



ALL INDIA MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2020

Steps of the Shakti

Cover Page Picture:
Milky way Galaxy in Motion

Ambadress twixt eternity and change,
The omniscient Goddess leaned across the breadths
That wrap the fated journeyings of the stars
And saw the spaces ready for her feet.

Savitri, p. 4

Sri Aurobindo

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Steps of the Shakti

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

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Editorial note : 2020 is a doubly special year. It is a leap year and hence the sixteenth anniversary of the supramental manifestation that took place on the 29th February 1956. It is also the centenary year of the Mother's final arrival to Pondicherry. On the 142nd birth anniversary of the Mother on the 21st February we try to trace a few of Her more visible outer steps after Her leaving Pondicherry on the 22nd February 1915 and Her return back to Pondicherry on the 24th April 1920. This of course to get a small little window glimpse of the last bit of Her pre-pondicherry life knowing well that whatever we may know of Her will always be little.

*"A thousand icons they have made of her
But she remains herself and infinite." Savitri, p.276*



Sri Aurobindo had a great liking for France. I was born there — certainly for a reason. In my case, I know it very well: it was the need of culture, of a clear and precise mind, of refined thought, taste and clarity of mind — there is no other country in the world for that. None. And Sri Aurobindo had a liking for France for that same reason, a great liking.... With France's intellectual quality, the quality of her mind, the day she is truly touched spiritually (she never has been), the day she is touched spiritually, it will be something exceptional.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, July 3, 1963

FRANCE

The aura of protection

Once, in Paris, I was crossing the Boulevard Saint Michel. It was during the last weeks; I had decided that within a certain number of months I would achieve union with the psychic Presence, the inner Divine, and I no longer had any other thought, any other concern. I lived near the Luxembourg Gardens and every evening I used to walk there — but always deeply absorbed within. There is a kind of intersection there, and it is not a place to cross when one is deeply absorbed within; it was not very sensible. And so I was like that, I was walking, when I suddenly received a shock, as if I had received a blow, as if something had hit me, and I jumped back instinctively. And as soon as I had jumped back, a tram went past — it was the tram that I had felt at a little more than arm's length. It had touched the aura, the aura of protection — it was very strong at that time, I was deeply immersed in occultism and I knew how to keep it — the aura of protection had been hit and that had literally thrown me backwards, as if I had received a physical shock. And what insults from the driver! I jumped back just in time and the tram went by.

CWM 10: 130-31

Painting a cathedral

I remember a good-hearted priest in Pau [Southern France] who was an artist and wanted to have his church decorated — a tiny cathedral. He consulted a local anarchist (a great artist) about it. The anarchist was acquainted with André's father and me. He told the priest, 'I recommend these people to do the paintings — they are true artists.' He was doing the mural decoration — some eight panels in all, I believe. So I set to work

on one of the panels. (The church was dedicated to San Juan de Compostello, a hero of Spanish history; he had appeared in a battle between the Christians and the Moors and his apparition vanquished the Moors. And he was magnificent! He appeared in golden light on a white horse, almost like Kalki.) All the slaughtered and struggling Moors were depicted at the bottom of the painting, and it was I who painted them; it was too hard for me to climb high up on a ladder to paint, so I did the things at the bottom! But anyway, it all went quite well. Then, naturally, the priest received us and invited us to dinner with the anarchist. And he was so nice — really a kind-hearted man! I was already a vegetarian and didn't drink, so he scolded me very gently, saying, 'But it's Our Lord who gives us all this, so why shouldn't you take it?'... I found him charming. And when he looked at the paintings, he tapped Morisset on the shoulder (Morisset was an unbeliever), and said, with the accent of Southern France, 'Say what you like, but you know Our Lord; otherwise you could never otherwise you could never have painted like that!'

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, April 29, 1961

Trance as a young child

There was another thing (laughing): even as a young child, I would all of a sudden, right in the middle of an action or a sentence or anything at all, go into trance — and nobody knew what it was! They would all think I had gone to sleep! But I remained conscious, with an arm raised or in the middle of a word — and poof! No one there (*Mother laughs*). No one there outwardly, but inwardly quite an intense, interesting experience. That used to happen to me even when I was very young.

I remember once (I must have been ten or twelve years old at the time), there was a luncheon at my parents' house for a

dozen or so people, all decked out in their Sunday best – they were family but all the same it was a ‘luncheon’ and there was a certain protocol; in short, one had to behave properly. I was at one end of the table next to a first-cousin of mine who later became director of the Louvre for a while (he had an artistic intelligence, a rather capable young man). So there we were, and I remember I was observing something rather interesting in his atmosphere (mind you, although the faculties were already there, I knew nothing about occult things; if someone had spoken to me of ‘auras’ and all that.... I knew nothing). I was observing a kind of sensation I had felt in his atmosphere and then, just as I was putting the fork into my mouth, I took off! What a scolding I got! I was told that if I didn’t know how to behave, I shouldn’t come to the table!

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, August 5, 1961

Going out of the body

It was during this period that I used to go out of my body every night and do the work I’ve spoken of in *Prayers and Meditations* (I only mentioned it in passing). Every night at the same hour, when the whole house was very quiet, I would go out of my body and have all kinds of experiences. And then my body gradually became a sleepwalker (that is, the consciousness of the form became more and more conscious, while the link remained very solidly established). I got into the habit of getting up – but not like an ordinary sleepwalker: I would get up, open my desk, take out a piece of paper and write ... poems. Yes, poems – I, who had nothing of the poet in me! I would jot things down, then very consciously put everything back into the drawer, lock everything up again very carefully and go back to bed. One night, for some reason or other, I forgot and left it open. My mother came in (in France the windows are covered

with heavy curtains and in the morning my mother would come in and violently throw open the curtains, waking me up, brrm!, without any warning; but I was used to it and would already be prepared to wake up — otherwise it would have been most unpleasant!). Anyway, my mother came in, calling me with unquestionable authority, and then she found the open desk and the piece of paper: ‘What’s that?!’ She grabbed it. ‘What have you been up to?’ I don’t know what I replied, but she went to the doctor: ‘My daughter has become a sleepwalker! You have to give her a drug.’ !’

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, August 5, 1961

That’s what I have to live

In fact, if I look at the order my own yoga took.... When I was five years old (I must have begun earlier, but the memory is a bit vague and imprecise) ... but from five onwards, in my consciousness (not a mental memory but — how can I put it? - it’s noted, a notation in my consciousness) ... well, I began with consciousness. Of course I had no idea what it was. But my first experience was of the consciousness here (*gesture above the head*), which I felt like a Light and a Force; and I felt it there (*same gesture*) at the age of five. It was a very pleasant sensation. I would sit in a little armchair made especially for me, all alone in my room, and I ... (I didn’t know what it was, you see, not a thing, nothing – mentally zero) and I had a very pleasant feeling of something very strong, very luminous, and it was here (*above the head*). Consciousness. And I felt, "That’s what I have to live, what I have to be." Not with all those words, naturally, but ... (*Mother makes a gesture of aspiration Upward*). Then I would pull it down, for it was ... it was truly my *raison d’être*.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, July 25, 1962

