



Renaissance

Sri Aurobindo Society
INDIA FROM PAST DAWNS TO FUTURE NOONS



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Revisiting some selections from the online journal *Renaissance* available at renaissance.aurosociety.org

Theme: Remembering the Mother



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“It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects—what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc.”

– The Mother (CWM, Vol. 12, p. 206)

Guided by this advice from the Mother, *Renaissance* aims to bring to the readers thoughtfully curated pearls of deep wisdom from the oceanic writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as well as other sadhaks and devotees, on a variety of themes. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, *Renaissance* is a monthly online journal with special focus on India's Rebirth through Integral Yoga.

The One Whom We Adore as the Mother

Beloo Mehra

Warm greetings on the Mother's birthday!

Once a disciple wrote to the Mother:

A few days ago I wished to begin each day by making my Pranam to You. Since then, I wake up remembering You and I make my Pranam to You before anything else. It is Your Grace that has made this possible, and I hope that the Grace will hasten the constant remembrance.

The Mother replied with her Divine Compassion and Love:

Every day you will receive my response and my blessings for the day.

– CWM, Vol. 18, p. 356

Remembering Her and offering my Pranams to Her, I open this editorial for the first issue of *Renaissance Redux*.

On this special date of February 21, 2025, we are happy to offer to the Mother this new work we have taken up at BhāratShakti. Several of our readers had been requesting PDF versions of *Renaissance* issues. After some reflection and with Mother's inspiration and guidance, we are launching a quarterly 16-page periodical titled *Renaissance Redux*, which will feature selections from various issues of *Renaissance*.

This PDF version can be easily downloaded and read on any digital device or can even be conveniently printed if one is so inclined. We plan to bring out four issues in a year – each with a different theme – on February 21, April 24, August 15 and November 24.

The first issue of *Renaissance Redux* focuses on the theme – Remembering the Mother.

In a conversation with Mona Sarkar, the Mother once said that it would take hundreds of births to understand what She is. And yet, because She is the All-compassionate Universal Mother, She reveals Herself to Her devotees who love Her. And still She shall remain unseizable (from the book *The Supreme*).

When we read accounts by senior *sādhaka*-s of Sri Aurobindo Ashram — those who were blessed to have close and intimate interactions with the Mother for decades, we enter into a new kind of contact with the Mother.

We connect with the Individual Mother, the One who was (and is) looking after all the inner and outer needs of the *sādhaka*-s, the One whose limitless and boundless Divine

Love can heal all pain and cure all ills, whose one smile can bring eternal peace and joy to the aching heart, whose one look can point the aspirant's inner being toward the right and the true and the beautiful.

Those of us who haven't had the blessing to be in the physical presence of the Mother have so much to gain from reading the memoirs carefully preserved and compiled by so many of the senior *sādhaka*-s of the Ashram.

Invoking the Divine Mother who is the Source of all our work as well as the ever-present Force and Guidance behind it all, we invite our readers to browse through this maiden issue of *Renaissance Redux* on the theme of **Remembering the Mother**.

As always, we offer this work at the Lotus Feet of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Ever in gratitude.



Mahashakti and Her Powers

Sri Aurobindo

Editor's note: This selection from Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother* (CWSA Vol. 32, pp. 14-18) describes the Four Powers of the Mahashakti. It was featured in Volume 1, Issue 8 of *Renaissance*.

THE MAHASHAKTI AND HER PLANES OF CREATION

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. . .

But there are many planes of her creation, many steps of the Divine Shakti. At the summit of this manifestation of which we are a part there are worlds of infinite existence, consciousness, force and bliss over which the Mother stands as the unveiled eternal Power. All beings there live and move in an ineffable completeness and unalterable oneness, because she carries them safe in her arms for ever.

Nearer to us are the worlds of a perfect supramental creation in which the other is the supramental Mahashakti, a Power of divine omniscient Will and omnipotent Knowledge always apparent in its unfailing works and spontaneously perfect in every process. There all movements are the steps of the Truth; there all beings are souls and powers and bodies of the divine Light; there all experiences are seas and floods and waves of an intense and absolute Ananda.

