

A bald eagle is shown in flight, wings spread wide, against a golden, hazy sunset background. The eagle's head is white, and its body is dark. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The eagle is flying over a field of tall grass, which is also illuminated by the golden light.

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**Born Free**



*When you cannot meditate, remain quiet and  
call in the Mother's Peace or Force.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

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# BORN FREE

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

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Editorial note: *The story of the Divine Mother is not just Her story but the story of the future yet to unfold upon earth. It opens a window in our inner being for a brief living contact with something of her divine personality, a contact that is always refreshing and rejuvenating.*



*The Mother — the consciousness and Force  
of the Supreme.*

*CWSA 32: 2*

**Sri Aurobindo**

## Reminiscences

### The Flame-Child

When I was a child of about thirteen, for nearly a year every night as soon as I had gone to bed it seemed to me that I went out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the city, very high above. Then I used to see myself clad in a magnificent golden robe, much longer than myself; and as I rose higher, the robe would stretch, spreading out in a circle around me to form a kind of immense roof over the city. Then I would see men, women, children, old men, the sick, the unfortunate coming out from every side; they would gather under the outspread robe, begging for help, telling of their miseries, their suffering, their hardships. In reply, the robe, supple and alive, would extend towards each one of them individually, and as soon as they had touched it, they were comforted or healed, and went back into their bodies happier and stronger than they had come out of them. Nothing seemed more beautiful to me, nothing could make me happier; and all the activities of the day seemed dull and colourless and without any real life, beside this activity of the night which was the true life for me. Often while I was rising up in this way, I used to see at my left an old man, silent and still, who looked at me with kindly affection and encouraged me by his presence. This old man, dressed in a long dark purple robe, was the personification — as I came to know later — of him who is called the Man of Sorrows.

Now that deep experience, that almost inexpressible reality, is translated in my mind by other ideas which I may describe in this way:

Many a time in the day and night it seems to me that I am, or rather my consciousness is, concentrated entirely in my heart which is no longer an organ, not even a feeling, but the divine Love, impersonal, eternal; and being this Love I feel myself living

at the centre of each thing upon the entire earth, and at the same time I seem to stretch out immense, infinite arms and envelop with a boundless tenderness all beings, clasped, gathered, nestled on my breast that is vaster than the universe.... Words are poor and clumsy, O divine Master, and mental transcriptions are always childish.... But my aspiration to Thee is constant, and truly speaking, it is very often Thou and Thou alone who livest in this body, this imperfect means of manifesting Thee.

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

*CWM 1: 81-82*

### **The present incarnation**

But with this present incarnation of the Mahashakti.... She is the Supreme's first manifestation, creation's first stride, and it was She who first gave form to all those beings. Now, since her incarnation in the physical world, and through the position She has taken here in relation to the Supreme by incarnating in a human body, all the other worlds have been influenced, and influenced in an extremely interesting way. I have been in contact with all those gods, all those great beings, and for the most part their attitude has changed. And even with those who didn't want to change, it has nonetheless influenced their way of being.

Human experience, with this direct incarnation of the Supreme, is ultimately a unique experience, which has given a new orientation to universal history. Sri Aurobindo speaks of this — he speaks of the difference between the Vedic era, the Vedic way of relating to the Supreme, and the advent of Vedanta (I think it's Vedanta): devotion, adoration, *bhakti*, the God within. Well, this aspect of rapport with the Supreme could exist only with man, because man is a special being in universal History — the divine Presence is in him. And several of those great gods have taken human bodies just to have that. But not many of them — they were so fully aware of their own perfect independence and their almightiness that they didn't



need anything (unlike man, you see, struggling to escape his slavery): they were absolutely free....

...In those movements of consciousness, in this state of consciousness, I am comfortable (*Mother heaves a sigh*). But it has taken me a lot of discipline to concentrate here [in the body]: there was always something, from my very childhood, that felt hemmed in, squeezed, really... oh! And with a sense of something so powerful that if it ever went into action (*gesture of unleashing*), it would smash everything.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, June 30, 1962*

My reply is that the whole world should be in the Ashram!

But as I cannot contain the whole world, I have to contain at least one representative of each type.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, November 8, 1960*

### **Missioned from childhood**

I prefer also to make no reply to the question about the Mother, at least in the form in which you put it. All I care to say, and it is all that is needed, is that she is doing the work for which she took birth and has prepared herself uninterruptedly from her childhood. The Power is in her that can bring down a true supramental creation, open the whole nature of the disciple to the supramental Light and Force and guide its transformation into a divine nature. It is because there is this Power in her that she has been entrusted with the work.

But all are free in their inner being, free to accept or refuse, free to receive or not to receive, to follow this way or another. What the Mother can do for the disciple depends on his willingness or capacity to open himself to her help and influence and on the completeness of his consent and confidence. If they are complete, the work done will be perfect and true; if they are imperfect, the work will be marred by the distortions brought in by his mind and his vital

failings, if they are denied, then nothing can be done. Or, rather, nothing will be done; for the attempt in such circumstances might lead to a breaking rather than a divine building of the nature, or even there might be a reception of hostile forces instead of the true light and power. This is the law of the relation on the spiritual plane: the consent of the disciple must be at every moment free, but his confidence, if given, must be complete and the submission to the guidance absolute.

This is the one real issue that your recent development has raised between us. The rising of some doubts would in itself have been of little importance; doubt is the very nature of the ignorant physical mind. But yours have very evidently risen because you have taken a turn away from the path to the supramental realisation along which the Mother was helping you and admitted another occult influence. This is shown by the nature of your doubts where you question her knowledge of certain common experiences of Yoga and by your conclusion that she can no longer help you. I pass by your pretensions to gauge her knowledge and experience; her dealings with you and others proceed from a consciousness to which the mental understanding and judgment have not the key. But when the doubt and questioning go so far, it is because something in the vital nature begins to be unwilling to accept any longer the guidance; for the guidance is likely to interfere with its going on its own way.