Art, music and painting

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

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, July 25, 1962

The link was established

For a long, long time, that was also the one thing I felt was worth living for — Consciousness. When I met Théon and came to understand the mechanism, I also understood why I wasn't conscious at a certain level. I think I've told you how I spent ten months one year working to connect two layers — two layers of consciousness; the contact wasn't established and so I couldn't have the spontaneous experience of a whole spectrum of things. Madame Théon told me, "It's because there's an undeveloped layer between this part and that part." I was very conscious of all the gradations: Théon had explained it all in the simplest terms, so you didn't need to be, as I said, a genius to understand. He had made a quadruple division, and each of them was divided into four, and then again into four, making innumerable divisions of the being; but with that mental

simplification you could make in-depth psychological studies of your own being. And so by observation and elimination I eventually discovered that between this and that (*gesture indicating two levels of Mother's consciousness*), there was an undeveloped layer — it wasn't conscious. So I worked for ten months on nothing but that: absolutely no results. I didn't care, I kept right on, telling myself, "Well, it may take me fifty years to get anywhere, who knows." And then I left for the country (I was living in Paris at the time). I lay down on the grass, and all at once, with the contact of earth and grass, poof! There was a sort of inner explosion — the link was established, and full consciousness came, along with all the ensuing experiences. "Well," I said to myself, "it was worth all the trouble!"

And I am sure that's how the work is done, slowly, imperceptibly, like a chick being formed in the egg: you see the shell, you see only the shell, you don't know what's inside, whether it's just an egg or a chick (normally, I mean — of course, you could see through with special instruments) and then the beak goes peck-peck! And then cheep! Out comes the chick, just like that. It's the same thing exactly for the contact with the psychic being. For months on end, sometimes years, you may be sitting before a closed door, push, push, pushing, and feeling, feeling the pressure (it hurts!), and there's nothing, no results. Then all at once, you don't know why or how, you sit down and poof! Everything bursts wide open, everything is ready, everything is done — it's over, you emerge into a full psychic consciousness and become intimate with your psychic being. Then everything changes — everything changes — your life completely changes, it's a total reversal of your whole existence.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, September 5, 1962

The world of music

The first time I heard Beethoven's concerto in D — in D major, for violin and orchestra ... suddenly the violin starts up (it's not right at the beginning — first there's an orchestral passage and then the violin takes it up), and with the first notes of the violin (Ysaye was playing, what a musician!), with the very first notes my head suddenly seemed to burst open, and I was cast into such splendor.... Oh, it was absolutely wonderful! For more than an hour I was in a state of bliss. Ysaye was a true musician!

And mind you, I knew nothing of all those worlds, I hadn't the slightest knowledge; but all my experiences came that way — unexpectedly, without my seeking anything. When I looked at a painting, same thing: something would suddenly open up inside my head and I would see the origin of the painting — and such colors!... One can get to that world directly from the vital, without going through all the mental gradations.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, October 27, 1962

Aspiration arising from music

The Jewish temples in Paris have such beautiful music; oh, what beautiful music! I had one of my first experiences in a temple. It was at a marriage, and the music was wonderful — Saint-Saens, I later learned; organ music, the second best organ in Paris — wonderful! I was 14 years old, sitting high up in the galleries with my mother, and this music was being played. There were some leaded-glass windows — white, with no designs. I was gazing at one of these windows, feeling uplifted by the music, when suddenly through the window came a flash like a bolt of lightning. Just like lightning. It entered — my eyes were open — it entered like this (*Mother strikes her breast violently*) and then I ... I had the feeling of becoming vast and all-powerful.... And it lasted for days. I learned later that it was

an entity from the past who had come back into me through the aspiration arising from the music.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, April 29, 1961

The Mother's music

But what I play isn't music, I don't try to play music: it's simply a sort of meditation with sound.

I constantly hear something like great waves of music. I just have to withdraw a little, and there it is; I hear it. It is always there. It is music, but without sound! Great waves of music. And whenever I hear those waves, my hands get the urge to play.

CWSA 32: 571

When I play I generally hear what I am playing. It's hard to say.... It's not just an ordinary sound, it's a combination of sounds, and it's not ... no, it's true, it's not the same sound but something like the essence of that sound. But for instance, I have a sort of feeling that what I am hearing should be expressed by a large orchestra.... I see it, you know, I see something like large orchestras around me, on my right, on my left – and I am supposed to transcribe it on a harmonium! It's like an orchestra made up of groups of musicians, with each group expressing one part of that combination, which is a much more complete sound than the ear can perceive. That's what it is. It's not something you can express just by humming a little tune, but a whole body of musical vibrations. And as I hear it, I see how it should be expressed. I see large orchestras around me. But it's another kind of vision; it's not the precise vision of the physical eye, but something very ... it's how consciousness sees. How can I describe it! All you can say is that it's not our normal kind of vision, or hearing, either.

It's quite a total knowledge, which includes a vision, an awareness of the combination of sounds and how they should be expressed....

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, October 27, 1962

Leaving the psychic being with Sri Aurobindo

You know that after living with Sri Aurobindo for a year, when I left at the time of the [first world] war, because of the war, all the nerves fell ill: they were in a state of irritated tension (I think they call it neuritis, when all, but all the nerves are ill). It's particularly painful, and everything is disorganised all over: the circulation was disorganised, the digestion was disorganized, everything was disorganised (it was in France, in southern France). The nerves remember that, and I don't know why, once when things here were very difficult, they remembered. Sri Aurobindo was there and I told him (I think I've already told you the story): I absolutely had the sense of a hand coming and taking the whole pain away like that – in one second it was gone. And it had never returned. Now, from time to time, when people are ill-disposed or their thoughts are bad, and when in addition there's no rest, no eating, no sleeping, then from time to time, here or there, the nerves get strained. It's a sharp pain at its height. In France, I had it for weeks. Sometimes it comes, and then I have to keep still and ... melt ... in the Divine Presence – then it's over, it goes away without a trace....

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, Feb 20, 1968

They call it a disease of the nerves: all the nerves are sensitised and suffer terribly. When I first had it, I could no longer eat, no longer sleep, no longer move, no longer ...

And that was because ... I had done something mad: I went back to France after leaving my psychic being here; so it seized

me as soon as I was far enough from the atmosphere; as soon as I entered the Mediterranean, it began. And it was very serious.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 12, 1969

Abuse of power in Religions

Of course, my mother was such an out-and-out materialist, thank God, that it was impossible to speak to her of invisible things — she took them as evidence of a deranged brain! Nothing counted for her but what could be touched and seen. But this was a divine grace — I had no opportunity to say anything. I kept my experience to myself. But it was one of my first contacts with.... I learned later that it was an entity from the past who had come back into me through the aspiration arising from the music.

But I have rarely had an experience in churches. Rather the opposite: I have very often had the painful experience of the human effort to find solace, a divine compassion ... falling into very bad hands.

One of my most terrible experiences took place in Venice (the cathedrals there are so beautiful — magnificent!). I remember I was painting — they had let me settle down in a corner to paint — and nearby there was a ... (what do they call it?) ... a confessional. And a poor woman was kneeling there in distress — with such a dreadful sense of sin! So piteous! She wept and wept. Then I saw the priest coming, oh, like a monster, a hard-hearted monster! He went inside; he was like an iron bar. And there was this poor woman sobbing, sobbing; and the voice of the other one, hard, curt.... I could barely contain myself.

I don't know why, but I have had this kind of experience so very often: either a hostile force lurking behind and swallowing up everything, or else man — ruthless man abusing the Power.

