

THE MOTHER

PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE

K. D. SETHNA
(Amal Kiran)



Clear Ray Trust
Pondicherry - India

THE MOTHER:
PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE

K.D. SETHNA
[AMAL KIRAN]

Clear Ray Trust
Pondicherry – 605 012, India

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The Mother and Amal Kiran (K.D.Sethna) in 1952

Introduction

The writings collected here — with slight revision at times — first appeared in *Mother India, Monthly Review of Culture*, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, in various issues from December 1973 to February 1976. All of them relate to the Mother.

Several bear upon the event of the Mother's passing away on November 17, 1973. Others look back upon her life and work up to that day, focus on some particular spiritual achievement of hers, record talks with her, revive personal memories, give diary-notes of Yoga under her guidance or look forward to the continuation of her help in inner and outer living. All these writings are from one pen.

A supplement has been added which includes, along with some matter by the same hand, a number of the Mother's own writings, a few by disciples reporting either an interview with her or a vision connected with her work, and a brief yet intimate public tribute to her by India's Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

What is sought to be offered is a sense of the momentous mission the Mother carried out while she was in her body, the constant touch of her presence felt by her spiritual children and the bright surmise inspired for the future by the feeling that her great and gracious labour is endless.

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SEPTEMBER 30, 1976

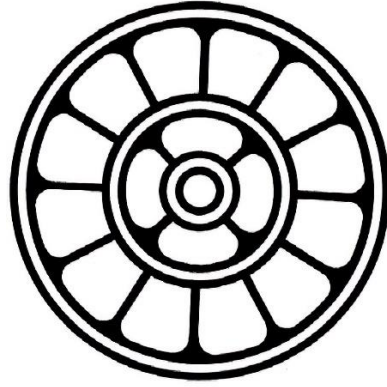
K. D. S.

Publisher's Note

(2nd Edition)

The Clear Ray Trust is happy to bring out this Long-Overdue 2nd Edition of the Popular Collection *The Mother: Past-Present-Future* during K.D.Sethna's Centenary Year.

The text has been further revised and amended at a few places in this reprint.



Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.

THE MOTHER

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THE MOTHER

The Mother*

Some General Truths and Personal Facts

The One whom we call the Supreme is the utter Unmanifest. The creative Conscious Force of the Supreme is the Divine Mother in Her transcendent poise, *Aditi*, holding the Truths that have to be manifested out of the absolute Mystery. Through the transcendent Mother and by Her creativity the whole universe has taken birth. And when the Supreme manifests in the world His own personal being, He does it also through Her transcendence. In Her universal aspect She is *Mahashakti*. All the Gods and Goddesses are of Her making — they are but powers that express Her.

There are many powers of the universal Mother which are not yet made manifest to us, and many universes too which are still in the Unmanifest and which the Divine Mother can create. What has been created is just one system of possibilities out of the innumerable that She and the Supreme can realise.

Time and again this Divine Creatrix takes a direct hand in the workings of the world. Through individual forms She manifests some ray of Herself: being Supernature, the truth of all that Nature here strives to express, She makes one aspect or another of Her light descend in all the ages of history and, when the hour is ripe, even a full individual embodiment can come forth.

It is such an embodiment, amidst a world of human beings, that Sri Aurobindo set before us when, on November 24, 1926, he charged with the care of his Ashram the radiant personality whom he called the Mother and into whose shaping hands he asked us to put ourselves as her children.

For forty-seven years and even past the age of ninety-five she played her mighty part to perfection. Born on February 21, 1878, she passed away on November 17, 1973. Her Ashram is still full of her though without her bodily presence. But no! we should only say: “without her bodily existence.” For,

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1974.

if ever there was a bodily presence which could never be effaced, it was the Mother's. Timeless she was not only in her inmost being but also in all the expressions of it in her outermost activity. During her last few years she was not up and about in the same way as before, but we must remember what she said to some disciples gathered in her room on April 2, 1972: "The body has some difficulty, so I can't be active, alas. It is not because I am old — I am not old... I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitively to prepare the transformation. But the consciousness is clear and we are here to work — rest and enjoyment will come afterwards. Let us do our work here." That is the typical Mother. And even in her last days, when her body had become exceedingly weak, she would say: "Make me walk." As late as November 14 she made her attendants lift her out of her bed. She tried to walk but staggered and almost collapsed. She took about 20 minutes to recover. But the moment she felt better she started saying: "Lift me up again, I shall walk." The constant urge towards activity of such an indomitable spirit could not help rendering her bodily presence a perennial part of our awareness. Naturally, therefore, she is in our memory most as we knew her before an acute form was taken by the difficulties of the body which she attributed to the exacting incalculable experiment of what she and Sri Aurobindo called "supramentalisation" — that is, the total "divinisation" of the physical being.

Right up to her ninety-third year the Mother was visibly true to her role of Divine Shakti on earth, but her best manifestation as the Ageless One was round about her eightieth year. For, contrary to expectation, it would have been the extreme of ineptitude to say on her eightieth birthday that she was eighty years old. Few of her disciples were up in the morning as early as she, few turned to repose as late. And it was hardly four or five years before this time that she used to be on her feet, without a moment's respite, from five in the morning to nearly two in the afternoon — meeting people, ministering to their spiritual needs, considering their physical requirements, attending to the reports of numerous departments, giving flowers charged with the soul's secrets, making those secrets breathe out more sweetly with that flower of flowers, her smile. In the evening again, from four she would be active, with a little recreation by way of tennis for an hour and then with

a large amount of re-creation of lost joy or clouded light in the thousand disciples who would move past her to receive from her hands a spoonful of nuts or a sweet through which their very bodies could absorb Grace. Even after eighty, her manifold activity was of one young, and at the day's end there was none who left the Ashram Playground with a fresher face and a brisker step.

Watching her, day after day, we realised that more than mere words were what she had once spoken on old age. She had said, in effect: "The coming of old age is due to two suggestions. First, the general collective suggestion — people telling you that you are getting old and can't do one thing or another. There is also the individual suggestion which keeps repeating, 'I am getting old, I mustn't attempt this or that.' The truth is quite different. Before thirty, the energy goes out in a spendthrift way because of the play of impulses. After thirty, there is a settling down and one is expected to have a plenitude of energy. At fifty, blossoming begins. At eighty, one becomes capable of full production."

Marvellously full indeed has been the Mother's productiveness, for it is rich with the power of a consciousness more than human. Even at the age of five she was aware that she did not belong to this world, that she did not have a merely human consciousness. Her Yoga may be said to have begun in that early period. Her parents had a small chair, with a little back, made for her — she would sit in it and meditate. She used to see a column of light above her head. As her brain was yet a child's and therefore insufficiently developed, she could not make out what it was, however much she tried. But the general sense of a high and vast mission accompanied always that experience.

Neither of her parents knew anything about this or who she was. And she did not tell them anything. On rare occasions, at a little later period, she tried to give some hint, but they failed to understand; nor, if they had caught its meaning, would they have believed her. Her mother was a positivist and materialist, in keeping with the tendency of those days, and wanted her and her brother to be ideal children according to her own notions. As for her father, he did not care one way or the other: he was a businessman.

All during her girlhood she was conscious of a more than human force behind her and often entering her body and working there in a supernormal way. This force she knew to be her own secret being. A few instances of its working may be given. She was about seven. There was a boy of nearly thirteen, a bully who always used to mock at girls, saying that they were good for nothing. One day she asked him, "Will you shut up?" He kept mocking. Suddenly she took hold of him, lifted him up from the ground and threw him down with a thump though she was so much smaller than he. The force that had come down into her and made her tremendously strong was recognised by her later in life as Mahakali.

Another instance. She had gone to play in a forest near Fontainebleau. She was climbing a steep hill, when her foot slipped and she began to fall down. The road below was strewn with sharp black stones. As she was falling, she felt somebody supporting her in a lap, as it were, and slowly bringing her down. When she reached the ground she was standing safely on her two feet, to the glad astonishment of all her companions.

In her sixteenth year she joined a Studio to learn painting. It was one of the biggest studios in Paris. She happened to be the youngest there. All the other people used to talk and quarrel among themselves, but she never took part in these things — she was always grave and busy with her work. They called her the Sphinx. Whenever they had any trouble or wrangle, they would come to her to settle their affairs. She could read their thoughts and, as she replied more often to their thoughts than to their words, they felt very uncomfortable. She would also make her decisions without the least fear, even if the authorities were concerned. Once a girl who had been appointed monitrice of the Studio got into the bad books of the elderly lady who was the Head of the place. This lady wanted to send away the monitrice. So the Sphinx was sought out by the young for help. She felt sympathy for the girl, knowing how poor she was and that if she left the place it would be the end of her painting career. The Head of the Studio had now to confront a determined little champion. Sensible pleading was first tried, but when it fell on deaf ears the champion took another line. With a bit of anger she caught the elderly woman's hand and held it in a firm grip as if the very

bones would be crushed. It was soon agreed that the monitrice would be allowed to stay on. Mahakali had been at work again.

The Sphinx of the Studio was also the same serious self at home. She rarely smiled or laughed. And for this, once when she was about twenty, she got a scolding from her mother. She simply replied that she had to bear all the sorrows of the world. Her mother thought she had gone crazy. On another occasion she was scolded by her for not listening to what she had been ordered to do. Then she answered that no earthly power could command her obedience.

We must not imagine that the Sphinx was morose or rebellious in general. She had enough of true joy and consideration. She was just weighted with the secret of the great work she had to do, and she could let nothing out of tune with it shape her actions.

Before this time, she had already arrived at a fairly precise idea of her mission. Between the ages of eleven and thirteen, a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to her not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine. And during her body's sleep occult instructions were given to her by several teachers, some of whom she met afterwards on the physical plane. Later on, as the inner and outer development proceeded a psychic and spiritual relation with one of these beings became more and more clear and frequent and, although she knew little of the Indian philosophies and religions at that time, she was led to call him Krishna and henceforth she was aware that it was with him, whom she knew she would meet on earth some day, that the divine work was to be done.

A number of years she spent in Algeria, learning the higher occultism from a Polish adept, Theon by name, and his still more profoundly experienced English wife. Under them she would put her physical body into a trance and awake progressively in her subtle sheaths: putting to sleep the subtle sheath next to the physical, she would grow aware in the one on a deeper level: she thus climbed the whole grade of what occultists have charted out as supraphysical planes, and became acquainted with their laws

and powers and operations, so that she might place all available means at the disposal of her spiritual ideal. On more than one occasion, so complete was her withdrawal from the body that the latter lay in a condition of temporary death. But the release, which could have absorbed her into the Divine Existence for good and plunged the embodied being into its Supreme Origin, was refused by her. She saw the world in its long travail and returned to the body by sheer force, a painful process when the connecting link between the subtle and the gross has been snapped.

In 1910 she came to hear of Sri Aurobindo who had settled in Pondicherry earlier that year. From then onwards her one desire was to visit India, the land which she had always cherished as her true mother country. And in 1914 the joy of seeing India was granted her — and the very heart of that joy was the meeting with Sri Aurobindo. But even before she caught sight of him she must have entered the ambience of his presence at Pondicherry. For we know how, six years later when returning by sea from Japan and drawing closer to the town, she had the occult experience as of a great light shining from some centre in it. Now, in 1914, she was soon face to face with the centre. And when she saw Sri Aurobindo she recognised in him the being of her early visions, the one whom she used to call Krishna. This was enough to convince her fully that her place and her work were near him in India.

Here we may remark that the whole truth about her choice to reside in India is not told when we have noted this meeting with Sri Aurobindo. The whole truth is compassed only when we realise why Sri Aurobindo himself, who had a wide Western education in England and wrote creatively in English and could have easily made his mark in Europe in whose culture he had been steeped, took India for his field, not only politically but also culturally and spiritually, assimilated the whole genius of this country and made it the central fount of his own future. India holds within her a supreme potentiality of spiritual response and development because of an extraordinary history of soul-culture: a vibrant psychological atmosphere is there, breathing life and vigour into all formations of the soul and rendering possible new evolutions of the Spirit's power. That is why Sri Aurobindo came an Indian and went to the West to bring the West to India for a novel world-wide synthesis of spiritual aspiration; that is also why the Mother

came a Westerner but with the eternal Indian within her, the born God-seeker and God-realiser, and joined forces with Sri Aurobindo to complete by her Indianised West his Westernised India, so that all mankind might grow to supermanhood with secret sustenance drawn from the soil where the wonderful seed of Avatarhood had often been sown.

The Mother saw the all-consummating Avatar in Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Aurobindo saw in her the Shakti that would make his Yoga an organised starting-point of a new chapter of earth's history. In the meeting on March 29, 1914, the true relationship between her and him, which she later expressed in a pithy sentence, must have flashed into awareness: "Without him, I do not exist; without me, he remains unmanifest."

But the master-means of manifestation, no less than the One who was to be manifested, was directly approached only on that day. Before meeting Sri Aurobindo the Mother used to find for her various spiritual experiences and realisations a poise for life-work by giving them a mould with the enlightened mind. All kinds of powerful ideas she had for world-upliftment — ideas artistic, social, religious. At sight of Sri Aurobindo she aspired to a total cessation of all mental moulds. She did not speak a word nor did he: she just sat at his feet and closed her eyes, keeping her mind open to him. After a while there came, from above, an infinite silence that settled in her mind. Everything was gone, all those fine and great ideas vanished and there was only a vacant imperturbable waiting for what was beyond mind. For days and days she carefully guarded her absolute silence and then slowly the Truth began to flow down from above. The Truth alone grew the substance of consciousness. No mental activity was left. And from that day in 1914 she never lived in the mind. Ideas got formed not on a mental initiative but in response to the Truth and in order to make the Truth mentally comprehensible and in order to transmit some experience of the truth to the ordinary world.

Sri Aurobindo had known in 1908 the cessation of all mental activity in an utter Nirvana which became the basis on which the dynamic and creative side of his Yoga proceeded. Although he experienced this cessation six years before the Mother, both of them soon found on comparing notes that they had worked essentially on the same lines of an integral development, seeking

to gather together all the movements of the spiritual life and carry them to a new goal. Only, a question that had haunted her from humanity's past had remained unanswered till she met Sri Aurobindo: Must always the attempt to establish a Kingdom of Heaven on earth fall tragically short of fruition? When she put the question to Sri Aurobindo he looked tranquilly at her and said, "This time it will not be so."

The secret of averting failure was what he called the Supermind, the Divine's own self-dynamism that had never before been brought into action in the world — the Supermind not only reached in its free and sovereign height but also carried down from there into Matter's depths to release in them its own hidden counterpart which is the buried source of all evolutionary striving towards divinity.

In those first few months of the Mother's stay in India, the mission of which she had been aware since childhood grew increasingly clear. She had hinted at this in the entry dated June 26, 1914, of her *Prayers and Meditations*:

"O Lord, grant that we may rise above the ordinary forms of manifestation, so that Thou mayst find the instruments necessary for Thy new manifestation.

"Let us not lose sight of the goal; grant that we may be always in union with Thy force, the force which the earth does not yet know and which Thou hast given us the mission to reveal to her."

An idea of the intensity with which the Mother devoted herself, from 1914 onwards, to her work for the world can be faintly formed if we remember what Sri Aurobindo remarked later to a disciple. He said that he had never known what spiritual self-surrender could be until she had thrown her whole being at his feet.

It was in 1914 too that she experienced an identification of even her most outer consciousness with the Universal Mother. She has written about this in her *Prayers and Meditations*. She has described there two successive identifications. Of course, she had known, long before, that she was the Mother: only the complete identification took place now, after her coming

to India. This was but natural, since no other country has felt and known the universal aspect so intensely.

Her diary which comprises the *Prayers and Meditations* had been started two years earlier. Every day at 5 a.m. she used to sit to meditate near her window with a Kashmiri shawl wrapped round her. The meditation being over, she would note down her thoughts and experiences; but they were meant only for herself and she always used to lock up her diary. In 1916 she stopped writing, but on her final arrival at Pondicherry in 1920 she took it up again. Later, it was only occasionally that she wrote. What she wrote covered five big volumes. The first to see them was Sri Aurobindo and it was he who asked her to get them published as they were sure to be of immense help to others and would at the same time show what the physical consciousness is capable of achieving. So he made a selection and she got it printed. She had the rest burnt in a boiler which is still in use at the Ashram.

The utter absence of self-attachment which is in this act impresses us in all the acts of the Mother. She never seemed to think of her own ends or comfort or satisfaction. For many years she did not have a regular bed to rest in. There was hardly even any privacy. Then some disciples pleaded with her to let them build a room of her own. Her constant gesture was to give and give, and there was no regret if the giving bore no palpable fruit. Nor did her vision admit failure. Once she indicated how Sri Aurobindo and she worked. She said that even when they saw that a disciple was acting under wrong forces or was about to revolt and leave the Ashram they would not envisage a dark end for him but set the delicate balance so that the other side, the spiritually receptive part, might not go down. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo never saw things in small blocks of time and space: a boundless vista was ever in their eyes. And even beyond time and space their sense of being extended. Vividly does one of her disciples remember what she said apropos of her own paintings. Himself an amateur with the brush, he was acutely concerned about the almost thoughtless scatter of her best work over many countries. She mentioned a decade in which she had done her finest pieces and said that most of them had been given away to various people at different times and in different places. The disciple said: "Should we not do something to collect them again?" The Mother calmly replied: "Why? Is it

so important?” “Surely, such masterpieces deserve to be found and kept safely. You took so much pains over them.” “It does not matter.” “But, Mother, don’t you think there will be a loss if they are not preserved?” Then the Mother, with eyes far away yet full of tenderness for the agitated disciple, said in a quiet half-whisper: “You know, we live in eternity.”

Suddenly the disciple woke up to the truth of the Mother’s being. “Of course, of course,” he broke out, realising how often, seeing her walk our little ways, we forgot the ineffable Plenitude that was she behind and beyond her dealings with us, the Plenitude which yet took on itself the difficulties and limitations that were ours, so that passing through them she might be the exemplar of not only a divine victory but also a human fulfilment.

An open reminder of the truth of her being came most emphatically in 1926 when Sri Aurobindo put the Ashram in her charge. To be precise, there was on November 24 of that year a descent of what Sri Aurobindo terms the Overmind, the highest dynamic divine consciousness that had been realised so far in the world: he brought it down into the very material being, thus carrying one step forward the work done by the previous Avatar Sri Krishna who had brought down its influence into earth-life. With the descent of this consciousness into Sri Aurobindo the ground was prepared for the future descent of the Supermind, the integral Truth-Consciousness of the Divine in which lies the secret power of a complete transformation of earth-existence, even to the very cells of the body. When the Overmind was brought down, Sri Aurobindo summoned all those who were staying near him and told them that the time had come for him to withdraw into seclusion for concentrated work towards the Supermind’s descent and that henceforth the Mother would be in the forefront, his Shakti and their Guru.

The nine or ten months after the Overmind’s descent were a history of spectacular spiritual events. All who were present have testified that miracles were the order of the day. What can be called miracles happen every day even now in the Ashram — wherever a great spiritual Force is at work the miraculous is inevitable — but many such events occur without any *éclat* and often wear even the appearance of natural phenomena. Those which were common occurrences in those ten months were most strikingly miraculous and, if they had continued, a new religion could have been established with

the whole world's eyes focused in wonder on Pondicherry. But the spectacular period terminated with an incident of profound significance. The Mother received one day what she has called the Word of Creation. Just as the God Brahma is said to have brought forth the world with his Word of Creation, the fiat of a new world that could be marvellously built lay ready with the Mother. A superhuman world was on the verge of being materialised.

With this power the Mother went to Sri Aurobindo's room and told him: "I have got the Word of Creation." Sri Aurobindo sat silent for a while and then said: "This Creation is from the Overmind. And we do not want that. We have to build the Supermind's world." The Mother went back to her own room. She concentrated intensely for two hours and at the end of them she had completely dissolved the whole new Creation that had been on the brink of precipitation on earth. The greatest power in any hands during human history was set aside as if it were a trifle — and all because Sri Aurobindo had said that nothing short of the highest divine Truth was the ideal of manifestation for him and her. Miraculously grand though the manifestation would have been of the Overmind deities, it would not have been an utter transformation of life and would have stood in the way of a still greater glory. The very grandeur of it would have filled the aspiring gaze of mankind and checked it from straining for anything beyond it — at least for millennia.

With that unparalleled act of obedience and surrender by the Mother at one gesture from Sri Aurobindo the long laborious period of gradual preparation for the Supermind's world started — on the one hand the drawing down of the supreme Truth-Consciousness from above and on the other the digging into what Sri Aurobindo designates the Inconscient, the apparent origin of evolution on earth, the seeming negation of the Divine within which the integral Divinity has to be manifested, converting all the painful terms of the Ignorance into the terms of Knowledge and Bliss.

Twelve years after the descent of the Overmind into the physical being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the greater aim seemed on the point of achievement. The Mother remarked in 1954 that even as far back as 1938 she used to see the Supermind appearing in Sri Aurobindo's body but what could not be done at that time was to fix it in the physical being. The first

fixing took place in circumstances mind-bafflingly dramatic. Twelve more years elapsed, and then Sri Aurobindo gave up his body, went through what appeared to be a disease with a fatal ending but what, in consideration of the extraordinary concomitants of that illness and that death, can only be regarded as a supreme strategic sacrifice. Sri Aurobindo, in view of the lack of preparedness in the world to receive and hold the descending Supermind, gathered as it were the whole force of mortal fate into his semi-divinised body and in the act of giving up this body exhausted that force in essence and principle and drew down to earth and fixed there the supramental Light. He took a drastic short cut towards a goal which otherwise would have taken decades to approach. As soon as he withdrew from his physical envelope the supramental Light made its permanent base in the Mother's body, beginning with the brain-mind. This is what is known as the "Mind of Light".

From then onward a deeper and deeper digging-in by the Light continued. In reaction against the invasion by the Truth-Consciousness the powers of the Ignorance attempted a desperate obstruction again and again. But Sri Aurobindo's sacrifice had already delivered the first of the finishing strokes to them. And with the Supramental Manifestation on February 29, 1956, when the Consciousness and Power of the Supermind became part of the earth's atmosphere, as it were — a power subtly yet directly at work on a universal scale in the midst of the old forces — the complete victory was assured, whose ultimate outer sign would be what the Mother called in her New Year Message of 1957 "the glorified body" which can conquer all Evil.

The process of the "glorified body" went on in the Mother — visible to a few whose sight, piercing through the outer eye's blindness, could catch the descended *karana sharira*, the causal sheath, at work within the Mother, a white glory into which the outer substance was gradually being absorbed or, rather, which slowly projected itself into that substance to transform it. The Light played about in the limbs, coming forward, drawing back, now a soft beauty enshrined in the flesh, now a great power possessing bone and tissue till one beheld no longer the familiar shape we adored but a perfect Goddess suffusing it and for a while blotting it from the gaze. But not rapidly enough could the supramental sheath exteriorise itself, for the Mother stood in no immune isolation, she took hundreds of imperfect consciousnesses into

herself, worked out their defects, repaired in her own body the constant damage which this comprehensive compassion inevitably brought: her aim was to carry the world with her and to prepare it for the full manifestation which it would scarcely have been able to bear if she had sought her own perfection to the neglect of humanity's cry for inner help and divinity's call to live for a collective triumph instead of an individual achievement.

A farther step towards the conquest of all Evil was disclosed in the Message of January 1, 1958, in which she spoke of the consent of material Nature to the demand for transformation. Nature has always been rejected by spiritual seekers and left to her own devices of slow circuitous development and aeonic travail with ill-lit forces. Nature, by being thrown back on herself, has avenged the rejection by obstructing with those forces the occasional pull on her for collaboration by seekers of the Spirit. The Mother's mission was to take Nature into herself, for indeed she was in essence all that is here in the very stone of material existence: a saviour love has been hers that shirks nothing, uplifts everything and makes even dust divine without annulling it, since even dust has its counterpart in the Supreme and a destiny of fulfilment here and now.

Over nine and a half decades has the saviour love been the earth's companion. A blessed day is every February 21 in its reminder to us of the long labour and of the fateful moment which saw its beginning. May our hearts beat in tune with that moment and be re-born from the sweetness and strength of this day that is effulgent with the Spirit's own sun — the Mother's face.

The Passing of the Mother *

The Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram left her body on November 17 at 7.25 p.m. Clinically, her departure has been attributed to heart-failure. Spiritually, we may assert that there could never be a failure of the Mother's heart in the sense either of ceasing to work or of falling short of its goal. Her physical heart was only an outer expression, under self-imposed limits, of a power that was endless in its working. We may well describe it in Sri Aurobindo's words about the central character in his epic *Savitri* — she who was figured as the incarnation of the Supreme Shakti:

A heart of silence in the hands of joy
Inhabited with rich creative beats
A body like a parable of dawn
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity
Or golden temple door to things beyond.¹

What this heart of a Yogini *par excellence*, this living echo of the Divine Consciousness, represented by its physical pulsation is revealed in another passage in the long description of Savitri:

A deep of compassion, a hushed sanctuary,
Her inward help unbarred a gate in heaven;
Love in her was wider than the universe,
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart.²

Surely, the fate of such a heart cannot be designated in clinical language. And what its import may be is best discerned from the Mother's own pronouncement to the present writer after Sri Aurobindo left his body on December 5, 1950.

When she was shown the Note giving a short account of the puzzling unexpected event, she paused over the expression: "the mortal remains of

* *Mother India*, December 5, 1973.

¹ *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, SABCL, Vol. 28, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*

Sri Aurobindo.” She said: “There was nothing ‘mortal’ about Sri Aurobindo. You must write only ‘remains’.” A moment later she added: “Sri Aurobindo did not die of physical causes. He had complete control over his body.”

The writer asked: “Will you not throw some light on the mystery of his passing?”

The Mother replied: “It is all quite clear to me. But I am not going to tell you anything. You must find out the truth yourself.”

“Mother, give me then the power to find it out.”

At this, she blessed her disciple.

Appealing to the Master for inspiration, the disciple spent nearly a fortnight preparing himself for his editorial in *Mother India*. The light dawned at last and he wrote his piece: *The Passing of Sri Aurobindo — Its Inner Significance and Consequence*. The Mother gave her full approval to it and later ordered 15,000 copies to be printed in pamphlet form. On the first anniversary of Sri Aurobindo’s departure the disciple wrote a second article, which again had the Mother’s sanction. From these two compositions, clues may be drawn in general to understand something of the step the Mother took twenty-three years afterwards along the same lines as the Master.

We may briefly say that in the interests of her work for the earth’s transformation, for the ultimate divinisation of the very cells of the human body with the power of that great discovery of Sri Aurobindo and herself, the truth-conscious all-illuminative Supermind, she chose to give up her physical sheath. The advantage resulting from such an act, under the challenging circumstances prevalent in earth-life, is suggested in an utterance of her own.¹

There she conveys to us that Sri Aurobindo now possesses more power for action than when he was in his body and that only by means of his so-called death could he get the increased capacity which had become necessary. We may further mark that the Mother characterises the action of Sri Aurobindo as “concrete” and almost “material”. The same holds for her

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1973, p. 89.

own action today. If we are to understand her passing in the terms she has herself set up *vis-à-vis* Sri Aurobindo's, there can be no other conclusion.

And when we think of both her and Sri Aurobindo — once joint Avatars of the Supermind — working together from a greater coign of vantage, there should be no grief or despondency on losing sight of that marvellous embodiment of divine love and loveliness that the Mother was for ninety-five years upon earth. The integral transformation of the world's evolutionary life, down to its most material aspect, for which she toiled with the smiling “God-touch” that can accomplish all, shall take place as promised in God's good time.

In the meanwhile we may rest our souls in the assurance she gave when the writer of these lines expressed his bewilderment on losing the physical presence of Sri Aurobindo — the gracious Master to whom he had turned for literary as well as spiritual progress and who had commented on almost everything written by his pupil. The Mother, pressing the pupil's hand, said: “Nothing has changed. Ask for help as you have always done and it will always be there. Nothing has changed.”

Who knows if the Mother's physical presence itself will long be absent! We are aware that the Supramental Body was already with her, waiting to fuse with the human form she had worn for our sake. We are aware also that the lengthy struggle she recently went through was only the Yogic endeavour of the human form to open completely to the Supramental Body. Perhaps this form did enough and its exalted agony was needed no more to enable the Supramental Body to manifest. Perhaps that Body, having assimilated the achievement of the other and thereby gained sufficient density for its subtle-physical substance, can now materialise itself on its own in a not too distant future.

Whatever be the case, most certainly we have not seen the end of the Mother's earthly mission. A gigantic labourer of love like her does not leave her children in the lurch. All her movements, however enigmatic, are bent on bringing the empyrean into the abyss. A Body of immortal knowledge and force and bliss — a visible and palpable divinity — must be assumed to be

the objective of every activity of the Mother as of Sri Aurobindo, even though our mind may fumble and see nothing but a luminous haze.

We must not merely say: “All will be well.” We must even say: “All *is* well — and shall be still better!”

O Silent Love... *

Because You never claim of us a tear,
O silent Love, how often we forget
The eyes of countless centuries were wet
 To bring Your smile so near!

Forgive if I remember not the blaze,
Imperishable, perfect, infinite,
Of far Omnipotence from which You lit
 Your lamp of human face!

Make me a worship-vigil everywhere,
Slumber and wakefulness one memory
That You are God: O let each pore of me
 Become a mouth of prayer!

* *Mother India*, November 1974.

The Mother's Victory *

The Present and Future Results of Her Passing

The passing of the Mother at 7.25 p.m. on November 17, 1973, from the visible scene whose luminous centre she had formed ever since November 24, 1926, when Sri Aurobindo put his Ashram in her hands and himself withdrew from common contacts in order to concentrate more intensely on the fulfilment of his work — the Mother's physical disappearance has caused a great deal of heart-burning and mind-churning among her disciples and devotees.

One of them has confronted the present writer with the article written when Sri Aurobindo had left his body: *The Passing of Sri Aurobindo — Its Inner Significance and Consequence*. This article is itself considered to have crucial significance and consequence because it carried complete approval by the Mother. Three times she formulated her sanction for it. She declared it to be excellent and as having nothing in it to be changed: she called it the best thing its author had done: she affirmed her entire satisfaction with it and wanted 15,000 copies to be printed in pamphlet form after its first appearance in *Mother India*. Now its author has been sent the following passage from it as a challenge:

“Nothing except a colossal strategic sacrifice... in order that the physical transformation of the Mother may be immeasurably hastened and rendered absolutely secure and, through it, a divine life on earth for humanity may get rooted and be set a flower — nothing less can explain the passing of Sri Aurobindo.”

Words could not be more explicit and emphatic in asserting that the Mother would not pass away as she has done. And to ratify further the assertion — if at all there was any necessity to do so after the Mother had set her seal on the article — we had the authorised report of the talk between her and Sri Aurobindo some months before he left his body on December 5,

* *Mother India*, January 1974.

1950. They had envisaged the contingency of one of them having to leave the body in the interests of their work. The Mother had said she would do it. Sri Aurobindo had refused to let her undertake the sacrifice. He had said that he would go and that she must stay to fulfil their Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation.¹

Most certainly the Supramental Transformation includes as its crown and climax a supramentalised physical body. Sri Aurobindo looked upon his “Integral Yoga” as the swift-moving concentration of the Yoga which Nature has been doing over the aeons, and he clearly laid down in the very first chapter of *The Life Divine* that the Supermind is “involved” in Matter along with the principles of Mind and Life and must inevitably evolve just as these principles did. Sri Aurobindo regarded the supramentalisation of the physical body as the ultimate goal of the Yogic endeavour in which he and the Mother were engaged. It was understood that they had come upon earth to be the pioneers of a total supramentalisation: they would undergo the supramental transformation in its entirety so that mankind might do the same with their help. Not all the race at once would succeed, or even attempt the Yoga, but at least a few who were prepared to follow them in perfect sincerity would in not-too-distant a future make a small nucleus of divinised humanity and from them the Light would gradually fan out. This was the vision repeatedly announced without any qualification during Sri Aurobindo’s life-time and still prominently after he had given the unexpected “strategic sacrifice”, though now there was a faint hesitation at times to speak with absolute certitude. It appears that with the Mother’s penetration further and further into the unexplored depths of the body-consciousness the work of physical transformation, which meant a radical reversal of the organism’s habitual functions, took the shape of a constant play with death — a sort of spiritual “brinkmanship”, a coming to the verge of dissolution again and again for the purpose of giving new subtle dynamisms a chance to take over. Merely a stoppage of the old organic operations would not suffice: the cells would have to be illuminated, the matter of the body refined and rendered receptive to the supramental

¹ See “A ‘Call’ from Pondicherry” by Dr. Prabhat Sanyal, *Mother India*, December 5, 1953, p. 187.

substance and form which had already been brought into action down to what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have called “the subtle-physical plane” immediately behind the gross-material on which we live. The process by which the habitually functioning organism could fuse with that substance and form was the one we could glimpse through the half-enigmatical disclosures of the Mother’s “Notes on the Way”, her talks with a disciple, in the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* from 1965 onward.

