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*Four Aspects
of the Mother*

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Four Aspects of the Mother

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

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Editorial note: The powers working in cosmos are not blind mechanical powers but conscious forces and beings that are ever engaged in the various functions of the world. Though they are countless yet they can be resolved ultimately into four great Powers that are the first emergence from the One Divine Mother and help prepare the human soul and nature to open to Her and be Her instruments in the world. Sri Aurobindo who had the direct experience of these powers and beings saw them not only as living Realities and Presences but as embodied in the Divine Mother in her present embodiment. This issue is dedicated to this profound revelation by Sri Aurobindo on these Four Great Aspects of the Mother.



Adyashakti

Adyashakti is the original Shakti, therefore the highest form of the Mother. Only she manifests in a different way according to the plane from which one sees her.

CWSA 32: 66

Sri Aurobindo

Adyashakti

The One Transcendent Shakti

The four Powers of the Mother are four of her outstanding Personalities, portions and embodiments of her divinity through whom she acts on her creatures, orders and harmonises her creations in the worlds and directs the working out of her thousand forces. For the Mother is one but she comes before us with differing aspects; many are her powers and personalities, many her emanations and Vibhutis that do her work in the universe. The One whom we adore as the Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates. But something of her ways can be seen and felt through her embodiments and the more seizable because more defined and limited temperament and action of the goddess forms in whom she consents to be manifest to her creatures.

There are three ways of being of the Mother of which you can become aware when you enter into touch of oneness with the Conscious Force that upholds us and the universe. Transcendent, the original supreme Shakti, she stands above the worlds and links the creation to the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. Universal, the cosmic Mahashakti, she creates all these beings and contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Individual, she embodies the power of these two vaster ways of her existence, makes them living and near to us and mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature.

The one original transcendent Shakti, the Mother stands above all the worlds and bears in her eternal consciousness the

Supreme Divine. Alone, she harbours the absolute Power and the ineffable Presence; containing or calling the Truths that have to be manifested, she brings them down from the Mystery in which they were hidden into the light of her infinite consciousness and gives them a form of force in her omnipotent power and her boundless life and a body in the universe. The Supreme is manifest in her for ever as the everlasting Sachchidananda, manifested through her in the worlds as the one and dual consciousness of Ishwara-Shakti and the dual principle of Purusha-Prakriti, embodied by her in the Worlds and the Planes and the Gods and their Energies and figured because of her as all that is in the known worlds and in unknown others. All is her play with the Supreme; all is her manifestation of the mysteries of the Eternal, the miracles of the Infinite. All is she, for all are parcel and portion of the divine Conscious-Force. Nothing can be here or elsewhere but what she decides and the Supreme sanctions; nothing can take shape except what she moved by the Supreme perceives and forms after casting it into seed in her creating Ananda.

The Mahashakti, the universal Mother, works out whatever is transmitted by her transcendent consciousness from the Supreme and enters into the worlds that she has made; her presence fills and supports them with the divine spirit and the divine all-sustaining force and delight without which they could not exist. That which we call Nature or Prakriti is only her most outward executive aspect; she marshals and arranges the harmony of her forces and processes, impels the operations of Nature and moves among them secret or manifest in all that can be seen or experienced or put into motion of life. Each of the worlds is nothing but one play of the Mahashakti of that system of worlds or universe, who is there as the cosmic Soul and Personality of the transcendent Mother. Each is something that she has seen in her vision, gathered into her heart of beauty and power and created in her Ananda. CWSA 32: 14-15

The faith in the Divine Shakti

The faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess allcreative from eternity and armed with the Spirit's omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination: she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and the laughter, the attahasya, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance: she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing: she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, yogah. karmasu kau'salam, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of themasteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

CWSA 23: 780-81

Sri Aurobindo

Four Great Aspects

Four great Aspects of the Mother, four of her leading Powers and Personalities have stood in front in her guidance of this universe and in her dealings with the terrestrial play. One is her personality of calm wideness and comprehending wisdom and tranquil benignity and inexhaustible compassion and sovereign and surpassing majesty and all-ruling greatness. Another embodies her power of splendid strength and irresistible passion, her warrior mood, her overwhelming will, her impetuous swiftness and world-shaking force. A third is vivid and sweet and wonderful with her deep secret of beauty and harmony and fine rhythm, her intricate and subtle opulence, her compelling attraction and captivating grace. The fourth is equipped with her close and profound capacity of intimate knowledge and careful flawless work and quiet and exact perfection in all things. Wisdom, Strength, Harmony, Perfection are their several attributes and it is these powers that they bring with them into the world, manifest in a human disguise in their Vibhutis and shall found in the divine degree of their ascension in those who can open their earthly nature to the direct and living influence of the Mother. To the four we give the four great names, Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati.

CWSA 32: 17-18

Sri Aurobindo

But these four are independent of one another?

To a certain extent, but not totally. It is always the same thing. There is an independence which at times seems to be total, and at the same time a very close link and even one which is, so to say, absolute. The central consciousness, that is to say, here in the material world, is the Mahashakti, you know. Well, she always has the power to control the action of these different

aspects — though they are quite independent and act according to their own aspirations. And yet she can control them, in the sense that if...