In fact, I have seen this all over the world. I have never been

on very good terms with religions, neither in Europe, nor Africa, nor Japan, nor even here.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, April 29, 1961

The most contradictory experiences

I have had the most contradictory experiences! Only one thing has been continuous from my childhood on (and the more I look, the more I see how continuous it has been): this divine Presence — and in someone who, in her external life, might very well have said, ‘God? What is this foolishness! God doesn’t exist!’ So you understand, you see the picture.

You know, it’s a marvelous, marvelous grace to have had this experience so constantly, so powerfully, like something holding out against everything, everything: this Presence. And in my outward consciousness, a total negation of it all. Even later on, I used to say, ‘Well, if God exists, he’s a real scoundrel! He’s a wretch and I want nothing to do with this Creator of ours....’ You know, the idea of God sitting placidly in his heaven, creating the world and amusing himself by watching it, then telling you, ‘How well done!’ ‘Oh!’ I said, ‘I want nothing to do with that monster!’

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, April 29, 1961

The thirst for Knowledge

At the age of eighteen, I remember having such an intense need in me to know.... Because I was having experiences — I had all kinds of experiences — but my surroundings offered me no chance to receive an intellectual knowledge which would have given me the meaning of it all: I couldn’t even speak of them. I was having experience after experience.... For years, I had experiences during the night (but I was very careful never to speak about them!) — memories from past lives, all sorts of things,

but without any base of intellectual knowledge. (Of course, the advantage of this was that my experiences were not mentally contrived; they were entirely spontaneous.) But I had such a need in me to know! ... I remember living in a house (one of these houses with a lot of apartments), and in the apartment next door were some young Catholics whose faith was very ... they were very convinced. And seeing all that, I remember saying to myself one day while brushing my hair, 'These people are lucky to be born into a religion and believe unquestioningly! It's so easy! You have nothing to do but believe — how simple that makes it.' I was feeling like this, and then when I realised what I was thinking (*laughing*), well, I gave myself a good scolding: 'Lazybones!'

To know, know, know! ... You see, I knew nothing, really, nothing but the things of ordinary life: external knowledge. I had learned everything I had been given to learn. I not only learned what I was taught but also what my brother was taught — higher mathematics and all that! I learned and I learned and I learned — and it was nothing. None of it explained anything to me — nothing. I couldn't understand a thing!

To know! ...

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

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, April 29, 1961

Abdul Baha

I knew Abdul Baha very well, the successor of Baha Ullah, founder of the Bahai religion; Abdul Baha was his son. He was born in prison and lived in prison till he was forty, I believe. When he came out of prison his father was dead and he began to preach his father's religion....

*

He was the son of the famous Baha Ullah who had been put into prison for spreading ideas that were more progressive and broad-minded than those of the Sufis, and was resented by orthodox Muslims. After his death, his son, the sole heir, became determined to preach his father's religious ideas, and for this purpose he travelled to many countries of the world. He had an excellent nature. He was as simple as his aspiration was great. I liked him very much....

His sincerity and his aspiration for the Divine were simple and very spontaneous. One day, when I went to visit him, he was to give a lecture to his disciples. But he was sick and could not get up. Perhaps the meeting would have to be postponed. When I came near to him, he said, "Go and take my place at today's lecture." I was startled, unprepared as I was to hear such a request. I said to him, "I am not a member of your sect and I know nothing about it, so how can I talk to them about anything?" But he insisted, saying, "It does not matter. Say anything at all, it will be quite all right. Go and talk.... Concentrate in the sitting-room and then speak." At last he persuaded me to do it....

Then one day he asked me to stay in Paris and take the responsibility for his disciples. But I told him that as I did not myself accept the beliefs of his sect, it was out of the question for me to do so....

CWM 2: 108-09

A talk at the insistence of Abdul Baha

All the prophets, all the instructors who have come to bring the divine word to men, have, on one point at least, given an identical teaching.

All of them have taught us that the greatest truths are sterile unless they are transformed through us into useful actions. All have proclaimed the necessity of living their revelation in daily life. All have declared that they show us the path but that we must tread it ourselves; no being, however great, can do our work in our stead.

Baha Ullah was no exception to this rule. I shall not quote the texts to you, you know them as well and better than I do. How many times Abdul Baha has said: "Do not talk, act; words are of no use without actions, we must be an example to the world."

It is indeed very necessary that each one of us should be an example to the world. For it is only by showing to men how an inner commerce with the eternal truths transforms disorder into harmony and suffering into peace, that we shall induce them to follow the way which will lead them towards liberation. But Abdul Baha is not content to give us this teaching, he is living it, and therein lies all his power of persuasion.

Indeed, who has seen Abdul Baha and not felt in his presence this perfect goodness, this sweet serenity, this peace emanating from his being?

And the revelations of Baha Ullah imparted through the mouth of his son are all the more comprehensible and convincing to us since he is living them within himself.

To some of you, perhaps, this reflection will occur: "If Abdul Baha can realise this beauty, it is because he is the master, but for us..."

Certainly, our indolence could not formulate a better reason for refusing to make any effort, but this is merely a lazy excuse.

There is, without doubt, an almost ineradicable difference between individuals, the one arising from their special role, their place, their status in the infinite hierarchy of beings; but whatever this role or status may be, within it each one can develop his own qualities to perfection, each one can and must aspire to gain the perfect purity, the perfect sincerity, the deep harmony which bring us into accord with the laws of order in the universe.

I knew an old sage who used to compare men to minerals that were more or less crude, more or less rich, but all containing gold. Let this ore undergo the purifying flames of spiritualisation and at the bottom of the crucible will be found an ingot which is more or less heavy, but always of pure gold.

We must therefore seek to release from its matrix the pure gold that is within us.

CWM 2: 109-10

On the departure of Abdul Baha

Last Monday, Abdul Baha took leave of us; in a very few days he will have left Paris, and I know many hearts which will feel a great void and will grieve.

Yet only the body is leaving us, and what is the body if not precisely that in which men are most alike, be they great or small, wise or ignorant, terrestrial or divine? Yes, you may rest assured that only his body is leaving us; his thought will remain faithfully with us, and his unchanging affection will enfold us, and his spiritual influence will always be the same, absolutely the same. Whether materially he is near or far matters little, for the divine forces elude completely the laws of the material world: they are omnipresent, always at work to satisfy every receptivity, every sincere aspiration.

So although it may be pleasant for our outer being to see his physical appearance or hear his voice, to dwell in his pres-

ence, we must truly tell ourselves that, inasmuch as it seems indispensable to us, this shows that we are still little conscious of the inner life, the true life.

Even if we do not attain to the marvellous depths of the divine life, of which only very rare individuals are constantly conscious, already in the domain of thought we escape the laws of time and space.

To think of someone is to be near him, and wherever two beings may find themselves, even if they are physically separated by thousands of kilometres, if they think of each other they are together in a very real way. If we are able to concentrate our thought sufficiently and to concentrate sufficiently in our thought, we can become integrally conscious of what we are thinking of, and if it is a man, sometimes see or hear him — in any case know his thought.

Thus separation no longer exists, it is an illusory appearance. And in France, in America, in Persia or in China, we are always near the one we love and think of.

But this fact is all the more real in a case such as ours, where we want to come into contact with an especially active and conscious thought, a thought which assumes and manifests an infinite love, a thought which enfolds the whole earth with a loving and fatherly solicitude that is only too glad to come to the help of those who entrust themselves to it.