The most baffling of these disclosures — a kind of paradoxical peak to the process — meets us in the issue of February 1973.¹ It is dated December 30, 1972, and runs:

So it is going to be the new year...

Do you feel anything for the new year?

(After a silence)

Things have taken an extreme form, so there is as it were an uplift of the atmosphere towards a splendour... almost inconceivable and at the same time the feeling that at any moment one may... one may die — not “die” but the body may be dissolved. And so the two at the same time form a consciousness (*Mother shakes her head*) ...all the old things seem puerile, childish, unconscious — within there... it is tremendous and wonderful.

So the body, the body has one prayer — and it is always the same:

Make me worthy of knowing You,

Make me worthy of serving You,

Make me worthy of being You.

I feel in myself a growing force... but it is of a new quality... in silence and in contemplation.

Nothing is impossible (*Mother opens her hands upward*).

¹ *Bulletin*, p. 93.

There we have a picture of stark opposites — the sense of the body’s dissolution and the sense of a surpassing divine splendour — not only facing each other but also playing into each other, becoming the components of a single state. An extreme point has been reached: it is as if to die physically could be to achieve something “tremendous and wonderful” — as if the feeling of the possibility that the body might dissolve were itself the feeling of “a growing force”. It is hardly surprising that this force should be “of a new quality” or that the new quality be experienced in a condition of indrawnness with everything fallen still — an increasing inner Power that can be all-effective without needing an outer expressive body — a miracle that has become eminently accomplishable when the body has given itself up in a complete surrender to the Will of the Supreme.

The Mother, at the end of 1972, has clearly previsioned that such a miracle may happen in 1973. And nothing said later goes really against this foresight. For, she always leaves the future open: “I am repeating always: as You want it, as You want it, as You want it... let it be as You want it, may I do whatever You want, may I be conscious of whatever You want.” This prayer of March 10, 1973,¹ puts aside all fixed anticipations and thus even the anticipation of the miracle is not positively affirmed, other possibilities are afforded their chance, but simultaneously room yet remains for the miracle to take place. And it is significant that the prevision at the close of 1972 has been preceded by the revelation on November 8 of the same year: “I have had for a moment — just a few seconds — the supramental consciousness.”² Yes, the Supermind that had been pressing for years to exteriorise itself is here said to have briefly done the exteriorisation in a part of the Mother’s bodily being. The significance of this act may be seen in two ways. First, the exteriorisation would ensure success in supramentalising the body in the measurable future. Second, it would prelude sufficient development in the near future to allow a change of plan

¹ *Ibid.*, April 1973, p. 81.

² *Ibid.*, February 1973, p. 85.

for the body's role in the Yoga of the earth's supramentalisation. The first alternative needs little explaining. The second calls for a commentary.

The role originally set for Sri Aurobindo's body as well as for the Mother's was entire divinisation so that it might not be subject in any mode to the so-called laws of Nature and would mark the beginning of a new, a supramental race. With the passing of Sri Aurobindo we saw a momentous shift in the plan: Sri Aurobindo admitted into his physical frame what we may term the basic power of darkness and, in the act of letting that frame merge with it and be destroyed, he destroyed that power's capacity to stand in the path of the Mother's Yoga and to retard the world's evolution towards the Supermind. The immediate result was the establishment of the "Mind of Light" in the Mother on December 5, 1950 — the permanent reception of the Supramental Light by the physical mind. This result has been described, according to the Mother's estimate, with revelatory accuracy in the opening lines of a poem by a disciple:

The core of a deathless Sun is now the brain
And each grey cell bursts to omniscient gold.

The next consequence of Sri Aurobindo's sacrifice was the Supramental Manifestation which occurred on February 29, 1956: the Supermind made an initial entry into the subtle layer of the whole earth-plane and became a permanent part of the earth's future evolution: now inevitably, in the course of time, the Supermind would take organic form in the gross layer of the terrestrial plane. We shall better appreciate the hastening of the Supermind's Golden Day, which Sri Aurobindo brought about, if we realise from some correspondence with Sri Aurobindo in July and August of 1938 that the Truth-Consciousness's manifestation on a world-wide scale was originally expected by the Mother as far back as that year.¹ Owing to several factors — the chief being the push towards World War II by Hitler and the increasing power of Stalinism and the catastrophic division of India — this

¹ *Life-Literature-Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1968), pp. 41-43.

divine event was delayed for eighteen years! Without Sri Aurobindo's drastic short-cut which we may call the Dying by the Deathless it would not have materialised for quite a length of time. The progression of the divine event in the terms of earthly life under the spiritual pressure of the Mother has also the touch of Sri Aurobindo: she has said that his action from beyond is greater than what it was when he was in his body and the increase has come precisely by his departure.¹ A similar increase in her own action grows conceivable in relation to the possibility she always envisaged of leaving her body.

But, merely by a disembodiment, neither she nor he can be thought of as acquiring a greater action: they would first have to make Yogically the most of their embodied state. Fighting for transformation till the last breath, they might somehow make the body's end itself a critical phase of the Yogic process and turn it to the purposes of their earth-transformative ideal. And it is a fact attested by Pranab and the rest of the Mother's attendants that, though she had considered death as possible, she never accepted it as probable and she worked unremittingly for the physical divinisation with which Sri Aurobindo wanted to consummate the Integral Yoga: never did she accept any natural compulsion to leave the body.

It may be argued: "When Sri Aurobindo's body was put in a casket and laid in a vault in the Ashram courtyard, did she not ask for a second chamber to be made and kept empty above the one where he was to be placed? Is not this provision a sure sign of accepting death as the end of her spiritual travail on earth?" The correct answer is: "If one envisages the possibility of dying, it is practical sense to make specific arrangements to meet it — especially when the person concerned is the responsible head of a great institution. But the true attitude of the Mother is clear from her words to Nolini: 'If ever I leave my body...'² The possibility is figured, as most faint and remote, as though she said: 'If by some rare chance I die...' And this attitude is borne out also by the actual explanation she gave to Udar who was in charge of building Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi. Knowing the transformative aim of both

¹ *Bulletin*, February 1973, p.

² "A Message by Nolini", *Mother India*, December 5, 1973. p. i.

the Master and the Mother, he was aghast at the proposal to have a second chamber in the vault. Then the Mother softly answered: ‘It is good tactics to put the Hostile Forces off the scent.’ She did not want these Forces to concentrate their attack on what she really sought to do. Thus the very gesture as of accepting death shows itself to be a secret move in the opposite direction, a provision made in favour of the transformative ideal.”

The Mother, like Sri Aurobindo, fulfilled the conditions under which Death the Enemy might be pressed into their service, and her talk on December 30, 1972, spotlights for an instant the capacity held by her consciousness to make the brief moment of her body’s collapse a long-term triumph. This capacity she exercised on November 17, 1973, at 7.25 p.m.

How exactly shall we picture the situation in which she made Death her servitor? On the one hand, as we know from “Notes on the Way” over several years, there was the growing infusion of her cells with the light of the Supramental Body already poised on the subtle-physical plane and then the short yet decisive experience of the exteriorised Supermind. On the other, as we learn from her attendants, there was infirm old age but also an ever-resisting youthfulness of attitude, both of which were linked with her stance as an Evolutionary Avatar representing all Nature’s upward travail. It was the Evolutionary Avatar who suffered an advancing weakness of limbs, a gradual deterioration of bodily powers — the exhaustion of a corporeal frame that had packed into itself the whole world’s problem of aging, the entire race’s difficulty of keeping life going for over nine decades. It was the Evolutionary Avatar too who had housed in that frame an indomitable spirit warring against the earth’s age-long darkness and doom and able to say like Sri Aurobindo:

I am full of wounds and the fight merciless.¹

The Mother seems to have found that the body, which she had allowed to go so far in its exalted agony, did not need to go any further: enough had been done to permit a victorious retreat. A retreat was desirable, since what had

¹ *Collected Poems*, SABCL, Vol. 5, p. 146: “In the Battle”, line 11.

been done was insufficient except barely to hold on against the battering of Time. But victorious indeed could the retreat become, since sufficient interaction had pulsed between the subtle-physical glory of Grace and the gross-physical labour of Love, to enable the Mother to carry on earth-work in the future without continuing an outer existence. The gross-physical form could give up the struggle it had so long made to merge with the subtle-physical shape, because the subtle-physical shape had now won by the gross-physical form's arduous *tapasya* a new earthward competence: it had attained the adequate density, the proper power, to operate directly on the earth-plane and ultimately even to condense and precipitate itself there for a still more intense activity to fulfil evolution as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had always dreamed.

The prolonged withdrawal from outer life the Mother underwent from mid-May to mid-November and the protracted trances into which she plunged during those six months must have been oriented towards endowing the supramentalised subtle-physical with the "virtue" gathered by the gross-physical from its fight for transformation. More and more the Mother dwelt in the former and drew into it the enriched essence of the latter while preparing to discard the failing appearance. She had set out to succeed the other way round — to draw the former's substance into the latter. But occult circumstances called for a change of strategy and she rose to the occasion.

Here a certain point must be thrown into some relief. When we speak of the Mother as preparing to discard the failing gross-physical we must not think she gave up warring against earth's age-long darkness and doom. Sri Aurobindo has said about his work of trying to bring the Supermind into the body that even if he saw the chance that it might come to nothing he would go on unperturbed and strive to the best of his power: he would go on doing what he took to be his mission, for, "what is so done always counts in the economy of the universe".¹ The Mother, aware that her corporeal frame might have to be dropped in the interests of novel tactics for earth's divinisation, kept still the warrior spirit, wanted still her infirm limbs to go on pressing for fitness. Else the essence of physicality would stop getting

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 154.

enriched and cease qualifying unreservedly to be assimilated into the hidden supramental Matter. The Mother, even in planning to abandon her outer sheath because of its being at a spiritual stalemate, went down fighting. Thus alone could the fate of other similar sheaths — the fate of embodied mankind in the future — become more favourable for transformation.

Yes, the Mother fought her way to victory during the retreat from her body. But there is yet another truth to be fathomed by us in visioning what happened to her. We have already seen her fundamental attitude: “Let it be as You want it, may I do whatever You want, may I be conscious of whatever You want.” The Mother, in doing everything, was still doing nothing — nothing except surrender actively to the Supreme Will. She had given her body to that Will’s demand on her for physical transformation. But her body had no preferences. When it was suggested to her in 1969 that she should have “a glorious body”, visible to everyone, so that all could come and see the Divine, she agreed but said: “I would be very glad if it were anyone, it does not matter who, I have not the least desire that it should be myself.”¹ And she added: “The body has no ambition or desire whatsoever or even the aspiration to become the glorious body.”² She repeated that not for a moment did she have the idea that it must be her own body which should become glorious. “Choosing one person or another, one place or another” — nothing of that kind existed for her, “*Let there be this incarnation, this manifestation*”: “the thing by itself was the wonderful solution. That’s all.”³ Lastly, she observed: “if there is nothing in this body which ‘aspires’ to be that, it proves that this is not its work.”⁴ Then she referred to “that wonderful Smile” — what she had earlier spoken of as not only a Smile but also “a shining Light” through which the Lord declared his omnipresence.⁵ Now the Smile said: “It is not your business”, and the Mother understood the phrase to mean: “it does not concern you: whether it is this or that or that...” But

¹ *Bulletin*, August 1969, p. 99.

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*, p. 100

⁴ This translation from the French differs from that in the *Bulletin*, because the latter has been found faulty.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

she at once followed up, referring to her body: “what has become its business — in such an intense way that it cannot be expressed — is: ‘Thou, Thou, Thou, Thou...’, no word can translate it; the Divine, to use one word. It is all, it is for all — to eat: the Divine; to sleep: the Divine; to suffer: the Divine... so on (*Mother points both hands upward*). With a kind of stability, immobility.”¹

There we have not what one may superficially understand as the Mother saying that another body than her own might, in historical fact, become “glorious”. She simply declares the sheer non-egoism of her body, even the absence of any sense of mission in her bodily being, her willingness that if the Lord so wills it anyone’s body should be divinised and not necessarily her own which has striven so much for the transformation. Stable and immobile in selfless surrender she yields herself to the Supreme for His activity — and at a different place we get a hint of what must have led her to the crisis of discarding her body. She speaks of having had for three or four hours the Divine Consciousness in the body, but it was a Consciousness that “went about from one body to another, altogether free and independent, knowing the limitations and possibilities of each body”.² Then she recounts how the cells of her body spoke to the Presence, telling It of “their effort to be transformed”. “The body told of its aspiration and of its will to prepare itself”, but “always with the question...: will it continue or will it get dissolved? ... Itself, it is like that (*gesture of self-abandon, palms open*), it says: ‘As thou wiliest, O Lord’, but then the body knows that it has been decided, and that it is not to be told to the body. It accepts, it is not impatient...”³

Here is the key to the moment when the Mother chose the paradox of victorious retreat. She came to know the decision of “the Absolute”, as she terms the Presence.⁴ And she automatically decided the same. Since the Absolute is her own highest being, we may designate the decision either the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

² *Ibid.*, April 1969, p. 85.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Presence's or hers. The decision was that her terribly strained body should get dissolved but that she must go down fighting.

As to the results of her heroic fall, what she said in 1969 is that if, with "the work becoming more and more exciting", the body, in spite of her persistence, did not "hold on", she would be constrained to let the transformation "be for another time".¹ But in March 1972, a Supramental Body waiting on the subtle-physical plane and pressing upon the gross-physical became a concrete reality in which she lived for a while,² and there were also the experiences we have already sketched. Hence an alternative outcome was open and, according to us, it was this outcome that was opted for and is the significance of her death.

The Mother, by passing away as she did, accomplished the task set to her by Sri Aurobindo in 1950, and repeated in a new mode his own master-stroke of conquering all while appearing to perish utterly.

The Mother stands now on a border-line between Matter subtle and Matter gross — she has broken the barrier that had separated the two — she has brought the former so close to us that the latter is not required any longer for her dynamic influence and impact upon our lives. Nor does she only have the nearness and effectiveness to be the concrete Guru for our Yoga and the direct Guide to our evolutionary consummation: she also waits with all her energy of manifestation ready to materialise herself even to our common sight and touch. If we desire to have an idea of what she is like as she abides on that transitional verge between the outer and the inner, we may recollect the description in Lalita's record of an experience on the Mother's Samadhi Day:³ "Then slowly You appeared, as if from behind a veil. You were clad in a pale-gold robe. You looked young and beautiful and radiant with a brilliant white light. This light was strongest round the head, circling it with an indescribable halo. It extended intensely down to the waist. Still lower, it was a little less bright. From Your body it spread out to the whole world."

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, August 1972, pp. 75, 77, 79, 81, 83.

³ *Mother India*, December 5, 1973, p. vii.

But for the materialisation of this body, the new Advent of the Mother, there are conditions to be observed. Our non-observance of them was one of the major causes why the Mother had to bear those countless inner wounds and why her outer form had to suffer so grievously to reach the paradoxical point where, baulked of going further, it yet surmounted the necessity of further progress. If we wish to know what the conditions are, we may also hark back to Lalita's record. She heard the Mother saying: "Forget ego, give up self; live and work in harmony and unity for the Divine."

The last three words are of the essence. Not only is an ethico-social ideal to be lived and worked for. Valuable as such an ideal is, we have to surpass it and rise with its *élan* vibrant in us to the level of dynamic mysticism and Yoga, a collective spiritual practice lifting our humanity towards a truth-conscious supermanhood.

Understood rightly, the message heard on the Samadhi Day sums up the Mother's demand on us. And the promise to our response is summed up in the final phrase Lalita caught from the Mother: "The Advent will not be far."

The Mother — Warrior of the Supermind *

A Note on the Essential Truth and Some Seeming Discrepancies

Right up to the end the Mother is said to have fought indomitably for the work entrusted to her by Sri Aurobindo: transformation of her body so as to complete the Supramental Yoga and initiate a new Race. But at the same time we have been told of certain moments and moods during her last illness, where she appears helpless or hopeless — a striking contrast to her accepted role as Warrior of the Supermind. And the impression that she was helpless and hopeless reaches its acme when we come to think of her as leaving her body because she who had striven so gallantly for the Supramental Transformation had yet perforce to grow old and weaken and die, give up her mission and submit to the “laws of Nature”.

Are those moments and moods genuine discrepancies? Did the Inevitable Hour that has awaited all living creatures form alike the terminus of one whom Sri Aurobindo had chosen and commanded to effect not only “the death of Ignorance” but also “the end of Death”? Here are crucial questions and some followers of the Mother have been disturbed by a sense of irreconcilableness.

The questions are disturbing only if these followers see them in too simple a manner, take them too superficially and probe them without sufficient insight into the special character of an Avatar like the Mother or Sri Aurobindo.

Some of the seeming discrepancies are clearly due to a wrong perspective. Thus there is no call to doubt the indomitableness of the Mother’s spirit in what has been described as her prolonged pleading with her attendants to lift up her disabled limbs and make her walk. Here she suggests a pitiful picture of helplessness, if not even of absurdity, knowing as we do that on the first occasion when her pleading had been answered she had collapsed, her face had grown deadly white and twenty minutes had passed before she could recover. Why did she keep pleading after this nearly disastrous experience?

* *Mother India*, January 1974.

Did she lose her poise and her common sense? The reason for her persistence is evidently the fear she had expressed to her attendants — that her limbs might get paralysed by disuse and prove unresponsive to her demand on them to be fighting-fit. In a state of exceeding feebleness she still wanted to get up and battle with the enemies of life. Here is no loss of poise or common sense, but exceptional courage, unremitting defiance of death.

What, however, shall we say when we hear that once she was “extremely restless”, “a bit annoyed with herself” and “dejected”, on finding she could not control her body for a time? Is this the Divine Mother whom we have known? Was she reduced to the merely human level of despair? Surely it is illogical to jump to a conclusion on the strength of our normal interpretation of appearances. Might not the terms that we have used be mere extensions from our ordinary reactions to the Mother’s psychological state? Many in the past have seen the Mother “angry”, “impatient”, “intolerant”. But did these adjectives do anything more than translate Mahakali’s drastic Truthward moods into human equivalents? Those moods can have no quality of our common anger, impatience, intolerance. The Mother has also undergone bodily ailments and felt drained of physical energy. Her body has even screamed with pain. Yet, when asked about it, she showed surprise, as if her consciousness had been elsewhere at the moments her body, which was like ours and shared our defects, had let out the screams. The restlessness, the annoyance, the dejection could very well have been the response her human-like body’s disposition made to a sudden adverse turn of the physical sadhana and could easily have had behind it the Inner Warrior’s profound sorrow — “psychic sadness”, as Sri Aurobindo has it — that the outer instrument should fail in endurance, fall short of the expected support. Here there may have been an idealism hurt to the utmost and moved to a deep self-censure: we need not conjure up hopeless pessimism.

The criterion which that idealism holds up is well caught in the exacting words the Mother uttered on May 28, 1969: “There is only one solution, the direct contact of the physical with the Supreme. That is the only thing... All the rest is misery...”¹ And side by side with the picture that we may paint

¹ *Bulletin*, August 1969, “Notes on the Way”, pp. 81, 83.

of hopeless pessimism let us set this other the Mother herself has given us on May 31 in the same year 1969: “...yesterday..., in front of the horror in the perception of things, this body (that is the very opposite of being sentimental, it was never, never sentimental), this body wept...”.¹ Is there any real break-down here? Did the heroic Mother we had known become a weakling? Nothing save idealism must once again come into paradoxical play.

Even putting aside the possibility of subjective interpretation and granting some real link with our “human, all-too-human” reactions, we may explain the seeming discrepancies. Now we have to go beyond the levels usually open to our understanding. We have not merely to cease being too simple and superficial: we have to penetrate to certain fundamentals of an Avatarhood like the Mother’s or Sri Aurobindo’s. We have to remember that the Mother was an Evolutionary Avatar: she represented all Nature, including human nature, in one part of her being, and assumed the problems and difficulties of the entire evolving earth. Times there could be, for such an Avatar, to pass through phases of mind and body which mirror man’s desperate agonies just as there could be a passage through phases echoing his intense exultations. We cannot apply any rule-of-thumb to the spirituality of an Avatar of evolution. Whatever is needed to be done for the sake of the Divine acting as both Evolver and Evolute would instantly be embraced, irrespective of human standards of what is spiritual and what is not.

Even Avatars who did not aim, as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have done, at a complete organic change from one grade of evolution to another, a total divinisation not only of mentality and vitality but also of physicality, a transformed body ultimately functioning like a god immune to disease, decay and death, a body expressing in full a consciousness wholly converted from the twilit Mind to the noonday-splendoured Supermind — even the Avatars who never attempted like Sri Aurobindo and the Mother an integral evolutionary advance have flouted habitual conceptions of spirituality. We know how Sri Aurobindo, instead of sitting like a Himalayan sage serenely apart from world-issues, declared himself on the side of the Allies in World

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

War II against Hitler and urged American participation *versus* Stalinism in the Korean conflict of 1950, and thus exposed himself in the one case to the charge of befriending the British who were still India's imperialist masters when World War II broke out, and in the other case to the accusation that he was hand-in-glove with Washington and Wall Street. But thousands of years before him Sri Krishna had led Arjuna's chariot, urged the mighty battle of Kurukshetra and called upon his beloved disciple to abandon all man-made Dharmas, take refuge in Him alone and fight with a high-stationed soul to bring about a New Age of history. In addition, Sri Krishna was an astute hand at politics and lived in kingly purple and gold rather than as a naked ascetic. Yes, past Avatars too have kicked over the traces of conventional norms of spirituality. They have apparently "fallen" into human ways in order to work their divine purposes. They had come to carry forward man's career on earth, although their ultimate goal for him was a Beyond. Through human ways, whenever necessary, they gave a push to that career. How much more might those ways be required at times by Avatars whose goal is earth's own fulfilment, a consummated Here and Now, a taking up of all Nature's imperfections and a furthering of her evolutionary instruments?

Nor must we forget the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were Evolutionary Avatars because they embodied the hitherto — unmanifest Supermind. And when so new a dynamism of the Divine is at work and thus their spirituality itself is a special one, who can assess their operations with the yardstick of the past, be the past ever so "spiritual"? The Supermind by its basic novelty has the right to fly in the face of all expectations. If it serves its ends that the Avatar of it should not only look but be "restless", "annoyed with herself" and "dejected" on a particular occasion, how can we conclude her non-divinity on that score? We are in no position to gauge what might be shaped out by such contrary means. More than in any other situation of sadhana we need to keep before us in confronting the Supramental Avatar those lines of Sri Aurobindo:

This too the Supreme Diplomat can use,
He makes our fall a means for greater rise.¹

¹ *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, SABCL, Vol. 28, p. 34.

And, when we discern in the Evolutionary Avatar the Avatar of the plenary Supermind, we must stop thinking that the Mother had to submit willy-nilly to any “laws of Nature”. Sri Aurobindo has characterised all the planes of existence and consciousness up to what he calls the Overmind as *aparardha*, the lower hemisphere of manifestation, while the *parardha*, the higher hemisphere, starts from the Supermind. The “laws of Nature” hold, though in different degrees, for everything below the Supermind. Nature extends thus far and no further: the Supermind is Super-nature. With the Supermind we do not have the Cosmic but the Transcendent: there automatically the laws which we may designate cosmic habits come to an end. And when the Supramental Divine becomes incarnate, he or she brings a total freedom, and absolute power. Whatever diminution of freedom, whatever decrease of power there may be in their world-work is of their own choice. Indeed they do diminish and decrease themselves, sometimes with terrible results, because they take upon their beings the cosmos’s shortcomings so as to work them out in the light of the cosmos’s archetype, the universe’s original truth, that shines forth in the Supermind and is obscurely “involved” in the Inconscient from which the world has evolved. Yes, the Supramental Divine has to be very much like us in order that we may at last be supramentally divinised. But let us make no mistake: there is here no inevitable submission at all.

Doubtless, the frailty and the suffering are real, they are truly undergone, they are no dramatic pose: were they something merely put on, the ultimate conquest of them would have no sense for us and be just a splendid show. But alongside the actual experience of them the Supramental Divine keeps intact the freedom and power intrinsic to the Transcendent. To quote Sri Aurobindo:

A Magician’s formulas have made Matter’s laws...

All here can change if the Magician choose.¹

Any minute the Transcendent can surmount the bondage that has been accepted in all its grim actuality. And there is always a voluntary act accompanying the appearance of both suffering and frailty. Death itself is

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 29, p. 457.

determined by that act. In each phase of the Mother's life there is a supreme unfettered "Yes" allowing the play of Nature. A luminous decision goes with all occurrences — and what is accepted, no matter how undivine or how inescapable it may seem, has behind it the highest wisdom no less than freedom and power.

Of course, we have to take account of the Mother's existing on several levels: she the incarnate Avatar from the Supermind has an instrumental being which is totally surrendered to the supramental Will within her, and when she speaks from her body-poise she refers always to the Lord, the Supreme Presence, the Absolute as governing her fate. But this supramental wisdom-freedom-power is identical with even her body-poise in the latter's essential self. In the closing passage of the talk she had with a disciple on August 30, 1972,¹ we see the interplay, the duality and yet the unity, between the supramental instrument and the supramental Transcendent, both of whom are she. "Very often, very often," she says, "I ask the Lord: How can I help now that I can no more see clearly nor speak clearly? It is a state... the body does not feel the decline! It is convinced that if tomorrow the Lord wanted it to take up again its activities, it would be able to do so. The Strength is there (*Mother touches her arms, her muscles*), at times a mighty strength!... Why!... The condition is willed so that... I might be left quiet." The disciple tells her: "But you know this is surely a willed state because I myself have the feeling, so far as I can perceive in my small measure, that in your immobility you are like a tremendous generating centre." She confirms his intuition by answering: "Yes, that I know. That I know. Tremendous. Yes, a Force."

We could not have a more distinct pointer to the capacity of the transcendent "Magician" within the Mother to change the material "laws" made by his own "formulas". The seemingly old and infirm body is declared to feel no "decline" and it knows in its very substance ("arms", "muscles") that at any moment it can be active and effective by the Transcendent's will. Half-humorously the Mother understates her condition, saying it is necessary for the purpose of letting her remain quiet. But it is really a situation needed

¹ *Bulletin*, November 1972, "Notes on the Way", p. 87.

at once to bring the problem of transformation to its acutest and gather the transformative energy to its most concentrated. And all the pain, weakness, vulnerableness are revealed to be a quite consciously veiled omniscience.

Crass casualty and blind fatality can never be deemed legitimate factors in the Mother's life in the same way that they are in our lives or even the lives of the great seers, saints and yogis of the past. The very Avatars of old have walked under their shadow to some extent, for they did not incarnate the plenary Supermind. If death necessarily took toll of the Mother as it does with all infirm old age, if it was not chosen by her for reasons of her own, then the Mother was not what Sri Aurobindo had visioned and proclaimed her to be. Are we prepared to believe that?

As to what her reasons for "dying" were, we may here simply say: "Her aim was to install in the world a Divine Body and thereby aid her children to get divinised. She has given up her present physical sheath in order somehow to bring closer, to concretise further, the secret Supramental form that she has spoken of as awaiting materialisation through the labour of her Aurobindonian Yoga."

Prospects of the Physical Transformation *

A Clarification of the Problem

Wide-eyed amazement, dim-eyed despondence, cold-eyed scepticism, sharp-eyed opposition as well as calm-eyed acceptance have met our reasoned presentation¹ of Nolini's brief pronouncement that the physical transformation, though not cancelled, has been postponed because of the Mother's giving up her body.

We argued that this transformation in the sense intended by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother — a transformation supramentalising the body, turning the body totally divine — could be achieved only if either an Avatar of the Supermind was physically present amongst us or else the Supramental Consciousness which manifested on a universal scale on February 29, 1956, and the Superman Consciousness which came at the end of 1969, became the ruling power in the earth's evolutionary history,² a natural force towards supramentalisation.

The use of the word "postponed" has been debated. The common meaning is: "to put off for a future time, to defer, to delay, to subordinate."³ The connotations which caused all those various eye-expressions other than that of acceptance were the first and the second. The more appropriate meaning is: "delay." For, this term has a twofold shade, and the conditions we have to consider are also twofold.

The physical transformation can be considered either as a process or as an end-product. The end-product, the accomplishment of the body's supramentalisation, may legitimately be taken as delayed in the sense of being put off for a future time or being deferred. The process cannot be so regarded: the Mother, whether physically present or not, is constantly at work on her followers as well as, in a lesser degree, on the rest of mankind, and the new Power that has become a factor in evolution is also pressing on

* *Mother India*, September 1974.

¹ *Mother India*, June-July 1974, pp. 438-39.

² *Ibid.*, March 1974, p. 167.

³ *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary* (Bombay, 1971), p. 854, col. 1.

to produce an effect in the world's surface-life. The process is postponed only in the sense of being retarded, slowed down. Our previous article should have explicitly distinguished the complete achievement from the movement towards it. The circumstances mentioned there could never rule out the continuation of the movement. They counteract only the coming of the fullness of physical supramentalisation in the present time or in the very near future.

Sri Aurobindo said that if the supramentalisation was not done first in him it could not be done in others.¹ The Mother declared that he had given her the work of completing their Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation and that her body was to be the first experiment in the difficult process of supramentalisation so as to make the task easier for others by her success. The physical absence of the Gurus is bound to postpone the success of the disciples in this particular part of the Integral Yoga — the postponement will end not before one of the Gurus reappears in some fashion or the manifested Supermind and the Superman Consciousness start operating directly in the forefront of universal evolution.

In the meanwhile the Mother's new creation, already a multiform splendour in the subtle-physical, is trying to break forth into the gross-material, with her own body of glory in the van of the fight outward. By withdrawing from her earthly sheath she has not abandoned her mission nor has she withdrawn merely because her children proved unworthy. Unworthy in many respects we all certainly have been, but the Divine Love is not offended by the unworthiness of its objects: it knows very well the nature of the stuff it deals with and it gives itself ceaselessly and will carry out what it has set its heart upon. The Mother left her body for occult reasons which determined that the immediate present period was not the one in which her undertaking could best be fulfilled for the good of her followers. A fresh turn of spiritual strategy was called for by the Supreme Will — the Will of the Mother's own highest Self — and the Mother in her incarnate role responded.

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 144-45.

There have been unexpected turns in the past of the Integral Yoga. After the descent of the Overmind into the body on November 24, 1926, the Mother tried to bring down divine beings from the highest spiritual level to work in the human instruments and she could manifest even in her physical form something of her four goddess personalities and powers: Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati. A kind of miraculous sadhana went on. If it had been successfully carried through, the Supermind would soon have taken direct charge. But the method of action from above could not sweep to its conclusion. Certain conditions of earth-nature, particularly as represented in the circle around the Mother, stood in the way. To follow the apparently swift method would have meant a series of brilliant sallies in all directions without striking on the central road. So a different mode of operation was adopted.

The Gurus came down to the level of the physical mind and worked from there, calling the descent of the Supramental Consciousness into that level. At the same time they started digging the Subconscient and the Inconscient. And, all the while, they insisted that the inmost soul, the true Psyche, should lead the Yogic evolution. The new turn was to all appearances a slow process, but it hit upon the main path and, in doing so, avoided the impressively swift-moving yet ultimately time-wasting sidetracks. Its slowness was, in the long run, speed disguised.