Take, for example, the instance of Kali. If Kali decides that she is going to intervene and the Mahashakti, who has naturally a much more total and general vision of things, sees that the moment for intervention is not opportune or that it is too soon, well, she can very easily put a pressure upon Mahakali and tell her, “Keep quiet.” And the other is obliged to keep quiet; and yet she acts quite independently.

But why doesn't she let Mahakali act? For here he says that if Mahakali intervenes what would have taken centuries can take place now.

I say it is for this that Mahakali is there and does her work. But Mahakali has a particular way of seeing the work; and when one has the total vision, one can see that this, you know... She sees only her side of the work, and when one sees the whole, one may say, “Ah, no, this is not quite the time!”

CWM 6: 289-90

The Mother



Wisdom

*Can only be acquired through
union with the Divine*

Consciousness.

*Flower (Significance and explanation
given by the Mother)*

Botanical Name :Enterolobium saman



Maheshwari

Maheshwari

Mother of Wisdom

Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will and sublimates and greatens them into wisdom and largeness or floods with a splendour beyond them. For she is the mighty and wise One who opens us to the supramental infinities and the cosmic vastness, to the grandeur of the supreme Light, to a treasure-house of miraculous knowledge, to the measureless movement of the Mother's eternal forces. Tranquil is she and wonderful, great and calm for ever. Nothing can move her because all wisdom is in her; nothing is hidden from her that she chooses to know; she comprehends all things and all beings and their nature and what moves them and the law of the world and its times and how all was and is and must be. A strength is in her that meets everything and masters and none can prevail in the end against her vast intangible wisdom and high tranquil power. Equal, patient and unalterable in her will she deals with men according to their nature and with things and happenings according to their force and the truth that is in them. Partiality she has none, but she follows the decrees of the Supreme and some she raises up and some she casts down or puts away from her into the darkness. To the wise she gives a greater and more luminous wisdom; those that have vision she admits to her counsels; on the hostile she imposes the consequence of their hostility; the ignorant and foolish she leads according to their blindness. In each man she answers and handles the different elements of his nature according to their need and their urge and the return they call for, puts on them the required pressure or leaves them to their cherished liberty to prosper in the ways of the Ignorance or to perish. For she is above all, bound by nothing, attached to nothing in the universe. Yet has she more than any other the heart of the universal Mother. For her compassion is endless and inexhaustible; all are to her eyes her children and portions of the One, even the Asura and Rakshasa and Pisacha and those that are revolted and hostile. Even her

rejections are only a postponement, even her punishments are a grace. But her compassion does not blind her wisdom or turn her action from the course decreed; for the Truth of things is her one concern, knowledge her centre of power and to build our soul and our nature into the divine Truth her mission and her labour.

CWSA 32: 18-19

Receiving the Divine Impulsions

“Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will....” Is there a plane of will, as there is a mental plane, a vital plane, etc.?

I have explained that to you in connection with Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda exists at the very origin of the worlds, but there is a Sachchidananda behind all the other states of being. You could make a diagram (though that does not explain much, it is quite an erroneous idea, but it makes things more easily understandable), you arrange the states of being according to a scale. Then, you have the earth below and the Supreme above (it is not at all like that, I hasten to tell you! But anyway, it is easy to understand), you put the earth at the bottom and the Supreme at the top, and you divide that into lots of little parts each of which represents a state of being; that makes a kind of ladder. And then, you have as though behind it, behind your ladder, something which supports it, against which it leans. It is not a wall but it is something which supports your ladder. And that is precisely the first principle of the universal form. In Hindu terminology it is called “Sachchidananda”. It is there, everything leans upon that; without that nothing could exist. It is that which upholds and allows existence. Then, if you enter a certain state of consciousness and find yourself, for instance, in the higher mind (for generally it is more easily there that this happens; you have started from the physical and climbed slowly, rung by rung, as far as the higher mind), but instead of continuing your ascent on the ladder you enter into a kind of interiorisation and try to go out of the form, you pass into a kind of silence outside the form. You pass in between the bars

of your ladder and enter straight into Sachchidananda which supports everything from behind. And then you can have mentally the experience of Sachchidananda. I have known people who had it and thought they had reached the heights of the Supreme. For there is a similarity in the experience, a very great likeness, only it is limited to the mind, the mind alone participates in it. Well, for the will it is the same thing. Instead of being the support of the ladder it is a kind of force, a very powerful current which passes through all these states, starting from above — it is the supreme Will—and coming down into the physical manifestation. Hence, if you get into affinity with this vibration or this force, you can enter “the state of will”; that is, whatever state of being you may find yourself in — physical, vital, mental, etc.— if you enter a certain state of consciousness and force, you come into contact with this power of will: it penetrates into you and you can use it for any purpose. If your reception is free from all egoism, if you are pure, completely surrendered and accept only what comes from the Divine, and if you don’t mix anything with it, egoism or desires or limitations... well, it is a state a bit difficult to attain, but if you attain it, you receive this force of will in its original state, pure (for it comes down pure, it is only in its reception that it gets deformed), then, instead of being your will it becomes an expression of the divine Will. And this happens *without your leaving the physical body* — you can receive the force of the divine Will without leaving the physical. Only, you see, you must not change it and deform it, spoil it in the receiving. When you feel within you a kind of indomitable energy to realise something, when you tell yourself, “I shall do this whatever the cost, I shall go to the end and shall use all *my* will” (for you always say *my* will), well, you cannot be in that state unless you have come into contact with this current of willforce. Only, with your little personal reaction, naturally you deform it and use it all wrongly, and then you come into conflict with other elements. But if you are truly a yogi, you receive the current and nothing can stop the *èlan* of your action, even physically.