But here where we dwell are the worlds of the Ignorance, worlds of mind and life and body separated in consciousness from their source, of which this earth is a significant centre and its evolution a crucial process. This too with all its obscurity and struggle and imperfection is upheld by the Universal Mother; this too is impelled and guided to its secret aim by the Mahashakti.

THE MAHASHAKTI OF THE WORLD OF IGNORANCE

The Mother as the Mahashakti of this triple world of the Ignorance stands in an intermediate plane between the

supramental Light, the Truth life, the Truth creation which has to be brought down here and this mounting and descending hierarchy of planes of consciousness that like a double ladder lapse into the nescience of Matter and climb back again through the flowering of life and soul and mind into the infinity of the Spirit.

Determining all that shall be in this universe and in the terrestrial evolution by what she sees and feels and pours from her, she stands there above the Gods and all her Powers and Personalities are put out in front of her for the action and she sends down emanations of them into these lower worlds to intervene, to govern, to battle and conquer, to lead and turn their cycles, to direct the total and the individual lines of their forces.

These Emanations are the many divine forms and personalities in which men have worshipped her under different names throughout the ages. But also she prepares and shapes through these Powers and their emanations the minds and bodies of her Vibhutis, even as she prepares and shapes minds and bodies for the Vibhutis of the Ishwara, that she may manifest in the physical world and in the disguise of the human consciousness some ray of her power and quality and presence.

The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. Impersonally, all things here, even the movements of the Ignorance, are herself in veiled power and her creations in diminished substance, her Nature-body and Nature-force, and they exist because, moved by the mysterious fiat of the Supreme to work out something that was there in the possibilities of the Infinite, she has consented to the great sacrifice and has put on like a mask the soul and forms of the Ignorance.

But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy and of her sublime Ananda.

In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, born to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life. This is the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the Purusha, but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother.

FOUR ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER THAT GUIDE THE UNIVERSE

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.**

The Mother is Indeed Always Present

M.P. Pandit

Editor’s note: In Volume II, Issue 5, we featured two excerpts from M. P. Pandit’s book titled, *Commentaries on the Mother’s Ministry, Vol. 1* (1983), published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Meditating on who the Mother is, opening oneself to Her Force, giving oneself to Her entirely so that She may make of us what She wills — this is the true worship to be offered at the feet of the Divine Mother by all those who have turned to Her.

THE MOTHER AS SHAKTI

Sri Aurobindo once observed that but for the Mother his philosophy may have remained a theory. It is she who has given practical form to his teaching. He explains that things had come to a standstill at a certain stage in his sadhana. The work that he was called upon to undertake required the presence of the appointed Shakti. If it was only a question of his developing a new philosophy, a new yoga and communicating it to a small circle of disciples, it would have been a different matter. But here it was a task of a universal dimension. And a break-through was effected only with the coming of the Mother.

All of us know that but for her it is doubtful if the Ashram would have come into being. It was only after her joining the little family that had grown around Sri Aurobindo, that things

began to get organised and the beginnings of the Ashram commenced in the early twenties. She it was who demonstrated first in the Ashram collectivity and gradually in her unseen spiritual empire all over the world that *Life Divine* is not a distant dream or vision but a viable and inevitable philosophy of life for man who is searching for the meaning of life and its goal.

Again it was she who provided the environment and the necessary guidance for those who aspired to practise the *Yoga of Self-Perfection* in which Knowledge, Will, Love enter as contributory elements. She it was who made of the *Ideal of Human Unity* a living actuality on however small a scale. She herself was a splendid example of Sri Aurobindo’s concept of integral *surrender* to the Divine and she taught its process to all who asked for it. In a word, she set into realisation all that Sri Aurobindo had conceived. The Movement is on and is sure to gather momentum as the evolution of the Earth-being proceeds. Her attention was always on the present, the actual; she did not allow herself to be distracted by the possibilities of the future.

As long as Sri Aurobindo was physically present, she always pointed to him as the Master of Yoga, the Revealer of the Path, the supreme Purusha of the manifesting Consciousness. She tried to keep herself, not always successfully, in the background. Some even took her to be a disciple, though

the first disciple, of Sri Aurobindo. But it was not so. Even before she came to India and met Sri Aurobindo, she had had significant spiritual and occult attainments and was only waiting for the destined divine collaborator with whom she had to work out a definite mission.