A second change of strategy came with the passing of Sri Aurobindo. A breakthrough which would have taken long if he had remained within his body was achieved at one drastic stroke by his leaving it. The Mind of Light, the physical mind receiving the Supramental Light, was established in the Mother the moment Sri Aurobindo made his stupendous self-sacrifice. Sri Aurobindo's physical absence created indeed a gap in our Yogic lives and the fact that the Mother alone, instead of him and her together, had to deploy the Avatar-energy towards the goal brought a tremendous pressure upon her physical instrument. The breakthrough which Sri Aurobindo had accomplished worked wonders and the Mother brought about two victories on a universal scale and prepared a future course of Supramental Evolution. But her own body had to pass through crisis after crisis at certain intervals of time. No crisis, of course, could ever spell defeat. Yet desperate-looking

situations could arise and her radiant form bore wound after wound. Warrior to the end, she saw that the sacrifice of this form was demanded in the larger interests of the Aurobindonian travail of total transformation. Postponement of bodily supramentalisation was the result, for no other body had reached anywhere near her own aspiring Light-touched cell-consciousness. When such a vehicle of the Divine was abandoned for a novel attack on the problem of divinising the earth, the perfection of the individual body could not but be deferred and the process towards it slowed down.

However, by analogy with the past strategic shifts, here is an occasion for hope rather than despair. What might have been done quicker for one special body under stress-conditions — stress-conditions because of a considerable lag between that body and those striving to follow its steps — might have proved too burning a burden, so to speak, for the unprepared, and created unbearable consequences for them by an extreme contrast. The unprepared might have felt internally confused and externally rejected. A more gradual achievement of the goal by means other than the ones adopted after Sri Aurobindo's passing might be envisaged as more advantageous for them. Hence the deferment of the full physical supramentalisation and the slowing-down of the movement in its direction would be the Mother's secret blessing to her disciples.

Our journey may seem long, our passage may at times even be as though in the words of T. S. Eliot —

Across a whole Thibet of broken stones
That lie, fang-up.

But if the difficulty is increased, it must be understood as a challenge to us to double our aspiration, our effort at self-surrender. Obstacles may rise before us, but only to raise our will to the highest pitch. Were a lengthy plodding period to become our lot, it should summon from our depths a tremendous power of patience, an unflinching fidelity to the Light, an ever-keener concentration to answer the Infinite Mother with the Eternal Child in us. For, unless we kindle within ourselves this intensity, we could never pass through; but we just have to do so and therefore just have to live at our most

eternally childlike, evoking from our inmost the wise innocence and the smiling endurance that are characteristic of the true soul in man.

How long the journey might last nobody could tell as yet. But it would be a journey meant to prepare the way of the Mother's return by a supramental materialisation and to make the superficialities of life respective to the push of the profundities where she has lodged forever the Supermind she had brought from the Beyond. The long-drawn-out journey, heroically and happily undergone, would set our faces towards the invisible Light and bring closer and closer the future to which the consummation of the body's supramental change has been postponed. Yes, more and more close — for, the postponement, the putting-off to a time-to-come, is not something fatalistically fixed. The Divine is never Time's slave. He can move farther and nearer as He wills, within the domain of world-circumstances He has chosen. Certain general restrictions He observes as ruler of the *lila*, but they are not cast-iron bonds. They can be tightened or loosened as He deems proper. So, although there is a postponement of the complete supramentalisation, the exact distance to it would be determined on the one side by the Divine's Will and on the other by the manner in which we traverse whatever cluttered foot-catching course there may be in store for us at present. If we gathered inner speed with the spur of the outer impediment, we could make the postponed perfection come sooner within sight. Thus all that we yearn for and dream about might take, if we chose, less than we can compute with our logical minds.

Even the difficulties hypothetised as probable may not all occur. Sri Aurobindo has said that the universal evolution itself from the Inconscient, though bound to be a tardy progression, need not have been the blind and blundering and tormented labour it has happened to be. If the psychic being had come to the fore and assumed leadership, the unfoldment could have been as if the protracted yet beautiful and happy opening of a tightly shut flower. The Divine Grace may intervene, especially if our psychic beings press constantly into the outer consciousness. But, whether we have a hard or a smooth time, we may be sure that all is well and that, in the final reckoning, all has been for the best.

To show our gratitude we must keep the inner flame steadily climbing. However, we must guard against one mistake. Those who do not understand the reason for the postponement of physical transformation protest vehemently that they are having marvellous experiences and that when even science is on the track of lengthening life and keeping the force of death at bay it would be unreasonable to limit the present possibilities of the Aurobindonian Yoga. They forget the difference between the immortality founded in a Supramental Consciousness with its divine “causal body” and the immortality due to a medically induced suspension of degenerative processes in the gross body. The suspension could never be one-hundred-percent proof against the forces of degeneration; and the forces of accident, of “crass casuality”, would still carry on their sport. Nor would the Godward-aspiring evolutionary soul be content to inhabit a body still working under an unillumined human consciousness. In any case, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were not after such a suspension and not even after a divine immortality imposed on the body by a special Siddhi, a supernormal power exercised against the body’s nature. What they wanted was to awaken the body’s own latent Dharma of being divine so that a divine immortality would prove to be its very nature. Our critics would also do well to have a proper view of their experiences. On the strength of diverse purificatory or expansive powers at play within them or even of supramental touches on their minds and life-beings, on the strength of a visioning of their own subtle sheaths that are luminous and can produce some effect on the outer sheath, they should not delude themselves into believing that the supramental perfection of this sheath has not been deferred. They must be realistic and, though never despondent and always certain of the Mother’s ultimate victory, go on doing the Yogically needful as her humble, hopeful, helpful, happy children instead of basing on the greatness of their parent any *folie de grandeur*.

Provided we keep free from spiritual misapprehension, there is every cause for us not only to have a calm-eyed acceptance of the new situation but also to give it a luminous-eyed welcome.

November 17, 1974 *

A Look Backward and Forward

1

November 17, 1974, marks the passage of a full year since the Mother left her body. Along with the understandable human reaction to the passing away of a most cherished presence, there has been a deep sense of something unimaginably great done by the withdrawal from the immediate visible scene, there has been the conviction of a *reader pour mieux sauter*, a “drawing back in order to make a spring”.

Not only amongst those who have been around the Mother for decades but also amongst people far away an urge has arisen to cleave closer to her light and love. From distant Europe and still more from farther America, men and women have poured into Pondicherry in large numbers even after knowing they could not have the Mother’s Darshan. The joy they have shown on entering the Ashram’s precinct or the open spaces of Auroville, the regret of some who had to return to their countries for a time, the enthusiasm of many who have resolved to make Pondicherry their home for good — all these psychological expressions testify to the Mother’s continuing impact on the world.

The disciples resident for years in the Ashram or Auroville have grown increasingly rooted in the Ideal of Sri Aurobindo that the Mother strove during her life to make an inalienable part of earth’s being and consciousness. They are not unaware of difficulties to be faced and problems to be solved in the physical absence of their Leader. But there is a calm light in their eyes, for the Mother is always within their hearts, inspiring and guiding, and their eyes carry even a secret vision of the future in which she herself is again an embodied glory.

Her grace is seen constantly at work — in private situations, in public confrontations, in the very midst of the powers that rule this country which

* *Mother India*, November 1974.

gave birth to Sri Aurobindo and which the Mother, recognising it ever as her soul's native land, made her own for fifty-three years out of her ninety-five.

By her grace — and by it alone — the Ashram, India and the world will emerge, despite all opposing influences and after whatever delays, into a new Golden Age.

2

Yes, a faith and a force are present everywhere and at all hours. There is also an attempt to comprehend more and more the exact nature and the precise implication of the event that took place at 7.25 p.m. on November 17, 1973. In the course of the twelve months after it, various questions have been asked about the Why and How of the Mother's departure as well as the How and When of her hoped-for return by occult means. The latter theme, though kept in sight, has not been much pressed, but upon the former the minds of the Mother's followers have continued to be exercised.

Perhaps the most impressive presentation by a fellow-disciple was a of viewpoint completely differing from the one adopted by the editor of *Mother India*. He also prepared a large selection from the Mother's talks at diverse times to bear him out. Incorporating some quotations meant to be in most direct support of him, we may set forth his viewpoint in his own words thus:

Several explanations have appeared as to what may have made our beloved Mother give up Her body in which most of us, if not all were hopefully waiting to see the transformation so that She might live among us physically present forever. But, in view of what has happened, it is obvious that our hoping lacked true perception and understanding of all that She had been trying to do and to tell us. Perhaps we are among those who become wiser after the event.

I have searched everywhere in all the available writings but nowhere the Mother seems to have promised or given us even a remote hint that in the immediate present, at the present stage of evolution, in Her present body She was going to achieve the transformation of the

entire physical being, including that of the external structure. What She has unmistakably said is:

“If you want to do the work all alone, it is absolutely impossible to do it in a total way, for the entire physical being, however complete it may be, even if it is of an altogether higher quality, even if it has been created for a very special work, can never be but partial and limited. It represents only one truth, one law of the world; it may be a very complex law, but it is only one law — what is called Dharma in India — and the totality of the transformation cannot be done through that alone, through one single body... a minimum number of persons are required.”¹

“I do not think that a single individual (on the earth as it is now), a single individual, however great he is, however eternal his consciousness and origin, can alone by himself change and realise — change the world, change the creation as it is, and realise this Higher Truth that will be a new world — a world more true, if not absolutely true. It seems a certain number of individuals (till now it appears to be rather in time as a succession, but it may be also in space, a collectivity) is indispensable so that this Truth may concretise and realise itself. Practically, I am sure of it.

“That is to say, however great, however conscious, however powerful an Avatar may be, he cannot, all alone, realise the supramental life on earth. It is either a group in time, arranged in a file in time or a group spread over a space — perhaps both — that are indispensable for this Realisation. I am convinced of it. The individual can give the impulse, indicate the way — walk on the path himself, that is to say, show the way by himself realising it — but cannot fulfil it. The fulfilment obeys certain group laws which are the expression of some aspect of Eternity and Infinity — naturally!...”²

“Is it possible to obtain a total personal transformation unless there is something at least corresponding in the collectivity?... It seems to

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1960, p. 63.

² *Ibid.*, August 1962, p. 73.

me that it is not possible.... Is it possible to bring about a total transformation of one's being so long as the collectivity has not attained some degree at least of transformation? I do not believe it... The total conquest, matter's transformation, depends certainly a great deal upon a certain degree of progress in the collectivity."¹

Repeatedly and clearly the Mother has expressed the central fact to be kept in mind. As long as the collectivity, consisting of a minimum number of persons, which the Truth demands, is not ready, a single body born in the human way cannot be so transformed as not to die; its death is inevitable. The cause is not of much importance, whether it is heart-failure or the unbearable pressure of the transforming power or the Divine's Will.

And then there was the age-old resistance of the defeatist subconscious which too had to be overcome; there too the certitude of transformation had to be achieved. After that, after passing through many intermediary stages when the substance that constitutes man's body will have undergone sufficient change, we can surely hope to see the transformed body and the superman. How long that will take, the Mother said She did not know; or perhaps She knew but would not disclose.

This also implies that no single human body at present can escape dying.

But this is for sure that to help us realise our dream She has prepared and opened for all time the Way to transformation. Before She left Her body She had achieved all that She had set out to achieve, all that Sri Aurobindo had wanted Her to achieve. Sri Aurobindo had wanted the manifestation of the transforming Power — the Supramental Power — upon earth and She announced its accomplishment in 1956. Sri Aurobindo had wanted his disciples to become the race of Superman, the Intermediary Race, which would find the means and discover the secret of direct supramental creation, the advent of supramental beings

¹ *Ibid.*, November 1966, p. 61.

formed in a supramental way (the type in which Sri Aurobindo has promised to return) and She announced in 1969 the certitude of its accomplishment, 1969 being the year at the end of which the Superman Consciousness came to earth and went out in search of those few who might be ready. Sri Aurobindo had wanted to build a bridge between earth and heaven, that is to say, the transformation of the bodily mind or the mind of Matter, as the Mother has called it, which was indispensable for the Supramental to manifest permanently upon earth and She announced its accomplishment in 1972. This transformed bodily mind has survived the death of Her body, and if the collectivity had been ready it would have naturally led to the transformation of Her most external being.

Before She left Her body the Mother told us that She had already lived for a while in a new subtle body (sexless, etc.). Whether it was a supramental body or a body in transition She did not clarify, but since its origin was not human it might as well have been the supramental. She had also told us that mostly among the children will those that can begin the new race be found — men are crusted over. So, if we wish to belong to the new race, the new creation, we must in all simplicity and sincerity follow the path of Sri Aurobindo shown to us by the Mother: the manifestation of the new race is not a freak, there is a method in it, and if we submit to it we too, in all probability, shall be there among those fortunate children —

“The sun-eyed children of the marvellous dawn.”

3

When we read this many-sided exposition of the Mother’s aims and achievements we cannot help marking the absence of one aim which the Mother was most bent on achieving. The exposition principally sets out to deny that aim — namely, the transformation of the entire physical being at the present stage of evolution, in her present body itself.

It is extremely improbable, if not absolutely impossible, that those who lived in close contact with the Mother from 24 November 1926 onward should have hopefully but erroneously waited to see the Mother's body completely transformed and that yet the Mother, knowing their minds, should not have unequivocally corrected their error but left it to them to discover it by studying her talks after she had left her body on 17 November 1973!

There is not the slightest doubt that she allowed those in close contact with her for forty-seven years to believe that she was striving with all her spiritual might to achieve a complete transformation of her body. Surely, she would not have thus striven if, knowing that the collectivity with whom she was in contact was poor in response, she had not felt that she could succeed in her work in spite of this collectivity's insufficient co-operation. If anything leaps out of Pranab's talk about her on 5 December 1973, it is her dauntless unremitting effort to transform her body.

He¹ says: "She fought and tried up to the end. She had a tremendous will and She was a great fighter and She fought and tried to do what She had taken upon Herself. She suffered a lot... if She had yielded to what we call natural law, that is, decay, disintegration and death, there would not have been so much suffering for Her, but that She did not want..." Then, citing her conversation with Dr. Bisht, to whom she said "She was undergoing a process of transformation", Pranab² concludes after recording the details of the talk: "So from that we can understand how eager She was to continue Her work of physical Transformation." And there is also Pranab's statement:³ "I am absolutely sure that if She had not the conviction that She would bring the Supramental Transformation in Her present body, She would not have been able to do all the Great Work that She has done."

In addition to all this, we must remember what she told Dr. Sanyal at the end of 1950 — namely, that Sri Aurobindo has asked her to fulfil their Yoga of "Supramental Descent and Transformation."⁴

¹ Supplement to *Mother India*, December 5, 1973, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴ *Mother India*, December 5, 1953, "A 'Call' from Pondicherry", p. 187.

It is not the believers in the Mother's complete transformation, who lacked true perception and understanding. Those who now refuse to believe after the event of her passing seem anxious to avoid the haunting sense of "failure" on her part. We must resolutely face the appearance of "failure" and, holding fast to our belief in her attempt to complete transformation, seek the conditions that made her change her course. There was no real failure. As with Sri Aurobindo's departure from his body on 5 December 1950, we have to see here again a strategic sacrifice and not a surrender to a "death" which was "inevitable". In the talk¹ which Dr. Sanyal has reported, with her approval, as having taken place between her and Sri Aurobindo some months before he passed away, it is distinctly said that one of them would have to leave the body in the interest of their work. There is no indication at all that both would have to do it. Quite the contrary. And when the Mother offered to make the sacrifice Sri Aurobindo refused and took the work upon himself. His going was considered a final sufficient gesture and the implication was certainly that she would "live among us physically present forever".

It is incorrect to speak of the inevitability of her death and the impossibility of her totally transforming her body because the fulfilment obeys certain group laws which are an expression of some aspects of Eternity and Infinity so that the totality of transformation depends largely upon a certain degree of transformation in the collectivity. There are two issues involved here. We must carefully distinguish them. They are: first, the establishment of a divine life on earth and, second, personal divinisation.

Evidently, if one individual got divinised, it would not mean that a divine life had been terrestrially established. Unless a certain group undergoes the physical transformation, a group which represents the several sides of the earth's nature as contrasted to an individual representing, however richly, one side of it, the establishment of a divinised earth-existence cannot take place. This does not rule out a total personal transformation. The Mother actually speaks of an individual showing "the way by himself realising it". Of course, his realisation cannot change the creation into a new world, but

¹ *Ibid.*

it can change his own physical existence into a new being. The full supramentalisation of others is not indispensable for it and an individual's change into a new being is suggested also when the Mother speaks of "a group in time arranged in a file in time" as one of the possibilities by which a divine life on earth may be established. Does not this imply one individual realising that life before others who repeat his realisation in the succeeding years?

Here, too, however, we must note that an individual's full supramentalisation is not quite unconditional: "some degree at least of transformation", "a certain degree of progress in the collectivity", is very much required. But there is no question of others getting fully transformed as a pre-condition. The question is only whether they have a partial change. Provided this change is present, "the total conquest, matter's transformation," is quite within the reach of the individual who is an Avatar of the Supermind.

That the Mother, the Incarnate Divine, should be slowed down in her personal supramentalisation by her human followers is perfectly understandable. After all, to transform them was her central purpose and to accomplish it she had to be linked with them, be affected by their stage of development and, to a certain extent, depend upon it. But in no writing of hers is there the smallest suggestion that her own transformation would not be done because of her dependence on them. Naturally, no such suggestion comes in, since people who sincerely accept her as their Guru are themselves bound to undergo a process of inner and outer change and, in the long run, some degree of transformation which would help her total supramentalisation.

Even if we interpret the passages quoted from her to mean that her whole supramentalisation depended on others getting wholly supramentalised, there is yet no suggestion that she could not hold out indefinitely till they came up in their transformation to the level needed for her to move further. A great delay can be deduced but no inevitable death resulting from group-laws.

We must not mistake the slowness of her personal fulfilment for inability, nor exaggerate her difficulty into a situation of checkmate, nor see in the length of time for her fulfilment the inevitability of death. She has said at one place: “What is acquired in the consciousness of this body is not acquired at all in the consciousness of others.”¹ Here is an extreme account of the collectivity lagging behind. Yet what is her conclusion? No more and no less than: “that increases the labour.”²

Again, she has announced: “The result remains still far, very far; much has to be done before the crust, the experience of the most external surface as it is, manifests what is happening within (not ‘within’ the inside spiritual depths: within the body). To enable that to manifest what is within it... This will come last, and it is good to be so, for if it came before time, the work would be neglected, one would be so satisfied as to forget finishing the work....”³ This is a most important statement. First, it shows that within the body the supramental working was going on and only remained to be manifested in the “crust”. Secondly, there is the definite announcement that “this will come last”. Much time will be taken for the manifestation in the “crust”, but, however late, it will “come”. And, when we dwell on the words, “The result remains still far, very far”, we must also bear in mind that these words are immediately preceded by: “The work remains to be done. But now a certitude is there.”⁴

What follows all this is perhaps even more important. The Mother affirms: “But once it was done (Sri Aurobindo has said that), once one single body has done it, it has the capacity to pass it on to others. It is the only hope, because if everyone had to go over once again through the same experience....”⁵ Evidently, something radical and crucial in the matter of transforming the external surface does not depend on the collectivity doing the same: “one single body” can do it and the others do not have to repeat

¹ *Bulletin*, August 1967, p. 71. All our excerpts from the *Bulletin* or *Questions and Answers* are taken from our fellow-disciple’s own selection from the Mother’s talks.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, February 1968, p. 57.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

its experience: they will simply be given the results. What we may conclude is: the Avatar of the Supermind and the disciples go on interdependently for quite a period of time but ultimately the Avatar breaks loose in a considerable measure from the drag of the collectivity and accomplishes a decisive turn which will hasten the collectivity's own progress.

It is with regard to this power of the Avatar that the Mother made some unmistakable statements in answer to pointed questions:¹

Q. "What have you been expecting from us and from humanity in general for the accomplishment of Your work upon earth?"

A. "Nothing."

Q. "Does the success of Your work for us and for humanity depend in any way upon the fulfilment of Your expectation from us and from humanity?"

A. "Happily not."

As for the intermediate stages involved in the physical transformation, the Mother is not referring mainly to mankind in general. She is referring primarily to her own bodily progress:

"This (*Mother holds the skin of her hand between her fingers*), how can that change into this other thing?... That appears impossible."² "I understand very well a progressive change and that one could make of this substance something which might renew itself from within to the outside and eternally — and it is that which would be immortality, but only it seems to me that between what is now, as we are, and this other mode of life, there have to be many stages."³ "Sri Aurobindo also has said that first of all there will come the power to prolong life at will..., but this one is a state of consciousness which is being established; it is a kind of relation, a constant and established contact with the supreme Lord; it abolishes the sense of wear and tear and replaces it by an extraordinary flexibility, an extraordinary plasticity. But the state of *spontaneous* immortality is not possible — at least for the present. This structure must change into something other than this;

¹ *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, Twenty-fourth Number, 1968, pp. 2-3.

² *Bulletin*, February 1967, p. 65.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

and in order to change into something other than this, in the way things are happening, it will take long.”¹

Not only when the Mother shows her own skin, but also when she refers to a state of consciousness which abolishes the sense of wear and tear and she speaks of it as “being established”, the talk turns upon the transformation going on in her physical being, for what is “being established” is evidently in herself. It is personal and it points at the end not to failure but to a long future before “the state of spontaneous immortality” arrives.

4

Now, are there any direct statements contradicting the idea that one would search in vain for any promise or even a remote hint of the Mother transforming in entirety the body which she had? Certainly. Let us begin with some words published in the *Bulletin* of April 1965:² “Even when I am quite unwell or things are quite difficult or even when I am left a little quiet, that is to say, at night and I say to myself: ‘Oh, to go into my blissfulness’ — it is not permitted. I am bound there (*Mother touches her body*). It is there, there, it is to be realised. It is for that.” A definite indication is here that her body is meant for the arduous transformation.

Next, take what appears in February 1972:³ “The old routine is ended. What is to be found is the plasticity of Matter so that Matter is able to progress always. There you are. How long will it take? I do not know. How much experience is needed? I do not know. But now the way is clear. The way is clear.” Do not these words suggest the surety of somehow finding the key to Matter’s progress towards total transformation?

Again, we read:⁴ “If you like, one might say that at every minute one has the feeling that one may live or one may die or one may live eternally.... At the same time the knowledge, ‘This is the moment of winning the Victory’

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 91.

which comes from the psychic and through it from above... ‘Hold fast, it is the moment of winning the Victory.’”

And consider the following:¹ “...yesterday, or the day before, I do not know, all of a sudden the body said: ‘No! It is finished — I want life, I want nothing else.’ And then things are getting better since.”

From *Questions and Answers* of 1956,² the year of the Supermind’s Manifestation in the subtle-physical, we may cull: “What Sri Aurobindo promised and what naturally interests us, we who are here now, is that the time has come when some beings among the *élite* of humanity, who fulfil the conditions necessary for spiritualisation, will be able to transform their bodies with the help of the supramental Force, Consciousness and Light, so as no longer to be animal-men but become supermen.” Note the phrases: “Sri Aurobindo promised” — “We who are here now” — “The time has come” — “will be able to transform their bodies.”

Finally, from *Questions and Answers* ‘57-58,³ we have the Mother’s assurance that “This was certainly what he expected of us, what he conceived of as the superman... I think — I know — that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty.... Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all.”

Nothing can be more positive. Of course we may be told of the three hundred years the Mother thought not enough for the full change of the present body into the supramentalised one. But in the above affirmation she is speaking of “the first visible results” appearing fairly early. Once these signs of bodily transformation are there, we may hope for the full change. And indeed the Mother says that such a change is certain amongst “us”, which naturally means the Mother herself first and foremost. And, even in connection with the three hundred years or more, the Mother’s accent is optimistic:⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 93.

² p. 323.

³ pp. 190-91.

⁴ *Bulletin*, February 1968, pp. 35, 37.

“So, to change this into what I have just described, I believe three hundred years are very little. It seems to me much more is needed than that. Perhaps with a very, very, very concentrated work....”

Q. “Three hundred years with the same body?”

“Well, there is change, it is no more the same body... If each year that passes represents a progress, a transformation, one would like to have more and more years in order to be able to transform oneself more and more....

“And then, when all is done, when all is perfect, then there is no more question of years, for you are immortal.”

Even when the Mother envisages the objection that “it would be impossible for the body to change unless something is also changed in the surroundings” — beings and objects — all that she concludes is:

“It seems necessary that a whole set of things must change, at least, in relative proportions, so that one exists and continues to exist. This brings much complication, for it is no more one individual consciousness that has to do the work, it becomes a collective consciousness. And it is much more difficult.”¹

Yes, a greater difficulty but nothing beyond that. No impossibility, not even improbability. Failure is not in the least visualised. On the contrary, in February 1972, we find the Mother saying:²

“I heard something written by Sri Aurobindo saying that for the supramental to manifest upon earth the physical mind must receive it and manifest it — and it is just the physical mind, that is to say, the body mind, the only thing that remains in me now... It is on the way to being converted in a very rapid and interesting manner. This physical mind is being developed under the supramental Influence. And it is just what Sri Aurobindo has written, that this is indispensable so that the Supramental can manifest itself permanently upon earth. So, it is going on well — but it is not easy (*Mother laughs*)...

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 85, 91.

“To what extent would it be able to change? Sri Aurobindo has said that if the physical mind were transformed the transformation of the body would follow *quite naturally*. We shall see....

“The mind that is in the body had become wide; it had a global view of things and the entire way of its seeing was absolutely different.... The Supramental is at work here.”

The prospect presented by the Mother for her body, in the light of Sri Aurobindo’s announcement, is a natural inevitable transformation. To overlook this fact is to begin with a capital mistake, a false premise.

Besides this unfortunate *point de départ*, there is to my mind a note of over-optimism about our own immediate possibilities. I should be ready to grant that the Mother’s force is working for the advent of the new race, but I cannot believe that the collectivity can so easily become responsive now and achieve for itself what it is alleged to have fatally prevented the Mother from doing for her own body. True, she has declared: “The Superman is now on the way to formation, and a new consciousness has manifested itself recently upon earth to perfect this formation.”¹ But she also added: “it is hardly probable that any human being has reached such a consummation, more so, since there must go with it a transformation of the physical body, which has not yet been done.”² What the Mother, despite her Herculean labour, left undone for the present in her own material frame — are we going to do in ours in the near future merely by being child-hearted and following in all simplicity and sincerity the path shown to us by her? A good deal of Yogic progress we surely can achieve but in the immediate days ahead not the physical transformation which has to go with becoming supermen.

All we can do is to prepare ourselves for the glorious time when the Mother again takes a direct physical hand in earthly evolution. How and when she will manifest is not given us to know with absolute certainty, but we may look forward to the materialisation of her supramental body as an outstanding possibility. And in regard to our preparation as well as in regard to an occultly managed materialisation we have been provided by our friend

¹ *Ibid.*, April 1970, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*

with a most inspired clue. At first his assertion looks bewildering but a little thought opens up a new vision.

He has spoken of the Mother's transforming the mind of matter in her own body and added: "This transformed bodily mind has survived the death of her body." It is the last phrase which is revelatory. Not only the transformed vital being and the subtle-physical have survived her body's death and been assimilated into her new mode of existence and accompany her supramental form: even the bodily mind, by being transformed to a considerable degree, has been given an immortality and is part and parcel of her new mode of existence.

The survival of this mind in separation from the dissolved physical frame has, on the one hand, brought the supramental body an extra density enabling it to come closer to our earth and prepare a breakthrough and, on the other hand, afforded to the obscurest and densest component in our consciousness, to our own body-mind, a sort of link with her supramental body. Hence, at the same time she can draw near to us and we can draw near to her. Our progress can thus be speeded up so as to make us co-operate with her supramental body's increased drive towards materialisation by means of its newly acquired extra density — materialisation which will put her supramental presence once more embodied in our midst and set us once more on the way to the fullness of physical transformation which, without her embodiment as the Avatar and leader of the transformative Supermind, may be considered, as Nolini has put it, "postponed — not cancelled".¹

Perhaps the Mother consented to leave her Yogically hard-pressed body because she saw in the survival of her transformed body-mind a shorter cut to her goal. Attached to her body, this mind might have taken very long to lead to that body's supramentalisation. Detached from it and assimilated into the supramental, it would help the latter to be materialised in less time. The Supermind's embodied presence was her goal. It was to be accomplished by the supramentalisation of the body in which she had taken birth. She strove towards it according to the plan Sri Aurobindo and she had made. But, just as Sri Aurobindo found that he could work for the goal better by leaving his

¹ *Mother India*, March 1974, p. 167.

body and concentrating everything in the Mother's, and himself acting from the subtle-physical plane, so too she found that she could fulfil his Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation better by taking up into her supramental body the greatest victory of this Yoga — sufficient if not full transformation of her body-mind. The strategy was changed in order to effect in a swifter way the Supermind's embodied presence. The sacrifice demanded for it was gladly given.

5

We may ask: “Under what circumstances was it realised that here was a swifter way?” To attempt answering the question we must attend to certain words of the Mother.

A few years back she stated about her body's future:¹ “(...as if the world put the question): Will it continue or will it get dissolved?... But the body knows that it has been decided, and that it is not to be told to the body. It accepts, it is not impatient, it accepts, it says: ‘It is all right, it is as Thou wilt’...” Some time after this we find:² “It is becoming terrible. It is like a Pressure, a frightful Pressure — to bring about the desired progress. I feel it in myself for my body. But my body is not afraid, it says (*Mother opens her hands*): ‘Very well, if I am to end, it is the end.’ Every minute it is like that: the true thing or the end.... The body knows that this is the way for the supramental body to be formed: It must be *wholly* under the influence of the Divine — no compromise, no approximation, no ‘it will come’, not so: it is like this (*Mother brings down her fist*), a formidable Will. But — it is the only way for things to go fast.” Not much later she saw her new body:³ “I was like that, I had become like that.” And shortly afterwards she announced:⁴ “I have had for a moment (the body) — just a few seconds — the supramental consciousness. It was so wonderful.”

¹ *Bulletin*, April 1969, p. 87.

² *Ibid.*, April 1972, p.73.

³ *Ibid.*, August 1972, p. 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, February 1973, p. 85.

We must surmise that in the wake of all these experiences and in the course of a tremendous subsequent trial of the body (from May 21 to November 17, 1973) she learned simultaneously the Supreme's decision — the Will of her own transcendent self — that she should abandon her body and the same Will's disclosure of the swifter way, a new pointer to the reward for all her luminous travail, all her exalted agony.

If we are to pinpoint the exact span of time in which, during this period, the about-turn took place from the effort of body-transformation to acceptance of body-abandonment, we should, in my opinion, put it after certain incidents reported by Pranab.¹ On 14 November last year, the Mother tried to do some walking with the help of Champaklal and Pranab but could not and had a severe temporary collapse. She took twenty minutes to recover. Immediately on recovery she said: "Lift me up again, I shall walk." She was told that it would be harmful. She insisted but the attendants dared not risk the repetition of the frightening break-down. Several times that night she asked to be lifted out of the bed. Once more at 4 a.m. next morning she said: "Pranab, lift me up and make me walk. My legs are getting paralysed; if you help me to walk again, they will become all right." The attendants did not co-operate: they could not bring themselves to face further danger. The whole of that day the Mother was quiet, but at night she wanted to walk. The attendants said: "Mother, you should not walk." She, as Pranab tells us, "obeyed" them. Pranab continues: "That was on the 15th. From that day she became absolutely obedient. Whatever we told Her She did."

It would seem from this calm passivity of the Mother that the Will of her transcendent self had dawned on her. There was an unexpected complete acquiescence on her part for the next two days, at the end of which the heart failed. The intervening spell of tranquil effortlessness and of what Pranab has called absolute obedience must have been due to the stoppage of the straining for bodily transformation and to the sudden burst of a novel light on the future, revealing the "blueprint" of the new Yoga-structure which would occultly bring about the fulfilment of the Aurobindonian Ideal.

¹ Supplement to *Mother India*, December 5, 1973, p.3.