CWM 4: 398-400

The Mother



Mahakali

Mahakali

Mother of strength

Mahakali is of another nature. Not wideness but height, not wisdom but force and strength are her peculiar power. There is in her an overwhelming intensity, a mighty passion of force to achieve, a divine violence rushing to shatter every limit and obstacle. All her divinity leaps out in a splendour of tempestuous action; she is there for swiftness, for the immediately effective process, the rapid and direct stroke, the frontal assault that carries everything before it. Terrible is her face to the Asura, dangerous and ruthless her mood against the haters of the Divine; for she is the Warrior of the Worlds who never shrinks from the battle. Intolerant of imperfection, she deals roughly with all in man that is unwilling and she is severe to all that is obstinately ignorant and obscure; her wrath is immediate and dire against treachery and falsehood and malignity, ill-will is smitten at once by her scourge. Indifference, negligence and sloth in the divine work she cannot bear and she smites awake at once with sharp pain, if need be, the untimely slumberer and the loiterer. The impulses that are swift and straight and frank, the movements that are unreserved and absolute, the aspiration that mounts in flame are the motion of Mahakali. Her spirit is tameless, her vision and will are high and far-reaching like the flight of an eagle, her feet are rapid on the upward way and her hands are outstretched to strike and to succour. For she too is the Mother and her love is as intense as her wrath and she has a deep and passionate kindness. When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilise or the enemies that assail the seeker. If her anger is dreadful to the hostile and the vehemence of her pressure painful to the weak and timid, she is loved and worshipped by the great, the strong and the noble; for they feel that her blows beat what is rebellious in their material into strength and perfect truth, hammer straight what is wry and perverse and expel what is impure or defective. But for her what is done in a day might have taken centuries; without her Ananda might be wide and grave or soft and sweet and beautiful but

would lose the flaming joy of its most absolute intensities. To knowledge she gives a conquering might, brings to beauty and harmony a high and mounting movement and imparts to the slow and difficult labour after perfection an impetus that multiplies the power and shortens the long way. Nothing can satisfy her that falls short of the supreme ecstasies, the highest heights, the noblest aims, the largest vistas. Therefore with her is the victorious force of the Divine and it is by grace of her fire and passion and speed if the great achievement can be done now rather than hereafter. *CWSA 32: 19-20*

Mahakali and Kali

What is the essential difference between the Mahakali form as described in the Chandi and the Shyama form?

These — Kali, Shyama, etc. — are ordinary forms seen through the vital; the real Mahakali form whose origin is in the Overmind is not black or dark or terrible, but golden of colour and full of beauty, even when formidable to the Asuras. *CWSA 32: 68*

In the earth atmosphere there is indeed a Kali who deals with earthly things and is somewhat, one cannot say independent, yet not quite the expression of Mahakali; but she is altogether obedient to her and has her major qualities. They are diminished in power and efficacy, but they exist, and the beauty of her nature is there. Perhaps some of you have had relations with that Mahakali. She does not avenge herself, she never does harm to those who love her, she does not strike with epidemics the countries which do not show her sufficient respect and consideration. But she likes violence, she likes war and her justice is crushing. *CWM 4: 397*

Mahakali's blows

What is the nature of Mahakali's blow?

It makes you feel very happy. It gives you a sweet warmth in the heart, like that. You feel quite satisfied.

Does one have to aspire for it or does it come naturally?

Yes, one must have a sincerity in the aspiration, really want to progress. One must truly say, "Yes, I want to progress" with sincerity...

“Whatever happens, I want to progress.” Then it comes.

But as I said, it comes with a power of plenitude which holds an intense joy. When one has taken a decision, has decided to stop something in oneself, just not to repeat a stupidity one has committed, or to do something which one finds impossible or difficult to do and which, one knows, should be done, and when one has taken the decision and has put in the full sincerity of one’s will, well, then if a terrible blow comes to compel you to do what you have decided to do, it is a blow, but you feel glorified, you are quite happy, it is magnificent, you see, you feel something magnificent here.

There is such a big difference between the mishaps that come to you just because you are in a purely external, mechanical, physical consciousness and in a state of ignorance which makes you commit all possible follies which naturally bring their consequences, inevitably — there is such a great difference between this and the altogether higher state to which you rise when you have determined to master yourself, to live only in the consciousness of Truth, whatever the cost, no matter what the price of progress, to progress... and the things that happen to you then are so full of meaning, you see so clearly in them that shining truth, that light which illumines you on the path as though you had a beacon, here, to guide you... you see so clearly! It is no longer something that crushes you, like a block of stone falling on your back. It is an overpowering resplendence.

That is why one always says: it is only the first step that needs an effort. The first step means: come out from that level and climb to this one. After that everything, everything changes. But one must come out completely from that level, one must not remain there, one must not try to keep one foot here and one foot there, for that will not do.