I could not accede under any circumstances to your request to me to substitute my instruction and guidance for the Mother's. If you cannot receive help from her any longer, it is evident that you cannot receive it either from me; for the same Power and the same Knowledge act through both of us. I have no intention of taking a step which would bring down the work to the personal human level and would be a direct contradiction of its divine origin and nature.

*CWSA 36: 391-92*

**Sri Aurobindo**



## **I am THAT**

Also when I was eleven or twelve, my mother rented a cottage at the edge of a forest: we didn't have to go through the town. I used to go and sit in the forest all alone. I would sit lost in reverie. One day (it happened often), one day some squirrels had come, several birds, and also (*Mother opens her eyes wide*), deer, looking on.... How lovely it was! When I opened my eyes and saw them, I found it charming — they scampered away.

The memory of all these things returned afterwards, when I met Théon — long afterwards, when I was more than twenty, that is, more than ten years later. I met Théon and got the explanation of these things, I understood. Then I remembered all that had happened to me, and I thought, "Well!..." Because Madame Théon said to me (I told her all my childhood stories), she said to me, "Oh, but I know, you are that, the stamp of that is on you." I thought over what she had said, and I saw it was indeed true. All those experiences I had were very clear indications that there were certainly people in the invisible looking after me! (*Mother laughs*)

Interestingly there was nothing mental about it: I didn't know the existence of those things, I didn't know what meditation was — I meditated without the least idea of what it was. I knew nothing, absolutely nothing, my mother had kept it all completely taboo: those matters are not to be touched, they drive you crazy!

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, March 9, 1963*

## **The Divine Presence from childhood**

And 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 vibration of pure Love**

For me, the most concrete approach to this is through the vibration of pure Love; not love for something, a love you give or receive, but Love in itself: Love. It is something self-existent. And it is certainly the most concrete approach for me. (But it isn't exclusive — it contains everything else within itself; it doesn't exclude all the other approaches, all the other contacts.)

You see, throughout my childhood and youth and the whole beginning of my yoga, there was a sort of refusal in my being to use the word "God," because of all the falsehood behind that word (Sri Aurobindo rid me of that; in the same way he got rid of all limitations, he rid me of that one too). But it's not a word that comes to me spontaneously.

But Love.... At the moment of contact, when it goes like this (*gesture*) — at that moment something surges up....

But the words don't matter, they're unimportant.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, May 31, 1962*

### **The body was prepared**

This body isn't even one that is unprepared. It had capabilities, it was born with certain capabilities and was prepared for all kinds

of experiences. There was also the sort of intuitive discernment Sri Aurobindo refers to, it had been there since my earliest childhood — veiled, mixed, no doubt, but present all the same, it was there. Afterwards, it was purified, developed, strengthened, the mixture lessened and the body was somewhat... (*laughing*) to perfect itself it went through quite a great deal of friction of all types. It's certainly more apt today than it was fifty years ago, there isn't a shadow of doubt about it! But you understand, there's nothing to boast about!

*I feel very strongly that things are that way because the Earth is that way.*

Yes, quite clearly! Quite clearly.

*If there were.... If people aspired, if there were enough people who wanted that, I feel it would be done almost in a flash.]*

Oh, that's absolutely correct, absolutely true. But anyway, it's a fact. And ultimately, a victory that's conditional [on others], well, it's just a way to speed up Nature's movement a little. If that's what it is, all well and good — but as I said (it's very good, I make no demands, I don't protest, I am quite peaceful, and, to tell the truth, the result is all the same to me), there's nothing worth mentioning, that's what I mean, you can't write stories about that! (*laughing*) It's not worth talking about it.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, March 23, 1963*

### **Born with a prepared body**

I was born with a consciously prepared body — Sri Aurobindo was aware of that, he said it immediately the first time he saw me: I was born free. That is, from the spiritual standpoint: without any desire. Without any desire and attachment. And, *mon petit*, if there is the slightest desire and the slightest attachment, it's impossible to do this work.

A vital like a warrior, with an absolute self-control (the vital of

this present incarnation was sexless — a warrior), an absolutely calm and imperturbable warrior — no desires, no attachments.... Since my earliest childhood, I have done things which, to the human consciousness, are "monstrous"; my mother went so far as to tell me that I was a real "monster," because I had neither attachments nor desires. If I was asked, "Would you like to do this?" I answered, "I don't care" (my father especially, it would make him furious!).

If people were nasty to me, or if people died or went away, it left me absolutely calm — and so: "You're a monster, you have no feelings."

And with that preparation... It's eighty-six years since I came here, mon petit! For thirty years I worked with Sri Aurobindo consciously, without letup, night and day....

We shouldn't be in a hurry.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, March 28, 1964*

*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.*

CWSA 32: 14

Sri Aurobindo



## Growth of the Flame

### Living divinely

That's another thing I have noticed: even in my childhood I was already conscious of what Sri Aurobindo calls "living divinely," that is, outside the sense of Good and Evil.

This was counterbalanced by a terrible censor which never left me. It took Sri Aurobindo to clear it from my path. But I didn't have the sense of sin, of Good and Evil, sin and virtue — definitely not! My consciousness was centered around *right action and wrong action* — "this should have been done, that shouldn't have" — with no question of Good or Evil, from the standpoint of work, of action alone. My consciousness has always been centered on action. It was a vision, a perception of the line to be followed — or the many lines to be followed — for the action to be accomplished. And any deviation from what to me was the luminous line, the straight line (not geometrically straight: the luminous line, the line expressing the divine Will), the slightest deviation from that, and... oh, it was the only thing that tormented me.