She was instrumental in getting Sri Aurobindo to communicate the great Knowledge that had been revealed to him in the course of his *tapasya* (yogic austerities), through the *Arya*. Later Sri Aurobindo asked her to take charge of his work, his disciples, and enjoined on all that she was his representative and he could be approached only through her. She represented him in all activities and naturally became the Leader, the Protagonist of this world-movement for integral perfection of life and its ultimate divinisation.

After Sri Aurobindo withdrew from the physical world, there were anxious moments for many about the future of the Work. But for those who had faith, the inner perception, there was never any doubt. The Mother had to continue Sri Aurobindo's mission on earth and she did it *after* receiving clear indications that she was chosen to do so and had no option in the matter. And the work continued. Not only did it continue, but it expanded and grew by leaps and bounds under her direction and dynamic drive. She continued and continues to continue even after her own physical withdrawal.

“I AM WITH YOU”

Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is, indeed, always present.

(Sri Aurobindo)

When this was placed there — in the early years of the Ashram — someone asked Sri Aurobindo if ‘were’ in the place of ‘was’ would not be more grammatically correct. Sri Aurobindo answered that ‘was’ had been used advisedly as ‘were’ would suggest that the Mother was really not present, whereas in fact she was always present.

Yes, the Mother is always present, her consciousness cannot be escaped in Pondicherry. Mother explains how this consciousness permeates the subtle physical atmosphere up to seven miles reaching to the Lake; further on it can be felt in the material vital, then in the mental and the other planes everywhere. This presence is distinctive and has a dynamic character of its own.

When the Mother says, ‘I am with you’, she speaks of this consciousness of hers which is present with us on all levels,

from the physical to the highest spiritual. It is not a figure of speech but a statement of fact. She is concretely with us, working dynamically in us leading us to the destined goal.

Whenever anyone opens to Sri Aurobindo or the Mother, a special bond of affection is formed between him and the Mother. The physical distance is no bar. It may be anywhere in the world. The moment one turns to this Teaching, a tie comes into being. Thereafter, each time there is a call, there is an immediate communication and the Mother responds: it may be to send a special help, an inspiration or protection. We have seen the Mother going into trance or semi-trance, all of a sudden in the midst of work, and resuming after a few moments. They were such occasions when she needed to concentrate.

There is something more with those whom she has accepted as her disciples. An emanation of her dwells with the individual and it keeps a constant connection. It relates all that happens in the person with the Mother's consciousness. Only it is not registered in her active memory but in her subliminal. She can always call it up when she needs to know in her physical consciousness.

It must be added that this consciousness, presence, is not something general, impersonally spiritual. It is intensely personal and one can sense, feel the personal touch of the Mother when one becomes aware of it. Usually it takes the form in which one is accustomed to visualise or recall her figure. Times without number people on the operation tables in surgeries have reported seeing Mother's figure in white standing by their side. So often we have known a gentle Hand holding us when we were about to fall. The experience is vivid and concrete. That is because *She is with us*.

The Mother assures that this bond between her and those who turn to her is never cut. Even those who revolted from her and left the Ashram have continued to be recipients of her grace and solicitude. She never abandons. She holds herself responsible even for those whom she has met just for a second in her life. That is so because she knows that nobody just comes to her; everybody is brought to her because of some soul-need.

One word more. It is not that this happens only to those who have met Mother physically. Even those who have never seen her physically but have opened to her Truth in some way or other, have testified to this action of her consciousness in their personal lives. “Yes,” they say, “Mother is with us.”

The Mother sums up the rationale in these cryptic words:

I am with you because I AM you or you are me. (Agenda, Vol. 1, p. 116)

She identifies herself with each one entirely.

Some Memories of the Mother

Amal Kiran

Editor's Note: In *Volume IV, Issue 2*, we featured a few of Amal Kiran's memories about the 'Maha-examiner' aspect of the Mother. He also narrates incidents that tell us about the Mother's grace and eternal love and also her sternness with which she helped sadhaks overcome their petty desires. This article was first published in *Mother India* on the Mother's birthday in 1975 (Vol. XXVII, No. 2, pp. 108-111).