Some Memories of the Mother *

It is natural that I should look back again and again on the forty-six years during which I knew the Mother. I first saw her on December 16, 1927, and the last look was on November 20, 1973, the day she was laid in the teak-wood casket and placed in the same vault as Sri Aurobindo, both of them making a common "Samadhi" in the courtyard of the Ashram they had built up and loved and set floating like a dream-ship on the uncharted waters of the unknown Supermind. Already I have written about her in many an essay, just as I have done about Sri Aurobindo; but there is always more to remember of a personality that had such a multitude of diamond-facets and such depth beyond depth of light. The memories may seem trivial at times, yet there is ever a revelatory touch in all that the Mother said or did, a glint of the Spirit's gold through all the small currency of daily word or deed.

I shall begin with a jest which she would have been the first to appreciate. For, the Mother was full of wit and her eyes never failed to sparkle when anybody was quick and keen in mind. Let me say then that, while we have heard of her four great aspects — Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati — very few have heard of the Mother as "Maha-Examiner". And by this new name I do not mean her all-seeing, all-probing, all-evaluating, all-classifying consciousness in dealing with our Yoga from day to day. The four great aspects would sufficiently cover it. I mean "Maha-Examiner" in a very literal sense: one who, because of her great standing in Aurobindonian knowledge, is appointed to examine a thesis written by a student of Sri Aurobindo's vision and work. A certain Indian University once sent her an M.A.-thesis to scrutinise and adjudge, and it offered her a remuneration of Rs. 50 for the task. The Mother accepted the assignment.

In advance of the thesis, she had received a letter from the student. He said in effect: "My work was not considered up to the mark last year. I have been made to toil at it again. I have done my best. But I don't know my fate. I am a whole-hearted admirer of Sri Aurobindo and I would have written more enthusiastically, but my overseer is not well inclined towards the

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1975.

Master. So please read more into my expression than you see.” The Mother was touched by the fellow’s bad luck the preceding year as well as by his good-will towards Sri Aurobindo. She took the trouble to go through his introductory note, where he had set forth the scheme and the scope of his disquisition. The disquisition was meant to be a survey of the entire range of the admirable Aurobindonian achievement in writing. The Mother liked the ambitious piety of this intention. Having done what she deemed necessary on her side, she handed me the bound volume of nearly 250 typed pages and said: “Read this and make your report. I shall sign it. But let me tell you from the start that I have made up my mind to pass the student.”

I was tickled by her statement, but also stimulated by the glimpse it gave me of her unconventional attitude, her unacademic approach and the happy audacity of her decisions. I smiled and she smiled back.

Immediately I got down to reading the thesis. I found it moderately good in several parts but absolutely off the track wherever Sri Aurobindo’s metrics were concerned. The writer knew nothing of metre and yet laid down the law. The mistakes were grotesque. In other matters too there were errors to correct. But, by and large, one could pass the lengthy treatment of Sri Aurobindo’s versatile genius. I wrote out a favourable report of four pages for the University Board and a far longer private piece for the student himself so that he might rectify the numerous howlers before publishing the work in book-form after obtaining his degree. My shorter report was read out to the Mother. It had a passage on technical points of English poetry. She said: “I don’t know English prosody. So I couldn’t have written this passage.” I generalised and abbreviated my remarks and brought the passage within the Mother’s acceptance. She signed the report. Then I said: “Mother, what about your fee, the fifty rupees?” She sharply replied: “I don’t care for them. Do you want them for yourself?” I rose to the occasion: “Not at all.”

There ended the world-manifestation of “Maha-Examiner”. But the free, bold and compassionate spirit shown in it was at play elsewhere too in different forms. Once I came across a street-hawker who had baby fountain-pens in various colours, each worth the equivalent of the present 25 paise. I bought up half a dozen and, filling four with inks to match their colours, presented them to the Mother. She tried out all of them on a large, white,

thick piece of paper, executing a fascinating “doodle” of lines and curves like a complicated Mandala. She signed it, put on it the date and gave it to me. The multi-inked pens were taken upstairs to her room and the next day she expressed her pleasure in them, even telling people: “See how beautifully these cheap little things of Amal work while your big pens give all sorts of trouble.” It was arranged that when the inks got finished I should be handed the pens to refill. The day of refilling never came. For, after four days of joyous scribbling, the Mother got her hands full of ink! The pens started leaking profusely.

On our subsequent meeting, the Mother made a wry face and said: “It took me nearly two hours to wash the ink off my fingers.” I apologised. She gave a soft smile and the episode was over. But I wondered why it had occurred in the first place. Surely she must have known that these cheap pens were rejected goods and would prove treacherous in a short time. Champaklal offered the explanation: “It was not appreciation of the pens that made the Mother use them but her desire for an act of Grace towards Amal.” I can hit upon no other explanation, though why at that particular moment she wanted to bestow her Grace I have no idea.

It is certain that she could go out of her way to be gracious to poor inept fools. I for one had been allowed to stay on at noon after all the others who used to be around her from about 9 a.m. up to 12 had gone home. At that hour she would go behind a small screen for her lunch with Pranab and I would wait in the passage near the stairs. I could hear all the talk she had with Pranab during lunch. I would in the meantime write little notes to her, tiptoe to a table in the proximity of the screen and put my chits under a glass paperweight. On finishing her lunch she would pass by that table, pick up the letters and go to her bathroom through a backdoor and, after a while, come out from the door in the passage where I sat. She would stop and talk and then retire for a bit of afternoon rest. On one occasion I thought of spending my time in Sri Aurobindo’s room nearby instead of sitting in the passage. I forgot myself there. Suddenly I realised that someone was outside the door of the room. I turned: it was the Mother. Not finding her disciple at his usual spot she had guessed where he had disappeared and come in search of him to give him the smile and the blessing-tap he so little deserved. The

disciple was overwhelmed with gratitude. He rushed out and kneeled at her feet.

Most considerate though the Mother again and again was, it would be a mistake to think she could never be stern. But a still greater mistake would it be to misunderstand her sternness. Every act of hers was an act of Grace and aimed only at the development of one's soul. The Mother had no egoistic reaction, no personal interest to serve, no wish for any gratification of self. What she was stern towards was petty desire in us, our forgetfulness of the grand purpose for which we were in the Ashram.

Early in 1954 I was staying on the ground-floor of a fine spacious building. On the upper floor were two other disciples. When they went to stay elsewhere, I wanted, before new sadhaks could come, to move downstairs a large swing which was on the verandah above mine. At Pranam time I gave the Mother a little note in which I expressed my request for the swing. I never thought there was anything wrong here. But, reading it, she made an angry face and then asked in a withering tone: "You want a swing for yourself?"

I was taken aback. She who had looked to all my comforts and my wife Sehra's was now a Goddess of Terror over so trivial a plea on my part. At once I said: "No, Mother, no. I want nothing. I am sorry." Flaming Mahakali turned into calm Maheshwari and blessed me. Within my heart I came to realise that the high aim with which I had just come back to the Ashram for a permanent stay after an absence of several years had been cut across by this silly move towards self-indulgence. The actual matter was fairly innocuous and, under other circumstances, my request might easily have been granted. But it must have marked a momentous point in the poise of the consciousness. Sri Aurobindo has said that sometimes in Yoga what might seem the loss of a mere postern-gate might spell the surrender of the whole fort: nothing in Yoga is trivial or negligible — especially at a critical instant. We cannot ordinarily see into the heart of an occasion. But the Mother could and for her to allow an instant of Yogic oblivion would mean a lapse of her Grace.

Yogic oblivion could come in many shapes. Perhaps the most startling that ever came to me had nothing to do with any greed or lust or anger. It came one evening in the early 1930's when, along with some others, I was waiting on the north pavement of the Ashram block for the Mother to return from her usual car-drive. Just for a few seconds I forgot that I was in the Ashram and doing Yoga. As soon as awareness was back I found myself utterly shut in heart and mind: no touch of devotion, no stir of aspiration, just a sense of darkness in the whole being. Later I asked the Mother how this could be. She answered: "Suppose you are on a battlefield and you forget that fact. Do you realise what would happen to you? In the life of Yoga it is the same."

Of course, this does not signify that one has always to be on pins and can never be "A spirit sliding through tranquillity". The Mother always tried to make our lives as smooth and easy as possible and concentrate all the rigours of Yoga in herself so as to give us the shining fruit and spare us the struggle and the pain. But certain crises are unavoidable and now and again one has to make a stand and fight or have the awareness that, as an Upanishad puts it, "sharp as the razor's edge is the path".

To revert to more pleasant subjects. A peep into the unusual state of subtle perception in which the Mother lived we once had when at the end of the morning's meeting with us and interviews with people she started to walk towards the stairs leading up to her room on the second floor. Before she had gone a dozen steps she stopped. She was looking down at the carpet under her feet. We were curious to know what had happened. So we inquired. She turned round and said: "Suddenly this carpet which has been lying here for years asked, 'How do you find me?' I replied, 'I find you very nice indeed.'" At another time she told us that in the room where we used to meet her the furniture had at last got into the right relative positions and there was a harmonious consciousness in it which should not be disturbed.

Passing words but packed with truths for a life-time fell often from the Mother during those wonderful mornings upstairs. On May 19, 1961, apropos of some topic which slips my mind, she stopped a minute before going up to her room and said: "I once told an occultist friend, 'There are many people who say they want to be independent.' He at once remarked,

‘That means they don’t want to be loved.’ I have never forgotten this. If you look into it, you will see much meaning.”

As a supplement or complement to this nugget of wisdom we may recall some words of the Mother where she speaks not of being loved but of loving. The words run: “They always speak of the rights of love, but love’s only right is the right of self-giving.”

Perhaps we may best close this first instalment of memories with a pronouncement that affords us a brief insight into her own love for us. There was a disciple who got into a number of difficulties owing to his weak nature but he had a simple heart with a sort of helpless turn towards the Mother in all conditions. He voiced to her his doubt whether with all his defects he could continue to stay in the Ashram. She wrote back: “You are my son and I am your mother for eternity. Do not worry, I take the entire responsibility of your spiritual growth and you can live in the Ashram so long as you feel it your home and you sincerely consecrate yourself to the Divine’s Work”.

(13-12-1966)

Some Letters of the Mother *

[THE QUESTIONS ARE QUOTED BEFORE THE REPLIES]

(Pardon my writing to you without any specific reason; but I felt like telling you that you are extremely dear to me. In spite of my thousand and three imperfections, this one sense remains in me — that you are my Mother, that I am born from your heart. It is the only truth I seem to have realised in all these years. A very unfortunate thing, perhaps, that I have realised no other truth; but I deeply thank you that I have been enabled to feel this much at least.)

Sri Aurobindo's reply: "It is an excellent foundation for the other Truths that are to come — for they all result from it."

The Mother's reply: "My blessings are always with you."

(17-9-1934)

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(I had been expecting a reply from you — but I got it this morning in your face. I suddenly resolved not to touch drink again, but saw some inconveniences in the way, so withdrew the resolution in its extreme form; yet a power for good remained. Facing myself later I perceived that, though a certain itch for drink had been brought about, it was only a temporary development and I really had no special complex for alcohol. The seven days' experiment with a bit of Bacchus seemed over.

Then I fell asleep and had a most frightfully realistic dream in which my teeth broke off in my mouth and fell out in my hand and on the floor. Thinking — in the dream itself — that this must be a dream, I *dreamed* that I got up. But in that condition also I discovered that my teeth came loose and I spat out quite a lot of them. I was terribly pained to see such a thing.

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1973.

I really woke up after this and, understanding that the falling of teeth in a dream meant the breaking of the physical mind's habits of thought, I felt a great release — a fine sense all over me of openness to you. Of course the physical mind brought back certain retarding considerations — but surely, Mother, something has been done. I should like to have some words from you.)

“I am happy at your resolution and I hope you will keep to it. I was going to write to you that you must choose between seeing me and drink — for I would not see you if you went on drinking — but I am glad to hear that you have made the resolution already.”

(11-10-1935)

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(A friend wishes to collect money for you. He says he will be very much helped if you write for him a statement about approaching people for monetary help.)

“I am not in the habit of writing for money to anybody. If people do not feel that it is for them a great opportunity and Grace to be able to give their money for the Divine cause, *tant vis pour eux!*¹ Money is needed for the work — money is bound to come; as for *who* will have the privilege of giving it, that remains to be seen.”

(24-4-1938)

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(My heart is pulled towards you and I want to come back from Bombay. But certain things are keeping me here and I feel that they will keep drawing me even if I return at present. What should I do? But please know that whether

¹ So much the worse for them (K.D.S.).

I come just now or not I cannot ever break away from you. I pray to you not to abandon me.)

“My dear child, blessings of the day... Just received your letter of 21st; it came to me directly (without the written words) three days ago, probably when you were writing it, and my silent answer was categorical: remain there until the necessity of being here will become so imperative that all else will completely lose all value for you. My answer now is exactly the same. I want only to assure you that we are not abandoning you and that you will always have our help and protection.”

(24-4-1939)

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(People keep lamenting about their lot and feel that their troubles and their unhappy reactions would go if other people and things were changed. Do you share my doubt about this feeling?)

“Each one is the artisan of his own miseries.”

(4-12-1939)

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(I dabbled in stocks and shares a little, but came a cropper. The speculation I carried on for a while has burnt quite a hole in my pocket. I really wish I hadn't. Are you dead against speculation?)

“You ought to know that I do not approve at all of speculation — but what is done is done.”

(17-12-1939)

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(So many problems have been facing me of late. I wonder how they are to be solved happily.)

“The only way to a true and lasting happiness is a complete and exclusive reliance on the Divine’s Grace.”

(19-10-1941)

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(Your letter, in reply to mine which explained what I thought of doing, runs: “Do as you like. But as you ask my opinion I must say that it is silly.” Is it silly because there is a feeling in me that circumstances are compulsive? Another thing: why have you omitted those words which mean so much to me and with which you have always ended: “Love and blessings?”)

“My ‘it is silly’ covered many sides of the question, including the most exterior one. What you suggest as the foolishness of believing that circumstances are compelling when they are not, is part of it.

“It is purposely that I have omitted the words love and blessings’, because I did not wish you to think that I am blessing your enterprise — I do not — just because I find it silly. So, do not be mistaken if I end by love and blessings. These words are for your soul of which you are not just now very conscious, and not for your exterior being.”

(18-6-1942)

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(I spent quite a lot of grey matter, putting before you argument after argument. But you have not argued back. You are quite happily unconcerned.)

“All the reasonings in your letter come from the external physical mind. You cannot expect me to come down to that level and discuss with you from there. I see things from another plane and in a different way.”

(19-7-1942)

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(It is hard for me to understand how X who had been absorbed in Yoga for years, who had been considered by you to have the nature of the Saints, could drift away from you and have a fall from the Yogic life.)

“The mistake in your psychology is its excessive simplification. You look at one side and with exaggerated emphasis and ignore the rest. A person may have certain qualities but not in perfection, and there is in the subconscious the very contradiction of these qualities. If one does not take care to eliminate this contradiction, then at any moment under the pressure of circumstances what is in the subconscious may rise up with force and bring about a collapse, what is called a fall from the Yoga.”

(30-11-1943)

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(If a person who was declared by you to be “saintly” in nature could come away from a Yogic life of many years, I can’t help feeling quite sad and discouraged.)

“I may point out to you that nothing irreparable has happened. Of course the further one wanders away from the path, the more radical will be the conversion needed to return to it; but the return is always possible.”

(22-12-1943)

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(You know that for many years I have been in the habit of leaving my physical body and making exploratory tours in my subtle body. I leave the physical from the region of the waist. Slipping out into the other planes

while I am living in Bombay, I find that I mostly get into planes that are not of a very high nature. Sometimes I pass through attractive scenery. Once to the earth-consciousness in an attempt to force them into the physical plane. But only up to the final verge between that world and this I could bring them. At other times the other world which I explore has a terrible dryness and there are also ugly sights compared to which earth's uglinesses are very far from being intense. Once or twice I was among haunts of a low erotic life. I have also entered many houses and moved from room to room, closely examining the furniture and the belongings. I have seen strange kinds of clocks and recently a type of flower vase which does not exist on earth. Then there are the people. They look human, have the shapes of men and women, but carry a silent menace in their looks. They are embodied figures that do not have the soul-being in them. Nor have they any sense of scruple. I suppose this is because the planes beyond the earth are typical and not evolutionary: the soul in us is for the purposes of an evolution from the lowest to the highest while everything in those planes moves with endless variations in a fixed type having its own perfection and pleasure, however evil and perverse. Once I found myself to be not a full subtle body but a sort of pigmy with a semi-idiotic consciousness, a funny squeak and an irresponsible hurried movement. We seem to have odd beings within ourselves.

Last night I was glared at by some people in the subtle world and they closed in upon me. I managed to escape back to my physical sheath, but there was a kind of crash over my spine and when I woke up I found myself awfully sick with a peculiar broken feeling in the back. I wondered what I should do. No doctor could have helped me. Then it struck me that this sort of subtle attack can only be remedied by bringing vibrations of the highest possible consciousness into my being. So I opened Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* at the passage in which he describes the avatar-like nature of Savitri. It is a passage which he, on being taxed by my questions, had said to be originating in the Overmind Intuition. I read it out loudly, giving full effect to its marvellous rhythm. Especially when I came to the line —

For even her gulfs were secrecies of light —

I felt flooded in all my inner recesses with an intense healing power, and at the end of the passage the brokenness in the back was gone.

I wonder whether I should keep up my practice of getting out of the body. It is extremely fascinating, but is it a necessary part of Yogic development for keeping the consciousness open to inner spiritual things?)

“It is much better to stop the experiences altogether. They seem to take you into levels which are undesirable and most unsafe; they are not at all necessary for any opening in the Yoga.”

(28-3-1944)

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(Your letter of warning has set me thinking whether you have my death in mind. Death by itself does not frighten me very much. I do have the normal man's recoil from it, but my mind has a certain detachment which makes something in me rise superior to fear, and there is also the vision and conviction born of my contact with you and Sri Aurobindo, making me keep a grip on the tremble of the heart-strings. Yet death does appear to me horrible because it would cut short my spiritual growth in this life and waste the mercy that has brought me close to you and given me a grand opportunity to be your instrument. I want to live and realise what I have never ceased to regard as my true ultimate goal. Personally, I do not and cannot ever believe that I shall die and not realise that goal. You know the secrets of all hearts. So what I feel for you and Sri Aurobindo must be known to you. With that feeling I find it hard, if not impossible, to envisage final defeat. Sometimes I think that even if you told me that I would be defeated I would refuse to believe.

Again and again I cannot help turning to you. You are a haunting background at all times and on occasion too a flame in the forefront. I should like to relate an experience I had several months back, which was one of the most vivid of the forefront type.

I was lying in bed at night and telling myself how vain were all things of the ordinary life, with death as the blind terminus of their groping. I reflected on the complex forces at play in my personality and the uncertain future they were working out. To know God by intimate experience seemed to me the sole worth-while business on earth. I exclaimed to myself: "O that I might one day know God wholly!" As soon as these words were uttered, a powerful tug was felt in the middle of my chest and, like a stream of warm wind or rather like a wind of fire, there rushed from the chest a cry that had nothing to do with my conscious mind. It went on and on for many minutes, an intense aspiration for the Divine, like a thousand prayers gathered into one yet prayed by something that was not my own self as I commonly knew it but a deep dweller within, who had suddenly come out and uttered his luminous hunger. I was afraid no less than astonished, as that soar of soul was like a knife cutting through all the small desires of my being. I did not know what dear delight of the human heart in me it would slay if I let it move on its relentless path, without any check or control. All my little longings stood anxiously around that upflying and upburning ache. So pure was the aspiration, with not the slightest reserve in its cry, that I hesitated to interfere with it: it was sacrilegious to put anything in its way, and I hung by, letting it go undisturbed, no matter what the consequence to my cherished frailties. I yielded to its steady sweeping self-consecration my whole consciousness, and the conviction dawned on me that this experience was definitely moulding my future. I seemed to realise that there was waiting for me an inevitable day when I would lie for ever at your feet and Sri Aurobindo's.

How I wish you would tell me that I am not mistaken! Have you given me up? Will you one day take me to the goal I desire?)

"Certainly I have not given you up, not in the least. You are quite capable of the realisation if you make up your mind to it, and the experience you relate seems to me a valid promise that it will come."

"As for what I meant in my last letter it was simply that there were things which might act to delay your spiritual realisation and might be otherwise dangerous for you. This does not mean that the realisation will not come."

(19-5-1944)

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(I was rather depressed on hearing of Chandulal's death after an operation. He was one of your workers with an exceptional ability. How is it that he passed away although under your influence and guidance?)

“The operation was quite successful, done by a very skilful surgeon, but Chandulal's heart was weak beyond expectation and he died of heart failure five days after the operation. It has been a sad event and a big loss for the work. But for some time he suffered much and felt tired of it. He had several times expressed the wish to change his body for a better one. It is surely this wish that is responsible for what happened.”

(22-11-1945)

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(I am still not through with this second spell of heart-trouble. The first was in June, 1938, owing to a gigantic overdose of a stimulant tonic powder. This time it is strain of the heart-muscle. The doctors have advised complete rest in a supine position. Not even the head is to be lifted. They also warn me that if I don't take extreme care I may develop more serious trouble. But I feel full of your presence and do what my suddenly and abundantly released poetic inspiration leads me to do. I sit up frequently, get excited with the passage of the poems through me — especially when the lines seem to come from wide far-off spaces — and my heart starts beating fast at that time and if the doctors could then put their stethoscopes to my chest they would begin to shake their heads at the prospect of a quick cure. But I am unconcerned. I trust implicitly in your power and feel like laughing away the black future with which they — of course, with the best intentions and for my own good — threaten me in case of carelessness about my heart. I feel certain, Mother dearest, the Divine Power can help — can't it?)

“My dear child, I quite agree with you that there is a power other and much more powerful than that of the doctors and the medicines and I am glad to see that you put your trust in it. Surely it will lead you throughout all difficulties and in spite of all catastrophic warnings. Keep your faith intact and all will be all right.”

(28-5-1948)

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(I want to ask you a question concerned with my reaction to the inconsideration and vulgarity in Y's letter about Sri Aurobindo. I remember an occasion many years ago when a lady friend of mine spoke unbecomingly of both of you. I verbally choked her off at once, but the indignation within me went on burning. It was like a sword of fire leaping out of my chest, striking and striking through the hours. My mind could serve only to direct it accurately, it had itself little part in the actual violence. The next day the lady had a terrific attack of diarrhoea. A similar blaze began to go out of my chest yesterday on reading Y's letter. I had no scruple in directing it at his journal as if to consume its future to ashes. But although I also struck out at Y himself as if to destroy him I did not encourage the fiery onslaught. I started wondering if it was right to attack a person like that. At times I thought I was perfectly justified. At other times it seemed to me that I should offer my sword of fire to you and Sri Aurobindo and leave it to you both to use it instead of myself concentratedly directing it at Y. I shall be thankful if I can have some words of guidance from you. Please keep in mind that I am not talking of a mere outburst of anger: some force appears to be there which wants to destroy and which feels it has the power to destroy. Of course I would never think of using it for my own private ends.)

“It is evidently the working of the Kali force that has lit and is directing this fire in you. There is nothing wrong in its action; it is not an anger personal to you but the wrath of a divine power and it must be allowed to act; in fact, I think you could not stop it from burning in you even if you wanted to stop it. This man has drawn it on himself and there is nothing

wrong in what is happening, he alone is responsible. Of course, it must not be used for any personal aim or in any self-regarding way.”

(8-10-1950)

Some Diary Notes *

(Coming from a private record, the following two selections are naturally very personal matter and “I” and “me” are all over the place. But as these “I” and “me” are the sadhak and not the mere ego-individual it is hoped that they will be considered as representative of all who have ventured forth on the delightfully difficult path of the Integral Yoga. As both the delight and the difficulty are bound to be basically common in spite of surface variations, one sadhak’s experiences cannot but prove helpful to other toilers towards the depths and heights.)

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March 4-14, 1953

Wednesday, 4th — Came back from Villupuram a little depressed, thinking that the Mother had received the impression that I and not Mina was going away. On reaching the Ashram the mind and heart cleared and when I went to the Samadhi a gathering together of the being took place, an intense interiorisation as if to collect the whole consciousness and lift it up to the Divine, letting it go nowhere else and to none other.

When I saw the Mother at the “staircase”,¹ she cried: “Bien revenu” (“Welcome back”). I gave her Mina’s message: “A thousand million thanks. I am carrying you with me in my heart.” The Mother was pleased and smiled and said something like “All right”. Then I asked her: “Mother, why did you think I was going away?” She replied: “I never thought that. I knew you were not going. But I had the impression that Mina also was not going.”

The day passed happily after this — aspiration and peace, and the Mother’s presence pervaded the hours.

* *Mother India*, June 1975; March 1975.

¹ People come up the stairs in a queue and receive blessings from the Mother, who stands almost at the head of the staircase.

The same evening I caught the Mother on the Playground at seven, and said to her: “May I ask one question? Could I come and sit in your ‘Prayers’-class?” She answered: “You can come.” So after the distribution of groundnuts I went to this class. I had been told by a friend that it was one of the best things in the Ashram and that the Mother appeared in her real divinity there. Today she read out the three last Prayers from her book *Prayers and Meditations* and discoursed a little about them and about her introduction to the book. It was an exquisitely deep half-hour. I was extremely glad I attended this class held in the Mother’s own room at the Playground.

When I got up from the mat there, I struck my back against the sharp corner of an overhanging cupboard fixed to the wall. It was a fierce impact right on the upper part of my spine. Everybody was perturbed. But most miraculously I felt not the slightest pain either then or afterwards. While I walked out of the room the Mother gave me a concentrated look.

Thursday, 5th — All the time I kept fixing my consciousness on the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. There was a sense of some blocking somewhere. Fine spells during the day but not to my satisfaction because too short.

The first piece of news I got in the morning was from Soli Albless, who came smiling and striding from the Ashram. “Stalin has been given a blow in the brain. He is dying.” People in the Ashram were feeling that the Divine had brought about that brainstroke, the cerebral haemorrhage. The Mother said that the going of one individual could not make all the difference and that other instruments could be found by the Asuric force. When S.A. asked her if our aspirations and the Supermind’s Descent could make the difference, she smiled and nodded. She is also reported to have said that Stalin had been really finished two months earlier. He had merely continued as a powerless shell.

Since yesterday I have started not to come down at all from the Mother’s floor till 12 or 12.30 after seeing her and sitting in Sri Aurobindo’s room. It is so lovely to spend the time there: I could stay there the entire day without tiring.

More and more my being resolves to turn to the Mother, but the sense of difficulty does not diminish. Oh, if only one could be poised overhead and in the psychic all the time!

Friday, 6th — Yesterday was Kishor Gandhi's birthday. But the Mother did not give him an interview that evening. She was coming to his room the next day — that is, today.

I go early to the Samadhi each morning, sit there for half an hour or more and then go to the Balcony Darshan. I wait for the Balcony Darshan, sitting on the edge of the footpath near one of the big doors. I concentrate and try to blot out the whole world. But some particular thoughts keep hovering. They are too sweet to be easily or rudely dismissed.

At the staircase I took the Mother's hand and kissed it. She smiled most beautifully, tilted her head to one side and said in silence: "I accept your love and I understand your need."

In the evening she came to our house to meet K.G. I sat with Pavitra in my room, while S.A. shut himself up in his. After a few minutes I felt a tremendous pressure on the head — as if an extraordinary descent had been taking place. In all these two and a half weeks in the Ashram I have never felt so strong a push from overhead. The Mother seemed to be emanating a gigantic power from where she sat. K.G. told me afterwards that he had never had such a wonderful interview before.

When the Mother came out, S.A. and I brought flowers to offer to her. After he had offered his, Keshav Poddar's wife came out from her room and requested the Mother to come in as she had something to say.

When the Mother reappeared, I brought her my flowers. I had hurriedly collected them from our own garden. They were *Quiet Mind* placed within the *Divine's Presence*.

At the moment of offering them, *Quiet Mind* tumbled off and fell to the ground. The Mother laughed: "Your quiet mind has fallen down. Well, I'll replace it with this" — and she gave me a tiny pink flower which means *Detailed Surrender*.

I forgot to write that in the morning at the staircase I spoke to the Mother about H.V. and gave her a note mentioning in brief what H.V. had asked me to tell the Mother: “She is very anxious to come.” The Mother said: “When she was here, she made all sorts of conditions.” I said: “But now she wants to make an unconditional surrender.” The Mother replied: “Oh yes, they all make that before they come here!”

Every afternoon S.A. and I have long philosophical chats, discussing a thousand and three things concerning Yoga. Quite a stimulus to the minds of both of us.

Saturday, 7th — Last night I had a dream in which I was telling the Mother that I must get poised above the mind and in the psychic.

At the staircase I related my dream to her. She said: “I see.” Then I told her: “I need this very badly. You must make me poised like that.” She replied: “No. *You* must make yourself poised. You have read in Sri Aurobindo that he does not encourage laziness.” I said: “Yes, but can’t I keep asking that you should do it? Isn’t that genuine aspiration?” She answered: “Yes, you can ask, but not in the ordinary way. If you just get up in the morning and ask once and then nothing more — that won’t do. It must be an intense inner asking.” I agreed with her. She smiled and kept looking into my eyes with those wonderful heart-opening head-cleaving eyes of hers.

I went into Sri Aurobindo’s room with an exceedingly powerful feeling within my head as well as above it, as if what I had asked for had been attempted. I kept this feeling for some time — sitting very quietly in Sri Aurobindo’s room and letting a wordless prayer go rising from the heart.

I want so much the total consecration, the integral self-opening! When will it come? Mother, make haste. The delay is unbearable.

Sunday, 8th — Felt myself to be at my wits’ end. Never in all these days was the morning so filled with a sense of hopelessness. Will I ever be able to keep up the decision I have taken? Am I not made of putty? Have I any strength or stability to go through the Yoga? All these questions weighed on my mind and heart and made me sad and threw an atmosphere of futility over my efforts.

Then, when everything seemed lost, something happened. I went and sat in the Pranam Hall, waiting for the Mother to come down. She came and slowly my heart began to open. It started flowing with love and blessedness. I got up to do my Pranam and, after doing it, went to my precious place near the Mother's chair. She had placed *The Divine's Solitude* in my left hand and a red rose in my right. More and more the heart widened and took the Mother in and I threw my being towards her. It seemed the beginning of what I had asked for all these days. The flow and the consecration continued right through the Pranam and persisted when I went up the staircase and met the Mother again. She appeared to recognise the change and stood gazing into my eyes. The change accompanied me to Sri Aurobindo's room. I nowadays sit there as long as I wish. Today I must have sat for nearly half an hour. And throughout that half hour the heart and the mind kept open and lived in the Mother's marvellous presence and Sri Aurobindo's exalted aura. The harbour seemed within sight of this wave-tossed wind-vexed mariner at last. But all is not done yet. The opening must continue and increase and become, as it were, world-wide.

The Mother played music at one o'clock this afternoon. I sat on the ground near the Samadhi and listened to the sweet and deep and far-away melody, interspersed with chords of intense nearness and intimacy as well as an enveloping embracing largeness.

Today wasn't bad at all. Thank you, my Mother and my Lord.

Monday, 9th — A day of quiet assimilation — or so at least it appeared to be, since there was no fretting. Not that there was no questioning or doubting of myself. But it all went on in the surface consciousness and a sense was pervasive that beyond the surface consciousness a wonderful work was proceeding. As a symbol of this was the fact that I felt a great peace to be not quite within me but all around me in the whole town of Pondicherry. And the entire vastness of the circumambient peace was as if focusing itself on some spot somewhere in my being that was not accessible to the talking and walking Amal. Yes, not accessible, but not imperceptible. For it was the vague perception of it that eliminated fretting. In spite of my inquiring again and again whether the huge task I had undertaken could be carried through by poor me, I saw no reason to pull a long face. On the contrary, a happy

irresponsibility played in my heart and mind. I went cheerfully to the Mother on the staircase. I was one of the early birds — at about 11. Only one chap was there, Pranab's brother. The Mother brought a sweet from her room and gave it to me with a rose. I knelt down as usual and got up with an easy familiarity with the Mother's presence. She was in a blue dress. I spoke to her about Sehra's mamma who, according to Sehra's letter, was still suffering from non-stop asthma. The Mother gave a packet of blessing-petals for her, and another for Sehra herself. Then I spoke of H.V. She said that the difficulty was to find accommodation for her but that she would try. I left the Mother then, but while about to enter Sri Aurobindo's room I remembered that I had to tell her about the day of my departure. Purani was leaving on the 14th, so I had decided to synchronise my going with his. Mina's doctor, Satya, was now talking with the Mother. I waited till he had finished and then called out to her as she was about to go away. She stopped and I went and told her about the 14th. She nodded and then with an arch half-smile asked me: "Am I expected to see you before you go?" I said: "Please, Mother, if you can. Just a few minutes' interview." She gave a full smile and said: "I'll try." Then she went inside and I to Sri Aurobindo's room where I sat for half an hour. I came out and sat in the middle room watching the Mother take the "staircase".