And the torment didn't come from me, it came from that character hooked on to my consciousness and constantly whipping me, hounding me, ill-treating me — what people call their "conscience," which has nothing whatsoever to do with consciousness! It's an adverse being, and whatever it can change, it changes for the worse; whatever is susceptible to being changed into something anti divine, it changes. And it is constantly repeating the same thing: "This is wrong, that is wrong, this is wrong...."

But this was the only thing; there was never, never the idea of being either virtuous or sinful — never. It was a matter of doing the right thing or not doing the right thing. That's all. No sense of being virtuous or sinful, none at all! I never, ever had that sense.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, January 9, 1962*

## Beyond Good and Evil

From my earliest childhood, instinctively, I have never felt the slightest contempt or ... how should I say ... (well, well! I was thinking in English) shrinking or disapproval, severe criticism or disgust for the things people call vice.

I have experienced all kinds of things in life, but I have always felt a sort of light — so intangible, So perfectly pure (not in the moral sense, but pure light!) — and it could go anywhere, mix everywhere without ever really getting mixed with anything. I felt this flame as a young child — a white flame. And never have I felt disgust, contempt, recoil, the sense of being dirtied—by anything or anyone. There was always this flame—white, white, so white that nothing could make it other than white. And I started feeling it long ago in the past (now my approach is entirely different—it comes straight from above, and I have other reasons for seeing the Purity in everything). But it came back when I met Z (because of the contact with him)—and I felt nothing negative, absolutely nothing. Afterwards, people said, 'Oh, how he used to be this, how he used to be that! ... And now look at him! See what he's become! ...' Someone even used the word 'rotten'—that made me smile. Because, you see, that doesn't exist for me.

What I saw is this world, this realm where people are like that, they live that, for it's necessary to get out from below and this is a way — it's a way, the only way. It was the only way for the vital formation and the vital creation to enter into the material world, into inert matter. An intellectualised vital, a vital of ideas, an 'artist'; it even fringes upon or has the first drops of Poetry—this Poetry which upon its peaks goes beyond the mind and becomes an expression of the Spirit. Well, when these first drops fall on earth, it stirs up mud.

And I wondered why people are so rigid and severe, why they condemn others (but one day I'll understand this as well). I say



this because very often I run into these two states of mind in my activities (the grave and serious mind which sees hypocrisy and vice, and the religious and yogic mind which sees the illusion that prevents you from nearing the Divine)—and without being openly criticised, I'm criticised ... I'll tell you about this one day ...

You're criticised?

Yes, but naturally without daring to criticize me openly. But I'm aware of it. On the one hand, they see it as a kind of *looseness* on my part (oh, not only for that — many things!). And on the other hand, you know well enough; it applies to other things, slightly different areas, it's not exactly the same, but in this area they're also severe. I'm even told that there are some people who shouldn't be in the Ashram.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, November 8, 1960*

## **The word God**

I am intentionally not giving any definition. Because my life-long feeling has been that it's a mere word, and a word behind which people put a lot of very undesirable things.... It's that idea of a god who claims to be "the one and only," as they say: "God is the one and only." But they feel it and say it in the way Anatole France put it (*I think it was in The Revolt of Angels*): this God who wants to be the one and only and all alone. That was what had made me a complete atheist, if I may say so, in my childhood; I refused to accept a being, whoever he was, who proclaimed himself to be the one and only and almighty. Even if he were indeed the one and only and almighty (*laughing*), he should have no right to proclaim it! That's how it was in my mind. I could make an hour-long speech on this, to show how in every religion they tackled the problem.

In any case, I have given what I find is the most objective definition. And as in the other day's "What is the Divine?", I have tried to give a feeling of the Thing; here I wanted to fight against the use of the word which, to me, is hollow, but dangerously so.

*I remember a very powerful line in "Savitri" which says it all wonderfully in one sentence. He says, "The bodiless Namelessness that saw God born...."*

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, June 7, 1967*

### **Place of comfort**

It's true, people are generally built for the place where they are to live, but in my case, I felt comfortable only here. Up to the age of thirty, my whole childhood and youth, I always felt cold — always cold. And in winter... Yet I went skating, did exercises, I led a very active life — but cold, terribly cold! I felt as if I lacked the sun. But when I came here: "Ah, at last! (*Mother takes a breath*) Now I am comfortable." The first year when I came here, bringing all that accumulated cold in my body, at the height of summer, in this season, I was going about in a woolen suit! A skirt, a blouse and a cloak. People would stare at me.... I didn't even notice it — it was my natural dress.

When I left again, I went by boat (people didn't travel by plane at the time), and when I came to the middle of the Mediterranean, I fell sick — sick from the cold, in the Mediterranean! So you see, I was built for the work here, (*laughing*) it was foreseen!

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, June 15, 1963*

### **A blissful splendid sleep**

I think it's useless to put a child to bed if he isn't going to sleep — he needs to be peaceful before going to sleep. If they were given a somewhat peaceful atmosphere, they would be able to sleep....

This brought back to my mind all kinds of things from my childhood, from my infancy. My grandmother lived next door to us, and at night (in the evening after dinner), we used to visit her before going to bed. I can't say it was great fun, but she had very good armchairs (!), and so while my mother chatted with her, I had

one of those splendid sleeps there, lying in that armchair—a blissful kind of sleep. But if someone had watched this from outside, without knowing anything, he would have said, "Just look! They force this child to stay awake till 10 instead of letting her sleep." But I'd be resting wonderfully!