Experience this mental communion and you will see that there is no room for sorrow.

CWM 2: 114-15

The great art in everything

Till the age of twenty or twenty-one I spoke very little, and never, never anything like a speech. I wouldn't take part in conversations: I would listen, but speak very little.... Then I was put

in touch with Abdul Baha (the "Bahai"), who was then in Paris, and a sort of intimacy grew between us. I used to go to his gatherings because I was interested. And one day when I was in his room, he said to me, "I am sick, I can't speak; go and speak for me." I said, "Me! But I don't speak." He replied, "You just have to go there, sit quietly and concentrate, and what you have to say will come to you. Go and do it, you will see." Well then (*laughing*), I did as he said. There were some thirty or forty people. I went and sat in their midst, stayed very still, and then ... I sat like that, without a thought, nothing, and suddenly I started speaking. I spoke to them for a half-hour (I don't even know what I told them), and when it was over everybody was quite pleased. I went to see Abdul Baha, who told me, "You spoke admirably." I said, "It wasn't me!" And from that day (I had got the knack from him, you understand!), I would stay like that, very still, and everything would come. It's especially the sense of the "I" that must be lost – that's the great art in everything, for everything, anything you do: for painting, for ... (I did painting, sculpture, architecture even, I did music), for everything, but everything, if you are able to lose the sense of the "I," then you open yourself to ... to the knowledge of the thing (sculpture, painting, etc.). It's not necessarily beings, but the spirit of the thing that uses you.

Well, I think it should be the same thing with language. One should be tuned in to someone in that way, or through that someone to something still higher: the Origin. And then, very, very passive. But not inertly passive: vibrantly passive, receptive, like that, attentive, letting "that" come in and be expressed. The result would be there to see.... As I said, we are limited by what we know, but that may be because we're still too much of a "person"; if we could be perfectly plastic it might be different: there have been instances of people speaking in a

language they didn't know, therefore ...

It's interesting.

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

When it's like that, all goes well.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, February 18, 1967

Rajayoga and the Gita

I don't know to whom I was mentioning this today... No, I don't know now. It was to someone who told me he was 18 years old. I said that between the ages of 18 and 20, I had attained a constant and conscious union with the Divine Presence and that I had done this all alone, without anyone's help, not even books. When a little later I chanced upon Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, it really seemed so wonderful to me that someone could explain something to me! And it helped me realise in only a few months what would have otherwise taken years.

I met a man (I was perhaps 20 or 21 at the time), an Indian who had come to Europe and who told me of the *Gita*. There was a French translation of it (a rather poor one, I must say) which he advised me to read, and then he gave me the key (HIS key, it was his key). He said, 'Read the *Gita* ...' (this translation of the *Gita* which really wasn't worth much but it was the only one available at the time – in those days I wouldn't have understood anything in other languages; and besides, the English translations were just as bad and ... well, Sri Aurobindo hadn't

done his yet!). He said, 'Read the *Gita* knowing that Krishna is the symbol of the immanent God, the God within.' That was all. 'Read it with that knowledge – with the knowledge that Krishna represents the immanent God, the God within you.' Well, within a month, the whole thing was done!

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, Aug 25, 1954

A constant and conscious union with the Divine

I said that between the age of eighteen and twenty I had attained a conscious and constant union with the divine Presence and that I had done it *all alone*, with *absolutely nobody* to help me, not even books, you understand! When I found one – there came to my hands a little later Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* – it seemed to me so wonderful a thing, you see, that someone could explain something to me. This made me gain in a few months what would have perhaps taken me years to do.

I met a man. I was perhaps twenty-one then, I think, either twenty or twenty-one. I met a man who was an Indian, who came from here, and he spoke to me about the *Gita*. There was a translation, which, by the way, was quite bad, and he advised me to read it and gave me the key – his key, it was his key – he told me: "Read the *Gita*, this translation of the *Gita* which is not up to much, but still that's the only one in French." At that time I wouldn't have been able to understand anything in any other language. Besides, the English translations were as bad and I did not have... Sri Aurobindo had not yet written his.

He said, "Read the *Gita*, and take Krishna as the symbol of the immanent God, the inner Godhead." This was all that he told me. He said to me, "Read it with that – the knowledge that Krishna represents the immanent God in the *Gita*, the God who is within you." Well, in one month the whole work was done! CWM 6: 298-99

The Mother

Algeria

Theon and Madame Theon

He (Max Theon) had assumed two names: one was an Arab name he had adopted when he took refuge in Algeria (I don't know for what reason). After having worked with Blavatsky and having founded an occult society in Egypt, he went to Algeria, and there he first called himself 'Aia Aziz' (a word of Arabic origin meaning 'the beloved'). Then, when he began setting up his *Cosmic Review* and his 'cosmic group,' he called himself Max Theon, meaning the supreme God (!), the greatest God! And no one knew him by any other name than these two – Aia Aziz or Max Theon.

He had an English wife.

He said he had received initiation in India (he knew a little Sanskrit and the Rig-Veda thoroughly), and then he formulated a tradition which he called the 'cosmic tradition' and which he claimed to have received – I don't know how – from a tradition anterior to that of the Cabala and the Vedas. But there were many things (Madame Theon was the clairvoyant one, and she received visions; oh, she was wonderful!), many things that I myself had seen and known before knowing them which were then substantiated.

So personally, I am convinced that there was indeed a tradition anterior to both these traditions containing a knowledge very close to an integral knowledge. Certainly, there is a similarity in the experiences. When I came here and told Sri Aurobindo certain things I knew from the occult standpoint, he always said that it conformed to the Vedic tradition. And as for certain occult practices, he told me that they were entirely tantric – and I knew nothing at that time, absolutely nothing, neither the Vedas nor the Tantras.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 4, 1958

I am never afraid

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

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

Have you seen his photo? No? I'll have to show it to you. He was a handsome man, about sixty years old – between fifty and sixty.

And do you know how he received me when I arrived there?... It was the first time in my life I had traveled alone and the first time I had crossed the Mediterranean. Then there was a fairly long train ride between Oran and Tlemcen – anyway, I managed rather well: I got there. He met me at the station and we set off for his place by car (it was rather far away). Finally we reached his estate – a wonder! It spread across the hillside overlooking the whole valley of Tlemcen. We arrived from below and had to climb up some wide pathways. I said nothing – it was truly an experience from a material standpoint. When we came in sight of the house, he stopped: 'That's my house.' It was red! Painted red! And he added, 'When Barley came here, he asked me, "Why did you paint your house red?"' (Barley was a French occultist who put Theon in touch with France and was his first disciple.) There was a mischievous gleam in Theon's eyes and he smiled sardonically: 'I told Barley, "Because red goes well with green! "'With that, I began to understand the

gentleman.... We continued on our way uphill when suddenly, without warning, he spun around, planted himself in front of me, and said, 'Now you are at my mercy. Aren't you afraid?' Just like that. So I looked at him, smiled and replied, 'I'm never afraid. I have the Divine here.' (*Mother touches her heart.*) Well, he really went pale.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, February 4, 1961

The pine story

The pine tree story is also from Tlemcen.

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

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

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

'Who are you?'

'The Lord of the Snow.'

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

So the little gnome left.