I was very quiet. No special aspiration, but a strange ease. Throughout the day this remained. At the Tennis Ground, when the Mother was leaving I found to my surprise that she looked at me long and deep, and with a sweet smile that covered my whole body with pleasure as she passed on.

The French-translation class began at 5:30. I was there, and found myself relaxed and pleased. Went home for a quarter of an hour and walked to the Samadhi. Quite an intimate and soft half-hour I had there with Sri Aurobindo. The background, the depth which all the day had been inaccessible though not imperceptible, came a little to the front and delighted me.

While communing with Sri Aurobindo I had a feeling that today was perhaps the most important in my whole stay. It was to all appearance a neutral day, but it was packed with a secret promise. At the evening distribution, the Mother again gave a knowing look and smile. I stood very

close to her after getting the groundnuts. Sutapa was not there, so I stood in her place, right within the Mother's most immediate physical atmosphere.

Tomorrow, what have you in store for me? Can it be paradise at last?

My bed is situated in an ideal position. I lie and look through the two windows on the two sides. Each presents a different view. That to the left shows an unobstructed sky, a vast star-quivering darkness during night and a blue with depth beyond depth during day. The window to the right shows in daytime a swaying jungle of palms, a South-Sea-Island picture. At night the palms become mysterious presences, lit with little glints. I find myself extremely happy gazing through the two windows alternately.

I must put down on paper the sight I saw some evenings back when the Mother went to the place where the children's French class is held by her. Before she distributed the sweets, a small girl was brought to her. She had a little fever. The Mother caressed her hair with a soft but significant pressure. Then she passed her hand right to the back of the head and down the spine. This she did again and again, most affectionately but with an effectivity beyond mere affection. She was acting upon the fever-force. For a long time she went on and at last bent her own head and lightly kissed the girl on the forehead. Oh it was so wonderful to watch the whole thing. Who would mind being ill in order to have such a doctor? I remember the Mother telling me that when her son Andre was a boy she used to cure all his illnesses herself, without calling any doctor. It is sweet to be the Mother's child. How I yearn to belong to her and be part of her!

Tuesday, 10th — Has today fulfilled the promise of yesterday?

Let me begin at the beginning. Every night, during my stay here, I have had some sort of sensual dream, the impulse that had been pushed out of the conscious mind was making a revolt in the subconscious. And every night there was a certain response to the stimulus, some assent or participation of the being. Last night I had two sensual dreams. In one there was a habitual routine-response. But in the other, all of a sudden a refusal came from the being, a spontaneous smiling refusal and I knew that the psychic had acted in a flash. With the flash I woke up and felt a release in the consciousness.

A gate long shut had burst open. A tiny lamp of God had been lit in the unchartered chaos of the lower vital.

The morning did not appreciably differ from other mornings. Some aspiration was going on, but nothing unusual. Then I went to the Samadhi. There a strong opening took place. The psychic started flowing and flaming. This was like old times. This was what I had been hankering for. I went to the Pranam and the flow and the flame increased. They went on and on. They continued at the staircase, kept going in Sri Aurobindo's room where I sat for 45 minutes. Right through the afternoon, right through the evening, an effortless joy and constant Godward intensity, a penetration into Sri Aurobindo's being and into the Mother's. I felt enveloped and embraced by their holy atmosphere. Within their consciousness I seemed to have made my home, though of course without sharing in their supreme light. I had nothing to do except attend to the automatic aspiration and natural drive towards the Divine. The attending brought them at once to a consecrated keenness. Here was a state of paradise indeed. Even if I were not in the midst of paradise I was definitely at its door and could take into myself both the glory of its blissful fire and the enchantment of its beautiful floweriness.

At Pranam the Mother said: "I think I have fixed your interview for tomorrow." "That's very good, Mother," I said. "Thank you so much."

At the staircase when she met me she said: "I'll go and make sure about the date." She went inside and consulted her diary. "Oui, c'est juste. Demain à six heures." I fervently thanked her again. Today I didn't kneel at her feet. I went down on my knees and hugged her legs. This gave somehow a closer and warmer contact.

It's past eleven now at night. I am going to bed. A wonderful day! I have been broken open at last. May the breaking grow from more to more till I am one with the Mother's Infinite!

Wednesday, 11th — For the first time in these days there was no dream at all with any sensual tinge in it.

The day was one of restfulness up to evening. I went to Mother after the Balcony Darshan. It was rather early. She came but when I went, after Pranab's brother, she smiled and said: "I am here, but not officially." She

meant that she had not come to start the “staircase”. I stood a little puzzled, but quiet. She gave me a rose and a sweet. I did not go down to her feet — I showed that I was not doing what I would if she were there officially. I gave her my head to pat and she did the patting both playfully and vigorously. Then I told her what had been in my heart since the glorious yesterday. “Mother, I am extremely grateful to you.” She took it as referring to the fact that although she was there not officially she had received me. So she laughed and said: “Is it not so?”, meaning, “Is there not cause for gratitude?” I laughed, too, and remarked: “I don’t mean just for this. I mean also in general, for everything.” She again laughed. Then I went to Sri Aurobindo’s room. The Mother started the official staircase very late, at 12 almost. So, after Sri Aurobindo’s room, I had a long sit in the middle room — watching the Mother when she did come. She always calls Soli and Nirod last. When Soli went, she said: “I am seeing you tomorrow, am I not?” Soli replied: “No, you are seeing me on the 15th.” She went to consult her notebook and said: “This evening I am seeing Amal.”

After everything was finished I sat chatting with a friend. Suddenly after 20 minutes or so of chatting, I caught sight of the Mother and Pranab going out of the Mother’s room on the other side. I felt awfully ashamed. I made a resolve never to chat lightly outside Sri Aurobindo’s sacred room and within such easy earshot of the Mother. I went home feeling uncomfortable. I lay in bed that whole afternoon, relaxing and getting into a frame of mind in which such sacrilegious frivolity would be impossible. Throughout the afternoon I felt a strong pressure on the head and an increasing aspiration in the heart.

At 4:30 I went to the Samadhi — rather to watch the Mother go to tennis. I then followed her there, and sat with a happy flow from my heart to her all the time. At 5 o’clock I left and came to the Samadhi where I spent about half an hour of deep devotion to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I went from there to the Playground where my interview was to be at six. The Mother came a little late and said: “I have by mistake given some time to other people too.” I said: “That’s all right. How much time will you give me?” She looked at her watch and I at mine. It was 12 minutes past six. She said: “I give you till 6:30.” “Very well,” I said, “I’ll be short in my talk.”

I asked her first about Mina's offer to work with me on *Mother India*. I said: "She has been helping me often, reading the typescripts while I check the proofs. But now she wants to make the work a regular part of her sadhana as an offering to you. She will also buy a typewriter. May I accept her as a co-worker?" The Mother looked interested when I said the above. To my question she answered: "Yes, you certainly may. But, you know, I intend to bring *Mother India* here. It will be printed from here at some time in the future. At that time, when you come to work here, Mina too will have to come here and work."

After this I began to talk of my personal difficulties. I put before the Mother a map of my vital being so that she might work on it. I drew her attention again to the need in me for being poised not only in the psychic but also overhead. She agreed. "You must break through the lid and sit above. Have you had some experience of the Kundalini? It rises up and breaks through the lid. Not immediately, of course, but after passing through the other centres." I said: "But can't you break the lid from above?" "No," she said, "that would simply crush your brain!" I told her how tired I was, working still with the mind. I said: "I feel as if my mind has made all the use of itself that it was capable of. Something new is now wanted. All the time in me is the desire to go beyond the mind. This desire interferes even with my creativity, for I am no more content to create with the mind. Please take me beyond." She sat in thought a long while, looking high and far. I tried to receive inwardly the impact of her working. At the close of the interview I asked her: "Do you remember, Mother, that I once inquired whether the Supermind could transform us in spite of ourselves? You said: 'Yes.' That gave me a great deal of hope for myself." She laughed. I continued: "I feel now that the decision I have taken is due to the Supermind's descent in some way, its gripping the earth in a definite manner. Nothing else could have brought it about." She sat silent for awhile, and then said: "Have you read Sri Aurobindo's article, *The Mind of Light*?" I said I had. She went on: "This was the last thing he wrote, apart from some revisions of *Savitri*. Immediately after he gave up his body the Mind of Light got realised in me."

The Mind of Light is, of course, a state in the descent and establishment of the Supermind on earth. It is not the Gnosis proper, but the mental Gnosis. So much, therefore, is at least fixed here in the Mother. Many other and greater things must be working in her — something of the direct Supermind, too, I am sure.

I finally told her how much love I had for her, and said: “But sometimes all that amount refuses to break through and come out.” She laughed. I added: “Oh please make it break through and come in all its fullness.”

I kissed her hand and she blessed me... After the distribution I attended the Prayer-class, now the Conversation-class since the “Prayers” are finished. Here, too, she discoursed on the various centres of the being and on the rising of the Kundalini. One felt that she was not just stating things: every phrase of the description was as if lived through by her or attempted to be vivified by her in us. She spoke in French but I understood everything.

After the Playground activities the Garage Darshan and then home.

My new life in the Ashram seems to have begun.

Thursday, 12th — Again a clear night, but a somewhat neutral day. No exaltations or ecstasies, yet once more I feel that this has been a day of assimilation and preparation. The Mother’s face seemed a mirror of things behind my surface consciousness. I saw the same kind of lingering look and steady smile as on Monday. So I’m full of expectation and look forward towards tomorrow. With the approach of evening and night, some little foretaste came already.

From the talk I had with the Mother at the staircase, I feel absolutely certain that I shall be called here again in April to do the special University Number of *Mother India* from the Ashram Press.

How I long to be in the Ashram for good! But everything is in the Mother’s hands and also depends on Sehra’s co-operation and glad acceptance to share in the Ashram life and Ashram work.

Only two days before me, and then not *adieu* but *au revoir*. I’m sure Soli will greatly miss the pleasant and varied talks that he and I have been having on matters philosophical and spiritual.

As he is one of the architects designing and building the Mother's new room, I have asked him to show it to me. He said he would be most happy to do so, if the Mother permitted. He'll ask her tomorrow.

Friday, 13th — I was right. Mind and heart again broke open. Nothing very spectacular — but a soft ceaseless receptivity, a quiet inner blessedness. It grew more intense before and during Pranam and while I was upstairs — especially when I was in Sri Aurobindo's room.

The afternoon seemed somewhat wasted because all the time the call was for drawing in, yet I had work in hand which required the mind to be active and questful.

In the evening the intensity returned to some extent and the sense of blessedness came to a finer focus than during the afternoon.

I have a feeling that tonight will be the most beautiful of all the nights.

Last night some part of the lower vital seemed to get worked out, exhausted, and then rejected from the system, leaving the system freer and fresher.

P.S. There was one little disappointment this morning. The Mother did not like the idea of Soli taking me to her new room. The fact is that nobody is taken there — even Nolini and Amrita haven't seen it. Only those who are strictly concerned with the work are allowed. Although disappointed I wasn't at all depressed. I perfectly understood the situation and saw the Mother's viewpoint.

Saturday, 14th (2 p.m.) — A pleasant day. Told the Mother on the staircase: "Do you remember the awful thing that is going to happen this evening?" She opened her eyes wide and said: "What?" I replied: "I am going away!"

"Dramatist!" she exclaimed and smiled.

Had an enjoyable but not quite quiet time in Sri Aurobindo's room. Knelt before his chair and offered myself, heart and soul, to him.

My roots are here. May the flower and fruit be here also! Bombay has no pull for me. The only gladness I feel in going there is really because of just one heart and face.

March 26, 1956

Yesterday morning I wrote to the Mother, asking what had happened on February 29. I opined that it was something connected with the Supermind's gripping the physical vital.

In the evening after tennis the Mother passed by, smiling — and said: "You are behind by a century."

I gave her a note at the time of groundnut-distribution: "From what you said after tennis, I feel sure that the whole blooming thing has come down. Hurrah! And now there is hope for such as I."

She read the note and laughed and said: "Years ago I had told you that I would call you from wherever you would be when the Supermind came. So I did call you. But you didn't understand."

I replied: "Mother, I returned from Bombay as soon as I could. And on the very day of the descent — February 29 — I saw you standing in the railway compartment of the Bombay Mail in which I had left Madras."

"Oh it was the same day? It is very good that you saw me."

I may record that in 1938, before I left for Bombay at the end of February, the Mother promised to call me back if the Supermind came down. She was expecting the descent some time in May. I, however, got no telegram — and Sri Aurobindo's letter to me said that the event expected had not happened.

I learnt many years later that the Supermind had come but could not be fixed here.

Now, on February 29 this year, late in the evening, it came for good! What Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had worked for during 30 years happened at last.

I wonder when the world will realise that in 1956 the greatest event in its history took place. Of course the detailed working out of the Supermind upon earth and even in the Mother's body will take long, but the full general

presence of it in her is there now and also its general working on ourselves and the world.

There is now hope for the weakest amongst us, for the Supermind is above the universe's laws and brings sheer omnipotence to our aid.

It seems that three immediate effects are possible. One is a sudden and radical clearing of difficulties. Another is a slow but quite perceptibly sure clearing. Still another is a final gathering up of difficulties prior to their clearance: difficulties may appear to increase, but really what will take place is like one's sweeping together the dust of a room before throwing it out. One must have no fear but face everything with faith and certitude.

I find examples of all these effects here. I myself feel the second effect.

I can hardly contain myself with joy at the Mother's victory. May all our hearts belong to her!

March 29, 1956

This morning the Mother distributed at Pranam time the printed copy of a painting by Krishnalal, "The Golden Purusha", with a quotation in French and English from an old "Prayer and Meditation" of her own, dated September 25, 1914 and beginning "O divine adorable Mère" — "O divine adorable Mother". The English version ran:

The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute:
A new Light shall break upon the earth.
A new world shall be born,
And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.

After the Pranam the Mother went up. Those who daily met her on the first floor gathered there as usual. She sat in her chair to hear, as she did every day, the reports from various departments. But before starting the work she asked from each one present the copy of the message. In her own hand she scratched out certain words in the French original and substituted others. When she came to the English version she consulted her disciples

about the right turns of expression for the change needed. I was sitting at the door of Sri Aurobindo's room, from where the Mother at work with the department-representatives could be seen. She called me and I contributed my bit to the suggestions given. The English message now read in its altered form:

Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.

The transformation of the future tense into the present marked the Mother's first open disclosure of what had taken place on February 29. But we were asked not to broadcast the disclosure. She particularly told me that the changes done in the texts were not for general circulation yet. As the editor of *Mother India* I must have been suspected of the journalist's itch for a "scoop". I promised to keep the "secret". It was understood that on April 24 she would make an announcement and permit the changes to be made widely known. However, the same evening I was cross-questioned by a friend about them. News had leaked out that something very interesting and significant had been done upstairs after the Pranam, and people were curious to learn what it had been. I had a hard time of it to evade giving a straight answer and yet not tell a lie.

So far *Mother India* has carried the old version as its second motto, the first being Sri Aurobindo's famous two-paragraphed "The Supramental is a truth..." From the issue of April 24, it has been resolved, the new version alone will appear as our motto.

April 5, 1956

I asked the Mother to tell me more precisely about the Great Event of February 29. I said I had to write about it in *Mother India*. "Has the whole Supermind descended?" The Mother answered:

“The Supramental Light, Consciousness and Force have come. But the Supramental Ananda has not yet come. You speak of a descent. But I speak of a manifestation. Descent is something that occurs in relation to an individual with the kind of psychological structure he has. You can refer to planes below and planes above in reference to this structure. Where the universe is concerned, there is no meaning in the term ‘descent’. There is only manifestation.”

I understood that we individuals have various levels connected with our bodies. The vital plane is connected with our abdominal region. The heart region has to do with the emotional being, the head with the mind plane. And above the head there are the spiritual ranges and on top of them the Supermind. Our consciousness can ascend and the Supermind can descend. Such a system of levels does not hold for the universe. However, I could not help asking: “Mother, is not the Supermind superior to our universe? From where has it manifested?”

“There is no ‘where’. It just manifested. You are using your mind too much in regard to these more-than-mental realities.”

As the Mother seemed impatient with my attitude I did not press my investigation further. I only inquired: “Does the manifestation imply that the Supermind involved within matter has emerged?”

“I know that you have this impression, but that is not the fact. The involved Supermind has not emerged. But now its emergence is not a problem at all. It is inevitable as the result of the manifestation of the free Supermind in what I call the earth’s subtle atmosphere. It is merely a matter of time.”

May 24, 1956

I wrote to the Mother: “Ever since I came back from Bombay I have been constantly feeling supported by the New Power that has come into the earth’s subtle atmosphere. I have been feeling that all difficulties belong to an old world that is really dead. But, although the sense of being a part of your life and of your work is often strong, I seem to be lingering just within the

borders of the new world instead of penetrating right to its centre. I want so much to be wholly yours. Won't you do something to absorb me into yourself? What should I do on my side?"

I kept my note on a table near the place where the Mother took her lunch with Pranab. As usual I sat in the space outside her bathroom. When she finished her lunch she took my note and went into the bathroom by its inner door. Having read the note she came out through the outer door. I was on my knees to receive her. She said: "Ça viendra" ("It will come"). I asked her: "When?" She replied: "Surely you don't want me to mention the date?" Then I said: "No — but please make it come soon." She smiled.

May 30, 1956

I wrote to the Mother: "Is it true that you have said the following or something like it? — 'Only four people realised the fact of the Supramental Manifestation — one in the Ashram and three outside.' I can very well believe that there was only one person in the Ashram — namely, yourself! But the three outsiders puzzle me. How did they manage to do what hundreds here didn't?"

The Mother told me after her post-lunch visit to her bathroom: "What I said was not that four people knew it was the Supramental Manifestation, but that when the manifestation took place they had some unusual experience because of it even if they did not understand why. I at first thought there was only one person in the Ashram to whom an unusual experience had happened, but afterwards I found there had been two. Among those outside, I counted you."

I was surprised to hear this. The Mother continued: "You wrote to me — didn't you? — that on the night of the 29th February I was with you. I had promised you, long ago when you had gone from here, that I would inform you at once if the Supermind manifested. I never forgot this. And when the Supermind did manifest, I went out to tell you."

"You did do that, Mother?" I said, hardly believing my ears. She answered: "Yes."

I feel unspeakably grateful to find that she thinks me so connected with her work.

November 25, 1956

In the morning the Mother said: “On this birthday I am not giving you any books because you have all of them.” I replied: “Not all. I don’t have *On the Veda* and *Poems from Bengali*.” She asked Champaklal to pick them out for me.

When she went for lunch I kept a note ready for her: “The books you will be giving me are certainly welcome, but what I would most like to read today is something else. You once told me that you would show it to me one day — but I think you said you would do so when I would be more worthy. If greater worthiness is the standard, I feel sure I shall not be shown what I want. But one can always hope for Grace. I am referring to what you wrote on February 29, just after the Supramental Manifestation.”

On finishing her lunch the Mother stopped at the table where I had placed my note. Usually she takes these notes to the bathroom and reads them there. But this one she read, standing by the table. Then she came to me. I had kept ready the flower whose significance is *Prayer*. On taking it from me she said: “I have read your prayer. If I can find the paper on which I have written, I shall bring it for you in the evening during the interview. If I have to search for it for an hour I shan’t be able to show it to you.”

In the evening, when I went into her room at the Playground, I saw that she had brought the paper with her. She said: “You won’t understand what I have written, but try to keep your mind absolutely quiet and receive it.” I said: “Perhaps it is not meant to be understood.” She laughed and said: “Probably.” Then she explained the background of the writing: “The whole thing is not so much a vision or an experience as something done by me. I went up into the Supermind and did what was to be done. There was no need for any verbal formulation as far as I was concerned, but in order to put it into words for others I wrote the thing down. Always, in writing, a

realisation, a state of consciousness, gets somewhat limited: the very act of expression narrows the reality to some extent. Well, here is what I wrote.”

Then the Mother read out the French. It began with the words: “La Présence Divine est là parmi nous.” She was as if addressing all of us. The next sentence, as far as I remember, was: “J’avais une forme d’or plus immense que tout l’univers.” Then she went on to say that she found herself in front of a massive door, on whose other side was the world. And she heard the words: “The time has come.” She heard them in English and not in French. Then she lifted up with her hands a huge hammer of gold and struck one blow upon the door. The door crumbled down. A tremendous flood of light poured out and swept all over the universe.

When the Mother had finished reading, I asked to take the paper into my hands and to read it myself so that I might catch better the French. She hesitated just a bit and said, a little shyly and doubtfully: “You’ll give it back to me?” “Of course,” I replied, laughing. After I returned the paper she remarked: “When I came back from the Supermind, I thought that with so stupendous an outpouring of light everybody would be lying flat. But when I opened my eyes I found everybody sitting quietly and perfectly unconscious of what had happened.”

I thanked the Mother very much for the act of Grace in her showing me the precious document.¹

November 26, 1956

No hope for me unless you break
Even from within my Cave
The gate of God the Gloom

¹ I did not know at the time what a rare privilege it was to have seen what the Mother made public only after four years had passed. The account of her experience was given to the sadhaks on February 29, 1960. As I had understood that she had shown me her account in private, I never breathed a word about it to anybody. I have reason to believe that one or two others had also been told by her of what she had done. But none of them seems to have read her account.

Just as you broke from the infinite room
The door of God the Gold
And set free wave on dazzling wave,
Omnipotence-sea that rolled
Over all earth and gulfed all things
In the love that turns clay Supermind.
But, O sweet splendour, find
Yourself not only high above
But deep below in the blindnesses
And crumble down my stone
Of a heart! Unless
You are one with my night I shall never be
One with your solar infinity.

An Interview with the Mother **about the Return of Sri Aurobindo ***

At the beginning of May 1952, during one of my visits to the Ashram from Bombay, I met the Mother in her room at the Playground. It was on the eve of my departure. What she had said at the end of 1950 about Sri Aurobindo coming back in a supramental body had been in my mind pretty often in the period after it, acutely missing him as I had done — missing him not only as a most compassionate and illuminating Guru but also as a most delightfully enlightening critic of literature and a correspondent most patient, understanding, intimate and voluminous. So, just before taking my leave, I expressed my hope to have Sri Aurobindo back with us in the near future. I spoke too of my concern over world-factors threatening the Divine's work. The Mother, with great sympathy and kindness in her eyes but with a quiet steady voice, replied:

“The return of Sri Aurobindo very soon is not likely. His going was connected with world-conditions. If world-conditions had been such as could so soon change and be suitable for his presence amongst us, his going itself would have been unnecessary.

“Also, the return cannot be in a startling miraculous manner. That would not be consistent with Sri Aurobindo's method and our work. A more probable way of return would be: the present occasional visions of Sri Aurobindo which some people see — the almost material appearance he makes now to some people at certain times — may increase; the manifestation may be more frequent and more general, until one day a permanent reappearance takes place.

“One can't fix the precise time of his return. It may even be five hundred years later. I can't say anything, since the knowledge has not come to me. I only say things when I get them. This much I have said: Sri Aurobindo will be the first to have the supramental body.

* *Mother India*, December 1974.

“People keep asking me: ‘When Sri Aurobindo comes back in a supramental body, will he need to eat or drink or do other usual things?’ All these questions are silly.

“Sri Aurobindo’s leaving the body makes no essential difference. Sri Aurobindo is after all a certain consciousness, the divine consciousness, and this consciousness was there even before the earth came. The question of his ‘absence’ has little meaning.

“A world war may destroy civilisation, but it won’t destroy the Divine’s work. Sri Aurobindo once told me that he had so arranged things that nothing would interfere with his work.”

An Interview with the Mother about an Extraordinary Death ¹

I returned to Pondicherry in the evening. Next morning I went to the daily Balcony Darshan. The Mother caught sight of me and smiled and kept looking at me for a long time. After this I went straight upstairs to see her. It was a lovely meeting, with the Mother looking deep and long into my eyes. I asked her if she would meet me for five or ten minutes alone in the course of the morning. She at once consented.

I had my interview at about 11.30. She was sitting in her chair with eyes half shut and I went and sat at her feet, placing my hands upon them. I asked her whether she had received the letter I had written after my Mamma's death, giving an account of what had happened and clearing up what I had considered as not quite understood. The Mother said:

“Yes, I got your letter, but it did not teach me anything I did not know. I had quite understood your earlier telegram and known exactly what had been happening. At the end of your letter you have asked me to tell you what took place on my side. I'll tell you.

“There was one thing of very special interest. When you first wrote to me about your Mamma, I put the decisive force which would make the soul's wish prevail. I found that your Mamma's condition began to improve. This showed that the soul had not wished to go. When I looked into the whole matter I found that she might linger on for a year or two, a long-drawn-out slow illness and not at all a pleasant period.

“Several days later, on getting news from you, I again did some working. Then I went to my room and while I was walking up and down a very extraordinary event happened. Suddenly the Supreme Will came down. You see, this Will does not always intervene. One puts forth consciousness but the Will does not act. It is rarely that the Will descends like this. It is a direct action from the Highest. Well, it came down with a view to take your

¹ *Mother India*, November 1974.

Mamma's soul. And your Mamma's soul, instead of making any kind of reaction, most readily consented. Most willingly it offered itself to the Supreme Will. I would say that it was a very pretty gesture. Connected with the soul's movement, there was a human movement, a movement of love which said that she had troubled and bothered people enough with the illness and now wished not to trouble and bother them any more.

“Then the end came, and the soul at once, at a single sweep, jumped into my heart and passed into the Soul-World for rest. There was no passage at all through the intermediate worlds, no difficulty or halting anywhere. This was because the soul had so spontaneously and gladly responded to the Supreme Will. The Supreme Will took it straight to its destination.”

I said: “Mamma was remembering you all the time. There was no name on her lips except yours. Whenever asked what she was thinking of, she said she was thinking of Mother darling. Even to the doctors she kept speaking of you, and your picture and Sri Aurobindo's were mostly on her chest.”

“It must be because of this that her soul so readily gave itself to the Supreme.”

“What about the open-eyed vision my sister Minnie saw?”

The Mother smiled, nodded and said: “One may say that it was in the right line. I remember reading of it in your letter. She saw my body transparent, didn't she?”

“Yes. I'm very glad at the beautiful thing that happened to Mamma at the end. What a fine end!”

**Physical Pain —
The Turn of the Consciousness —
The Victory of the Divine's Truth ***

An Interview with the Mother on November 25, 1962

SEHRA: The doctors say that when Amal's kidney stone will come out, there will be a great deal of pain.

THE MOTHER: The doctors always say things like that. You then make a formation of fear and keep expecting the pain. And the pain comes even when it needn't.

AMAL: I recently read the review of a book on heart-trouble. The reviewer says that unless one has the courage of a lion, the hide of a rhinoceros and the intelligence of a moron, this book will make one take as heart-trouble the slightest indigestion or touch of flatulence or twitch in the chest-muscles!

THE MOTHER: Yes, and even in the case of a real heart-attack, if one keeps calm and takes no notice of it and is unperturbed, the attack can pass off without any bad effect.

As for your stone, we have decided — haven't we? — that there shall be no pain in its passing out. You wrote to me asking for such a result.

About physical pain, I can tell you one thing. If the consciousness is turned upward, the pain vanishes. If it is turned downward, it is felt and even increases. When one experiments with the upward and the downward turnings, one sees that although the pain may not be there at all or on the contrary is very great, the body in both cases is in exactly the same condition. It is the turn of the consciousness that makes all the difference.

I say "turned upward" because to turn towards the Divine is the best thing, but what can be said in general is that if the consciousness is turned away from the pain to one's work or anything that interests one, there is the cessation of the pain.

* *Mother India*, January 1975.

And not only the pain but whatever damage there may be in the organ is set right much more easily when the consciousness is taken away from the trouble. Also, I may say that pain is not always indicative of great damage in the organ. The two are not balanced. The one can be without the other.

AMAL: What you have written out for me in your birthday present gives me hope again for my spiritual future. I was nearly losing hope.

THE MOTHER: You have a strong will that has carried you through a lot of things. Keep that will going.

AMAL: I can't say I am a man of strong will, but the will in me can at times be made to act strongly — as it has been on many occasions in the past.

THE MOTHER: Yes, you must set this will, which is capable of strength, against all troubles physical and spiritual.

People who are intelligent find always a difficulty in going through troubles. Those who are not particularly intelligent have an easier time.

AMAL: You are always having a dig at me like that! Well, I'll try to put to work the will which you refer to.

Now I want to ask you a general question. Is it you who have inspired the Chinese cease-fire?

THE MOTHER (*crossing her lips with the index-fingers of her hands*): Better not to pronounce anything. People see only a little way. The Divine sees much further. And there is a Truth which has to find its place on earth and create its own order. If you are quiet and allow it to come as it wants, things can be smooth. If there is resistance, there will be an amount of breaking. You may not know what exactly the Truth is like, but if you keep constantly the will that this Truth should be established, you will work for its arrival. If you start thinking one way or the other, you may not work in harmony with it. But if you preserve a calm consciousness and concentrate only on the victory of the Truth, you will help the Divine's Will to manifest. And this is what you must do always instead of deciding for yourself. You have yourself a will which can be very strong: use it for the swift establishment of the Divine's Truth.

“The Mother of Dreams” *

Some Experiences from 1973

I left for Bombay from Pondicherry by plane on August 2, 1973 to have the cataract in my right eye removed. I had to remain there owing to unexpected circumstances right on to the night of November 18. On the morning of that day I had a phone-call from Pondicherry informing me of the Mother’s passing away the previous evening. Along with my wife, her sister, my sister, my niece and her husband who were all in Bombay at the time, I flew homeward the same night.

Looking back at the stay in Bombay I cannot help seeing the Grace of the Mother in the series of dreams I had of her, such as had never happened to me in all the years I had known her. It was as if she showed herself close and intimate to one who was far away but needed her intensely — a presence of love and light giving repeated Darshan before the great leave-taking. The last dream was on the very night of November 17. I used to write a report of each dream and send it to Pondicherry. Perhaps these reports may prove of general interest and hold meanings for others no less than for myself. They are reproduced below as originally written. Some later comments follow them whenever these second thoughts seem to illuminate the earlier experiences.

1

Dream of 18-8-1973

I have got up from sleep, with a wonderful dream as a *grand finale* to the night’s rest. Yesterday before going to bed I had the news that the Mother had appeared on her balcony at 6.15 p.m. on August 15 but had gone in because it had started raining. I felt there was something wrong with the information, for it was hardly like the Mother to be frightened by a bit of

* *Mother India*, November and December 1975

rain. But I was elated by the fact that after all she had given Darshan. I went to sleep concentrating on her.

Round about 6.15 this morning I had my dream. I was in a horse-carriage going somewhere. I ended up in the midst of a crowd waiting to see the Mother. Each of us had a card with a number and two words. My card read: “47. Matter-of-fact. Independence.” There was a sort of balcony from which Champaklal was calling out the numbers. I joined the queue and climbed up a staircase and reached the first floor. There was a room to the right. The Mother was sitting there, awaiting all of us.

On the way I had interrogated my own condition and found some faults or rather ambivalences in it but on the whole it seemed fairly receptive. I approached the Mother. She appeared a little lean in the face, the nose looked sharp-cut; otherwise she was as I had seen her in my first interview in December 1927 — and, as on that occasion, a soft white radiance seemed to play all over her. I knelt down, she smiled, I put my head on her feet, she blessed me. When I lifted my head — with my hands clasped together and pressed to my heart — she was still smiling. I was filled with a sense of beauty and graciousness. It was the Mother I had always known — with no barriers between us, all the recent withdrawal and absence due to her ailing condition were wiped off.