It is natural that I should look back again and again on the forty-six years during which I knew the Mother. I first saw her on December 16, 1927. And the last look was on November 20, 1973, the day she was laid in the teak-wood casket and placed in the same vault as Sri Aurobindo, both of them making a common "Samadhi" in the courtyard of the Ashram they had built up and loved and set floating like a dream-ship on the uncharted waters of the unknown Supermind.

Already I have written about her in many an essay, just as I have done about Sri Aurobindo. But there is always more to remember of a personality that had such a multitude of diamond-facets and such depth beyond depth of light. The memories may seem trivial at times, yet there is ever a revelatory touch in all that the Mother said or did, a glint of the Spirit's gold through all the small currency of daily word or deed.

I shall begin with a jest which she would have been the first to appreciate.

THE "MAHA-EXAMINER" ASPECT OF THE MOTHER

For, the Mother was full of wit and her eyes never failed to sparkle when anybody was quick and keen in mind.

Let me say then that, while we have heard of her four great aspects—Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati—very few have heard of the Mother as "Maha-Examiner".

And by this new name I do not mean her all-seeing, all-probing, all-evaluating, all-classifying consciousness in dealing with our Yoga from day to day. The four great aspects would sufficiently cover it. I mean "Maha-Examiner" in a very literal sense: one who, because of her great standing in Aurobindonian knowledge, is appointed to examine a thesis written by a student of Sri Aurobindo's vision and work.

A certain Indian University once sent her an M.A. thesis to scrutinise and adjudge, and it offered her a remuneration of Rs. 50 for the task. The Mother accepted the assignment.

In advance of the thesis, she had received a letter from the student. He said in effect:

"My work was not considered up to the mark last year. I have been made to toil at it again. I have done my best. But I don't know my fate. I am a whole-hearted admirer of Sri Aurobindo and I would have written more enthusiastically, but my overseer is not well inclined towards the Master. So please read more into my expression than you see."

The Mother was touched by the fellow's bad luck the preceding year as well as by his good-will towards Sri Aurobindo. She took the trouble to go through his introductory note, where he had set forth the scheme and the scope of his disquisition. The disquisition was meant to be a survey of the entire range of the admirable Aurobindonian achievement in writing. The Mother liked the ambitious piety of this intention. Having done what she deemed necessary on her side, she handed me the bound volume of nearly 250 typed pages and said:

"Read this and make your report. I shall sign it. But let me tell you from the start that I have made up my mind to pass the student."

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

Immediately I got down to reading the thesis. I found it moderately good in several parts but absolutely off the track wherever Sri Aurobindo's metrics were concerned. The writer knew nothing of metre and yet laid down the law. The mistakes were grotesque. In other matters too there were errors to correct. But, by and large, one could pass the lengthy treatment of Sri Aurobindo's versatile genius.

I wrote out a favourable report of four pages for the University Board and a far longer private piece for the student himself so that he might rectify the numerous howlers before publishing the work in book-form after obtaining his degree.

My shorter report was read out to the Mother. It had a passage on technical points of English poetry. She said:

"I don't know English prosody. So I couldn't have written this passage."

I generalised and abbreviated my remarks and brought the passage within the Mother's acceptance. She signed the report. Then I said:

"Mother, what about your fee, the fifty rupees?"

She sharply replied:

"I don't care for them. Do you want them for yourself?"

I rose to the occasion:

"Not at all."

There ended the world-manifestation of "Maha-Examiner". But the free, bold and compassionate spirit shown in it was at play elsewhere too in different forms.

MOTHER'S GRACE

Once I came across a street-hawker who had baby fountain-pens in various colours, each worth the equivalent of the present 25 paise. I bought up half a dozen, and filling four with inks to match their colours, presented them to the Mother. She tried out all of them on a large, white, thick piece of paper, executing a fascinating “doodle” of lines and curves like a complicated Mandala. She signed it, put on it the date and gave it to me. The multi-inked pens were taken upstairs to her room and the next day she expressed her pleasure in them, even telling people:

“See how beautifully these cheap little things of Amal work while your big pens give all sorts of trouble.”

It was arranged that when the inks got finished I should be handed the pens to refill. The day of refilling never came. For, after four days of joyous scribbling, the Mother got her hands full of ink! The pens started leaking profusely.

On our subsequent meeting, the Mother made a wry face and said:

“It took me nearly two hours to wash the ink off my fingers.”

I apologised. She gave a soft smile and the episode was over.