So it depends on the child. And if he really feels sleepy, what prevents him from sleeping? What's required is to give them a peaceful atmosphere, as much peace as possible.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, October 14, 1964*

### **Knowledge by experience**

You understand, none of my certitudes — none, without exception — have ever come through the mind. The intellectual comprehension of each of these experiences came much later. Little by little, little by little, came the higher understanding of the intellectual consciousness, long after the experience (I don't mean philosophical knowledge — that's nothing but scholarly mumbo-jumbo and leaves me cold). Since my earliest childhood, experiences have come like that: something massive takes hold of you and you don't need to believe or disbelieve, know or not know — bam! There's nothing to say; you are facing a fact.

Once, during those last difficult years, Sri Aurobindo told me that this was precisely what gave me my advantage and why (how to put it?) there were greater possibilities that I would go right to the end.

I still don't know. The day I do... it will probably be done. Because it will come in the same manner, like a massive fact: it will be like that. And only much later will the understanding say, 'Ah! So that's what it is!'

First it comes, afterwards we know it. ...

A book like that (sufficiently veiled, of course), written in the simplest way possible (like I wrote 'The Science of Living,' I believe)

— and it's fine, you speak to people in their own language. Above all, no philosophy! None! You simply tell some extraordinary stories in the same way you would tell an ordinary story. But the Story is there, that's the most important thing.

It started in my infancy — the Story was already there.

But it never passed through my head first, never, never, never! Experiences came in my childhood that I didn't understand until Sri Aurobindo told me certain things; then I said, 'Ah, so that's what it was!...' But I never had that kind of curiosity, I never cared to understand with the head, I wasn't interested. I was interested in the result, in the inner change: how my attitude towards the world changed, my position relative to the creation — that interested me from my infancy; how what seemed to be quite ordinary incidents could so completely change my relationship with that whole little world of children. And it was always the same thing: instead of feeling burdened, with a weight on your head, and just plodding on like a donkey, something would lift (*gesture*) and you would be on top of it — you could smile and begin to change. See that thing that's out of place?... Why not set it right! Like arranging things in a drawer.

Why? How? What does it all mean?... What do I care! Setting it right is what's important!

It began when I was five, almost eighty years ago.

If God wills and we reach the end, then we will simply tell our story, that's all — No teaching

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, December 20, 1961*

### **Telling stories to oneself**

Nothing is more interesting. It is a most pleasant way of passing the nights. You begin a story, then, when it is time to wake up, you put a full stop to the last sentence and come back into your body. And then the following night you start off again, re-open the page and resume your story during the whole time you are out;

and then you arrange things well — they must be well arranged, it must be very beautiful. And when it is time to come back, you put a full stop once again and tell those things, "Stay very quiet till I return!" And you come back into your body. And you continue this every evening and write a book of wonderful fairy-tales — provided you remember them when you wake up.....

And on the trust he has in what happens to him, on the absence of the mind's critical sense, and a simplicity of heart, and a youthful and active energy — it depends on all that—on a kind of inner vital generosity: one must not be too egoistic, one must not be too miserly, nor too practical, too utilitarian—indeed there are all sorts of things one should not be... like children. And then, one must have a lively power of imagination, for— I seem to be telling you stupid things, but it is quite true — there is a world in which you are the supreme maker of forms: that is your own particular vital world. You are the supreme fashioner and you can make a marvel of your world if you know how to use it. If you have an artistic or poetic consciousness, if you love harmony, beauty, you will build there something marvellous which will tend to spring up into the material manifestation.

When I was small I used to call this "telling stories to oneself". It is not at all a telling with words, in one's head: it is a going away to this place which is fresh and pure, and... building up a wonderful story there. And if you know how to tell yourself a story in this way, and if it is truly beautiful, truly harmonious, truly powerful and well co-ordinated, this story will be realised in your life — perhaps not exactly in the form in which you created it, but as a more or less changed physical expression of what you made.

That may take years, perhaps, but your story will tend to organise your life. But there are very few people who know how to tell a beautiful story; and then they always mix horrors in it, which they regret later.

*CWM 8: 116-18*

## Getting rid of limitations

It is said and repeated, and there are people who will prove it: to do something well one must specialize. One must do that and concentrate. If one wants to become a good philosopher, one must learn only philosophy, if one wants to be a good chemist, one must learn chemistry only. And if one wants to become a good tennis-player, one must play only tennis. That's not what I think, that is all I can say. My experience is different. I believe there are general faculties and that it is much more important to acquire these than to specialise — unless, naturally, it be like M. and Mme. Curie who wanted to develop a certain science, find something new, then of course they were compelled to concentrate on that science. But still that was only till they had discovered it; once they had found it, nothing stopped them from widening their mind.

This is something I have heard from my very childhood, and I believe our great grandparents heard the same thing, and from all time it has been preached that if you want to succeed in something you must do only that. And as for me, I was scolded all the time because I did many different things! And I was always told I would never be good at anything. I studied, I did painting, I did music, and besides was busy with other things still. And I was told my music wouldn't be up to much, my painting wouldn't be worthwhile, and my studies would be quite incomplete. Probably it is quite true, but still I have found that this had its advantages — those very advantages I am speaking about, of widening, making supple one's mind and understanding. It is true that if I had wanted to be a first-class player and to play in concerts, it would have been necessary to do what they said. And as for painting, if I had wanted to be among the great artists of the period, it would have been necessary to do that. That's quite understandable. But still, that is just one point of view. I don't see any necessity of being the greatest artist, the greatest musician. That has always

seemed to me a vanity. And besides, it is a question of opinion...