I moved away and stood in a big adjoining room. Watching from there I saw a visitor-sadhak doing Pranam to the Mother. He kept his head at her feet even after she had blessed him. She did nothing for a while and then touched his head two or three times impatiently. She did not want such an artificial self-centred ceremony as this prolonged Pranam. But the chap hardly took notice of her disapproval. He got up in his own good time. The Mother started saying something. I don't remember all the words, but the last one got translated in my mind into the Gujarati term “Gandio!”, meaning “Imbecile!”. I was surprised, and looked with mingled shame and pity at the fellow.

He got up and with a dazed expression walked hurriedly away and disappeared. In contrast to this occurrence I came to know from my wife Sehra that she had done Pranam sixteen times, bowing at the Mother's feet first and then touching the head to the sides of her seat and so on, but the

Mother had kept smiling and said, “It’s all right.” The two occurrences showed her different responses to false devotion and to true love.

I lingered for some time in the adjoining room talking with people. Then I woke up. My whole being was brimmed with a deep quiet joy. And the realisation came to me that utter humility is the only way to receive the Divine’s personal physical presence on the earth. Not the mind but the heart has to be our answer to this supreme grace. And, while I became aware of this truth, I felt that by her appearance to me and by her blessing the Mother had not only compensated me for missing August 15 in Pondicherry but also rounded off a certain puzzling period and given the “green signal” to me, opening the way at last to my cataract-operation which had been suspended even though I had been in Bombay for it from the 2nd of the month.

Suddenly I remembered that a few days before starting for Bombay I had had a dream of the Mother which I had not told anybody because I had regarded it as just a projection of my own desire to get the cataract treated in an unorthodox way — without surgery. In this dream the Mother was seated in somewhat the same fashion as in my present one. I approached her and told her, “I am going to have my cataracts removed.” She at once replied, “No, don’t get them removed. Go to Togo”. The closing part of the speech was a mystery except that the last two syllables were merely the first two in the reverse order: instead of “Go to” there was “To go”. The opening part of her speech was surely a non-acceptance of my hurried desire for the operations. And yet the command to go pointed to my leaving Pondicherry for some other place. Perhaps my memory garbled what she had said and I had missed the word “Bombay”.

I may add that in this dream the Mother was not quite normal. For, when my right hand touched her left foot she winced in pain. As the feet are symbolic of the most exterior part of the being — the gross-physical — I suppose the pain signified that some crucial work was going on in this part of the being — work which seemed to have been essentially over before my second dream. And during the crucial process her attitude to the question of getting my cataracts removed was clearly negative.

My hurry in the opposite direction was mistaken and has actually proved useless. The Mother's Grace has intervened to check it. A doctors' strike has gone on stopping what I had arranged to be done as soon as I would have arrived in Bombay.

Here I may record in parenthesis an interesting event. Our "astrologer-royal" of the Ashram — Patrizia Norelli-Bachelet — had told me that according to my horoscope the time was very inauspicious for the operation. She said she was not happy at my going in for it. The stars showed "isolation, detachment, separation", but in an unfavourable manner for a move like the operation. As a Yogi who steps out of the round of common cosmic forces I was supposed to ignore stars — whether ethereal or Hollywoodian. But perhaps Sri Aurobindo who, in spite of telling us that the stars' indications are not binding when one enters the Yogic life, had yet coincided the day of his passing away with the astrological indications of the time of his "death", as if deliberately to pay with his sacrifice the full penalty of material fate — perhaps Sri Aurobindo saw something worth attending to in the pointers of my horoscope. Anyway, the Mother's negative attitude in my pre-Bombay dream had come before Patrizia spoke to me. Somehow it had been decided by the Divine that my operation should not happen in the period which was horoscopically inauspicious.

The upshot of the delay was that the doctor who would have operated on me was put off the scene and another who proved to be an ideal surgeon came into the picture. As though to make the change-over doubly sure, fate whisked away the first doctor to a conference in Africa. It strikes me that, if the operation had occurred when I had ventured to have it, there would have been some loss of protection. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have evidently saved me from myself.

One question may puzzle people. If the Gurus so hold me in their hands, why did they not prevent me from starting in such hot haste to get the operation done? One may say that my folly was so great that they could not directly counter it. But I think this is only half the truth. My state of mind at the time was such that I just had to be — as my horoscope showed — isolated, detached, separated from my immediate circumstances. And Bombay was the best place to "go to", as the Mother's words had it. But,

though badly needing to go, would I have gone if the urge to get rid of those awful impediments to my work — the cataracts — had been lacking? So to rush like a cataract to get the cataracts removed was the unavoidable mode by which the sorely needed isolation, detachment, separation could be achieved. The Grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lay behind even my folly. The folly itself may be interpreted as a paradoxical action of their wisdom.

While writing this, it occurs to me that the name “Togo” itself might be a hyperingenious way of pointing to Bombay. For, impossible as it may sound, I knew when I was a boy an English child in Bombay who had been named “Togo” because he had been born in 1904, the year at whose near-end during the Russo-Japanese War Admiral Togo had started the masterly manoeuvres by which he had destroyed the whole Russian fleet off the coast of Manchuria. And I myself was also born in the same year in Bombay. Perhaps the month of my birth — November — was the one in which Togo’s manoeuvres started.

I am now waiting, in gratitude and confidence, for events to take the turn which the Divine wishes. The Mother, according to her own sense of the right time, will see me through my cataract-problem and lead me, in every sense, from Darkness to Light.

In closing, I may confess that I have not yet properly gauged either the meaning of “Matter-of-fact” and “Independence” or the suggestion of “47”. May be those two words tell me that I have to be realistic and not live under illusions, as well as that I should stand in my own inner strength and not be influenced by outward factors. What they tell me could be a manner of conveying what Sri Aurobindo deems essential for realising the Spirit in terms of Matter: a sublime common sense and a supreme poise.

As for “47”, it may be taken in the context of the word “independence” as appropriate since India won her independence in the year 1947 on August 15 which was also a birthday of Sri Aurobindo. But there is another reference possible. There will start for me in the December of this year — on the 16th, to be exact — my own 47th year as a member of the Mother’s Ashram.

Later Comment

After the Mother's passing away a sharp light falls on the number 47. The Mother took charge of the Ashram, at Sri Aurobindo's bidding, on November 24, 1926. The year 1973 completed, in November, 47 years of her creative role as the Ashram's Head — no less than its Heart. The number in my dream appears to mean that, on the physical plane, this completion was also the end.

In view of the termination of the Mother's physical presence amongst us, the words "Matter-of-fact" and "Independence" acquire, in the meanings I have tried to read in them, a special point. They beckon me to an undreamt-of stance of practicality and self-reliance in the outer half of the spiritual field.

2

Dream of 29-8-1973

Early this morning I had another dream of the Mother. I dreamt that some time in the late afternoon I went to see her. From an outer room I passed into an inner one. Before entering the latter, I picked up a tubular flashlight, its body tarnished and old-looking. But, as soon as I got in, the "torch" disappeared from my hand.

I found the Mother standing, in a long robe, as I have often seen her in the years immediately following 1954. When I approached her she smiled a little and gave me a bunch of flowers for myself and another bunch for Sehra. One flower was prominent in each bunch. It was positioned like a leader of the three or four others. The Mother, pointing to it, said, "Seventy times" — and, pointing to the rest, she added, "Forty times." Then she mentioned the significance of my leading flower and that of Sehra's. Mine was "Vital Protection". Sehra's was "Radha's Consciousness in the Vital".

I asked the Mother whether the significance of these flowers were to be spoken out by us 70 times and those of the remainder 40 times. She

answered, “Concentrate on them inwardly.” I then bent down to her hand-level, kissed her left hand, and received the blessing from her right.

As I was taking my leave she called me back, “Aren’t you going to wish me a happy birthday?” I looked somewhat puzzled. Either Vasudha or Kumud explained, “Mother couldn’t celebrate her birthday on the 21st February. So she’s doing it now.” I walked back to the Mother. She opened her arms and we warmly embraced. Before the embrace ended, she kissed me on my right cheek. I first kissed in the air in response but soon brought my lips to her left cheek and kissed it.

Then I left her, saying to myself, “This is the most wonderful day of my life!”

When I woke up, I took the old tubular flashlight standing on the table next to my bed and with its dim glow read the time on my wrist-watch. It was 3.08 a.m.

Looking back, the first thing that struck me was the numerological aspect. Like the number 47 which had figured on my card in the dream of August 18, there were 70 and 40 in this dream. The same two numbers 4 and 7 were here, though in the opposite order. And their total, either way, was 11 which, again, totalled $(1+1)=2$. Even the time of waking was $3+8=11=2$. And the date itself — the 29th — amounted to $11=2$. Perhaps we can ignore the waking time and the date, but the recurrence of 4 and 7 is quite intriguing.

I noted that along with the 2 ultimately resulting from the addition of these figures there were 2 words — “Matter-of-fact” and “Independence” — in the earlier dream and again 2 words for me — “Vital Protection” — in the present case.

Curiously enough, the second dream came 11 days after the first which had come on the 18th — a time-length which once more adds up to 2. Finally, if we add the pair of dates — 18 and 29 — what do we get? Precisely the numerals which in different ways were given by both my dreams: 47. And, of course, 47 is 2.

What is the significance of this recurring 2? I can think only of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo side by side — joined and inseparable.

I may observe that in the meeting with the Mother there was no sense of cataract, no dimness of vision: everything was clear and normal. The cataract-sense and the dim vision must have been there when I took hold of that old tarnished flashlight. But the complete disappearance and forgetting of it when I received flowers from the Mother showed the change in the state of sight. It was as if the Mother were giving me some power of seeing which I did not lately have. But what exactly was I called upon to see?

Later Comment

Perhaps I had to see the reason why the Mother's birthday was being observed in the month of August in my dream. The Mother may have been passing at that time through a period in which one could declare that a special birthday for her in some sense was occurring in the same month as Sri Aurobindo's birthday. The month being the same should suggest an extra-strong linking of them, so as to give a particular point to the side-by-sideness I have read in general in the number 2 produced by $47=11$. The Mother's departure from her physically embodied state in 1973 joined her most literally with Sri Aurobindo, setting her close beside him on the subtle plane and marking the commencement of a new life one with his work from there, the birth of a new activity on her part as the Shakti of Sri Aurobindo.

3

Dream of 13-9-1973

At an early hour this morning I dreamed once more of the Mother. I don't remember many details, but her part is perfectly vivid in my mind. All the more is it vivid because on this occasion I had two Darshans of her.

I had to go into a room from an open space in order to see her. She was on a low seat as she used to be in the early days. The first time I went in, I knelt down to her at a little distance. So she leaned forward and stretched her hands and gave me some flowers. After coming out of the room I made

a sketch of her as she had looked during that gesture. Before going in again, I found myself, on the way to the room, crossing the open space outside. I saw Pujalal walking a little ahead of me and speaking to somebody behind me on the right. What he said was centred on the word “Sacrifice”. Our sacrifice of ourselves to the Mother: this was the sense of his speech. When I went once more into the room and knelt down — this time quite close — the Mother had a radiant face and a glorious smile. It was wonderful to see her thus.

Out of the two Darshans, the first was as if the Divine were going out of her way to help: the Divine reaching out to give her love. The second Darshan was as if the Supreme Bliss, Beauty and Grace were shining forth from their own far-off home, effortlessly like the light of a full moon.

When I woke up, with a deep happiness in my heart, I heard water flowing from the tap in the bathroom. The tap had been kept running in order to fill the bathtub for use the next morning. I went and turned the tap off. Then I came back, picked up my wrist-watch from the table next to my bed, switched the light on and read the time. It was two minutes past 4 a.m. My dream must have been at exactly 4. There we have again the number which had figured in both the earlier dreams — as part of 47 in the first and of 70 and 40 in the second. What is further interesting is that when I looked at the watch what I saw most clearly was just 4 and 12 on the dial. My eyes were focused on these numbers as if they had been the only ones there. On reflection, I realised that, when 12 and 4 were added up, the sum was $16=1+6=7$. So not only was 4 there quite openly but also 7 as in the other dreams, though now in an indirect manner.

Within the dream itself the only number evident was 2, from the two Darshans; but 2, of course, is the key-number, communicated through the sum of 4 and 7, 70 and 40, each time 11 which equals 2. Now it seemed communicated straight away and in immediate connection with the Mother herself.

Later Comment

In the preceding comment I have read the recurring 2, which is linked with the repeated 4 and 7, as an indication of the Mother's taking her stand alongside Sri Aurobindo after 47 years of spiritually mothering the Ashram (from November 24, 1926 to November 17, 1973). The present dream shows the Mother herself twice over — but in two distinct attitudes that are complementary to each other. And these attitudes remind us of our usual impression at the Darshans when she and Sri Aurobindo used to sit side by side. Though full of a transcendent beauty, she leaned towards us and put us at ease by her smiling all-giving grace. Sri Aurobindo, though near to us in the act of benediction, was like a Himalaya, a far height of all-transcending truth. In my dream the Mother was both herself and Sri Aurobindo. She re-enacted in her own person the old Darshans, suggesting in a sort of pre-view that in another manner she and Sri Aurobindo would again be together but also that to our subtle senses the Divine would still be accessible in a Motherly-cum-Aurobindonian power.

4

Dream of 15-9-1973

Another dream of the Mother, again at an early hour today. It was a long dream, but my memory does not go back beyond a certain point. At that point which serves as the beginning for me, the keynote of all the dreams — number 2 — is at once struck.

For, I find myself in a kind of classroom with only one other student. We are two and the Mother is our teacher. The second student is Huta. She has an exercise-book, but I have only a big white envelope with a letter in it dealing with a worldly concern — a sort of business letter. The flap of the envelope has not yet been stuck.

The Mother dictates a sentence in French — a message from her. I start wondering from where to get hold of some material on which to take down the message. Then I decided to write, in a small hand, on the inside of the

envelope flap. I can't recall the words in full but the ending sounds like "t'arrondir" which means, literally, "to make you round" and, figuratively, "to enlarge or extend you" or perhaps "to make you full and complete". When the dictation is done, the Mother wants to look at it. She turns the envelope around and reads what I have written. She finds it correct and is pleased.

She moves on to what has been written on Huta's exercise-book and, after reading it, puts her signature on the page. This seems to be her custom. Then she moves back to me. My envelope has changed into an exercise-book. She waits for a second — and decides to put her signature on my page, too. But it's not the full name. Just an abbreviation: M. I feel very moved by her generous act.

Now she leaves us. We follow. I may say that my eyes have no cataracts and my left leg is not lame at all. While following the Mother at a distance I feel extremely open to her in my heart. Aspiration and devotion are working there intensely. I ask myself: "Should I send that business letter at all? Why not forget about it and give myself wholly to the Mother?"

At last we reach the door of her apartment. Huta walks in as if that was a natural thing to do. I stand outside and wait. The Mother, who is standing beyond the threshold, smiles, steps half outside, catches my hand and pulls me in. I go in happily. At this time my companion student is a mixture of Huta and Vasudha. She sees that there is a big attached bathroom and exclaims: "How nice! We shall live here like two cooks!" The word "cooks" is surely odd but again the number 2 openly named is striking.

Huta-Vasudha then disappears and I am alone with the Mother. Now she and I form the number 2. I am very close to her. I have an arm half around her waist. The Mother's face is near mine. I move my head a little forward and lightly kiss her on the right cheek. She is slightly startled and makes a serious, semi-disapproving face. I say, "Sorry", and everything is all right. Then she starts speaking about my sister Minnie. She says: "I wish to bring Minnie near me. I know she has been full of love for me, but I have understood that this love was meant to be in her inner being and not come at all into her outer. The outer was meant to be different. But now I want her

to stay near me.” I remark: “Mother, whatever you do in this way is just what she wants. It will enrapture her.”

Here the dream breaks off. I wake up. My impulse is to look at my wrist-watch. But I don't look, I lie quietly lest the memory of the dream should vanish. I trace back the events of the dream for a short while and then, when I am sure of them, I get up, take my wrist-watch to the next room, switch on the light and try to read the time. For a second I can't properly see. The light dazzles me. When I am able to look it is 3.29 a.m. A few minutes have surely elapsed from the time the dream ended. It must be two or three minutes. Most probably it is three. If that is so, the time was 3.26 a.m. The numbers would add up to $11=2$.

P.S. — My first operation has come to be fixed for next Tuesday: $18.9.1973=38=11=2$. Doctor Ursekar will do it. He is at present doing his own work as well as that of Doctor Maskati who was going to operate on me but is now gone abroad.

Doctor Ursekar=13 letters=4.

Tuesday=7 letters.

So $4+7=11=2$.

5

Dream of 29-9-1973

Three more reports were sent to Pondicherry during the next fortnight — on September 20, 25 and 29 respectively. The first one ran as follows:

At the hospital where my operation was to be done, I was to be put in ward 13, that is $1+3=4$. I chuckled with anticipation. I was told my bed would be number 1, This surprised me, but a greater surprise was in store. On getting to the hospital in the afternoon of September 17, I found that my bed was part of a row of 5 beds — the very first row as we entered the room. Believe it or not, my bed, numbered 1, was not standing first but second. It was as if bed 2 from one side and bed 4 from the other. If 4 and 2 are put together

and the actual labelled number, which was 1, is added to their sum, we get 7. So once more 4 and 7, amounting to 11=2. Surely the Mother's numerology was having a field-day!

It was a huge ward, very clean, airy and bright. There were sixteen beds in all, widely spaced. Late in the evening, after a good vegetarian meal, I was taken downstairs for a final check. Various tests were done; the one that sticks most in my memory is the passing of a wire into the tiny hole at the inner corner of the right eye, the hole connecting the eye with the nose and throat. Water was injected into this hole until I could get it in the throat and gulp it. My upper eyelashes were all cut after this.

Early next morning I was sponged. Then I got tea, but no bread and butter, as patients who are to be operated upon do not get solid food. Later I was given an intravenous injection of Terramycin. At 8, I was taken in a wheelchair to the preparation room. There the eye was washed with drops and the surrounding areas cleaned with ether. Again in a wheelchair I was taken to the upper floor — the operation theatre. Stretched on the operation table I was given several injections — one in the facial nerve near the ear, another in the lower eyelid, a third in the upper eyelid, and a fourth behind the eyeball. Then an intramuscular injection of Pethidine (Morphine) in the right arm to make me dopey. While lying on the operation table I got repeatedly a slight cough, a thing forbidden. I tried a trick in which I had often succeeded. There is a Purusha (Self) at each spot of the body behind the Prakriti (Nature) working there. I now separated the Purusha in the throat from the Prakriti which was indulging in that local irritation. And this Purusha, standing back, refused sanction to what Prakriti was up to. Immediately the movement to clear the throat stopped and never came back till 36 hours later! I also called for the peace and protection of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

When the injection had taken effect, Dr. Ursekar started covering my left eye as well as the parts around the right, leaving only the prepared eye open. This took quite a time. He was sitting on a stool behind my head. My doctor nephew, Ferdauz, was to my left and near him a nurse. A bright light was switched on above my eye and the operation began. The doctor made a semicircular cut in the skin over the lens. Then he called for the Cryopen,

the probe with freezing nitrogen within its tip. He inserted it under the skin flap and touched the lens. The lens froze and stuck to the Cryopen and came out with it. The operation was over. The doctor started putting sutures into the cut skin of the eyeball, as well into the upper eyelid. The previous bandage was removed and a new bandage was neatly put over the eyes. I tried to thank the doc and to say that the operation had been absolutely painless, but the Pethidine made my speech very difficult and I could hardly get the letter *l* right in the expression. Then I was shifted to a wheeled trolley and taken out of the operation room. I attempted to say something to my sister, my brother-in-law and my other nephew who were waiting outside. But the same effect in the speech was there.

We are supposed to keep the head completely still for twenty-four hours, otherwise the operation may be a failure. I consider this idea an utter myth. For the trolley on which I was laid was an old rattling one and, although sandbags had been put on both sides of my head, my head was jerked up and down and from left to right as I have never experienced before in my life. Halfway through, I kept my head a little high, suspended instead of right down.

Back to the ward, very dopey in the head but in possession of my mind, even if unable to articulate clearly. I inwardly thanked the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. After some time I fell into a doze. The doze lasted until about 3 p.m. Ferdauz had been tenderly looking after me all the time.

The rest of the family called at 4 p.m. when the visiting hours started. I chatted with them cheerfully. As I had been instructed to lie on my back all the time, my back was painful. At night when one of the hospital doctors came to see me I asked if I could turn a little. The answer was “Yes”. This relieved the backache. Now I realise that all such instructions are more or less bunkum. One should try to take precautions but not overdo it. Of course one must not turn on the side of the operation.

I woke up in the morning lying on my left side. At seven the left eye was unbandaged, the right eye cleaned, the suture in the upper eyelid cut, the eye closed up again but the other one left free and open. I was no longer totally blind. The whole day passed well. In the afternoon my sister brought Sehra’s

registered envelope containing the special blessing-packet given by Champaklal from the Mother's room. It was a glorious little purse in gold-paper with a press-button. Inside were the photos of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The instructions were that what was inside should be the first thing my right eye should fall upon when it would be able to see.

In the evening when the other relatives called, I was quite animated and my hands moved as usual in accompaniment to my talk. They found me a little too active and advised me not to move my head. Very obediently I agreed, affirming my agreement by nodding several times.

I slept well at night. In the morning I got permission to read and write a little. Hence this report. I'll close it with a snatch of conversation I heard when my sister and my brother-in-law had come in the afternoon of the operation-day. I asked Ferdauz at what time the operation had started. He at once said: "9.20." My brother-in-law remarked that it must have been at 9.30, but Ferdauz replied: "No, it was at 9.20." He said this without any preconception, quite spontaneously, confidently and matter-of-factly. I was struck by his statement. 9.20 comes to $11=2$.

The report of September 25 is rather brief:

It was my wish that on the very next day after my eye would be opened — that is, on the seventh day after the operation — my left eye should be operated upon, even though the cataract there was still unripe. I persuaded the doctor to undertake the job. But two days before the date fixed, which was September 25, I developed conjunctivitis in the eye and a little cold and cough. This made it uncertain whether my wish could be carried out.

On September 24 it was found that the second operation was out of the question. I was running a temperature and the cough had become fairly nasty. What was worst of all was an extremely disagreeable feeling as of a lump of poison in the stomach. Occultly speaking, it was as though a small monster was sitting in it.

The same afternoon Ferdauz decided I should leave the hospital immediately. When a healthy patient falls ill in a hospital, the hospital itself becomes a risk, for having caught one infection he is exposed to the various

other maladies flying about, as it were, in the hospital air. So I was taken home.

The day, however, was memorable for me because of what had happened in the morning. The right eye was at last opened completely. I had kept my golden press-button paper-purse ready. There was a sudden blaze of white light when the shield was off the eye and in that blaze I saw what was inside the purse: Photographs of 2 faces, the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's, side by side. The strange history of the numerology that had presided over my doings in Bombay seemed to reach its completion and culmination.

Later Comment

What happened afterwards lent a poignant touch to my newly opened eye's first vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother side by side. The first sight it had of the Mother in actuality was when I flew back to Pondicherry on hearing that she had passed away.

A week before November 17 I had gone to the optician to have my new glasses made. On November 17, a Saturday, I was supposed to go and fetch them. But there were hitches and it seemed reasonable to wait till Monday. Somehow I felt I must go that very day. So I got the glasses in the late afternoon. The next morning I heard of the Mother's departure. If I had not obtained the glasses as I had done, I could not have seen her body clearly at the distance at which I had to stand when I reached Pondicherry and went to the Meditation Room. They were obtained exactly in time.

However, what I saw with them made my first view of her inside that press-button purse tragically significant. The cured eye was fated to see her as Sri Aurobindo had been seen by me at the end of 1950. The side-by-sideness which it first glimpsed in that purse presaged the sight of her after she had discarded her body and taken up her position in the subtle world with Sri Aurobindo who had discarded his body twenty-three years earlier. The sequence of number 2, which the glimpse completed and culminated, meant for the newly seeing eye a final look at the Mother in a state which joined her to the Master beyond the earth-plane.

Here is the report of September 29:

I move about in grey-tinted goggles, with flaps on both sides to shut out light. The right eye has been progressing excellently. But a big general setback came in the form of the strange infection I had brought from the hospital: the cold, the cough, the fever and that sense of a monstrous little presence in the stomach.

Various blood-tests were taken. They showed nothing. This meant a viral infection which would not respond to any antibiotic treatment. So all treatment was stopped and one had just to wait.

Much anxiety was caused all around. The third day at home was the worst. I sent a telegram to Sehra to carry the news to the Mother's room. On the fourth day there was a little improvement on the whole but the infection persisted. The monster within the stomach refused to budge. My resistance appeared to be in a poor state and I felt no certainty within me of any cure. On the fifth day the same helplessness and hopelessness continued. My body made no positive reaction. The mind kept detached, not caring whether the body lived or died, though vaguely somewhere in the being was an expectancy for some reaction at some time.

Late in the evening of the fifth day — counting September 24 itself as the first — something suddenly awoke in me. From behind the head of the right side and from behind the right side of the upper part of the body a mysterious power acted. It was as if a subtle arm were stretched forth with a clenched fist, asserting an irresistible decision. I felt a thrust of the mind and a drive of the life-force, supported by the secret soul. Just one moment of decision and I knew that the viral infection had been completely pushed out of the body. There was no process, no gradual betterment: everything was instantaneous. The disease was completely gone. The ogre sitting in the stomach was dislodged once for all. If this was not a miracle, I don't know that a miracle could be. At once I declared to Ferdauz that I was well. Nobody could believe me but they knew the old blighter had always been a strange chap.

I had a very pleasant sleep. When Ferdauz came the next morning to ask me how I was and whether the special blood-test for Rs. 100, which he had planned, was to be taken or not, I smiled and said: “Not at all. Everything is finished. Forget the special blood-test.”

I said this not only because of what had happened the previous evening but also because of what had happened the same morning in the early hours — that is, on September 29, the date itself (2+9) an 11 and exactly 11 days after the operation.

I had a dream. I found myself living in the house where I had spent the first 10 years of my stay in the Ashram. I had lived in the upstairs corner room of what had then been known as the Guest House. It is the present Dortoire opposite Pranab’s place. Sri Aurobindo had lived there for 9 years, and when I arrived in Pondicherry Purani had his quarters there. Now in my dream I was again a resident of that room. I came out of the house and was taken in a sort of truck to the corner diagonally opposite the Ashram on the south side where the main gate is. I stood on the footpath in the midst of a small group of people. Suddenly the Mother emerged on the top terrace of the house where she had been living. But the house was as I had seen it in 1927, when the Mother’s present room had not yet been built on that terrace. She came walking in our direction. Her hair was done as in a picture of her when she was 18 — wound in a top knot. The significance of this vision was that she had unexpectedly got up from her couch or chair of current withdrawal, throwing aside all apparent infirmities and illnesses and come up in full strength. There was an unbounded joy in the watchers as she kept moving forward. She came in my direction and seemed to look long at me. At one point she slightly slowed down and, in response to my gesture to her with folded hands, made a similar gesture. Her walk was a walk of supreme victory. My heart was near to bursting and the lips kept saying “Mother, Mother, Mother!” The same words were in everybody’s mouth. This Darshan was the most moving experience in my whole life. Then the dream ended. I knew that the Mother had achieved something stupendous and that one of the side-effects of the achievement was my own inexplicable cure.

Only one thing remains to be added. When I first arrived in Pondicherry I was taken straight from the station to Purani’s room by Pujalal who had

come to receive me. As I have already mentioned, Purani's room was in the Guest House. The time was 7 o'clock. From the north window I looked towards the main Ashram block and lo! the Mother was on the top terrace of her house, walking in the morning sun, with her hair unbound. That was my first sight of her — a glorious unforgettable vision of divine beauty that made me instantly her disciple and her child.

That experience and the dream were as if fused now and what had begun then seemed consummated.

Later Comment

Here is not only a doubling — two experiences of essentially the same kind — but also the seeing of the Mother as quite different in look from what she was at the age of 95. The old body seemed to have been left and a perennially young Mother came forth — an anticipation of her abandonment of her aged frame on November 17 to become altogether her ever-youthful being of the subtle planes. Viewed in the light of the victorious air she bore in the dream, we may regard the event of November 17 as a triumph, no matter how like a death that is a defeat it may appear to our surface eyes. These surface eyes may be compared to the cataract-obscured eye, which I had before the operation. The cataract-free eye, in the very first dream after the operation, saw the true Mother, the verity behind appearances.

6

Dream of 17-11-1973

There were several dreams of the Mother between September 29 and November 17 but their impression was not strong and they have now faded from my memory. But the short one I had on the night of the day which was the Mother's last in her body has stuck in my mind ineffaceably.

There is no prelude to its main feature as far as I can make out, nor does there seem to be a sequel to it. The Mother was before me in a strange kind

of light — neither clear brightness nor marked dimness. The atmosphere was most unusual. I stood facing her. She had a big bunch of reddish-pink roses in her two cupped hands. She gave them to me, saying, “Put them upon your head.” That was all.

What did this mean? Reddish-pink is the colour of psychic love and indicates “Surrender”. I believe I have to put my head under the power of the surrender which is the natural movement of the deep soul’s loving self-gift to the Divine. Perhaps the Mother meant that she was herself giving me the capacity of a full self-giving of all my mind in psychic love to her? The sense of “full” is shown by the numerousness of the roses. The big bunch seemed to represent a blessing from her hands — a last gift to enable poor me to realise in life the message of the flower which, a long time ago, she had described as my typical flower and whose painting I had made and hung, as she had ordered, in Sri Aurobindo’s old room which I had occupied for 10 years in the Guest House — the flower called “Krishna’s Light in the Mind”. Sri Aurobindo has said that Krishna’s Light is also his own. Krishna’s and Sri Aurobindo’s Light — a whitish blue — surely needs for the preparation of its establishment in the mind the latter’s complete psychicisation by devoted submission to the Mother. Even in that whitish blue the white, according to Sri Aurobindo, comes of a fusion of the blue light of Bliss (Ananda) with the Mother’s white light of pure Consciousness-Force (Chit-Tapas) in which everything originates.

The next morning a trunk call came from Pondicherry to announce that the Mother had passed away at 7.25 the previous evening. Towards the beginning of November my wife and her sister had come to Bombay. My niece and her husband were already there. All of us, together with my sister, made ready to fly to Pondicherry by the first available plane. The husband of my wife’s niece was connected with the airways and he tried his best to get us seats. But there was a semi-strike on — and most planes were either cancelled or considerably delayed. We could not fly during the whole day which we spent at the airport. The earliest booking we could obtain was on a night plane to Bangalore, from where we would have to hire a taxi and ride down to Pondicherry.

At the airport I developed severe tachycardia — the heart racing at about 120 beats per minute. I stood it for nearly two hours and then felt rather tired and uncomfortable. So I stretched myself on one of the sofas in the waiting hall. As the tachycardia wouldn't stop I was told that perhaps the flight was not advisable for me. But I was determined to go. By night-time the heart was on a little better behaviour. We emplaned, all our hearts seeming to be already in the Ashram where the Beloved's body awaited our last look at it, the shed vehicle of the Warrior Spirit that had come as the Avatar of the Supreme to save us with its love from our darkness and that could say like Sri Aurobindo:

Often, in the slow ages' long retreat
On Life's thin ridge through Time's enormous sea,
I have accepted death and borne defeat
To gain some vantage by my fall for Thee.

For Thou hast given the Inconscient the dark right
To oppose the shining passage of my soul
And levy at each step the tax of Night:
Doom, her august accountant, keeps her roll.

All around me now the Titan forces press;
This world is theirs, they hold its days in fee;
I am full of wounds and the fight merciless.
Is it not yet Thy hour of victory?