But I wondered why it had occurred in the first place. Surely she must have known that these cheap pens were rejected goods and would prove treacherous in a short time.

Champaklal offered the explanation:

“It was not appreciation of the pens that made the Mother use them but her desire for an act of Grace towards Amal.”

I can hit upon no other explanation, though why at that particular moment she wanted to bestow her Grace I have no idea.

It is certain that she could go out of her way to be gracious to poor inept fools.

I for one had been allowed to stay on at noon after all the others who used to be around her from about 9 a.m. up to 12 had gone home. At that hour she would go behind a small screen for her lunch with Pranab and I would wait in the passage near the stairs. I could hear all the talk she had with Pranab during lunch. I would in the meantime write little notes to her, tiptoe to a table in the proximity of the screen and put my chits under a glass paperweight.

On finishing her lunch she would pass by that table, pick up the letters and go to her bathroom through a backdoor and, after a while, come out from the door in the passage where I sat. She would stop and talk and then retire for a bit of afternoon rest.

On one occasion I thought of spending my time in Sri Aurobindo's room nearby instead of sitting in the passage. I forgot myself there. Suddenly I realised that someone was outside the door of the room. I turned: it was the Mother. Not finding her disciple at his usual spot she had guessed where

he had disappeared and come in search of him to give him the smile and the blessing-tap he so little deserved. The disciple was overwhelmed with gratitude. He rushed out and kneeled at her feet.

MOTHER'S STERNNESS TOWARDS PETTY DESIRES

Most considerate though the Mother again and again was, it would be a mistake to think she could never be stern. But a still greater mistake would it be to misunderstand her sternness.

Every act of hers was an act of Grace and aimed only at the development of one's soul. The Mother had no egoistic reaction, no personal interest to serve, no wish for any gratification of self. What she was stern towards was petty desire in us, our forgetfulness of the grand purpose for which we were in the Ashram.

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

“You want a swing for yourself?”

I was taken aback. She who had looked to all my comforts and my wife Sehra's was now a Goddess of Terror over so trivial a plea on my part. At once I said:

“No, Mother; no. I want nothing. I am sorry.”

Flaming Mahakali turned into calm Maheshwari and blessed me.

Within my heart I came to realise that the high aim with which I had just come back to the Ashram for a permanent stay after an absence of several years had been cut across by this silly move towards self-indulgence. The actual matter was fairly innocuous and, under other circumstances, my request might easily have been granted. But it must have marked a momentous point in the poise of the consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo has said that sometimes in Yoga what might seem the loss of a mere postern-gate might spell the surrender of the whole fort: nothing in Yoga is trivial or negligible—especially at a critical instant.

We cannot ordinarily see into the heart of an occasion. But the Mother could and for her to allow an instant of Yogic oblivion would mean a lapse of her Grace.

Yogic oblivion could come in many shapes. Perhaps the most startling that ever came to me had nothing to do with any greed or lust or anger.

It came one evening in the early 1930's when, along with some others, I was waiting on the north pavement of the

Ashram block for the Mother to return from her usual car-drive. Just for a few seconds I forgot that I was in the Ashram and doing Yoga. As soon as awareness was back I found myself utterly shut in heart and mind: no touch of devotion, no stir of aspiration, just a sense of darkness in the whole being. Later I asked the Mother how this could be. She answered:

“Suppose you are on a battlefield and you forget that fact. Do you realise what would happen to you? In the life of Yoga it is the same.”

Of course, this does not signify that one has always to be on pins and can never be “A spirit sliding through tranquillity”.

MOTHER’S ETERNAL LOVE FOR SADHAKS

The Mother always tried to make our lives as smooth and easy as possible and concentrate all the rigours of Yoga in herself so as to give us the shining fruit and spare us the struggle and the pain.

But certain crises are unavoidable and now and again one has to make a stand and fight or have the awareness that, as an Upanishad puts it, “sharp as the razor’s edge is the path”.

To revert to more pleasant subjects. A peep into the unusual state of subtle perception in which the Mother lived we once had when at the end of the morning’s meeting with us and interviews with people she started to walk towards the stairs leading up to her room on the second floor. Before she had gone a dozen steps she stopped. She was looking down at the carpet under her feet. We were curious to know what had happened. So we inquired. She turned round and said:

“Suddenly this carpet which has been lying here for years asked, ‘How do you find me?’ I replied, ‘I find you very nice indeed.’”