CWM 6: 325-26

The Mother

Dynamic Power

Indispensable for progress.

*(Flower Significance and explanation
given by the Mother)*

Botanical Name : Hibiscus rosa-sinensis





Mahalakshmi

Mahalakshmi

Mother of Beauty and Harmony

Wisdom and Force are not the only manifestations of the supreme Mother; there is a subtler mystery of her nature and without it Wisdom and Force would be incomplete things and without it perfection would not be perfect. Above them is the miracle of eternal beauty, an unseizable secret of divine harmonies, the compelling magic of an irresistible universal charm and attraction that draws and holds things and forces and beings together and obliges them to meet and unite that a hidden Ananda may play from behind the veil and make of them its rhythms and its figures. This is the power of Mahalakshmi and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings. Maheshwari can appear too calm and great and distant for the littleness of earthly nature to approach or contain her, Mahakali too swift and formidable for its weakness to bear; but all turn with joy and longing to Mahalakshmi. For she throws the spell of the intoxicating sweetness of the Divine: to be close to her is a profound happiness and to feel her within the heart is to make existence a rapture and a marvel; grace and charm and tenderness flow out from her like light from the sun and wherever she fixes her wonderful gaze or lets fall the loveliness of her smile, the soul is seized and made captive and plunged into the depths of an unfathomable bliss. Magnetic is the touch of her hands and their occult and delicate influence refines mind and life and body and where she presses her feet course miraculous streams of an entrancing Ananda.

And yet it is not easy to meet the demand of this enchanting Power or to keep her presence. Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of

Mahalakshmi. Where there is affinity to the rhythms of the secret world-bliss and response to the call of the All- Beautiful and concord and unity and the glad flow of many lives turned towards the Divine, in that atmosphere she consents to abide. But all that is ugly and mean and base, all that is poor and sordid and squalid, all that is brutal and coarse repels her advent. Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come; where they are mixed and disfigured with baser things, she turns soon to depart or cares little to pour her riches. If she finds herself in men's hearts surrounded with selfishness and hatred and jealousy and malignance and envy and strife, if treachery and greed and ingratitude are mixed in the sacred chalice, if grossness of passion and unrefined desire degrade devotion, in such hearts the gracious and beautiful Goddess will not linger. A divine disgust seizes upon her and she withdraws, for she is not one who insists or strives; or, veiling her face, she waits for this bitter and poisonous devil's stuff to be rejected and disappear before she will found anew her happy influence. Ascetic bareness and harshness are not pleasing to her nor the suppression of the heart's deeper emotions and the rigid repression of the soul's and the life's parts of beauty. For it is through love and beauty that she lays on men the yoke of the Divine. Life is turned in her supreme creations into a rich work of celestial art and all existence into a poem of sacred delight; the world's riches are brought together and concerted for a supreme order and even the simplest and commonest things are made wonderful by her intuition of unity and the breath of her spirit. Admitted to the heart she lifts wisdom to pinnacles of wonder and reveals to it the mystic secrets of the ecstasy that surpasses all knowledge, meets devotion with the passionate attraction of the Divine, teaches to strength and force the rhythm that keeps the might of their acts harmonious and in measure and casts on perfection the charm that makes it endure for ever. CWSA 32: 20-22

Home of love

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

For ever love, O beautiful slave of God!

It's to prepare the earth to receive the Supreme's manifestation, the manifestation of His Victory.

Seen in that way, it becomes clear – comprehensible, and comprehensive, too: it has a content.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple, May 11, 1963

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

CWSA 32: 21

Sri Aurobindo

When the surroundings, circumstances, atmosphere, the way of living and above all the inner attitude are altogether of a low kind, vulgar, gross, egoistic, sordid, love is reluctant to come, that is, it always hesitates to manifest itself and generally does not stay long. A home of beauty must be given for Beauty to stay. I am not speaking of external things – a real house, real furniture and all that – I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: it is “reluctant to be born” – it could

be said that it immediately regrets being born. Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life, mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay. If they don't succeed in killing it altogether, they make it utterly sick. So the only thing it can do is to take flight. People always complain that love is impermanent and passing. To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it.

CWM 4: 402

Inner and outer poverty

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

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

When we say "a poor man — un pauvre homme", what is the exact meaning of "poor man"?

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

reckoning, one is never unhappy, never. It is he who wants to take who is unhappy; he who gives himself is never so.

CWM 4: 403-04

Divine disgust

Sweet Mother, what is a “divine disgust”?

Ah, my child! (*Silence*) It is a disgust that is full of a total compassion.

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

CWM 4: 286

The Mother



Integral Harmony

Harmony between things, harmony between persons, harmony of circumstances and, above all, harmony of aspirations — all leading towards the Supreme Truth.