Even as Thou wilt! What still to Fate Thou owest,
O Ancient of the worlds, Thou knowest, Thou knowest.¹

¹ *Collected Poems*, SABCL, Vol. 5,

SUPPLEMENT

Nearly 2 years have passed since the dream on the night of November 17, 1973. Several dream-darshans have been experienced in the meantime, one or two of deep personal significance: but none had any notable connection with the old series except the one which I am reporting below.

Dream of 11-10-1975

I was at the window of a high storey in a tall building. On the opposite side across a broad street was a place where people had to go to have the Darshan of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. One had to leap over the breadth of the street to reach there. I had the impression that it was a space I had leaped over several times in the past. But now I was hesitating.

Then Champaklal came along to the window and without a moment's thought took a leap. But he misjudged the distance and, instead of reaching safely the opposite house, he fell short of it and dropped vertically down, head first, towards a stone block in the street. To save his head from striking the block he thrust his arms forward so as to take his weight on them. But before he could reach the block some people rushed out and caught his legs in mid-air. When he got back on his feet he swayed a little uncertainly but without any fuss kept moving on to meet the Master and the Mother.

I was rather unnerved at the sight of what had happened, and so I did not jump. I thus missed the Darshan. In the next scene I was sitting with some others near Champaklal who had come back from the Darshan. He told us that, on his way in, he had been attacked by two fellows who had short knives in their hands but he too had a similar knife and he got past them though with a few scratches on his back. Then he asked me if I had gone for the Darshan. I said, "No." He was a little surprised.

I resolved to go up to where the Mother had retired after the Darshan. I climbed staircase after staircase from floor to floor. I had no lameness in my left leg and mounted rapidly. From far below, my natural mother was heard

shouting in fear, “Don’t climb so fast!” I emerged onto a balcony at a great height. Looking down on the street I saw two or three men running to the house in answer to mamma’s alarm. I waved to them, telling them all was safe. Then I ran up another floor to reach the Mother.

Suddenly I saw the Mother herself coming swiftly down a small staircase. She was dressed in cream pajamas and a cream khameez. There seemed to be a soft yellow-white radiance about the dress. Her face was also calmly luminous and looked as if she were rapt in a trance with open eyes. She made a majestic all-silencing picture. Evidently she was coming down for my sake. As I looked at her, there was intense emotion in my heart and the words “Mother, Mother, Mother!”, as during a dream-darshan of her over two years earlier, came out. I rushed to her, fell on my knees and gave my head to her to bless. She blessed it. Then I brought it down to her feet and touched with it first her left foot and then her right. It was a most fulfilling experience.

When I got up she started to move back upstairs. There were a few people on the upper landing. I remember only Udar. The Mother whispered something into his ear. Then I heard Champaklal saying, “She will see Bala.” The Mother passed into a balcony which was at the back of the landing. As she disappeared there, I saw that her clothes were a pale shiny orange.

When I woke up from the dream my mind was filled with a vivid memory of the Mother’s presence as she had come down that small staircase. Rather the frontal part of my mind was full of it, while at the back of it I found the image of a familiar face from my waking life.

I pulled my wrist-watch out from under my pillow to see the time. It was 4.50 a.m. Immediately my thought went on a numerological track. First I realised that the date was the 11th, the digits of which add up to 2. When I had looked at the watch-dial what I had noted was that, while the minute hand had been at the 50-minute mark, the hour-hand had stood at the 24-minute mark, just a little before the numeral 5, since the time — 4.50 — meant also 10 minutes to 5. Now, $50+24=74=11=2$.

What does 2 signify in this dream’s context? We must observe that the original Darshan was to be not only of the Mother but also of Sri Aurobindo — a side-by-sideness explicitly possible only with the Mother physically

disembodied like Sri Aurobindo. The two of them were together in one and the same sense — a joint presence on a plane other than the earth, though about it one could always say in Shelley's words:

Thou whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.

The leap which Champaklal instantly essayed showed the distance of that plane from our earthly stance. I failed to make it and consequently lost the chance of the full glory of the new side-by-sideness. But the Divine Grace forgives our fears and vacillations and grants whatever is still possible. That is why the Mother responded to the cry in the soul of her hesitant child, especially as a bold attempt was made to climb high in spite of some danger. The sign was given that the Mother, for all the gap between her present plane and ours, was always ready to answer a true call and would come forward on her own, descending towards us. Yet even in the descent she kept her consciousness aloof and above at the very time that her eyes were open to the needs of the world below. This was the impression created by the kind of trance she was in. The rapt open-eyed state beckoned us towards the subtle dimensions of her being while making a move of love and help in our direction.

The yellow-white radiance accompanying her rapid descent of the small staircase symbolised the spiritually mental form taken by the answer she gave to the soul yearning through a wide visionariness of the mind. When the dress changed to a pale shiny orange on the way to the Mother's own chamber where Sri Aurobindo must have been waiting, a glimpse was afforded of the nature of the work both of them are at present intensely doing; for orange or red-gold light is the light of the Supramental in the physical, and the whole effort of the Master and the Mother is to emanate into our outer material world the Supermind's Truth-luminosity which is theirs in this world's inner subtle-physical background where they have now joined their forces.

Sri Aurobindo's Work and the Way to Its Fulfilment *

A Look Towards the Future from the Standpoint of November 17, 1973

Sri Aurobindo left his body on December 5, 1950. The Mother departed from hers on November 17, 1973. But the Ashram which they founded is aware of their presence all the time. The Samadhi in the courtyard of the main Ashram-building — holding the physical remains of both these mighty pioneers of a new world — is a living power. All who have stood before it have known a Light and a Love ready to respond to their prayers and aspirations. A giant Grace breathes out from this simple flower-laden incense-haunted monument of peace. Our hearts feel suffused with the promise of that fourfold state of fulfilled being which Sri Aurobindo has summed up in a master-mantra:

Arms taking to a voiceless supreme delight,
Life that meets the Eternal with close breast,
An unwall'd mind dissolved in the Infinite,
Force one with unimaginable rest.¹

It was to embody such a state in its entirety that the Mother carried on the work of Sri Aurobindo after he had sacrificed, as she has declared, his own physical transformation in order to hasten the divine destiny of the world. As a result of the exhaustion of the forces of Darkness in his willingly accepted “death”, he sought for his companion, the Mother, an easier passage in the future to the goal of his Integral Yoga. And, through the Mother’s physical transformation, the path was to be cleared for the race to evolve from humanity to supermanhood. Sri Aurobindo meant to concentrate in his co-worker the achievement of his victory in the time to come.

* *Mother India*, November 1975.

¹ *Collected Poems*, SABCL, Vol. 5, p. 575: “The Life Heavens”.

The first step towards this victory was the permanent establishment, in the Mother's most outward self, of that phase of the supramental consciousness which he had called the Mind of Light. And that establishment was a prelude to the progressive illumination, which she subsequently described, of the subtle consciousness within the very cells of the body. But when this illumination had reached — if we may judge from her "Notes on the Way" — a stage preparatory to a radical reversal of

the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to,

there took place on the contrary what appeared to be a radical reversal of the entire course of the Yoga. The Mother abandoned the physical frame she had used for ninety-five years in the cause of the Divine's manifestation on earth.

What are we to make of this act of leave-taking by one whom we expected to complete the Yoga of Supramental Descent and Transformation? And how are we to envisage the shape of the future?

One thing may be immediately said. All the energies the Mother had to spend on her body in the enormous uphill fight for Matter's divinisation have been set free. They are turned now to a general impact on individuals and groups everywhere. Increasingly they are felt as a new cosmic impetus bearing mankind over hurdle after hurdle thrown in its path by agencies mundane and preternatural. Individuals also have known a vast Care bearing them easily along with a strength that is at the same time a sweetness.

But this is one side of the situation. As against the advantage of a greater impact on a universal scale, there is the absence of a *pou sto*, a fulcrumlike poise on hard earth to move its downward gravitating nature to finer intensities. The focus of divine consciousness held within a human face and form, with a recognisable receptiveness to our calls and a sunshine-smile for every agonised grope of our beings, is missed. And, when we realise that the Mother's body which had kept the now-freed energies busy with its maintenance was precisely the fiery point at which a divine future for the very substance of earth-man was being moulded, we cannot help looking anxiously for sign-posts and guide-lines.

On November 17, 1973, when the Mother withdrew from her body, the question could not but arise: “Is her work fated to remain incomplete?” If any doubt could be entertained of Sri Aurobindo’s project of complete success, the idea of incompleteness would be out of place and the perplexed mind might find comfort. But how would we reconcile such comfort with the drive of numberless pronouncements by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother? Two brief expressions by Sri Aurobindo of their fundamental goal may be quoted to speak for all.

A letter on January 14, 1932, has the phrase: “...I want to divinise the human consciousness, to bring down the Supramental, the Truth-Consciousness, the Light, the Force into the physical to transform it....”¹ The same letter goes on to say: “All other Yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental Yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object. The Supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter.”² Here Sri Aurobindo’s aim is the Supermind’s descent and the process of this descent finally achieves the total transformation of the “physical”. That will be the crowning stage of Sri Aurobindo’s action and the Divine’s manifestation.

Again, Sri Aurobindo’s letter of September 15, 1935, which couples the Mother with him by name, says: “What is being done is meant to prepare the manifestation of the Supermind on the earth-consciousness down to Matter itself, so it can’t be for the physical of myself or the Mother alone.”³

This short declaration implies three basic points: (1) Not only the higher parts of the earth-consciousness but “Matter itself” is to hold the Supermind’s manifestation; (2) Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who are trying

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, p. 122.

² *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

in 1935 to bring about this manifestation are to exemplify it in their “physical”; (3) they would not be “alone” in that achievement: others too should succeed by their help.

No doubt, the “physical” of the Mother as well as that of Sri Aurobindo has been given up short of total transformation. But is real failure at all possible? The answer is “No.”

What else can the answer be in the face of such words as Sri Aurobindo employed on October 19, 1946, when conditions in India looked very unfavourable? — “...I have not been discouraged by what is happening, because I know and have experienced hundreds of times that beyond the blackest darkness there lies for one who is a divine instrument the light of God’s victory. I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world — I am not speaking of personal things — which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster.”¹

Then there is the letter of April 4, 1950, to a disciple “badly upset” with his “sense of the present darkness in the world round us”. Sri Aurobindo writes: “For myself, the dark conditions do not discourage me or convince me of the vanity of my will ‘to help the world’, for I knew they had to come; they were there in the world-nature and had to rise up so that they might be exhausted or expelled.... Afterwards the work for the Divine will become more possible and it may well be that the dream, if it is a dream, of leading the world towards the spiritual light, may even become a reality. So I am not disposed even now, in these dark conditions to consider my will to help the world as condemned to failure.”²

We may remember that this letter was penned at almost the time when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were aware that one of them had to give up the body in the interests of their work and he had decided that he would go and she would stay for its completion.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

³ “A ‘Call’ from Pondicherry” by Dr. Prabhat Sanyal, *Mother India*, December 5, 1953, p. 87.

Even apart from our faith in such direct references by Sri Aurobindo to his own mission, we may dismiss the idea of failure on the basis of our insight into the nature of the Avatarhood we ascribe to him and the Mother.

Generally speaking, in the case of Avatars of any type, real failure cannot be thought of, whatever the surface appearances. Has not Sri Aurobindo exclaimed: “Why should the Divine be tied down to succeed in all his operations? What if failure suits him better and serves better the ultimate purpose? What rigid primitive notions are these about the Divine!”¹ If the Divine’s (that is, the Avatar’s) ultimate purpose is served, the failure which helps it cannot be regarded as a real one. A real failure is the frustration of one’s avowed ultimate purpose. The Avatar comes to establish a certain stage in the earth’s evolution and always fulfils his mission in the mode intended by the Divinity that he is. To quote Sri Aurobindo again: “The Divinity acts according to another consciousness, the consciousness of the Truth above and the Lila below and It acts according to the need of the Lila, not according to man’s ideas of what It should or should not do. This is the first thing one must grasp, otherwise one can understand nothing about the manifestation of the Divine.”²

The same view Sri Aurobindo expresses elsewhere also. According to it, the Divine Consciousness of the Avatar, concerned as it is with only two things fundamentally — “the truth above and here below the Lila and the purpose of the incarnation or manifestation” — does “what is necessary” for them “in the way its greater than human consciousness sees to be the necessary and intended way”.³

Now, if real failure is out of the question for all Avatars, how much less can it be conceived in connection with the incarnate Supermind? The Supermind, unlike even the highest Overmind consciousness like Sri Krishna’s, is the Transcendent not acting indirectly as in Sri Krishna through the supreme grade of the Cosmic Divine, but acting directly, with all the power of the more-than-cosmic level, however self-veiled and self-limited for the necessities of the World-play. So to believe that Sri Aurobindo and

¹ *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 411.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 421-22.

the Mother did not succeed and that their plan to supramentalise their own “physical” went quite astray is to entertain a sheer anomaly. Simultaneously, we have to come to grips with the fact that they have shed their bodies and thereby made a straight interpretation of their aim unrealistic. But, before doing so, let us further underline the situation in which we are placed by our argument. We cannot deny Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the full possibility to do what they set out to accomplish.

In Sri Aurobindo’s letters we have even a few open clues to the unfailing character of the power brought by the Supramental Avatar. A question was put to him in 1933: “It seems to me that if the Supermind is not established in Mother’s body-consciousness, it is not because she is not ready for it like us, but because in order to establish it she has first to prepare the physical of the sadhaks and of the earth to a certain extent. But some people take it in the wrong way; they believe that the Supermind has not been established in her body because she has not yet reached perfection. Am I right?” Sri Aurobindo answered: “Certainly. 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. Even as it is, Mother has to come down towards the lower consciousness of the sadhaks instead of keeping always in her own, otherwise they begin to say, ‘How far away, how severe you were; you do not love me, I get no help from you, etc., etc.’ The Divine has to veil himself in order to meet the human.”¹

Here Sri Aurobindo, speaking of living physically in the Supermind from the beginning, affirms that from the beginning the Mother and he could have had not just a completely divinised consciousness but also a completely divinised bodily existence. To “live” is to be more than merely conscious: it is an organic activity, and when one adds the adverb “physically” one brings in a realisation in terms of the matter composing the organism. Moreover, just to have the physicalised mind or the physicalised life-force turned supramental would not render Sri Aurobindo and the Mother unapproachable or any sadhana impossible to do. As long as some part of the physical being

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, SABCL, Vol. 26, pp. 449-50.

— namely, the material constitution of the body — remained unsupramentalised, a point of contact with Sri Aurobindo and with the Mother would be there for people, and the two Gurus' sadhana of this part's supramentalisation would give people an opportunity to do some sadhana of their own along with the still unperfected Gurus. Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's capacity of living physically in the Supermind from the start must signify nothing short of their capacity of having a bodily existence divinised to the full.

Further, in saying "Certainly" to the correspondent Sri Aurobindo has concurred with the latter's opinion that there never was any question of the Mother's not being ready for the Supermind's establishment in her body-consciousness or of her body not attaining the perfection necessary for the establishment of the Supermind in it. This means that complete success in their present lives was always within the reach of the Mother and, by the same token, that of Sri Aurobindo himself. Hence failure, in the essential sense, could never be anticipated for either of them.

What actually happened may be guessed from another point covered by Sri Aurobindo's "Certainly". The correspondent has opined that the reason why the Mother's body had not been divinised by the time he wrote his letter was that "the physical of the sadhaks and of the earth" had not yet been prepared to the needed extent. This point comes out very clearly in a statement of Sri Aurobindo's in August 1936 on the spiritual fight upon the physical plane: "As for the question about the illness, perfection in the physical plane is indeed part of the ideal of the Yoga, but it is the last item and, so long as the fundamental change has not been made in the material consciousness to which the body belongs, one may have a certain perfection on other planes without having immunity in the body. We have not sought perfection for our own separate sake, but as part of a general change — creating a possibility of perfection for others. That could not have been done without our accepting and facing the difficulties of the realisation and transformation and overcoming them for ourselves. It has been done to a sufficient degree on the other planes — but not yet on the most material part of the physical plane. Till it is done, the fight there continues and, though there may be and is a force of Yogic action and defence, there cannot be

immunity. The Mother's difficulties are not her own; she bears the difficulties of others and those that are inherent in the general action and working for the transformation. If it had been otherwise, it would be a very different matter."¹

The implications are clear. If the Mother did not drag with her the whole world's difficulties in opening up the most material part of the physical plane, if she did not have to tackle the whole earth-consciousness's resistance to the transformative action and working, she would achieve her own supramentalisation, her body would be divinised and she would be yogically perfect and the Aurobindonian goal would be compassed *in toto*. There could be no possibility of failure for her and for Sri Aurobindo in themselves: their own personal success was a certainty. The evolutive process, without which no terrestrial achievement can be permanent and grow in expression of the terrestrial plane's Dharma, is bound to take time but the time required for instruments like Sri Aurobindo and the Mother would be fairly short. Their supramentalisation, even if evolutively stretched out, would show in its history something of "what men would regard as a miraculous intervention", an amazing rapidity of movement which would come, as Sri Aurobindo has said, "if the human mind were more flexible and less attached to its ignorance than it is".² In any case, there could be no in-built chance of failure for her and him if they sought supramental perfection for their own separate sake: rather there would be an automatic success.

But they did not seek this perfection like that — and there was the rub. Yet it was not such a rub as might lead to failure: it could only lead to a host of difficulties and sufferings and illnesses in the course of an earth-representative sadhana whose final fruit would be a success holding out the promise of transformation to all mankind. Carrying within themselves the power to live physically in the Supermind from the beginning and having the ability to be perfectly ready for divinisation of their bodies, they must be expected to have power enough to establish the Supermind in their physical beings in spite of all obstructions accepted from others and from the general earth-conditions. The obstructions might even create an early

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

² *Ibid.*, p. 471.

period during which Sri Aurobindo would not be sure whether he would succeed: evolutionary Avatars have to pass through all human phases. But, however evolutionary, these were Avatars — and Supramental Avatars at that. Consequently, a time must come when Sri Aurobindo would go past possibility and even probability and reach practical certainty and the luminous dominating sense of achievement in the near future. Thus on December 25, 1934 he writes:

“I know with absolute certitude that the supramental is a truth and that its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable. The question is as to the when and the how. That also is decided and predestined from somewhere above; but it is here being fought out amid a rather grim clash of conflicting forces. For in the terrestrial world the predetermined result is hidden and what we see is a whirl of possibilities and forces attempting to achieve something with the destiny of it all concealed from human eyes. This is, however, certain that a number of souls have been sent to see that it shall be now. That is the situation. My faith and will are for the now.”¹

Granting the non-failing supramental power in operation through its two chosen emanations who came, as this letter shows, with a small group of beings as collaborators in the work of supramentalisation in the present time and not in another age, we are left with no escape from seeing as a success what has happened to both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and hence as a voluntary fate their passing away without personal supramentalisation. This fate has to be interpreted as having been embraced for nothing less than success but success in a fashion enigmatical to man’s non-flexible mind which is attached to its ignorance.

The call on us is to keep steadily before this mind the true nature of the Avatarhood that was Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s — and then to probe the events of the two “deaths”. But to reach the proper view we must clear a few crucial points. While refusing to deny the authenticity of the success in spite of those events, we must ask how in view of them the Master and the Mother could be said to succeed in the “now” to which Sri Aurobindo

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

refers and, if they could, under what aspect consistently with their certitude their success would arrive.

2

Obviously, they have altered their original plan. And there is no reason why they should not — provided they fulfil in however oblique and paradoxical a shape their fundamental mission. The Avatar, even the Supramental one, assumes certain human traits in right earnest: otherwise Avatarhood would be a flashing intrusion of the Divine and have no evolutionary significance for the world. In a very effective sense, God has to become like us in order to help us become like Him. God has to undergo our predicaments and take upon Himself our defects, pass through obscurities and come to terms with the manifold play of possibilities that work out the designs of the Supreme, a play calling for various adjustments and alterations, shifts of strategy and shufflings of tactics. The Incarnation takes his stand in the midst of a world-order that has gone on for centuries along lines often in opposition to new truths. The Incarnation enters a game proceeding according to rules partly dictated by the Ignorance through which evolution moves towards Knowledge. These rules are permitted to spring surprises even upon Divinity when It enters the human formula. The humanised Divinity holds on to Its basic vocation but needs to revolutionise Its methods, discard old projects, adopt startlingly new devices.

Thus Sri Aurobindo has spoken of an entire change of front from what was being done soon after November 24, 1926, when he and the Mother experienced the Overmind descent into their bodies. Looking back from a latter time (October 18, 1934) he writes: “...if the Mother were able to bring out the Divine Personalities and Powers into her body and physical being as she was doing for several months without break some years ago, the brightest period in the history of the Ashram, things would be much more easy and all these dangerous attacks that now take place would be dealt with rapidly and would in fact be impossible. In those days when the Mother was either receiving the Sadhaks for meditation or otherwise working and concentrating all night and day without sleep and with very irregular food, there was no

ill-health and no fatigue in her and things were proceeding with a lightning swiftness... Afterwards, because the lower vital and the physical of the Sadhaks could not follow, the Mother had to push the Divine Personalities and Powers, through which she was doing the action, behind a veil and come down into the physical human level and act according to its conditions and that means difficulty, struggle, illness, ignorance and inertia...”¹

Alluding to the same “brightest period”, Sri Aurobindo remarks on January 14, 1932: “...the Supramental could very well have come down into Matter under former conditions, if the means created by the Mother for the physical and vital contact had not been vitiated by the wrong attitude, the wrong reactions in the Ashram atmosphere. It was not the direct supramental Force that was acting, but an intermediate and preparatory force that carried in it a modified Light derived from the Supramental, but this would have been sufficient for the work of opening the way for the highest action, if it had not been for the irruption of these wrong forces on the yet unconquered lower (physical) vital material plane.”²

Again we hear from Sri Aurobindo on December 31, 1934: “It is a little difficult to say whether all have to come down totally into the physical. The Mother and I had to do it because the work could not be otherwise done. We had tried to do it from above through the mind and higher vital, but it could not be because the Sadhaks were not ready to follow...”³

A change still more radical and revolutionary in the dynamics of the Integral Yoga was required in 1950. When Sri Aurobindo and the Mother saw the necessity of one of them abandoning the body and Sri Aurobindo chose to withdraw from his physical sheath on December 5, he began to operate from behind the scene as a power of manifestation from the subtle-physical plane where he had established himself and as a power of evolution from the Inconscient where he had thrust the antennae of his consciousness through the dissolution of his semi-illuminated gross-physical substance. His direct role upon the earth was projected into a future when, as the Mother communicated to us, he would come in the first supramental body built in

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 472.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 473-74.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

the supramental and not the natural way. From his command to the Mother early in the year that she would have to “fulfil our Yoga of supramental descent and transformation”, we understood that just as he would represent a non-evolutionary materialisation of the Supramental she would toil on to represent an evolutionary supramentalisation of the Material: they would be the obverse and reverse of the same eternal Truth-gold made current in our Iron Age. The Aurobindonian objective would still be compassed except that, contrary to the original plan, the Master himself would not be the first body in evolutionary history to be divinised. But as he was concerned essentially with the supramentalisation of the earth-consciousness and never involved in any personal race for the Supermind all was well for him so long as his own Shakti, the Mother, with whom he was one in consciousness, was there to be the leader of the evolution, guiding the earth to its fulfilment by supramentalising herself in this life and not in another.

Yes, Sri Aurobindo’s departure, although heart-stunning, was yet not absolutely mind-bewildering. It is the Mother’s departure that is the extreme enigma. Of course, a radical and revolutionary change of plan is as legitimate for her as for him. But her change has occurred with an ostensible non-completion of the task Sri Aurobindo had entrusted to her. It is this non-completion that hits us hard and acutely challenges us.

3

If we are to formulate a satisfying answer, we must set the enigma itself in its proper terms. These terms can only be as follows: “Sri Aurobindo willed — and his willing was in tune with the nature of the Supramental Avatarhood — that from their assumed human bodies a centre would result of a supramentalised physicality for the supramentalisation first of a few of their children and finally of all humanity. He focused his vision of such a centre in the Mother. Now that she has made her exit without actualising his vision, how will she yet manage, as she must, to be in a divine body amongst us to continue carrying the travail of evolution towards the *grand finale* prophesied by Sri Aurobindo? And what, after her exit at the age of ninety-

five, should we understand by fulfilment not in a later age but in the present time?”

Our statement has two “posers”: to adopt Sri Aurobindo’s own brief categories for the original plan, “the question is as to the when and how.” The challenge of the “when” can be immediately met. By the present time, the “now”, we have to understand the period which would have been covered by the progress of the Mother’s body if, animated more and more by the Supermind, it had persisted on earth in its originally planned course of concentrated evolution towards the supramental completeness. How long would that period be? The Mother has reported Sri Aurobindo as saying that perhaps three hundred years would be needed for the complete transformation of the body. She has also expressed her own feeling that it might take longer but an intense speeding-up of the supramental action may keep the time within the lower limit. So we cannot calculate in terms of less than three centuries. The oblique and paradoxical yet authentic success we have to attribute to the Mother must be allowed this time-span to realise itself. With the Supermind as her guard, her life could have been prolonged to that stretch for the full realisation. Logically, we cannot insist on a smaller stretch for the novel “how” of her fulfilment.

All the same, we may not rule out a shorter duration by virtue of the very novelty involved. Who knows if, just to avoid those three centuries which were the inevitable minimum under the old dispensation, she has struck out a new path which may seem to us a plunge into darkness but is actually a streak of light too rarefied for us to see until it issues once more into our common day? Should we not have faith that she would never do anything except for our advantage — that is, for the purpose of bringing about the Life Divine for us by means of her pioneering fulfilment?

The question would yet remain: “In what form is this fulfilment to be now conceived?” There are only two modes of conceiving it.

One is with reference to the “new body” which the Mother spoke of on several occasions as existing in the subtle-physical plane and acting upon the body in the gross-physical with a view to emerge into it and materially manifest a *corps glorieux*, “a body of glory”, a divinely radiant form. The gross-physical, in order to effectuate the emergence in it of the new body,

would have to get transformed to a high degree. Transformation must imply the assumption of the central difficulties of corporeal life and the conquest over them. The tendency to age, to deteriorate in faculties, to grow weak, to harbour the process of decay and run the risk of death — this tendency had to be faced in right earnest and then conquered. The Mother, in her ninety-fifth year, stood evenly balanced, as it were: the difficulties of the human condition were sufficiently borne and the power to prevent them from becoming dominant was in enough exercise but there seemed to be a standstill, a kind of stalemate.

We have to say “seemed” because the Supramental Avatar holds by the right of a direct transcendent origin, the capacity to counter and annul all cosmic laws. The Mother could have brought that capacity into play and moved forward, but the reversal of the problem she had admitted into herself — the problem of “this mortal coil”, the tumultuous trouble of the human condition — would probably have taken an inordinate length of time — very much past what would be advantageous to her children. In response to a sudden call from the Truth above and to the hidden requirement of the World-Play, she consented to the dissolution of a body whose cells were passing through the sublime suffering of a radical recast under the Supermind’s pressure. The Transcendent, that was her own highest Self, overruled in the interests of His earth-creatures His own planned triumph in a chosen vehicle.

The sole course open to the Mother was to let fall the body she had worn so long and so carefully prepared. This would mean letting someone else’s body in the future achieve the fundamental Aurobindonian goal of changing evolutionarily into a divine one. Since both she and Sri Aurobindo had basically sought the supramentalisation of others, such a shift-over of achievement was altogether welcome. But none could be supramentalised without the dynamism of the Avatar who had descended from the Supermind to give supramentalisation to the world: either the Mother or Sri Aurobindo had to be the instrument for the divinisation of earth-creatures. This was the proviso of their very mission. Long ago — on April 20, 1935 — Sri Aurobindo laid down the terms of his work: “I have no intention of achieving the Supermind for myself only — I am not doing anything for myself... If I

am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others...”¹ Sri Aurobindo’s supramentalisation was the *sine qua non*. And when he left his body, it could not be done in others if it was not done in the Mother whom he had elected as a compact field for his victory. When she left her body, the need still held for a centre which somehow or other would not be different from herself. Someone else’s body would naturally have to be divinised now instead of her own, but the proviso of their mission would be satisfied only if to divinise someone else’s body she yet worked from a poise on the earth itself. That poise would be indispensable to the pioneering Avatar-spirits that she and Sri Aurobindo were. Hence the question confronting the Mother in her ninety-fifth year of Supramental Avatarhood was: how, while obeying the Transcendent Will and giving up the body she had entered nearly a century before, was she to establish an earth-poise of divinising power?

We can reach an understanding of her answer through an insight into the transformation she was undergoing. On the one side the transformation was meant to render the gross-physical form increasingly subtle by the action of the subtle-physical Supramental Shape, so that it might be fit to house the latter. On the other side the transformation was meant to render this Shape increasingly dense by the reaction on it of the gross-physical form, so that it might be fit to be housed in the materially visible and tangible. Embracing the decision of the Transcendent, the Mother appears to have abandoned further sublising or supramentalising the dense stuff of her evolutionary frame and to have concentrated on drawing up into this frame’s non-evolutionary counterpart — into the subtle-physical Supramental Shape — the conscious essence of whatever sublisation the dense evolutionary substance had acquired. By means of such a drawing up, she endowed the non-evolutionary counterpart with some of the “virtue” of the dense matter that had been passing through the transformative travail. The deathless Light proper to the new body waiting behind the scene took on an extra density and, when the old body gave itself up to death, the extra-densified new one

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.

got charged with the sense of the other's function and was pulled towards the materially visible and tangible, as if it were henceforth meant to stand not beyond but right over the frontier between its own world and ours.

The Mother we were familiar with is now the new secret body, a superhuman ensheathing. Such a transference from the old body is nothing inconceivable. She actually had the experience, on March 24, 1972, of living as the new body with a continuity of consciousness from the old. She says: "I had a body altogether new in the sense that it was sexless... It was very white... It was very slim (*gesture of slenderness*) — it was pretty. Truly a harmonious form... I *was* like that, I had become like that... It was quite natural..."¹ At the time of the transference the old body had not been dropped: it had just been kept aside. Now it has been allowed to dissolve, and the Mother has only a divine ensheathing. But she has assimilated into it all the attainments of the dissolved sheath in terms of "body-mind" and thereby brought it closer to our longing human arms than it ever could be without the assimilation of those attainments. A veritable Goddess, the Mother is yet within concrete reach of us — we have only to stretch our arms more intensely *ripae ulterioris amore*, "with love of the other shore", to get the Truth-touch we need for our integral Godward growth. The greater proximity of this compassionate Perfection to our body's soulful cry is what the Mother has accomplished through the apparent withdrawal from us that was her death.

With its greater proximity comes a greater force to carry us towards the Supramental goal. But this proximity is not the whole aim of the Mother's strategy. The earth-poise the Avatar of the Supermind must have in order to supramentalise earth is no more than approached by the proximity. It has yet to be fully realised. And the extra-densified new body has the power to realise it in full. To obtain that power for this body was the final victory won by the Mother. The new body's extra density provides the Mother with the possibility of materialising that body and making it visible and tangible, a supreme Presence in our midst to bring about our evolutionary completion.

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, August 1972, p. 75.

But, just as the Mother's sadhana before her passing away was linked with our receptivity to the higher consciousness and could be to a considerable extent quickened or slowed down by the state in which we were, so also her progress towards materialisation from the boundary between two worlds is conditioned in a substantial measure by our response to her stand on that boundary. She cannot materialise herself soon unless we hasten to spiritualise ourselves.

The sudden shock we have received with the Mother's departure and, along with it, the sense that departure has given us of a greater impact from her new body have caused a forward spurt in our Yoga. If we can keep up the intensified aspiration we may hope to see the new body materialised in the near future — in less than a century. Even if our effort for progress gets relaxed the Mother will press for the manifestation. Her children then may not have to wait very long.