CWM 6: 19

### Suppleness and breadth

Once, very long ago, when Sri Aurobindo was telling me about himself, that is, of his childhood, his education, I put the question to him, I asked him, "Why am I, as an individual being, so mediocre? I can do anything; all that I have tried to do I have done, but never in a superior way: always like this (*gesture to an average level*)." Then he answered me (at the time I took it as a kindness or commiseration), "That's because it gives great suppleness — a great suppleness and a vast scope; because those who have perfection are concentrated and specialised." As I said, I took it simply like a caress to comfort a child. But now I realise that the most important thing is not to have any fixity: nothing should be set, definitive, like the sense of a perfection in the realisation — that puts a total stop to the forward march. The sense of incapacity (with the meaning I said of mediocrity, of something by no means exceptional) leaves you in a sort of expectation (*gesture of aspiration upward*) of something better. And then, the most important thing is suppleness — suppleness, suppleness. Suppleness and breadth: reject nothing as useless or bad or inferior — nothing; set nothing up as really superior and beautiful — nothing. Remain ever open, ever open.

The ideal is to have this suppleness and receptivity and surrender, that is, so total an acceptance of the Influence that no matter what comes the instrument adapts itself instantly to express it naturally, spontaneously and effortlessly. With everything, of course: with the plastic arts, with music, with writing.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, February 18, 1967*

### Shy nature

The nature (of Mother) was rather shy, and as a matter of fact, there wasn't much confidence in the personal capacity (al-



though there was the sense of being able to do anything, if the need arose). 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 half an hour (I don't even know what I told them), and when it was over everybody was quite pleased. I went to find 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, for everything 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.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, February 18, 1967*

### **Great formative power**

I've had this great formative power ever since my earliest childhood, but I had channeled it and stopped it because I considered it useless. But it came back recently, along with the sure sign

that it was coming from the very highest origin: "This is it, this is how things will be." But that's for later, of course. To our external reason, those things seem totally unrealizable, but they will be realizable in... perhaps a few hundred years, I don't know—it's the future being prepared. And indeed, that vision has a tremendous power of creation and realization, and it is always felt physically (the rest is very still), it's always physical. But it triggered a kind of very rapid movement of the physical consciousness (within the most material substance), and caused a dislocation. And so the day before yesterday, that old formation suddenly returned and made me understand one aspect of the body's nature, the way the body is constructed and the usefulness of that construction. So now things are all right. It has been one more step.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, August 8, 1962*

### **A concentrated will and endurance**

To everyone who has lived closely with it, my body gives the impression of two things: a very concentrated, very stubborn will, and... such endurance! Sri Aurobindo used to tell me he had never dreamed a body could have such endurance. And that's probably why.... But I don't want to curtail this ability in any way, because it is a cellular will, and a cellular endurance too—which is quite intriguing. It's not a central will and central endurance (that's something else altogether) — it's cellular. That's why Sri Aurobindo used to tell me this body had been specially prepared and chosen for the Work — because of its capacity for obstinate endurance and will. But that's no reason to exercise this ability uselessly! So I am making sure it relaxes now; I tell it constantly, "Now, now! Just let go! Relax, have some fun, where's the harm in it?" I have to tell it to be quiet, very quiet. And it's very surprised to hear that: "Ah! Can I live that way? I don't have to hurry? I can live that way?"

\*

## Need for relaxation

I've fainted fairly often in my life. Even when I was young, I would remain conscious, and there was a whole period when I used to go out of my body, which I would always immediately see in some ridiculous position (just where it had no business being, of course!). So I would rush back into it and say, "Come on! What's wrong with you!" Then it would shake itself and get moving again, like a donkey — you give it a good whack, and it gets back to work.

This need for relaxation was never psychological with me. And I have seen that the habit people have of slackening has the same origin: it's not necessarily negligence or vital weakness, the body simply gets winded. It bears up under the tension of vital energy, but eventually it gets winded, tired out, and needs rest.

Given the world's present set-up, this is "normal"— but if the supramental world were to be realized, it shouldn't remain normal. Clearly, a considerable change has to take place in the physical substance. That will probably be the essential difference between the bodies fashioned by Nature's methods and those to be fashioned by supramental knowledge — a new element will come in, and we will no longer be "natural." But so long as this natural element is present, well, a certain amount of patience is probably required — let the body catch its breath, otherwise something gives way.

It gets much less winded, of course, when you have the inner equality of the divine Presence. So much fatigue is due to excess tension produced by desire or effort or struggle, by the constant battle against all opposing forces. All that can go.

We tire ourselves out quite needlessly.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, January 9, 1962*

## Student days

From my earliest childhood I have not stopped observing things. When I was very young I was chided for never speaking. It was because I spent my time observing. I passed my time observing, I registered everything, I learnt all I could, I did not stop learning. Well, I can still feel surprised. Suddenly I find myself looking at such twisted, insincere and obscure movements that I tell myself, "It is not possible. Can such a thing exist?" Indeed, things which still come to me, day after day, "It is not possible! In the world things happen in this way?" And yet I have seen a great number of people, I began being interested in people when very young, I have seen many countries, done what I recommend to others; in every country I lived the life of that country in order to understand it well, and there is nothing which interested me in my outer being as much as learning.