(Flower Significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical Name : Antigonon leptopus



Mahasaraswati

Mahasaraswati

Mother of perfection

Mahasaraswati is the Mother's Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature. Maheshwari lays down the large lines of the world forces, Mahakali drives their energy and impetus, Mahalakshmi discovers their rhythms and measures, but Mahasaraswati presides over their detail of organisation and execution, relation of parts and effective combination of forces and unfailing exactitude of result and fulfilment. The science and craft and technique of things are Mahasaraswati's province. Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker. This Power is the strong, the tireless, the careful and efficient builder, organiser, administrator, technician, artisan and classifier of the worlds. When she takes up the transformation and new-building of the nature, her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless. For the will in her works is scrupulous, unsleeping, indefatigable; leaning over us she notes and touches every little detail, finds out every minute defect, gap, twist or incompleteness, considers and weighs accurately all that has been done and all that remains still to be done hereafter. Nothing is too small or apparently trivial for her attention; nothing however impalpable or disguised or latent can escape her. Moulding and remoulding she labours each part till it has attained its true form, is put in its exact place in the whole and fulfils its precise purpose. In her constant and diligent arrangement and rearrangement

of things her eye is on all needs at once and the way to meet them and her intuition knows what is to be chosen and what rejected and successfully determines the right instrument, the right time, the right conditions and the right process. Carelessness and negligence and indolence she abhors; all scamped and hasty and shuffling work, all clumsiness and *à peu près* and misfire, all false adaptation and misuse of instruments and faculties and leaving of things undone or half done is offensive and foreign to her temper. When her work is finished, nothing has been forgotten, no part has been misplaced or omitted or left in a faulty condition; all is solid, accurate, complete, admirable. Nothing short of a perfect perfection satisfies her and she is ready to face an eternity of toil if that is needed for the fullness of her creation. Therefore of all the Mother's powers she is the most long-suffering with man and his thousand imperfections. Kind, smiling, close and helpful, not easily turned away or discouraged, insistent even after repeated failure, her hand sustains our every step on condition that we are single in our will and straightforward and sincere; for a double mind she will not tolerate and her revealing irony is merciless to drama and histrionics and self-deceit and pretence. A mother to our wants, a friend in our difficulties, a persistent and tranquil counsellor and mentor, chasing away with her radiant smile the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and depression, reminding always of the ever-present help, pointing to the eternal sunshine, she is firm, quiet and persevering in the deep and continuous urge that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature. All the work of the other Powers leans on her for its completeness; for she assures the material foundation, elaborates the stuff of detail and erects and rivets the armour of the structure.

There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood

out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation,—most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe. But human nature bounded, egoistic and obscure is inapt to receive these great Presences or to support their mighty action. Only when the Four have founded their harmony and freedom of movement in the transformed mind and life and body, can those other rarer Powers manifest in the earth movement and the supramental action become possible. For when her Personalities are all gathered in her and manifested and their separate working has been turned into a harmonious unity and they rise in her to their supramental godheads, then is the Mother revealed as the supramental Mahashakti and brings pouring down her luminous transcendences from their ineffable ether. Then can human nature change into dynamic divine nature because all the elemental lines of the supramental Truth-consciousness and Truth-force are strung together and the harp of life is fitted for the rhythms of the Eternal.

CWSA 32: 22-24

The spirit of perfection and order

“Mahasaraswati is the Mother’s Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature.... Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the

accuracy of intuitivemind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker.”

CWSA 32: 22

In the order of manifestation, she was the last. And in her special nature, in the quality of her vibration, she is very close to... even a little child. She likes young people, children, things in the making, which have a long way before them to be transformed and perfected. She likes the activities of the young. She is the youngest in nature and the last to manifest.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a “conscious hand”; what does that mean?

What! I have told you this I don't know how many times, I have explained it hundreds of times and you still ask this question? I have told you that no matter what you want to do, the first thing is to put consciousness in the cells of your hand. If you want to play, if you want to work, if you want to do anything at all with your hand, unless you push consciousness into the cells of your hand you will never do anything good — how many times have I told you that? And this is felt. You feel it. You can acquire it. All sorts of exercises may be done to make the hand conscious and there comes a moment when it becomes so conscious that you can leave it to do things; it does them by itself without your little mind having to intervene.

CWM 4: 403

The detailed perfection

“All the work of the other Powers leans on her [Mahasaraswati] for its completeness....”

Mahasaraswati. Yes, because she is... (silence) precisely the

goddess of perfection. For her everything must be done down to the last detail, and done in an absolutely perfect way. And she wants, she insists that it should be done physically, totally, materially, that it should not remain in the air, you see, like a mental or vital action, but that it should be a physical realisation in all its details, and all the details be perfect, that nothing be neglected. So all that the others undertake in the other domains she concretises and brings to its material perfection.

CWM 4: 283

Sweet Mother, why is Mahasaraswati the youngest of the four?

Because her work came last; so she came last. (*Silence*) It is in this order that they manifested, in the order given here. These aspects are like the attributes of the Mother, which manifested in succession according to the necessities of the work; and the necessity of perfection was the last, so she is the youngest.