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

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

You see, when people are in this occult consciousness, everything is possible – it creates an atmosphere where all, all is possible. What to our European common sense seems impossible ... is all possible.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, February 4, 1961

Twelve bodies and the immaculate White Light

There is also what Theon and Madame Theon used to say. They never spoke of ‘Supermind,’ but they said the same thing as the Vedas, that the world of Truth must incarnate on earth and create a new world. They even picked up the old phrase from the Gospels, ‘new heavens and a new earth,’ which is the same thing the Vedas speak of. Madame Theon had this experience and she gave me the indication (she didn’t actually teach me) of how it was to be done. She would go out of her body and become conscious in the vital world (there were many intermediary states, too, if one cared to explore them). After the vital came the mental: you consciously went out of the vital body, you left it behind (you could see it) and you entered the mental world. Then you left the mental body and entered into.... They used different words, another classification (I don’t remember it), but even so, the experience was identical. And like that, she successively left twelve different bodies, one after another. She was extremely ‘developed,’ you see – individualised, organised. She could leave one body and enter the consciousness of the next plane, fully experience the surroundings and all that was there, describe it ... and so on, twelve times.

I learned to do the same thing, and with great dexterity; I could halt on any plane, do what I had to do there, move around

freely, see, observe, and then speak about what I had seen. And my last stage, which Theon called ‘*pathétisme*,’ a very barbaric but very expressive word, bordered on the Formless – he sometimes used the Jewish terminology, calling the Supreme ‘The Formless.’ (From this last stage one passed to the Formless – there was no further body to leave behind, one was beyond all possible forms, even all thought forms.) In this domain [the last stage before the Formless] one experienced total unity – unity in something that was the essence of Love; Love was a manifestation more... ‘dense,’ he would always say (there were all sorts of different ‘densities’); and Love was a denser expression of That, the sense of perfect Unity – perfect unity, identity – with no longer any forms corresponding to those of the lower worlds. It was a Light! ... An almost immaculate white light, yet with something of a golden-rose in it (words are crude). This Light and this Experience were truly wonderful, inexpressible in words.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 7, 1961

Prototype of the Supramental form

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

Afterwards, when I met Sri Aurobindo and talked to him

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

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

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

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

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

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 7, 1961

Descent into the Inconscient and the immanent God

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

it was ‘the immanent God in the depths of the Inconscient,’ who through his radiations was slowly waking the Inconscient to Consciousness.

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

I have experienced the descent into the Inconscient many times (you remember, once you were there the day it happened – it had to do with divine Love); this experience of descending to the very bottom of the Inconscient and finding there the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Presence, under one form or another. it has happened quite frequently.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 7, 1961

Building a passage through the vital

These things are very interesting. They must form part of the work I have come on earth to do. Because even before encountering Theon, before knowing anything, I had experiences at night, certain types of activities looking after people who were leaving their bodies – and with a knowledge of the process; I didn’t know what I was doing nor did I seek to know, yet I knew exactly what had to be done and I did it. I was around twenty.

As soon as I came upon Theon’s teaching (even before meeting him personally), and read and understood all kinds of things which I hadn’t known before, I began to work quite systematically. Every night, at the same hour, I was working to construct – between the purely terrestrial atmosphere and the psychic atmosphere – a path of protection across the vital, so that people wouldn’t have to pass through it (for those who are conscious but without knowledge it’s a very difficult passage – infernal.) I was preparing this path, doing this work (it must have been around 1903 or 1904, I don’t remember exactly) for months

and months and months. All sorts of extraordinary things happened during that time – extraordinary. I could tell long stories....

Then, when I went to Tlemcen, I told Madame Theon about it. ‘Yes,’ she told me, ‘it is part of the work you have come on earth to do. Everyone with even a slightly awakened psychic being who can see your Light will go to your Light at the moment of dying, no matter where they die, and you will help them to pass through.’ And this work is constant. Constant. It has given me a considerable number of experiences concerning what happens to people when they leave their bodies. I’ve had all sorts of experiences, all kinds of examples – it’s really very interesting.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, May 17, 1969

Conscious samadhi

But I myself have never had it in trance, and neither did Sri Aurobindo – neither of us ever had trances! I mean the kind of trance where contact with the body is lost. That’s what he always said, and one of the first things I told him when we met was, ‘Well, everybody talks about trance and samadhi and all those things, but I have never had them! I have never lost consciousness.’ ‘Ah,’ he replied, ‘it’s exactly the same for me!’

It depends upon the level of development, that’s what Theon used to say: ‘One goes into trance only when certain links are missing.’ He saw people as made up of innumerable small ‘bridges,’ with intermediary zones. ‘If you have an intermediary zone that is undeveloped,’ he said, ‘a zone where you are not conscious because it’s not individualised, then you will be in trance when you cross it.’ Trance is the sign of non-individualisation – the consciousness is not awake and so your body goes into trance.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 7, 1961

Consciousness of the form

When they're in too much of a hurry to burn them, sometimes they burn them alive! ... They should wait.

For there's a consciousness of the form, a life of the form. There's a consciousness, a consciousness in the form assumed by the cells. That takes seven days to come out. So sometimes the body makes abrupt movements when burned – people say it's mechanical. It's not mechanical, I know it's not.

I know it. I know that this consciousness of the form exists since I have actually gone out of it. Once, long back, I was in a so-called cataleptic state, and after awhile, while still in this state, the body began living again'; that is, it was capable of speaking and even moving (it was Theon who gave me this training). The body managed to get up and move. And yet, everything had gone out of it!

Once everything had gone out, it naturally became cold, but the body consciousness manages to draw a little energy from the air, from this or that ... And I spoke in that state. I spoke – I spoke very well, and besides, I recounted all I was seeing elsewhere.

So I don't like this habit of burning people very much.

I think they do it here (apart from entirely sanitary considerations in the case of people who have died from nasty diseases), here in India, mainly because they are very afraid of all these little entities that come from desires, impulses – things which are dispersed in the air and which make 'ghosts' and all kinds of things. All desires, all attachments, all those things are like pieces that break off (each one goes its own way, you see), then these pieces gain strength in the surrounding atmosphere, and when they can fasten on to someone, they vampirise him. Then they keep on trying to satisfy their desires.

The world, the terrestrial atmosphere, is full of filth.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, May 28, 1960

Living after the chord of life is cut

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

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

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, Aug 5, 1961

Meeting the four Asuras and the mantra of Life

It was not by choice that I met all the four Asuras – it was a decision of the Supreme. The first one, whom religions call Satan, the Asura of Consciousness, was converted and is still at work. The second [the Asura of Suffering] annulled himself in the Supreme. The third was the Lord of Death (that was Theon). And the fourth, the Master of the world, was the Lord of Falsehood; R. was an emanation, a vibhuti, as they say in India, of this Asura. Theon was the vibhuti of the Lord of Death.

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

Anyway, it was because of Theon that I first found the 'Mantra of Life,' the mantra that gives life, and he wanted me to give it to him, he wanted to possess it – it was something formidable! It was the mantra that gives life (it can make anyone at all come back into life, but that's only a small part of its power). And it was shut away in a particular place, sealed up, with my name in Sanskrit on it. I didn't know Sanskrit at that time, but he did, and when he led me to that place, I told him what I saw: 'There's a sort of design, it must be Sanskrit.' (I could recognise the characters as Sanskrit). He told me to reproduce what I was seeing, and I did so. It was my name, Mirra, written in Sanskrit – the mantra was for me and I alone could open it. 'Open it and tell me what's there,' he said.