At another time she told us that in the room where we used to meet her the furniture had at last got into the right relative positions and there was a harmonious consciousness in it which should not be disturbed.

Passing words but packed with truths for a life-time fell often from the Mother during those wonderful mornings upstairs.

On May 19, 1961, apropos of some topic which slips my mind, she stopped a minute before going up to her room and said:

“I once told an occultist friend, ‘There are many people who say they want to be independent.’ He at once remarked, ‘That means they don’t want to be loved.’ I have never forgotten this. If you look into it, you will see much meaning.”

As a supplement or complement to this nugget of wisdom we may recall some words of the Mother where she speaks not of being loved but of loving. The words run:

“They always speak of the rights of love, but love’s only right is the right of self-giving.” – CWM, Vol. 14, p. 121

Perhaps we may best close this first instalment of memories with a pronouncement that affords us a brief insight into her own love for us. There was a disciple who got into a number of difficulties owing to his weak nature but he had a simple heart with a sort of helpless turn towards the Mother in all conditions. He voiced to her his doubt whether with all his defects he could continue to stay in the Ashram. She wrote back:

“You are my son and I am your mother for eternity. Do not worry, I take the entire responsibility of your spiritual growth and you can live in the Ashram so long as you feel it your home and you sincerely consecrate yourself to the Divine’s Work.” – CWM, Vol. 13, p. 140



The Mother's Divine Ways of Action

Nirodbaran

Editor's Note: In Volume IV, Issue 2 we featured a few incidents shared by Nirodbaran in his book *Memorable contacts with the Mother*. He describes here the various ways in which the Mother prepared, taught and helped sadhaks. Some of the ways are directly visible to us, and some are subtle and non-understandable for the mind. Through one specific example Nirodbaran also explains that the Mother was always in favour of freedom for the sadhaks but disapproved of indiscipline in the name of freedom.

REASONS BEHIND HER MOVEMENTS

The Mother gave me some apparently simple and trivial work whether as a test or with a deeper intention, I cannot say. **But this we knew that she had almost always an occult or hidden purpose behind her movements.** Sometimes she would disclose it. At any rate we were supposed to take it as a matter of discipline. I am afraid, my nature was not so obedient and thus I failed to cooperate with her at times.

She asked me, for example, to give instructions in anatomy and physiology to a young girl who had come from outside. I could not understand why a girl who intended probably to stay here and would never take up a medical career should learn these subjects. However, I started. The girl was quite intelligent but my interest was not equal to her intelligence. Besides, the subjects were quite new to her and could not be properly learnt unless followed by practical demonstrations. I found it therefore a tedious job.

After a couple of months, I told her that a new doctor had come to the Ashram whom she would find more competent and I left her. I came to know afterwards that she had gone away and got married. I wondered then if the Mother wanted to use our contact as a means of keeping her here. Many years later, she returned to the Ashram.

Another example was of a young boy whose parents had settled in the Ashram. The Mother told me that the boy had an inner opening. It would do him good if I read with him Sri Aurobindo's poems. We began. The boy was really nice and had some regard for me. Here too, I could not continue for long and broke off.

Once during the Pranam in the 1930's, I had to face a very embarrassing situation. I was going through a period of acute inner struggle. As always, I used to write frankly about it to Sri Aurobindo. Extremely patient and affectionate, he let me fight it out, but I could not do so and groaned. Finally I became impatient and wrote a desperate letter saying that the tussle must end now.

Next day was Pranam. The Mother came down as usual. I noticed behind her seat a garland of flowers called 'Courage' [*the spiritual significance given by the Mother to the flower of Calotropis gigantea, or Mudar/Crown plant*]. The hall was full of disciples. When it was half-empty, my turn came for Pranam.

As soon as I had knelt down before the Mother with folded hands, she fixed her concentrated gaze on my eyes and kept me immobile like a statue. The people around were witnessing the scene with awe and wonder. I felt all their strange vibrations. After about five minutes, she relaxed her grip and with a soft smile gave me the garland "Courage". It did its work.

PREPARING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK

Now for a very trivial instance, but typical of the Mother's subtle action. It belongs to the earliest period of our twelve years with Sri Aurobindo.