CWM 6: 289

The Mother

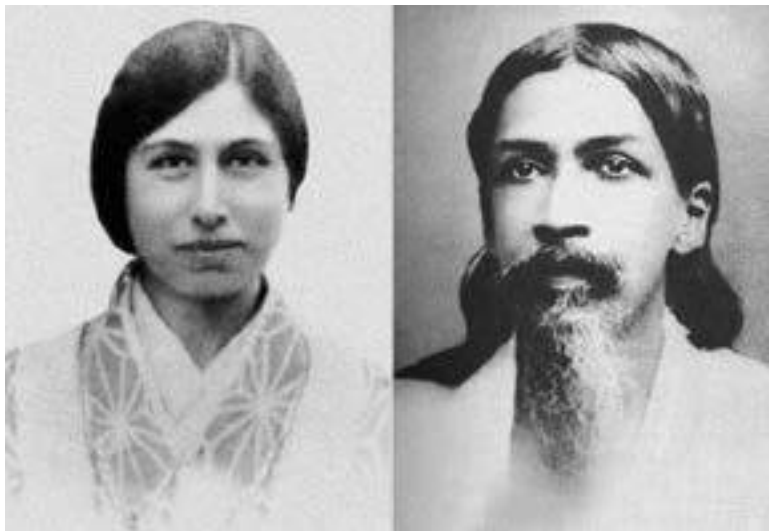


Mahasaraswati's Perfection in Works

It is not satisfied with makeshift.

(Flower Significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical Name : Rondetia odorata



Radha

I have been teaching some beautiful poems about Radha and Krishna. Radha seems to be so living. The scholars of the modern age say that Radha is a very recent addition to the Krishna cult. Can you tell me whether Radha existed or not?

Surely she has lived and is still living.

Love and blessings.

CWM 17: 278

The Mother

Mother of Delight

Supreme divine Love and Ananda

“There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation, — most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe.”

Sweet Mother, what Personality is this and when will she manifest?

You asked: “What personality is this and when will she come?”
(Silence) And this is my reply:

“She has come, bringing with her a splendour of power and love, an intensity of divine joy unknown to the earth so far.

The physical atmosphere was completely changed by it, saturated with new and marvellous possibilities.

But for her to be able to settle and act down here, she needed to meet with at least a minimum of receptivity, to find at least one human being having the requisite qualities in the vital and physical nature, a kind of super-Parsifal endowed with a spontaneous and integral purity, but at the same time having a strong and balanced body in order to bear the intensity of the Ananda she had brought without giving way.

Till now she has not obtained what was necessary. Men ob-

stinately remain men and do not want to or cannot become supermen. They can only receive and express a love cut to their measure — a human love! And the marvellous joy of the divine Ananda escapes their perception.

So, at times, she thinks of withdrawing, finding that the world is not ready to receive her. And this would be a cruel loss. It is true that for the moment her presence is more nominal than active, for she does not have the opportunity to manifest herself. But even so, she is a powerful help in the Work. For, of all the aspects of the Mother, this is the one which has the greatest power for the transformation of the body. Indeed, the cells which are able to vibrate to the contact of divine joy, to receive and preserve it, are regenerated cells on the way to becoming immortal. But the vibrations of divine joy and those of pleasure cannot lodge together in the same vital and physical system. So one must have totally renounced experiencing all pleasure in order to be in a state to receive the Ananda. But very few are those who can renounce pleasure without, by the very fact, renouncing all participation in active life and plunging into a rigorous asceticism. And among those who know that it is in active life that the transformation must take place, some try to see pleasure as a more or less warped form of Ananda, and thus justify in themselves the quest for personal satisfaction, creating in themselves an almost insuperable obstacle to their own transformation.”

But, Mother, she came down because she must have seen some possibility!

She came down because there was a possibility, because things had come to a certain stage and the time had come when she could descend.

In fact she came down because I thought it was possible that... she could succeed. (*Silence*) There are always possibilities, only... they must materialise. You see, a proof of what I told you is that it happened at a given moment and during... for two or three weeks, the atmosphere, not only of the Ashram but of the earth, was surcharged with such power, precisely, with so intense a divine joy, which creates so wonderful a power that things which were difficult to do before could be done almost instantaneously! There were repercussions in the whole world. I don't think there was one among you who was aware of it. You couldn't even tell me when it happened, could you?

When did it happen?

I don't know the dates. I don't know. I don't remember dates. I could tell you approximately, like that... (*Silence*) Perhaps if I consult my papers I would find the dates. But I don't know the dates. These, for me, are things which... All I know is that it happened before Sri Aurobindo left the body, that he had been told beforehand and recognised the fact...

There was a terrible fight with the inconscient; for, as I saw that the receptivity was not what it ought to be, I put the responsibility for it on the inconscient and it was there that I tried to give battle. I don't say that this had no result, but between the result obtained and the result hoped for, there was a great difference....

CWM 6: 291-94

Ascetic discipline and renunciation of pleasure

Doesn't ascetic discipline help us to overcome attachment?

No, it inflates and strengthens your pride.

But you said, "Renounce pleasure." Then...

Renounce pleasure... but it isn't through an ascetic discipline that one renounces pleasure! It is through an inner illumination and a kind of sublimation of the being which makes you feel all that is gross and obscure and unpleasant in pleasure.

If we are living in gross pleasures, how should we overcome them?

But you are not living exclusively in gross pleasure; otherwise, I suppose you wouldn't be here.

But everything is pleasure, isn't it? Pleasure, that means... pleasure. We live comfortably, we eat, etc. All that, isn't that pleasure?

(Surprised) You do all that for pleasure? *(Laughter)* That's perhaps your conception, I have nothing to tell you. If you can't feel the difference between something that aspires to a higher life and something which finds itself altogether comfortable in the ordinary life, well, I cannot help you. You must first have found that in yourself.

But doesn't some outer discipline help?