If, however, she finds it unfitting that she should thus manifest, a second way is conceivable. Indeed, it would be the one inevitable way under the circumstances. And of this possibility too we have a glimpse in some words of the Mother. Three years before she had the experience of living in her new body as if it were the most natural sheath for her — to be precise, on February 15, 1969 — she said: "...the work is becoming more and more 'exacting'. But I feel (that is to say the body feels very well) that it is part of a training. It looks like that: it must hold on, the body, or otherwise, so much the worse, it will be for another time."¹ Again, in the very talk about the new body the Mother pointed to her own and exclaimed: "Is that (*Mother points to her body*), is that going to change? It must change or it has to follow the old ordinary process of undoing itself and remaking itself."²

This can mean only one thing: as in the past, the Mother may utilise the usual mode of birth, assume once more a body like ours and be amongst her children at the head of earth's evolution. An implication of this meaning is that for the body-supramentalising turn of evolution the rebirth of none except the Mother will do. But her rebirth will not involve going laboriously

¹ *Ibid.*, April 1969, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, August 1972, p. 81.

over the same field that she covered before. Rather, by force of all that her earlier incarnation has done and by the greater proximity it has brought about of her Supramental Shape, this second embodiment will have, despite its unavoidable nexus with world-conditions, a rare rapidity of sadhana and will soon be ready to house that Shape and uplift her children to spiritual supermanhood. When and where the hour of the re-embodiment will strike is left to the wisdom operating through the Supramental Shape in which she now abides. But we may be sure that it will not go beyond the limit of what we have stipulated as her extraordinary life-length if the original plan of supramentalisation had been followed. In saying “another time” she need not be construed as referring to a far-off date and negating the broad sense of “now”. The expression simply connotes a bodily existence other than the one that was hers from February 21, 1878. In fact, once she decides on this alternative way of securing her earth-poise, the “when” can be very near and the “where” is likely to be such as to let her appear amidst her erstwhile family without unnecessary delay.

What we must guard against is letting our imagination run riot. We must not start hunting for signs and make various self-gratifying mental constructions. Although we must keep our eyes open, we must be passive in our receptivity. If the Mother takes birth, she will declare herself in her own fashion and her own good time. We must not superimpose our ignorance-coloured “Lo here!” and “Lo there!”. The birth which she will bring about by her direct action will carry the clearest credentials. We shall not need to speak for it. We have merely to watch and wait.

Still, as regards the whole possibility of a second embodiment we have to remember the Mother’s expression: “so much the worse.” She did not favour “another time” and the mechanism involved: “the old ordinary process” of rebirth. It would have to be the last resort. The preference would undoubtedly go to the direct self-materialisation. Even though we have no open reference to such a mode of reappearance of the Mother, we know that she looked forward in general to an occult method of birth for human beings. This method was expected to come into force after the Mother had sufficiently divinised her body and established herself firmly for the new world she was building up, the world in which Sri Aurobindo was to come

in the first supramental body built in the supramental way. But, with the evolutionary alteration of her course on November 17, releasing new powers of action, the will of Sri Aurobindo for supramentalisation in the present age, and not in a later one, would tend to bring this method into use far sooner.

However, if we take “so much the worse” in its own restricted context, we find “another time” to be disapproved as compared only to the birth the Mother accepted in 1878 and wanted to use for the utmost consummation. Then there would be nothing in particular against the usual process of birth. The two alternatives of reappearance would be on a par.

But neither can become an early reality without our co-operation. We should go all out to create the conditions that would facilitate the wonderful phenomenon of self-materialisation. For the Mother’s rebirth too our souls must keep devoted vigil. More than ever before we shall have to open our depths to the Light and Love that were lavished on us for so many years and that still waft to us from the joint Samadhi. Had we answered sufficiently to their call, the original plan might never have been changed. Indeed, to a high degree, it is our “estranged faces” that have made us “miss the many-splendoured thing” that for ninety-five years was our Mother, most divine, most human.

SUPPLEMENT

“Immortality Day” *

Some Light on a Little-Known Event in the Ashram’s Spiritual History

I arrived in the Ashram on December 16, 1927. It was a little more than a year after November 24, 1926, the *Siddhi* Day, the Day of Victory marking the descent of what Sri Aurobindo has called the Overmind, the Krishna Consciousness, the plane of the Great Gods, into the physical being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This Victory was to prepare the descent of the supreme divine dynamism that has never directly worked in the world and that Sri Aurobindo has termed the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness, the spiritual Power holding the secret of Matter’s total transformation.

The first sadhak I met was Pujalal who had come to the Pondicherry station to receive me and the girl I had married two months earlier and who afterwards came to be known in the Ashram as Lalita. We were taken to the room of Purani through whom I had corresponded with Sri Aurobindo. Purani had not yet returned from the main Ashram building where he had gone for some daily work entrusted to him. He came soon after. And, along with him and Pujalal, we watched from a north window the Mother take her morning walk on the flat roof of the house some distance away, in which she and Sri Aurobindo had their rooms. She had her long brown hair down and in the morning light she looked a vision of wonderful beauty. Immediately she won our hearts and turned us into disciples.

When she had finished her stroll we sat for a while in Purani’s room before being taken to the house close to the main Ashram block, which the Mother had engaged for us. I noticed that a big white tomcat was sitting on Purani’s bed. It was introduced to me as “Amar”, the name signifying “Immortal”. An unusual name — but I never knew its relevance till November 25, 1975, my seventy-first birthday. It would seem that this beautiful cat was born on November 26, 1926 and got its name from the event that signalled that day, between which and the Day of Victory my

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1976.

date of birth was sandwiched. I came to know also that “Amar” had been given to Champa, the resident wife of a visiting sadhak, Punamchand, with some definite purpose and that later, when it died by falling into a well, the Mother, on learning the news, said, “Oh!” — an exclamation which meant as if the death had somehow been connected with her work as well as with the person to whom the tomcat had been given.

“Immortality Day” was an occasion mentioned to me by a few inmates of the Ashram during the early months of my stay there. But it soon fell into oblivion. Just some weeks back I referred to it in a letter to Udar who has been here for the last thirty-five years or so. He did not know what I was talking about and, when I told him a few things I had heard, he was surprised that nobody had even hinted to him of them in the past. At the moment, perhaps, I must be one of the two or three who alone remember that a great occasion led to the designation “Immortality Day”. On observing the almost universal ignorance about it I made up my mind to have a talk with Champaklal who, according to my memory of the Ashram’s early days, had been a participant in the ceremony which had taken place on November 26 forty-nine years before.

A natural chance came when I went up to meet him on my own “bonne fête”. In the course of our conversation on various matters relating to his years with the Mother I asked him to tell me all he knew of the “Immortality Day”. When I said that hardly anybody recalled it, he replied: “How could people know of it when Datta and I were most probably the only persons present on the occasion?” What I gathered from Champaklal, in addition to what I have already said on “Amar”, is as follows:

At that time (1926) Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were living in the “Library House”, the building to which the principal Ashram gate directly leads. A day or two before November 26, Champaklal arranged flowers on the floor of the Mother’s room in the form of the Swastika. The Swastika is the sign of Immortality. The Mother commented that it was remarkable that he should have chosen to make this particular sign on that particular day. Her words seemed to suggest an inner spiritual movement going on, significant of what the Swastika represented. Then on the 26th, in the passage-room where soup used to be prepared, the Mother stood before a

basin of water and, holding her hands over it, appeared to pass into the water a spiritual consciousness and power descending into her. She declared that a most important and fundamental event had occurred but it was both very sacred and secret. She asked for some small glass bottles. When they were brought, she poured the occultly charged water into them and gave them to those who were there. According to her, the divine principle of Immortality had been brought down on that day.

How should we understand the message of the event? Just as November 24 promised with the descent of the delegate consciousness of the Supermind the advent of the true Supramental Divinity, November 26 confirmed to the very last particular of supramentalisation what the earlier occasion had betokened in general: the very last particular is the divinisation of the body. In Indian spirituality, from the beginning, Immortality has stood for much more than personal survival of physical death: it has stood for a realisation of the Divine Consciousness which is infinite and eternal, the supreme God-Self both within and beyond the changeful series of birth and death in which our common terrestrial existence is caught. Immortality, in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, necessarily includes this experience. When the Overmind came down into his body and the Mother's, the highest range of past realisation of the Immortal Being was compassed not only in the inner consciousness but also in the outermost, with wonderful consequences in the material sheath itself and an earnest of the full and final result which would come by the arrival of the Supramental Truth: The total earnest of the Godlike future was revealed on November 26 — a signal almost incredible to the human mind haunted and obsessed by millennia of mortality. That is why the Mother considered the revelation not only sacred but secret and that is why the memory of it was allowed to hide in the background.

However, in the interests of spiritual history it needs to be brought forward now. Besides, a broad suggestion of the ultimate goal sought for was always given by the writings of the Mother as well as Sri Aurobindo. We may end with a quotation from the Mother:

“When it is said that by the union with the Divine one attains the consciousness of immortality, it means that the consciousness in us is united with that which is immortal and therefore feels itself immortal. We become

conscious of the domains where immortality exists. But that does not imply that the physical substance is transformed and becomes immortal; for that quite another procedure has to be followed, and you must not only let it work out the transformation of the physical consciousness, but also the transformation of the physical substance which is quite a considerable work.”¹

The “Immortality Day” was the seed assurance that this “considerable work” which has been going on ever since will bear flower and fruit on the earth in the time to come.

K.D. SETHNA

¹ *Path to Perfection*, Compiled from the Writings of the Mother by Keshavmurti (Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1967), p. 79.

The Supramental Manifestation of February 29, 1956 *

Extracts from Notes of Two Interviews with the Mother

May 13, 1956

THE MOTHER: Were you here on the 29th February?

Yes, Mother, I was here. I arrived the same day in the morning and I was present at the "Questions and Answers" and the Meditation.

THE MOTHER: Did you feel anything then?

No, Mother. All I was aware of is that it was a calm and quiet meditation. It is only on the Darshan Day, the 24th April, that a vague and faint sense of reality of the New Force came to me. And since then the feeling of it has been growing, but I don't have a clear and concrete sense of its existence.

THE MOTHER: Well, what happened was something tremendous. Suddenly a flood of light came pouring forth, as if the divine gate had been thrown wide open. It continued for twenty minutes. Or, rather, I watched it for twenty minutes and then stopped the meditation. I could not carry on the meditation indefinitely — you know how restless people become.

When the light was pouring, I thought that at the end of the meditation I would find everybody knocked out, lying flat. But when I opened my eyes I found them as after any meditation. I myself had to make a special effort to come into my external being and it was with great difficulty that I could utter a word.

Was this advent unexpected?

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1974.

THE MOTHER: Absolutely. But all my greatest experiences have come like that. I am in my usual consciousness and they come suddenly, as if to show their reality in the fullest contrast and vividness. They have the best value when first received in this way. When one is informed beforehand, the mind begins to play a part. On the present occasion, when the mind came in I was on our side of the divine gate: there was then just a magnificent light, nothing more. Those who live in their emotions had a better chance to feel things than those who live in their minds.

What should I do to acquire a sense of the Supermind?

THE MOTHER: The Supermind will work itself out — by the decision of the Supreme. Sri Aurobindo was instrumental in bringing it. The working of the Supermind in my body has gone on since the 5th December, 1950. It has been a progressive individual working; so I thought things would go on like that. But in January this year Sri Aurobindo appeared to me two or three times and it was as if he indicated that the Supermind was coming on a universal scale.

What has come has got engulfed at present and it has to work itself out. Nature did not reject it — she could not. The Supreme decided that the time had come and He released the Force. But the Inconscient has covered it up. It can be felt in the subtle-physical, but in the physical there is hardly anything yet. The manifestation is only a little more than two months old and it will show itself gradually. I can definitely feel it in the subtle-physical, but my sensitiveness is perhaps a little unusual... Two disciples here in the Ashram and three outside simultaneously had rare experiences as a result of what had happened.

A marked difference has come in our Yoga. Things that were easy are now achieved without effort. Things that appeared difficult appear easy. Things impossible seem now achievable and likely.

The pouring of the Supermind is constant, but at Balcony time every morning it is more concentrated.

People have been here twenty to thirty years — talking of the Supermind's coming and prepared for it, as it were — yet they did not notice it when it came!

The manifestation was a cosmic phenomenon and I took time to return to this individual self and it was difficult to speak the first word.

In half an hour I formulated the whole experience and wrote it down.

May 22, 1956

THE MOTHER: Things are now all changed for me — radically changed.

How, Mother?

THE MOTHER: Previously everything worked under the pressure of the Mind of Light. Sri Aurobindo secured this working when he left his body. Now it is the Supermind that directly guides and governs. The manifestation is just over two and a half months old and yet a new situation — an absolutely new situation — has come into being.

What has happened now I call a manifestation and not a descent, because it is not an individual event: the Supermind has burst forth into universal play. It has become a principle at constant work upon all earth — a possibility of a general order, as when the mind was first diffused over the earth.

INDRA SEN

What the Mother Endured and Achieved for the Earth in 1962 *

1

Introductory Report¹

The Mother was not well for some time in early 1962. But she kept on working. She even came to the Balcony now and again to give the morning Darshan as usual. But the 18th of March was the last day. After that, she fell seriously ill and did not come down from her room on the second floor.

She began to have heart-attacks. One day she had them twice in twenty-four hours. They were severe. A third followed the next day. Some time later she recounted to a disciple the experience connected with the heart-attacks. No definitive version is available, but the following account seems nearest the truth. She saw a huge being who looked exactly like Sri Aurobindo. This being asked her, "Will you surrender yourself to me?" The Mother, recognising that he was not Sri Aurobindo but an Asura, replied, "I surrender to the Lord. This body has been given over to His Supreme Will." It may be surmised that the pretending being started his hostile work against her and that Sri Aurobindo fought with him and saved her. The Mother remarked that the fight had been a crucial one in the course of the Integral Yoga.

A report has it that the same Asura in the shape of Sri Aurobindo appeared to a disciple and asked him to do Pranam to him. When the disciple was about to get down on his knees he saw the being's feet and at once realised that this was not Sri Aurobindo but a demon with a characteristic recorded in Indian tradition: the feet had the position of their toes and heels reversed. The disciple stopped himself and the demon vanished. The experience was told to the Mother, who found it significant in view of what had happened to her.

From the medical standpoint the Mother's life seemed to have hung by a thread during her illness. Once, at 2 a.m., her condition grew exceedingly

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1974.

¹ Based on notes made on the 9th of May 1962.

bad. Her breathing was very difficult and she repeatedly put her hand on her chest and looked as if she might faint. Her doctor was sent for. According to reports, the Mother lay in a dead swoon for quite a time, and the doctor could barely feel her pulse. As the Mother had forbidden him to give any drug or injection, he could do absolutely nothing. He felt his responsibility terribly. Here he was, the Mother's special doctor, and could not take a step. What would people say if anything should happen?

The whole critical period came to an end on the 5th of May. A disciple had a vision in which Sri Aurobindo appeared to him. He asked Sri Aurobindo why the Mother had to go through such dire suffering. Sri Aurobindo said that she had to pay almost as high a price as he had done for the future of humanity, but that now she had come out victorious.

The culmination of the Mother's experience of victory came on the night of the 12th April. On the 13th, in spite of extreme weakness, she made a tape-record of her experience. On the evening of the 15th the tape-record was played to the members of the Ashram at the Playground.

Soon after the heart-attacks the Mother was utterly indrawn. One day she sat stiff for six hours in a deep trance, opening her eyes only at rare intervals. When asked whether she would take any food or drink, she signed with her head that she would take nothing. Even later on, she kept concentrating on her inner work and mostly seemed not to notice the people around her. But gradually she began to take interest in things. At certain hours she let a couple of sadhaks take their routine work to her. One of them reported that he had found her skin unusually shining.

The Mother astonished her doctor by the rapidity of her recovery. From such weakness that she could hardly lift a finger and from a state of constant heart-irregularity for days, she commenced moving by herself, though slowly, in her room. Her emaciated body was also fast picking up.

When her heart-attacks were over, she told an attendant, "You thought I was going. How could I go? Have I completed my work?" The attendant said, "Mother, you are not eating properly and have grown so very weak. Naturally we have fears." The Mother replied, "Do you think I depend on

food and drink for my strength and life? I don't depend even on my lungs and heart.”

After the great experience of April 12 she had the long passage on the Supreme Love in Book Eleven, “The Book of Everlasting Day”, of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* read out to her — the passage beginning

O beautiful body of the incarnate Word

and ending

Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.¹

It gave some idea of what she had become in relation to the Lord and to the world.

The Victory marked by the Mother's experience may be understood as a very decisive step further in her world-work. It was a great sequel to the achievement of the 29th February 1956 when the Manifestation of the Supermind on a universal scale had taken place in what the Mother had then called the earth's subtle atmosphere. At that time the Supramental Light, Consciousness and Force had come. The experience of April 12 seems to have speeded up the future evolution of the world by bringing in the Supramental Love whose presence would keep impelling the earth towards a divine destiny in spite of all obstacles and apparent setbacks.

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *SABCL*, Vol. 29, pp. 698-702.

**The Mother's Experience on the Night of
April 12, 1962**

After a month of grave illness which had threatened her life, the Mother spoke for the first time on April 13, 1962. She lay stretched on her bed, in her room upstairs, very thin. Dr. Sanyal, Nolini, Vasudha and Pavitra were present. It was round about 10 o'clock in the morning.

Suddenly in the night I woke with the full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the World. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsations, 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 universal further in its manifestation.

And the certitude that what is to be done is done and the Supramental Manifestation is realised.

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 to express it in the world? It was like an impossibility, because of the contradiction... But then it came: "You have accepted that the world should know the Supramental Truth... and it will be expressed totally, integrally." Yes, yes...

And the thing is *done*.

(Long Silence)

The individual consciousness came back, just the sense of a limitation, limitation of pain; without that no individual.¹

And we set out again on the way, sure of Victory.

The skies are full of the songs of Victory.

The Truth alone exists; it alone shall be manifested. Forward!

Glory to Thee, Lord, supreme Triumpher!

(Silence)

Now, to the work.

Patience, endurance, perfect equality, and an absolute faith.

(Silence)

What I am saying is nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing but words, if I compare it to the experience.

And our consciousness is the same, absolutely the same as that of the Lord. There was no difference, no difference...

We are That, we are That, we are That.

(Silence)

Later I shall explain better. The instrument is not yet ready.

Afterwards the Mother added:

The experience lasted at least four hours.

There are many things which I shall say later.

¹ All that follows was originally spoken in French and subsequently translated by the Mother into English.

The Mother on the Inner Divine *

A Pronouncement in the Middle 1960's

You have to cling only to the Divine within. I have seen much in the world and always I found everything transitory. But when I met Sri Aurobindo, I said to myself, “Ah, this is stable at last!” (*Pause*) What a knock on the nose I received when Sri Aurobindo left his body. Of course, he is right here within me (*the Mother put her hand on her chest*), I can speak to him. He is close. But (*spreading out her palms to both sides*) he is not in the physical. One must cling to the Divine within. All these things — harmony in the collective and so on — they are all right, but it is to the Divine within that you have to cling.

Reported by SRIMAYI

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1975.

**The Mother's Statement on how
Pavitra (Philippe Barbier St.-Hilaire)
Passed Away on May 16, 1969 ***

It was very interesting, the experience I had that night. Nothing like it I ever had in my life. It was the night before the day he passed away. The time was 9 o'clock. I felt he was withdrawing, withdrawing in an extraordinary manner. He was coming out of himself and gathering and pouring himself into me. He was coming out consciously and deliberately with the full force of a concentrated will. He continued to do so steadily, ceaselessly for hours. It ended at about 1 o'clock, I looked at the time.

There was no slackness or interruption or stop at any moment. It was throughout the same steady continuous flow, without a break, without a diminution in the strength. Such a concentrated undiminishing stream it was. The process continued until he was wholly within me as though he was pumping and exhausting all he was in the body till the last drop. I say it was wonderful — I never experienced such a thing. The flow stopped when there was very little left in the body: I let the body remain as long as it was needed for the work to continue, till long, quite long after the doctors declared it dead.

As he was in life, he could not have done the thing, I did not expect it of him, it must have been some past life of his that was at work and did the thing. Not many Yogis, not even the greatest among them could do such a thing. There he is within here, quite wakeful, looking in a rather amused way at what you people are doing. He is merged in me wholly, that is dwelling within me, not dissolved: he has his personality intact. Amrita is different. He is there outside, one of you, one among you people moving about. At times, of course, when he wants to take rest and repose he comes and lodges here. A remarkable story. A great and very difficult thing Pavitra has done.

25-5-1969

* *Mother India*, May 1974.

A Talk of the Mother on April 17, 1969 *

A Report Based on Notes Taken at the Time

I know very well the troubles and difficulties India is facing. I am constantly giving my help and blessings to her leader.

As for the danger of Communism, Communism is a truth that has been distorted. When the truth comes out, the distortion will fall off. The truth is that all one's efforts and all one's work should be turned to the Divine. But in place of the Divine the State has been put.

Only one country in the world knows that there is only one Truth to which everything should be turned, and that country is India. Other countries have forgotten this, but in India it is ingrained in the people, and one day it will come out.

We must all recognise this and work for this. India is the cradle of the Truth and will lead the world to it. But she has to realise her role, and then she will find her real place in the world.

One should decide to become an obedient, faithful and devoted servant of the Truth and the Truth alone. Then nothing can obstruct one. All outward difficulties, and even persons trying to upset one's position, will be unable to have any effect. Although they may seem to succeed, nothing can prevail if one is firm in faith and devoted to serving the Truth.

To be a real servitor of the Truth, one must forget all personal desires and preferences and have only the thought to serve the Truth.

I hope the men hearing me will not be offended, but it is only women who know how to use the Power that comes from serving the Truth.

The laws of man cannot stand before the laws of the Divine and ultimately it is the laws of the Divine that will prevail.

The new Consciousness that descended on the 1st of January is very active, and we have come to an extremely critical time in the history of the

* *Mother India*, April 24, 1974.

world. It is most interesting to watch how things are happening. This new Consciousness is preparing for the Superman and so there are big changes occurring all around. When the first man developed, the animal had no mind and could not appreciate the evolution. Man has mind and can appreciate it. That is why the present is the most interesting period in history. If one can stand in the new Consciousness and watch all events from above, one can see how small and futile they are and then one can act upon them with a great power.

I am aware of the condition of the country. If even one person can put himself faithfully at the disposal of the Truth, he can change the country and the world.

Auroville is the only hope for preventing a third world war. Tensions are growing and the situation is becoming very critical. But the idea of Auroville, if it can be more widespread, can prevent world war.

The children who are born at this time are fortunate.

Notes by D. & N. S.

Sri Aurobindo and the Supermind's Descent *

A Written Question and the Mother's Oral Answer

Q. Here is a quotation from you, which appeared in 1954 in an article by the Associate Editor of *Mother India*: "Even in 1938 I used to see the Supermind descending into Sri Aurobindo. What he could not do at that time was to fix it here."

An article in February 1968 by the Editor has understood this to mean that in 1938 the Supramental Force, which had already settled in Sri Aurobindo's inner being, made its first appearance in his body but could not yet be fixed down in it, so as to make it stay there.

Could one know from you what exactly the truth is?

A. The Supermind was established in Sri Aurobindo but it had not transformed his body. To put it precisely, he did not have a supramentalised body and that is why he could undergo death.

The Supramental Force was there up to the subtle-physical, and when he left his body this Force made a halo of light around it, visible for some days.

1970

* *Mother India*, December 1974.

Sri Aurobindo's Home in the Subtle-Physical *

A Letter To The Mother, With The Mother's Reply

The Letter

27.2.1963

Last night Amal told me that you had spoken of “a permanent home of Sri Aurobindo in the subtle-physical”. At once my mind went back to a dream in last September. This is how it ran:

I enter the Ashram and see that there is some difference in the building. I say, “Well, something has changed.” And I see a staircase and climb. I pass through a corridor upstairs towards a room at the end of it. In this room there are cupboards very high, reaching near to the ceiling. All the walls are lined with such cupboards which have moon-silver panels and glass doors. On top of the cupboards there are lovely vases of various colours and designs — vases such as we never find on earth. I am standing at the door of the room. On the floor I see a carpet one-foot thick, adorned with beautiful designs and I say to myself, “This room with book cupboards is not Mother's room. It belongs to Sri Aurobindo. All these books are written by him.”

Then I look for another room, thinking Mother might be there. I see a room and go to its door. But I find something quite different from what I was expecting. It is not Mother's room. The whole room is made as if of moon-silver. And the furniture consists of two beds, two cupboards, two dressing-tables — everything two. All the furniture is carved out of moon-silver. And the arrangement of things draws from me the exclamation, “How beautiful!” Then I say to myself again, “Some day in the future, Mother and Sri Aurobindo will come and stay here.”

So again I search for another room where I may see Mother. I find a third room. This room is not of moon-silver. It is a little golden in colour. The carpet is also as if of gold stuff — very soft, with a flower-design in red.

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1976.

And I see on the carpet four or five low small Japanese tables, all carved in gold. On the tables there are plates with fruits that we never see on earth. And there are some tiny toys on the carpet — rabbits and deer and other animals — as if they were decorations. Then I just kneel down and stretch my hand to touch and pick up one of the toys. Suddenly the toy becomes alive and runs away. All the others also start moving to form a new pattern. Then I know that all these animals are real ones. I say to myself, “Oh, this is the dining room. But where can I see Mother?”

While I am wondering, I hear a voice saying, “Mother is with Sri Aurobindo and very busy. So you won’t see her today.” I turn back to go away and say, “My God, so much wealth is here — more than the wealth of the whole world, and why is Mother always telling me I must bring wealth to her?” Then I go down the stairs and — wake up.

Mother, what do you think of my dream? Have I seen something really there? Is it Sri Aurobindo’s permanent home?

I may add that the whole dream — everything in it — was bathed in an atmosphere and a light of moon-silver.

When I told Amal about it, he quoted to me four lines from Sri Aurobindo’s poem, *A God’s Labour*:

A little more and the new life’s doors
Shall be carved in silver light
With its aureate roof and mosaic floors
In a great world bare and bright.

SEHRA

The Mother’s Reply

It is certainly part of His permanent home in the subtle-physical — a part of it only. Once, surely, you will meet Him there.

A Message by Nolini *

Mother once told me — “If ever I leave my body my Consciousness will remain with you.”

Mother is present amongst us and Her work continues.

Let us once more dedicate ourselves for Her work of transformation with utmost sincerity and faithfulness.

21-11-1973

* *Mother India*, December 5, 1973.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Tribute to the Mother *

I am profoundly grieved at the passing away of the Mother. It was rather a privilege to know such a being and to have her in our midst for so many years. May her words continue to give sustenance to her disciples and others.

The Mother was a dynamic, radiant personality with tremendous force of character and extraordinary spiritual attainments. Yet she never lost her sound practical wisdom which concerned itself with the running of the Ashram, the welfare of society, the founding and development of Auroville and any scheme which would promote the ideals expressed by Sri Aurobindo.

She was young in spirit, modern in mind but most expressive was her abiding faith in the spiritual greatness of India and the role which India could play in giving new light to mankind.

November 18, 1973

* *Mother India*, December 5, 1973, from newspaper reports.

An Experience on the Mother's Samadhi Day *

Heart-broken and utterly depressed I came to You, my dearest Mother, feeling lost and forlorn. It was between 1 and 2 a.m. on the 20th November.

“Is this a defeat of the Divine?” I asked. “Why did you leave Your body when all along we were expecting its transformation? Life is not worth living any longer, for all my hopes and aspirations were centred in You. You were the heart of my heart, my sole guide and protector.”

As I sat complaining thus and weeping inwardly near Your body which lay in state in the Meditation Hall, I felt a strong Force pulling me deep within myself until I lost all sense of time and space.

My physical mind, which is usually very active, ceased its noise. My body, which was full of pain and discomfort after a long and tiring journey, became so quiet that I was hardly aware of its presence.

Then slowly You appeared, as if from behind a veil. You were clad in a pale-gold robe. You looked young and beautiful — radiant with a brilliant white light.

This light was strongest round the head, circling it with an indescribable halo. It extended intensely down to the waist. Still lower, it was a little less bright. From Your body it spread out to the whole world.

Seeing me gaze at You in utter amazement, You smiled Your sweet and loving smile and said, “There is no defeat of the Divine. This too is a triumph leading to Glory.”

When You spoke these words I understood them perfectly; later when I tried to explain them in the mental way their precise meaning evaded me. Actually, words as we know them were not uttered, but I could hear within me what was silently conveyed.

* *Mother India*, December 5, 1973.

You added, "I have not left you and never will. Forget ego, give up self; live and work in harmony and unity for the Divine."

Then, opening both Your palms and interlacing Your fingers, You finally said, "And the Advent will not be far."

I was greatly heartened by Your Message. All sorrow and forlornness passed from me.

The vision withdrew as if You had gone into another room, and I gradually woke up and became conscious once more of time and space and all that they hold for us.

LALITA

This Secret Splendour *

Thou hast withdrawn with flying golden banners,
Golden trumpets with music mute —
Our hearts lie injured, bleeding — a barren world —
A Krishna with a voiceless flute!

I have loved Thee for these forty years and more,
But now is still Thy radiant smiling face.
Reveal to us the meaning of this secret splendour,
The mystery of Thy seeming withdrawal of Grace.

Yes, merely “seeming” to our stunned saddened eyes —
For, Thy eternal glorious Promise we know.
Thy undying Consciousness pervades all time,
Only the beloved outer being is now laid low.

Thou art still the Keeper of our souls,
Of our very lives the Treasury —
Those two fragile hands the Safety of our universe.
Our inner citadel rests for ever in Thee!

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

* *Mother India*, December 5, 1973.

Into the Depths *

A Revelation

Early in the morning of the 12th May 1974 I had a very powerful dream. I saw a column of white light descending from above. The white light was fringed on both sides by a line of golden light.

The column went down into a pit which had a round opening. The white light gave the impression of an intensity which was at the same time sweet, calm and soothing. The descent continued for a minute. When it was over, the pit was filled and there hung over it a bright haze which was very beautiful.

The dream left an extremely vivid and concrete impression.

HUTA

A Comment by Nolini

It is a true and very beautiful experience.

Naturally, it is Mother's Presence and the living action of Her Force.

* *Mother India*, September 1974.

A Dream of Reality *

In a dream on August 15, 1974, early in the morning, I saw the Mother lying on a bed. Her body was immobile. I questioned myself: “If the Mother’s body was put in a casket, how is it that it is here?” Then I saw Her hands moving and Her eyes open.

Suddenly, while I was wondering, I found Her standing near me. She embraced me and I had the same feeling as when She used to embrace me in the old days. I was still in amazement. She then became invisible but I distinctly heard Her parting words:

“I am coming...”

HUTA

A Comment by Nolini

She showed to you her living presence still continues.

* *Mother India*, November 1974.

A Dream-Vision *

On 16th October 1974 early in the morning I had a dream-vision. I saw Durga's lion — a beautiful, majestic, golden-skinned creature. In front of him was a strange-looking being. It was felt to be Falsehood. The lion leaped upon it, tearing its face with his claws and then ripping the whole body. He pulled out, one after another, all the hidden parts and ate them up. What remained was only the hollow skin of the body.

But to my utter amazement this skin started to move, hopping forward in order to create an impression of life and have an effect in the world.

HUTA

A Comment by Nolini

It is self-explanatory. The hostile force is destroyed, but its shadow remains for some time.

* *Mother India*, January 1975.

A Message Heard on November 17, 1974 *

Before Passing in a Queue through the Mother's Room

“Do not look for me only in my room. I have liberated myself from my human's body. I am now everywhere.”

SEHRA

* *Mother India*, February 21, 1975.

A Dream-Vision of the Mother *

Outside Sri Aurobindo's room I was waiting for the Mother to come from the room in the eastern wing where she used to stand and receive people in the course of every morning. Some people were in that room. The Mother entered it, spoke with them and then turned and saw me.

Smiling, she put both her arms forward as if to draw me towards her. I went and held her hands and told her: "Mother, I am depressed because I've to see you only in my dreams — and that also not every night."

She then took me near Sri Aurobindo's room and said a little angrily: "Why can't you open your eyes and see me whenever you want to see? I am always there. Why should people think they can see me only in their dreams?"

I replied: "Mother, I am an ordinary person. Many a time I feel your presence just next to me, and I try to see you but I can't. How can I with my eyes open — unless you do something for me?"

She laughed and, tapping my left shoulder, said: "Have some patience."

SEHRA

* *Mother India*, November 21, 1975.