*CWM 6: 166*

Once in my life I took an exam (I forget which one), but I was just at the age limit, that is I was too young to sit at the time of the regular exam, so they had me sit with those who had flunked the first exam (I sat at that time because it was autumn, and then I was old enough). And I remember, we were a small group, the teachers were greatly annoyed because their holidays had been cut short, and the students were for the most part rather mediocre, or else rebellious. There I was, observing all that (I was very young, you understand, I don't remember how old, thirteen or fourteen), observing the whole thing: a poor little girl had been called to the blackboard to do a mathematical problem, and she didn't know how to do it, she kept stammering. Me (I wasn't being questioned just then), I looked and smiled — oh, dear! The teacher saw me and was quite displeased. As soon as the girl was sent back, he called me and said, "You do it." Well, naturally (I loved mathematics very

much, really very much, and also I understood, it made sense), I did the problem — the chap's face!... You see, I wasn't in that (in the small outward person): I was constantly a witness. And I had the most extraordinary fun. So I know the way children are, the way teachers are, I know all that, I had great fun, really great fun. At home, my brother was studying advanced mathematics (it was to enter Polytechnique), and he found it difficult, so my mother had engaged a tutor to coach him. I was two years younger than my brother. I used to look on, and everything would become clear: the why, the how, it all was clear. So the teacher was working hard, my brother was working hard, when suddenly I said, "But it's like this!" Then I saw the teacher's face!... It seems he went and told my mother, "It's your daughter who should be learning!" (Mother laughs) And it was all like a picture, you understand, so funny, so funny! So I know, I remember, I know the reactions, the habits.... That's why I didn't want to look after the School here because I thought it would be a headache and everyone would fall on me! Then I was forced to because of that copying affair. But now I find it funny! (Laughing) And I tell them outrageous things! It's so amusing, so amusing!...

For a time I attended a private school: I didn't go to a state school because my mother considered it unfitting for a girl to be in a state school! But I was in a private school, a school of high repute at the time: their teachers were really capable people. The geography teacher, a man of renown, had written books, his books on geography were well-known. He was a fine man. So then, we were doing geography (I enjoyed maps more fully because it all had to be drawn) and one day, the teacher looked at me (he was an intelligent man), he looked at me and asked, "Why are towns, the big cities, settled on rivers?" I saw the students' bewildered look, they were saying to themselves, "Lucky the question wasn't put to me!" I replied, "But it's very simple! It's because rivers are

a natural means of communication." (*Mother laughs*) He too was taken aback!... That's how it was, all my studies were like that, I enjoyed myself all the time — enjoyed myself thoroughly, it was great fun!

The teacher of literature ... He was an old fellow full of all the most conventional ideas imaginable. What a bore he was, oh!... So all the students sat there, their noses to the grindstone. He would give subjects for essays—do you know *The Path of Later On and the Road of Tomorrow?* I wrote it when I was twelve, it was my homework on his question! He had given a proverb (now I forget the words) and expected to be told ... all the sensible things! I told my story, that little story, it was written at the age of twelve. Afterwards he would eye me with misgivings! (*Laughing*) He expected me to make a scene.... Oh, but I was a good girl!

But it was always like that: with that something looking on and seeing the sheer ridiculousness of this life which takes itself so seriously!

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, July 26, 1967*

### **To be more and more conscious**

*Ever since I was very young, I have always thirsted for the same thing: I have always wanted to be conscious. So what makes me furious is that I am not conscious — it infuriates me.*

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!"

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, September 5, 1962*

### **Surrounded with ingratitude**

From my earliest childhood (when I was five, my memories at five) and for more than eighty years, I have always been surrounded with people who brought me an abundance of revolt, discontent, and then, more and more so, cases (certain cases have been very acute and still are) of sheer ingratitude — not towards me, that doesn't matter at all: towards the Divine. Ingratitude... that is something I have often found very, very painful — that it should exist. It's one of the things I have seen in my life that seemed to me the most... the most intolerable — that sort of acid bitterness against the Divine, because things are as they are, because all that suffering was permitted. It takes on more or less ignorant, more or less intellectual forms... but it's a kind of bitterness. It takes some-



times personal forms, which makes the struggle even more difficult because you can't mix in questions of persons — it's not a personal question, it's an error to think that there can be a single "personal" movement in the world; it's man's ignorant consciousness which makes it personal, but it isn't: it's all terrestrial attitudes.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, December 21, 1963*

### **The blows of life**

I saw it in my own case. It was interesting enough, because from my earliest childhood, I was in contact with the higher consciousness (*gesture above the head*) and in a real stupefaction at the state of the earth and people—when I was very little. I was in a stunned amazement all the time. And the blows I received!... Constantly. Each thing came to me as a stab or a punch or a hammer blow, and I would say to myself, "What? How is this possible?" You know, all the baseness, all the lies, all the hypocrisy, all that is crooked, all that distorts and undoes the flow of the Force. And I would see it in my parents, in circumstances, in friends, in everything — a stupefaction. It wasn't translated intellectually: it was translated by that stupefaction. And when I was very little, the Force was already there (*gesture above the head*); I have a clear memory from the age of five: I only had to sit down for a moment to feel it, that Force which would come. And I went through the whole of life, up to the age of twenty or twenty-one (when I began to encounter Knowledge and someone who explained to me what it all was) like that, in that stupefaction: "What — is this life? What — is this what people are? What...?" And I was as though beaten black and blue, *mon petit!*

Then, from the age of twenty or twenty-five, that habit of pessimism began. It took all that time, all those blows, for it to come.

But with regard to health, whenever I had an illness (for me it was never an "illness," it was still part of the blows), I had a trust,

a complete assurance that it had no reality. And very young (very young, maybe around the age of thirteen or fourteen), every time a blow came, I would tell my body, "But what's the use of being ill since you'll just have to get well!" And that stayed until I was over thirty: what's the use of being ill since you have to get well? And it faded away only little by little, with that growing pessimism.

Now I have to undo all that work.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, October 10, 1964*

### **Sense of the sacred**

Something the modern world has completely lost is the sense of the sacred.