The Mother brought a big calendar for Sri Aurobindo's room and said to me that I should tear off each date-sheet day by day and hand it over to her when she would leave the room after her work. I took the gesture as a sign of Grace on her part, though I could not understand why she was so particular about my doing it or about the way it should be done. However, I obeyed cheerfully and daily I used to receive a broad smile to start with.

But gradually the response began to vary. On some days she would give a half-smile; on other days her "eyes would grow solemn and laughter fade away"; on other days, she would not look at all. A hundred variations on a single theme of apparently no significance and likely to be called pure whimsicality. Yes, but a divine whim that bore often a hidden meaning for me.

[...]

One of the funniest or most queer jobs the Mother gave me was to supply regularly a small quantity of *Lithiné* powder to a doctor. It turned out to be an unpleasant duty and unworthy of my position as a doctor. I expressed my reluctance to continue it. She heard in silence without any comment. It is not to be thought that she took no notice of these reactions.

Any work given by her, light or serious, pleasant or tedious, was recorded in her consciousness and the person gained or lost inwardly according to the attitude with which he had done the work.

We know that in the spiritual life, strict obedience to the Guru is enjoined upon the disciple. I remember an instance of her clear intention in a given case. A boy running away from home had come to the Ashram and wanted to stay on. Outwardly he had nothing to recommend him except that he had relatives living here. The Mother accepted him and wanted certain relatives who were an easy-going people to take charge of him. She said that it would teach them a sense of responsibility.

In spite of knowing her intention, the members refused the offer, except for one member of the same family. She took up the responsibility and had to undergo a lot of trouble, from the boy's waywardness and other bad habits till he himself left the Ashram, but she earned the Mother's grace.

I have spoken of a young boy. . . who came as a patient, but whom I was given also to look after as a sort of a guardian and friend. I was supposed to help him to a disciplined life as regards food, sleep and other habits. To this end, he used to take his breakfast with me and spend his evening time playing indoor games in the Dispensary.

When he left for Calcutta, I asked the Mother if I was "*one of those who had harmed him*", for that was the story going round in the Ashram in her name. Sri Aurobindo replied,

"Mother never said anything of the kind about you. On the contrary she has always approved of his going to you because you give him a physical support, encourage him to eat, etc..."

[...]

I have cited all these trivial instances in order to show how, apart from her yogic force, the Mother used also minor psycho-physical aids to prepare the sadhak in the inner discipline.

SUBTLE WAYS OF TEACHING AND HELPING

Of course all these ways of her action were commonplace to us, but not always to those who were not familiar with them at least at the beginning. Here are some more personal examples.

I was passing through a hard time; the Guru's long sweet letters had only a momentary effect. At this period an intimate friend wanted to come for his second visit. As no suitable room was available, I offered to share with him my small room in the Dispensary. The Mother consented at once, though it was a dispensary.

When people raised an objection, Sri Aurobindo wrote to me:

"Mother has put him there, because his influence would be helpful to you."

I was surprised! Yet, in the case of another friend, the answer was,

"You are not to share your room with him."

A more subtle way: During the Pranam downstairs in the 1950's, quite a number of people would sit in her Presence throughout the function. I used to work in my

office-room upstairs, go down for Pranam and come back at once. The work was just an excuse for my reluctance to sit "unnecessarily", for such a long duration. It would be a waste of time, I thought. One day the Mother, coming up after the Pranam, told me,

"I looked for you. A sadhika was ill. I wanted you to go and see her, but you were not there."

I replied,

"I was here all the time, Mother."

As if she did not know it, she simply heard me without a word more and I understood what she had meant. She wanted that instead of my so-called reading, I should have been sitting like the others in her Presence.

If this is a too fanciful interpretation by a *bhakta*, I shall give a clearer example. At one stage, she was seeing some people, especially the departmental heads, in her *boudoir*; in the afternoon. Others would sit outside watching her and enjoying her Presence, and later expecting to catch her soul-stirring glance and sweet smile when she would pass by them to her room upstairs.