(All this was going on while I was in a cataleptic trance.) Then immediately something in Me Knew, and I answered, 'No,' and did not read it.

I found it again when I was with Sri Aurobindo and I gave it to Sri Aurobindo. *The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 5, 1961*

JAPAN

Flowers and vegetables

In the morning I always arrange them (it's a work that takes me at least three quarters of an hour, there are more than a hundred flowers in different vases that I have to arrange, and to each person I give a special sort of flower – I arrange all that), and in the vases, some flowers say, "Me!" And indeed they are just what I need. They call out to me to say, "Me!" ... But that's not new, because when I was in Japan, I had a large garden and I had cultivated part of it to grow vegetables; in the morning I would go down to the garden to get the vegetables to be eaten that day, and some of them here, there, there (*scattered gesture*) would say, "Me! Me! Me!" Like that. So I would go and pick them. They literally called me, they called me.

That's a long time ago, nineteen hundred and ... when was it? It was in 1916-17, so that's ... forty years ago.

Fifty.

(Mother laughs) Fifty years ago!

But now, in the morning, I just have not to think, to remain quiet, and I go straight to the flowers, they say, "Me! Me! ..." In spite of myself I am surprised, I say, "Wonderful, this is just what I wanted!"

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, Feb 7, 1968

Tagore and Nirvana

It all ultimately depends on one's aspiration or dominant preoccupation, or on what one needs for one's work. It's as if one went straight where one wants to go, ignoring everything else, taking no notice of it – passing through it if necessary, but without paying attention to it. And the need to classify, well ... it comes afterwards, if one feels like describing things, but it isn't necessary.

It's like that famous Nirvana – you can find it behind everything. There's a psychic nirvana, a mental nirvana, even a vital nirvana. I think I already told you about the experience I had with Tagore in Japan. Tagore always used to say that as soon as he started meditating he entered Nirvana, and he asked me to meditate with him. We sat together in meditation. I was expecting to make a very steep ascent, but he simply went into his mind, and there ... (what I do, you see, is tune in to the person I am meditating with, identify with him – that's how I know what happens). Well, he started meditating, and everything quite rapidly came to a halt, became absolutely immobile (this he did very well), and from there he sort of fell backwards, and it was Nothingness. And he could remain in that state indefinitely! We did in fact stay like that for a rather long time; I don't remember how long, three quarters of an hour or an hour, but anyway it was long enough. I was keeping alert the whole time to see if, by chance, he would go on into something else, but there he stayed – he stayed there nice and calm, without stirring. Then he came back, his mind started up again, and that was that.

I said nothing to him.

But it was a true nirvana: Nothingness. Not a single sensation, not a movement – no thoughts, of course – nothing, not a vibration: just like that, Nirvana. So I quite naturally concluded that there is a nirvana behind the mind, since he went there directly.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, October 30, 1962

Madame David-Neel and the Buddha

I remember, once, it was with Madame David-Neel. It's very interesting. She came to give a lecture (I wasn't acquainted with her, that's where I met her for the first time), I think it was

at the Theosophical Society (I forget). I went to the lecture, and while she was speaking, I saw Buddha – I saw him clearly: not above her head, a little to the side. He was present. So after the lecture, I was introduced to her (I didn't know the kind of woman she was!), and I said to her, "Oh, Madam, during your speech I saw Buddha present." She answered me (*in a furious tone*), "Impossible! Buddha is in Nirvana!" (*Mother laughs*) Oho!... "Better keep quiet!" I thought.

But he really was there, whatever she thought!

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, November 9, 1966

A communication from Gautama, the Buddha

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

“As thou art contemplating me, I shall speak to thee this evening. I see in thy heart a diamond surrounded by a golden light. It is at once pure and warm, something which may manifest impersonal love; but why dost thou keep this treasure enclosed in that dark casket lined with deep purple? The outermost covering is of a deep lustreless blue, a real mantle of darkness. It would seem that thou art afraid of showing thy splendour. Learn to radiate and do not fear the storm: the wind carries us far from the shore but shows us over the world. Wouldst thou be thrifty of thy tenderness? But the source of love is infinite. Dost thou fear to be misunderstood? But where hast thou seen man capable of understanding the Divine? And if the eternal truth finds in thee a means of manifesting itself, what dost thou care for all the rest? Thou art like a pilgrim coming out of the sanctuary; standing on the threshold in front of the crowd, he hesitates before revealing his precious secret, that of his supreme discovery. Listen, I too hesitated for days, for I could foresee both my preaching and its results: the imperfection of expression and the still greater imperfection

of understanding. And yet I turned to the earth and men and brought them my message. Turn to the earth and men — isn't this the command thou always hearest in thy heart?—in thy heart, for it is that which carries a blessed message for those who are athirst for compassion. Henceforth nothing can attack the diamond. It is unassailable in its perfect constitution and the soft radiance that flashes from it can change many things in the hearts of men. Thou doubtst thy power and fearest thy ignorance? It is precisely this that wraps up thy strength in that dark mantle of starless night. Thou hesitatest and tremblest as on the threshold of a mystery, for now the mystery of the manifestation seems to thee more terrible and unfathomable than that of the Eternal Cause. But thou must take courage again and obey the injunction from the depths. It is I who am telling thee this, for I know thee and love thee as thou didst know and love me once. I have appeared clearly before thy sight so that thou mayst in no way doubt my word. And also to thy eyes I have shown thy heart so that thou canst thus see what the supreme Truth has willed for it, so that thou mayst discover in it the law of thy being. The thing still seems to thee quite difficult: a day will come when thou wilt wonder how for so long it could have been otherwise.” *SDkyamuni*

CWM 1: 332–33

[In her prayer of 20 December 1916, the Mother wrote out a long “communication” she received in her evening meditation from C, akya-Mouni (*pp.* 366 – 67). A disciple asked who this was.]

Çakya-Mouni is a name of Buddha —“the sage of the Çakyas” — the clan to which Buddha belonged by birth and of which his father was the “king”.

CWSA 32: 607

Awakening of the Kundalini

This “rising of the kundalini,” I had it in ... I was still in Paris. It was before I came to India. I had read Vivekananda’s books about it.... And when the Force rose, it emerged from the head through here (*gesture at the top of the head*); the [classic] experience was never described in that way. The Force came out and the consciousness settled here (*gesture about eight inches above the head*). So when I came here, I told Sri Aurobindo about it; he told me it had been the same thing with him, and that according to the teaching of [ancient] texts, you “cannot” live when that takes place: you die! So ... (*laughing*) he told me, “Here are two who haven’t died!”

The consciousness has remained there (*gesture above*), it didn’t come down again; it’s there, its always there...

And then, when I went back from here [to France, in 1915] ... I did something deliberately: all the energies of the last center [at the base of the spine] were drawn up here (*gesture to the heart*).

But I felt centers below the feet.

I felt a center below the feet....There was one below the feet, one at the knees, one here (*gesture at the base of the spine*), and all of it (*Mother gestures, drawing the energies upward*), like this, drawn up, and it came here (*gesture to the heart*).