Ever since my childhood, I have spent my time veiling myself: one veil over another veil over another veil, so as to remain invisible. Because to see me without the true attitude is the great sin. Anyway, 'sin' in the sense Sri Aurobindo defines it — meaning that things are no longer in their place.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, September 19, 1958*

### **The Mother and food**

I have never been interested in food! I have never liked eating. When I was small, they had to think up all sorts of tricks to make me eat, to me it was the most absurd and least interesting thing. Well, I know the food of every country and have done a comparative study (!) of all cuisines, and I can be anywhere without it disturbing my body in the least.

It's not out of taste for food, it's out of taste for... (how can I put it?) the expansion of consciousness, the elimination of limits, and above all to prevent the slavery of habits—that's a horrible thing. To be the slave of one's habits is disgusting. Even when I was very small, that's how it was: no slavery. I was told, "But you must do this, because that's the habit," and I used to answer in a

very little polite way, "Rubbish!"... To do things that way because the habit is to do them that way is no argument to me — free, free, free! The taste for freedom.

You mustn't be a little slave just because you were born from certain parents in such and such a place — it's by chance, not fate!

No, Mother, it's mostly the sense of smell. There are certain smells I find very hard to bear.

But you must learn to bear them. Just do this: when you get a shock, stay very quiet and call — call the Lord or call me, it doesn't matter (laughing), it has the same effect! (Don't go about repeating this!) And then say, "Give me a widened consciousness," that's all. And then remain quiet. And then the next time the smell comes, you'll notice that, oh, it's not so unpleasant, and the third or fourth time, you will feel the Ananda behind it.

I know this from experience.

It's quite simply a narrowness in the taste because from your childhood you have been given a certain number of things. You are used to them: "Then it's good"; you aren't used to them: "Oh, how horrible!"... You must learn to see why it's there, why it's in the world — everything in the world is for the delight of being, so the delight must be there since it's everywhere!

You only have to find it.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, November 15, 1965*

## **The Mother and sleep**

You must sleep well. Yes, I have noticed that it's important to sleep a long time. As soon as you feel tired, let yourself drift into sleep, don't resist. That's important. I am saying this from personal experience, because all of a sudden... When there is a length of time (it lasts an hour, two hours, it depends) during which the atmosphere is all vibrant with this light-force-joy I spoke of the other day, and you are as if... it's absolutely full, absolutely full;

and then all of a sudden (*gesture of inward plunge*), and after a time you ask yourself, "Well, well, where have I been?..." There are times like that when you go into a sort of sleep. The first few times, I thought I had lapsed into unconsciousness (although that has rarely happened to me!), but anyway, I wondered what it meant. Then I took a good look and I saw it was a necessary period of assimilation. It's very necessary. It's in a sort of stillness of the cells' consciousness that they assimilate the new force. So when it comes, don't resist. Generally, it doesn't last very long: fifteen minutes, twenty minutes. A period of assimilation. You know, the atmosphere is charged, charged, increasingly charged. So if suddenly you feel something pulling, don't resist, let yourself go — it's better not to be standing up!

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, November 15, 1965*

### **Twelve year period**

I have seen that the different stages of my development occurred in twelve-year periods, though I don't recall the exact dates. The first period, from the age of five (I can't start earlier than five!) to about eighteen, dealt with consciousness. Then came all the artistic and vital development, culminating in the occult development with Théon (I met Théon around 1905 or '06, I think). Then right around this time an intensive mental development began—from 1908 to 1920, or a little before; but it was especially intense before coming here in 1914.

And 1920 marked the beginning of full development. Not spiritual development — that had been going on from the very start — but action, the action with Sri Aurobindo. That was clearly from 1920 on; I had met Sri Aurobindo earlier, but it really began in 1920.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, July 28, 1962*



*mother saravrobinso  
is my refuge*

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.

*CWSA 32: 14-15*

**Sri Aurobindo**

# Sri Aurobindo on the Mother

## Early Visions and Experiences

*When Ramakrishna was doing sadhana, Mother was on earth physically for the first eight years of her childhood, from 1878 to 1886. Did he know that Mother had come down? He must have had some vision at least of her coming, but we do not read anywhere definitely about it. And when Ramakrishna must have been intensely calling Mother, she must have felt something at that age.*

In Mother's childhood's visions she saw myself whom she knew as "Krishna" — she did not see Ramakrishna.

It was not necessary that he should have a vision of her coming down as he was not thinking of the future nor consciously preparing for it. I don't think he had the idea of any incarnation of the Mother.

\*

The Mother's sadhana started when she was very young. When she was twelve or thirteen, every evening many teachers came to her and taught her various spiritual disciplines. Among them was a dark Asiatic figure. When we first met, she immediately recognised me as the dark Asiatic figure whom she used to see a long time ago. That she should come here and work with me for a common goal was, as it were, a divine dispensation.

The Mother was an adept in the Buddhist yoga and the yoga of the Gita even before she came to India. Her yoga was moving towards a grand synthesis. After this, it was natural that she should come here. She has helped and is helping to give a concrete form to my yoga. This would not have been possible without her co-operation.

One of the two great steps in this yoga is to take refuge in the Mother.

CWSA 32: 35-36

*There are some prayers of the Mother written before she came here in 1914 in which there are ideas of transformation and manifestation. Did she have these ideas long before she came here?*

The Mother had been spiritually conscious from her youth, even from her childhood, upward and she had done sadhana and developed this knowledge very long before she came to India.

CWSA 32:601

### **The Mother's Music**

It is not by knowledge of music that the understanding [*of the Mother's music*] comes; nor is it by effort of the mind — it is by becoming inwardly silent, opening within and getting the spontaneous feeling of what is in the music.