If you impose a discipline upon yourself and if it isn't too stupid, it may help you. A discipline, I tell you — disciplines, tapasyas, all ascetic disciplines are, as ordinarily practised, the best means of making you proud, of building up in you such a terrific pride that never, never will you be converted. It will have to be broken down with hammer-strokes.

The first condition is a healthy humility which makes you realise that unless you are sustained, nourished, helped, enlightened, guided by the Divine, you are *nothing at all*. There now. When you have felt that, not only understood it with your mind, but felt it down to your very body, then you will begin to be wise, but not before....

CWM 4: 301-02

The Mother

The Radha-Power

In the Chandi the names of the four Cosmic Powers of the Mother — Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati — are mentioned along with others, but the name Radha is not mentioned. This is a clear proof of the fact that when the Chandi was composed the Radha-Power was not manifested to the vision of the saints and that the Chandi mentions only the Cosmic Powers of the Mother and not her supramental Powers. In the book The Mother, after describing the four Powers of the Mother, you have said: “There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation, — most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe.” [pp. 23 – 24] Is not the Personality referred to in this passage the Radha-Power, which is spoken of as Premamayi Radha, Mahaprana Shakti and Hladini Shakti?

Yes — but the images of the Radha-Krishna lila are taken from the vital world and therefore it is only a minor manifestation of the Radha Shakti that is there depicted. That is why she is called Mahaprana Shakti and Hladini Shakti. What is referred to

is not this minor form, but the full Power of Love and Ananda above.

CWSA 32: 72-73

Radha's Prayer¹

O Thou whom at first sight I knew for the Lord of my being and my God, receive my offering.

Thine are all my thoughts, all my emotions, all the sentiments of my heart, all my sensations, all the movements of my life, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood. I am absolutely and altogether Thine, Thine without reserve. What Thou wilt of me, that I shall be. Whether Thou chooseth for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome. Each one of Thy gifts will be always for me a gift divine bringing with it the supreme Felicity.

¹ *The Mother originally wrote this prayer in English and then translated it into French the following day. Later Sri Aurobindo translated the French version into English; this is the translation presented above. The Mother's original prayer in English is given in the Note on the Texts.—Ed.*
CWSA 32: 647

Sri Aurobindo

Sweet Mother, I didn't understand this: "This is the power of Mahalakshmi and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings."

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

CWM 4: 282

The Mother

Images and Photographs

Form of the Gods and Goddesses

As to the Gods, man can build forms which they will accept; but these forms too are inspired into man's mind from the planes to which the God belongs. All creation has the two sides, the formed and the formless; the Gods too are formless and yet have forms, but a Godhead can take many forms, here Maheshwari, there Pallas Athene. Maheshwari herself has many forms in her lesser manifestations, Durga, Uma, Parvati, Chandi etc. The Gods are not limited to human forms — man also has not always seen them in human forms only. CWSA 32: 67

Images of gods and goddesses

Are the images we see of Mahasaraswati true?

Oh, Lord! (*Laughter*) When a very small child tries to make someone's portrait, does it resemble that person? It is very much like this, sometimes worse! Because the child is frank and sincere, whereas the one who makes the images of the gods is full of fixed notions and preconceived ideas, or else of all that others have said about the subject and of what has been written in the scriptures and what has been seen by people. And so he is bound by all that. *At times, from time to time*, there are artists who have an inner vision, a great aspiration, a great purity of soul and of vision, who have made things which are reasonably good. But this is extremely rare. And generally, I believe it is almost the opposite.

I have seen some of these forms in the vital and mental worlds, which were truly human creations. There is a force from beyond which manifests. But in these triple worlds of falsehood, truly man has created God in his own image —more or less — and there are beings which manifest in forms which are the result of the formative thought of man. And here, you see, it is truly frightful! I have seen some of these formations... (*silence*) and all this is so obscure, so incomprehensible, inexpressive....

Some of the gods are more ill-treated than others. For exam-

ple, that poor Mahakali, you know, what things are done to her!... It is so *frightful*, it is unimaginable! But this form lives only in a very low world... yes, in the lowest vital; and what it possesses of the original being is something... a reflection so remote from the origin that it is unrecognisable. However, usually, it is this that is attracted by human consciousness. And when an idol is made, you see, and the priest brings down a form — when the ceremony takes place in a regular manner, he puts himself in an inner state of invocation and tries to bring down a form or an emanation of the godhead into the idol in order to give it a power — if the priest is truly a man with a power of invocation, he can succeed. But usually — there are exceptions to everything — but usually these people have been educated in the common ideas according to tradition. And so, when they think of the godhead whom they are invoking, they think of all the attributes and appearances that have been given to it, and the invocation is usually addressed to entities of the vital world or at best to those of the mental world, but not to the Being itself. And it is these small entities which manifest in one idol or another. All these idols in small temples or even in families — some people have their little shrines, you know, in their homes and keep an image of the godhead they worship — these entities manifest in them; sometimes the consequences are rather unfortunate, for these forms are precisely so remote from the original godhead that... they are awkward formations. Some of those Kalis they worship in certain families are veritable monsters!

CWM 6: 275-76

The Mother's photographs

Sweet Mother, when we concentrate on one of your photos — there are many photos, each one with a different expression — does it make a difference for us, the one on which we concentrate?