The moment I came here, I no longer concerned myself with the body: I concerned myself with the Work; but before coming here, especially between my departure from here and my return, it was ... (how much time?... I came back in 1920; I came here in 1914 and left from here in 1915, I think – from ‘16 to ‘20 I was in Japan, but I came in ‘14 and I think I left in 1915), from that time on, there were all those experiences [*kundalini, etc.*], in France and in Japan.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, July 11, 1970

The aura of Sri Aurobindo

Listen, as I had when I came from Japan: I was on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a physical experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

CWM 4: 223

There are people who live constantly in a higher consciousness, while others have to make an effort to enter there. But here it is an altogether different thing; in the experience I was speaking about, what gave it all its value was that I was not expecting it at all, not at all. I knew very well, I had been for a very long time and continuously in “spiritual” contact, if I may say so, with the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, but I had never thought of the possibility of a modification in the physical air and I was not expecting it in the least, and it was this that gave the whole value to the experience, which came like that, quite suddenly, just as when one enters a place with another temperature or another altitude.... I do not know if you have noticed that the air you breathe is not always the same, that there are different vibrations in the air of one country and in the air of another, in the air of one place and in the air of another. If indeed you are accustomed to have this perception of the subtle physical, you can say immediately, “Ah! This air is as in France” or “This is the air of Japan.” It is something indefinable like taste or smell. But in this instance it is not that, it is a perception of another sense. It is a physical sense, it is not a vital or mental sense; it

is a sense of the physical world, but there are other senses than the five that we usually have at our disposal — there are many others.

CWM 4: 229-30

A kind of paradise

And in the cities, a city like Tokyo, for example, which is the biggest city in the world, bigger than London, and which extends far, far (now the houses are modernised, the whole centre of the city is very unpleasant, but when I was there, it was still good), in the outlying parts of the city, those which are not business quarters, every house has at the most two storeys and a garden — there is always a garden, there are always one or two trees which are quite lovely. And then, if you go for a walk... it is very difficult to find your way in Tokyo; there are no straight streets with houses on either side according to the number, and you lose your way easily. Then you go wandering around — always one wanders at random in that country — you go wandering and all of a sudden you turn the corner of a street and come to a kind of paradise: there are magnificent trees, a temple as truly beautiful, you see nothing of the city any longer, no more traffic, no tramways; a corner, a corner of trees with magnificent colours, and it is beautiful, truly beautiful. You do not know how you have reached there, you seem to have come by luck. And then you turn, you seek your way, you wander off again and go elsewhere. And some days later you want to come back to this very place, but it is impossible, it is as though it had disappeared. And this is so frequent, this is so true that such stories are often told in Japan. Their literature is full of enchantment. They tell you a story in which the hero comes suddenly to a magic place: he sees fairies, he sees marvellous beings, he spends exquisite hours among flowers,

music; all is splendid. The next day he is obliged to leave; it is the law of the place, he goes away. He tries to come back, but never does. He can no longer find the place: it was there, it has disappeared!... And everything in this city, in this country, from beginning to end, gives you the impression of impermanence, of the unexpected, the exceptional. You always come to things you did not expect; you want to find them again and they are lost—they have made something else which is equally charming. From the artistic point of view, the point of view of beauty, I don't think there is a country as beautiful as that.

CWM 4: 307-08

Moral construction and spirituality

Now, I ought to say, to complete my picture, that the four years I was there I found a dearth of spirituality as entire as could be. These people have a wonderful morality, live according to quite strict moral rules, they have a mental construction even in the least detail of life: one must eat in a certain way and not another, one must bow in a certain way and not another, one must say certain words but not all; when addressing certain people one must express oneself in a certain way; when speaking with others, one must express oneself in another. If you go to buy something in a shop, you must say a particular sentence; if you don't say it, you are not served: they look at you quizzically and do not move! But if you say the word, they wait upon you with full attention and bring, if necessary, a cushion for you to sit upon and a cup of tea to drink. And everything is like that. However, not once do you have the feeling that you are in contact with something other than a marvelously organised mental-physical domain. And what energy they have! Their whole vital being is turned into energy. They have an extraordinary endurance but no direct aspiration: one must

obey the rule, one is obliged. If one does not submit oneself to rules there, one may live as Europeans do, who are considered barbarians and looked upon altogether as intruders, but if you want to live a Japanese life among the Japanese you must do as they do, otherwise you make them so unhappy that you can't even have any relation with them. In their house you must live in a particular way, when you meet them you must greet them in a particular way.... I think I have already told you the story of that Japanese who was an intimate friend of ours, and whom I helped to come into contact with his soul — and who ran away. He was in the countryside with us and I had put him in touch with his psychic being; he had the experience, a revelation, the contact, the dazzling inner contact.

And the next morning, he was no longer there, he had taken flight! Later, when I saw him again in town after the holidays, I asked him, "But what happened to you, why did you go away?" — "Oh! You understand, I discovered my soul and saw that my soul was more powerful than my faith in the country and the Mikado; I would have had to obey my soul and I would no longer have been a faithful subject of my emperor. I had to go away." There you are! All this is authentically true.

CWM 4: 308-09

The Mother



It happened in a Japanese country-house where we were living, near a lake. There was a whole series of circumstances, events, all kinds of things – a long, long story, like a novel. But one day I was alone in meditation; and I was seeing.... You know that I had taken on the conversion of the Lord of Falsehood: I tried to do it through an emanation incarnated in a physical being, and the greatest effort was made during those four years in Japan. The four years were coming to an end with an absolute inner certainty that there was nothing to be done – that it was impossible, impossible to do it this way. There was nothing to be done. And I was intensely concentrated, asking the Lord, ‘Well, I made You a vow to do this, I had said, “Even if it’s necessary to descend into hell, I will descend into hell to do it....” Now tell me, what must I do?...’ The Power was plainly there: suddenly everything in me became still; the whole external being was completely immobilized and I had a vision of the Supreme ... more beautiful than that of the Gita. A vision of the Supreme. And this vision literally gathered me into its arms; it turned towards the West, towards India, and offered me – and there at the other end I saw Sri Aurobindo. It was ... I felt it physically. I saw, saw – my eyes were closed but I saw (twice I have had this vision of the Supreme – once here, much later – but this was the first time) ... ineffable. It was as if this Immensity had reduced itself to a rather gigantic Being who lifted me up like a wisp of straw and offered me. Not a word, nothing else, only that. Then everything vanished.

The next day we began preparing to return to India.

It was after this vision, when I returned from Japan, that this meeting with Sri Aurobindo took place, along with the certainty that the Mission would be accomplished.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, December 20, 1961

Pondicherry

Towards a grand synthesis

I don't know, I'm putting it poorly, but this experience was concrete to the point of being physical. It happened in a Japanese country-house where we were living, near a lake. There was a whole series of circumstances, events, all kinds of things – a long, long story, like a novel. But one day I was alone in meditation (I have never had very profound meditations, only concentrations of consciousness – Mother makes an abrupt gesture showing a sudden ingathering of the entire being); and I was seeing.... You know that I had taken on the conversion of the Lord of Falsehood: I tried to do it through an emanation incarnated in a physical being, and the greatest effort was made during those four years in Japan. The four years were coming to an end with an absolute inner certainty that there was nothing to be done – that it was impossible, impossible to do it this way. There was nothing to be done. And I was intensely concentrated, asking the Lord, 'Well, I made You a vow to do this, I had said, "Even if it's necessary to descend into hell, I will descend into hell to do it...." Now tell me, what must I do?... 'The Power was plainly there: suddenly everything in me became still; the whole external being was completely immobilized and I had a vision of the Supreme ... more beautiful than that of the Gita. A vision of the Supreme. And this vision literally gathered me into its arms; it turned towards the West, towards India, and offered me – and there at the other end I saw Sri Aurobindo. It was ... I felt it physically. I saw, saw – my eyes were closed but I saw (twice I have had this vision of the Supreme – once here, much later – but this was the first time) ... ineffable. It was as

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The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, December 20, 1961

Union of the earth with the divine principle

THE entire consciousness immersed in divine contemplation, the whole being enjoyed a supreme and vast felicity.