CWSA 32:571-72

*I feel within me a tendency for music, but I understand nothing of harmony, tune and rhythm. Yet sometimes when I hear the Mother's music, I am spellbound and lose all sense of time.*

It is not necessary to have technical knowledge in order to feel what is behind the music. Mother of course does not play for the sake of a technical musical effect, but to bring down something from the higher planes and that anyone can receive who is open.

When I entered the Mother's room, she had just finished playing for a long time — that is why I did not expect her to play for me. The Mother has played music from her childhood upwards — so it is no trouble to her to sing or play several times.

Why does my mind become so full of joy listening to the Mother's music? Today while listening to her play, my mind, my heart, my whole consciousness became full of peace and joy and then went high up somewhere.

What else is the Mother's music except the bringing down of these things? She does not play or sing merely for the music's



sake, but to call down the Divine Consciousness and its Powers.

CWSA 32:572

### **The perception of Power**

Since childhood, I have always endeavored, as it were, to attain total indifference — nothing is annoying, nothing is pleasant. Since childhood, I recall a consciousness striving for... (that's what Sri Aurobindo meant) for indifference. Interesting! It makes me understand why he said that it was I who could attempt the transition between human consciousness and supramental consciousness.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, April 26, 1972*

In fact, it's something I had never experienced [that absence of meaning]; even in my earliest childhood, when there was no development, I always had a perception (not a mentalised but a vibrant perception) of a Power behind all things which is the Raison d'Être of all things—a Power, a Force, a kind of warmth.

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, August 21, 1963*

### **A Stranger to the World**

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

But whenever there was unpleasantness with my relatives, with playmates or friends, I would feel all the nastiness or bad will — all sorts of pretty ugly things that came (I was rather sensitive, for I instinctively nurtured an ideal of beauty and harmony, which all the circumstances of life kept denying)... so whenever I felt sad, I was most careful not to say anything to my mother or father, because my father didn't give a hoot and my mother would scold me — that was always the first thing she did. And so I would go to my room and sit down in my little armchair, and there I could concentrate and try to understand... in my own way. And I remember that after quite a few probably fruitless attempts I wound up telling myself (I always used to talk to myself; I don't know why or how, but I would talk to myself just as I talked to others): "Look here, you feel sad because so-and-so said something really disgusting to you — but why does that make you cry? Why are you so sad? He's the one who was bad, so he should be crying. You didn't do anything bad to him.... Did you tell him nasty things? Did you fight with her, or with him? No, you didn't do anything, did you; well then, you needn't feel sad. You should only be sad if you've done something bad, but...." So that settled it: I would never cry. With just a slight inward movement, or "something" that said, "You've done no wrong," there was no sadness.

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

*The Mother: Conversation with a Disciple, July 25, 1962*

In this high signal moment of the gods  
Answering earth's yearning and her cry for bliss,  
A greatness from our other countries came.

A silence in the noise of earthly things  
Immutably revealed the secret Word,  
A mightier influx filled the oblivious clay:  
A lamp was lit, a sacred image made.

A mediating ray had touched the earth  
Bridging the gulf between man's mind and God's;  
Its brightness linked our transience to the Unknown.

\*

A spirit of its celestial source aware  
Translating heaven into a human shape  
Descended into earth's imperfect mould  
And wept not fallen to mortality,  
But looked on all with large and tranquil eyes.

One had returned from the transcendent planes  
And bore anew the load of mortal breath,  
Who had striven of old with our darkness and our pain;  
She took again her divine unfinished task:  
Survivor of death and the aeonic years,  
Once more with her fathomless heart she fronted Time.

\*

Again there was renewed, again revealed  
The ancient closeness by earth-vision veiled,  
The secret contact broken off in Time,  
A consanguinity of earth and heaven,  
Between the human portion toiling here  
And an as yet unborn and limitless Force.

Again the mystic deep attempt began,  
The daring wager of the cosmic game.

**Sri Aurobindo**

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our love, all our being. Take unto Thyself oncemore what  
is Thine; for Thou art ourselves in our Reality.

The Mother



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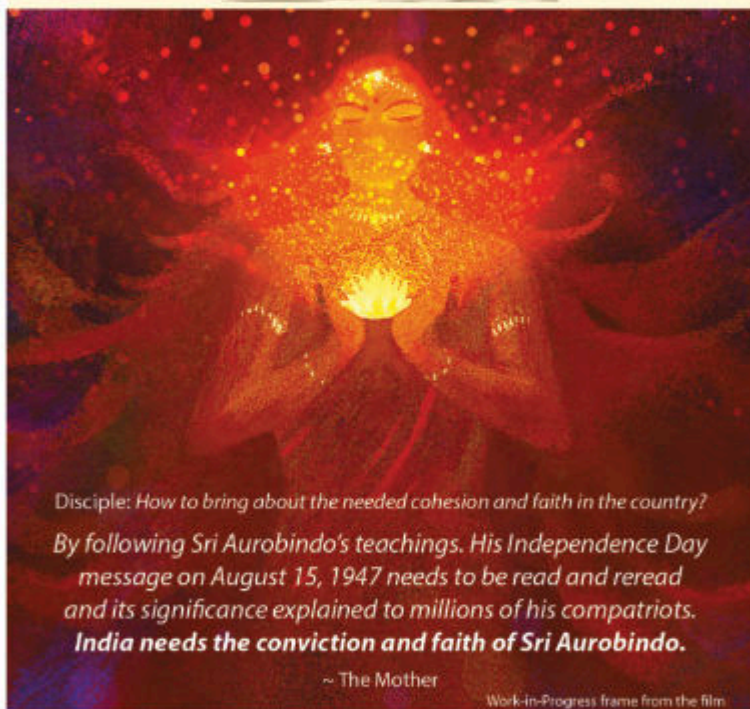
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