If you do it purposely, yes, of course. If you choose this photo for a particular reason or that other one for another reason, surely. It has an effect. It is as though you were choosing to concentrate on one aspect of the Mother rather than another; for example,

if you choose to concentrate on Mahakali or Mahalakshmi or on Maheshwari, the results will be different. That part of you which answers to these qualities will awaken and become receptive. So, it is the same thing. But somebody who has only one photo, whichever it may be, and concentrates, without choosing this one or that, because he has only one, then it is of no importance which one it is. For the fact of concentrating on the photograph puts one in contact with the Force, and that is what is necessary in the case of everyone who responds automatically.

It is only when the person who concentrates puts a special will, with a special relation, into his concentration that it has an effect. Otherwise the relation is more general, and it is always the expression of the need or the aspiration of the person who concentrates. If he is absolutely neutral, if he does not choose, does not aspire for any particular thing, if he comes like this, like a white page and absolutely neutral, then it is the forces and aspects he needs which will answer to the concentration and perhaps even the person himself will not know what particular things he needs, because very few people are conscious of themselves. They live in a vague feeling, they have a vague aspiration and it is almost unseizable; it is not something organised, coordinated and willed, with a clear vision, for example, of the difficulties one wants to overcome or the capacities one wants to acquire; this, usually, is already the result of a fairly advanced discipline. One must have reflected much, observed much, studied much in order to be able to know exactly what he needs. Otherwise it is something hazy, this impression: one tries to catch it and it escapes... Isn't that so? CWM 7: 271-72

Mahakali picture

The black Kali form is a manifestation on the vital plane of Mahakali — but Mahakali herself in the Overmind is golden. What you saw was the Mother herself in her body of light with the Mahakali power in her, but not the actual form of Mahakali. CWUSA 32: 274

Mahalakshmi picture

On the music days it is always the Mahalakshmi aspect that is prominent. CWUSA 32: 574

Mahasaraswati picture

What is the wisdom that brought deeper gyri in the human brain, the perfect septa in the ventricles of the heart and such other details of structure? Is it the work of Mahasaraswati?

Yes — all perfection in intricacy of detail shows the touch of Mahasaraswati. CWSA 32: 72

The Mother's Light

(a) It [*the diamond light*] means the essential Force of the Mother.

(b) The diamond light proceeds from the heart of the Divine Consciousness and it brings the opening of the Divine Consciousness wherever it goes.

(c) The Mother's descent with the diamond light is the sanction of the Supreme Power to the movement in you.

(d) The Mother's diamond light is a light of absolute purity and power.

(e) The diamond light is the central consciousness and force of the Divine.

*

The Mother's light is white — especially diamond white. The Mahakali form is usually golden, of a very bright and strong golden hue.

*

The diamond is the symbol of the intensest light of the Mother's consciousness, so your visions indicate that you saw her full of that light and radiating it. Other jewels must be symbols of other forces, the ruby indicating power in the physical.

*

The diamond is the symbol of the Mother's consciousness; the colour depends on the particular force which her consciousness puts forth upon you at the moment.

*

The diamond is the symbol of the Mother's light and energy — the diamond light is that of her consciousness at its most intense.

Today at Pranam I saw a light like a golden thread coming from the Mother to me, but it vanished in a short time. Once I saw this light very clearly when she was standing on the terrace, just before coming down the staircase. Is this light from inside or outside? Since I saw it only for a while, I cannot believe my own eyes.

The golden Light is the light of the Divine Truth on the higher planes above the ordinary mind — a light supramental in origin. It is also the light of Mahakali above the mind. The golden light is also often seen emanating from the Mother like the white Light.

*

The line of golden light is a line of the light of the higher Divine Truth encircling the Akash of the heart and the diamond mass is the Mother's light pressing into that Akash. It is therefore a sign of these powers working on the psychic-emotional centre.

*

One night I found a vast light, yellowish white, cool and peaceful, coming down from above. Is this the light of the higher mind consciousness or of some spiritual consciousness?

It depends on the shade of the yellow. If it is golden white it comes from above the mind and the combination suggests the Maheshwari-Mahakali power. Higher Mind colour is pale blue.

CWSA 32: 266-68

Sri Aurobindo

What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?

Ah! First of all you must feel the need for it.

This is the most important point. It is to have a certain inner humility which makes you aware of your helplessness without the Grace, that truly, without it you are incomplete and powerless. This, to begin with, is the first thing.

It is an experience one can very well have. When, you see, even people who know nothing find themselves in quite difficult circumstances or facing a problem which must be solved or, as I just told you, an impulse which must be overcome or something that has disturbed them... and then they realise they are lost, they

don't know what to do — neither their mind nor their will nor their feelings help — they don't know what to do, then it happens; there is within them something like a kind of call, a call to something which can do what one cannot. One aspires to something which is capable of doing what one can't do.

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can do that, that the situation in which you find yourself, from there the Grace alone can pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call, aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace.

And later — you must pay great attention to this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips*) — the Grace will answer you, the Grace will pull you out of the trouble, the Grace will give you the solution to your problem or will help you to get out of your difficulty. But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, don't forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and don't think it is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point. Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say, "After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well."

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity.

CWM 6: 322-23

The Mother

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