Then was the physical body seized, first in its lower members and next the whole of it, by a sacred trembling which made all personal limits fall away little by little even in the most material sensation. The being grew in greatness progressively, methodically, breaking down every barrier, shattering every obstacle, that it might contain and manifest a force and a power which increased ceaselessly in immensity and intensity. It was as a progressive dilatation of the cells until there was a complete identification with the earth: the body of the awakened consciousness was the terrestrial globe moving harmoniously in ethereal space. And the consciousness knew that its global body was thus moving in the arms of the universal Being, and it gave itself, it abandoned itself to It in an ecstasy of peaceful bliss. Then it felt that its body was absorbed in the body of the universe and one with it; the consciousness became the consciousness of the universe, immobile in its totality, moving infinitely in its internal complexity. The consciousness of the

universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from him; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra enveloping the universe gave it eternal birth. Then the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable. The return towards the consciousness of the individual body took place very slowly in a constant and invariable splendour of Light and Power and Felicity and Adoration, by successive gradations, but directly, without passing again through the universal and terrestrial forms. And it was as if the modest corporeal form had become the direct and immediate vesture, without any intermediary, of the supreme and eternal Witness.

CWM 1: 311-12

The Mother

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DEORAH SEVA NIDHI

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Some Events in the Mother's Life

Materialisation at a distance

X asked me whether Mother can materialise herself at a distance. Y seems to have said something like that.

Y probably referred to an experience in which the Mother being in Algeria appeared to a circle of friends sitting in Paris and took up a pencil and wrote a few words on a paper. Having satisfied herself that it was possible she did not develop it any farther. That was at a time when she was practising occultism with Théon in Algeria. Materialisation is possible but it does not happen easily—it demands a very rare and difficult concentration of forces or else an occult process with vital beings behind it such as materialises objects, like the stones that were daily thrown in the Guest House when we were there. In neither case it is a miracle. But to do as you suggest, make it a common or everyday phenomenon, would be hardly practicable and spiritually not useful, as it is not a spiritual force which gives the power but an occult mental-vital force. It would turn the Yoga into a display of occultism, rather than a process of spiritual change.

*

Travel to far off planets

I have been wondering whether the Mother has been able to establish a direct connection with Mars or any other far-off planet which is probably habitable and inhabited.

A long time ago Mother was going everywhere in the subtle body but she found it of a very secondary interest. Our attention must be fixed on the earth because our work is here. Besides, the earth is a concentration of all the other worlds and one can touch them by touching something corresponding in the earth-atmosphere.

CWSA 32: 37, 40

Sadhana for the world

*Why do we feel that the Mother is experiencing this or that?
Has she still to go on experiencing?*

Experiencing what? She has her own experiences in bringing down the things that have to be brought down — but what the sadhaks experience she had long ago. The Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then in others.

CWSA 32: 40

Sri Aurobindo

The Mother, Human and Divine

IN our human frailty we regard the Divine Mother as mother only, forgetting that she is also divine. We are apt to seize exclusively the last term of the great Name and ignore the other term which is equally important. We demand from her the same reactions of motherly love as we expect from a human mother. Our love for her is human, human in the ignorant way — full of passion and craving, hunger for appropriation, considering her as nothing else than food for our egoistic desires.

She is the mother indeed, but the Divine Mother. She wishes us to come to her in the divine way and not in the human way. For it is in the divine way that we rise to our highest and deepest stature and receive her fully and integrally, enjoy the plenitude of the delight in her Grace. A human way ties us down to the littlenesses and smallnesses of the human feeling. The human approach is more often than not that of a spoilt child. If there is one drop of true love at the bottom of the heart, the amount of ignorance and turbidity in which that is sunk is colossal. The dirt smears us and is cast upon the object of our love too.

And yet she is the mother in being the Divine. She is divine not in the sense that she is afar and aloof, cold and indiffer-

ent like the transcendent Brahman. Indeed, the Divine Mother is more motherly than the human mother can be. The human mother is only a faint echo, a far-off shadow, at times a travesty of the true Mother in the archetypal world.

The Divine Mother even in being transcendent leans down to our human dimensions, becomes one of us, is within us as our own self and with us as comrade and guide. She takes us by the hand, and if we only allow it, teaches us how to transcend the little humanity we are made of and grow into her own nature and substance through the miracle of her love – if our love responds to it adequately.

It is only by remembering her twofold truth, the two arms of her love with which she enfolds us and cherishes us that we can hope to be her true children.

CW/NKG: 5: 85 – 86

Nolini kanta Gupta

SAVITRI STUDY CAMP FEBRUARY 2020

(Continuing Study)

Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri": Book 11

Facilitator: Alok Pandey

Venue: Sri Aurobindo Society Beach Office

Dates: 22nd Feb to the 28th Feb 2020.

Timings: Two sessions every day as follows:

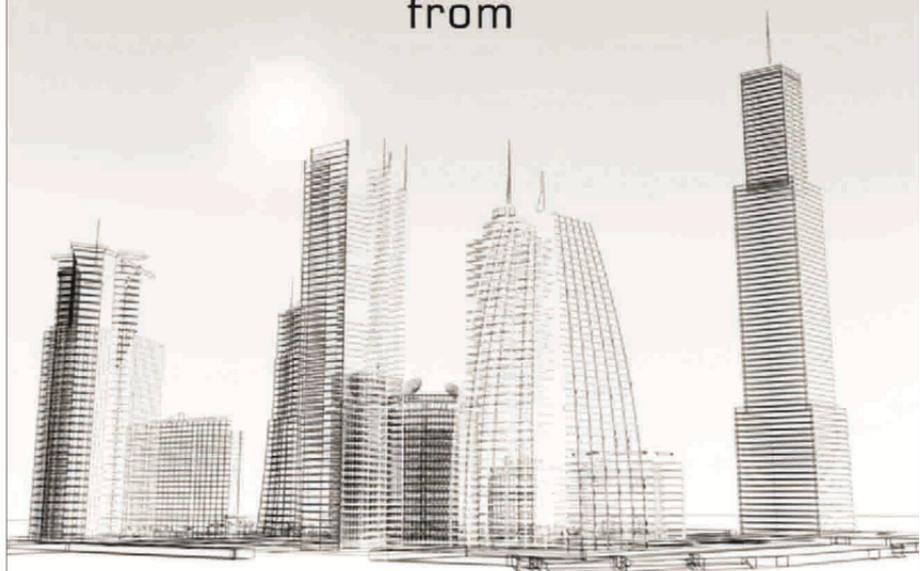
First Session: 5.15 to 6 PM

Second Session: 6.15 to 7 PM.

(There will be only one session on the days when dining room is early)



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