This would last about an hour. I used to do my work at my desk instead of being bathed in her atmosphere. One day light dawned on me, and putting aside the books, I went to sit with the others outside. As soon as she came out, her eyes fell on me and she exclaimed with a gracious smile, "*Ah, you are there!*" Then she moved on, radiating joy, beauty and love on all around. I was reminded of Wordsworth's lines:

"Flowers laugh before thee on their beds And fragrance in thy footing treads."

I understood her exclamation and from then onwards I came every day, but strangely enough, rather I should say naturally enough, she neither repeated that smile nor looked at me, but I was sure she noted my presence.

Nothing could elude her eyes nor her knowledge. As to her not looking, she had done her work by dropping a hint and I had caught it. That was enough.

Vivekananda, if I remember rightly, and Nivedita too perhaps have said what a fine life it would have been to pass one's days sitting at the feet of Sharada Devi, the Mother of the Ramakrishna Ashram, instead of spending all one's energy in useless hectic activities! A moment's mood, it may be, but the truth of the feeling is unmistakable.

I was trying to learn French, but was still playing with the idea, going about from one teacher to another. Then I heard that our engineer Chandulal was taking with the Mother's permission a French class for a few sadhaks. The number was restricted and approved by her. It was hardly a class: we used to read one sentence each from the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations* — that's all.

I was not very regular. One day the Mother herself came to the class and read a whole prayer and that very day I was absent! I learnt that her visit had been pre-arranged, but it had

been kept a secret. She had also the door bolted from within. Imagine my sense of shame and regret at missing this rare opportunity. But that was her way.

[...]

GUIDED BY INNER LAWS

Since I have touched upon the subject of medicine, let me give one more instance along this line.

One day the Mother told me that an old army doctor had come to the Ashram and was teaching physiology in the school. She would like me to go and tell the doctor that he should give the students some elementary lessons on the reproductive organs, their functions, purpose, etc.; in other words, what we call sex-education. I wondered what lay behind this move.

We knew very well that the Mother was “modern”, even “ultra-modern” in many ways, just as Sri Aurobindo was “a modern Avatar”; still this seemed to be too modern for the Ashram. There must be an inner call for it, I conjectured.

The doctor accepted the suggestion and said that he would get some slides on the subject. A few years later when the doctor had left I was asked, with the Mother’s permission, to give a number of talks to a group of young men on the same subject with a special emphasis on *brahmachārya* and its vital connection with the seminal fluid. When, however, years afterwards, another request was made for a talk, she said, “Why raise the issue again? Its necessity is over.”

A significant remark which implied that she was always guided by inner laws and inner movements.

[...]

The construction of our lovely swimming pool in the sports ground had been complete and was thrown open to all the Groups of Physical Education. At last, I thought, some pleasant innocent exercise when I had given up all other games. But alas, soon I began to feel uneasy after the dip, even a bit out of sorts.

One night I had the vision of Sri Aurobindo’s right arm stretched out across the entrance to the sports ground. The indication was quite clear that I should stop my innocent pastime. I asked the Mother if swimming was harmful for me. She answered, “No, you can go for swimming.” But when I told her about my dream, she said, “Then you should not go.” This is how the Guru guides us in every little detail!

[...]

On the Prosperity day, the Mother used to distribute our monthly material necessities to each of us. During the long distribution, some of us used to sit by her with her permission.

To be so close to the Divine’s physical Presence and watch at the same time the significantly changing expressions on her face was a delight to be envied even by the gods. Dante says of Beatrice:

*"What she appears when she smiles a little,
Cannot be spoken of, neither can the mind lay hold on it,
It is so sweet and strange and sublime a miracle."*

– Translation by Sri Aurobindo

This is true of the Mother much more.

STERN DISAPPROVAL OF ‘INDISCIPLINE IN NAME OF FREEDOM’

The following incident also took place in 1961. The gymnastic Groups in the Playground were re-organised. Apropos of it a point was raised about the need of a certain degree of compulsion for those who joined them. This was especially in the case of those above the age of forty, I believe. It was decided by the captains that one day in a week, preferably Monday, there should be compulsory marching for the “Blue Group”, i.e., the senior most male members. On other days the members were left free to do exercises as they liked.

The word “compulsory” raised a small storm of indignation among us.

Why should we, responsible sadhaks, be treated like school children? This was the burden of the controversy. Some of us left the Group on this account. I was one of those who had a dislike for any sort of compulsion. All the same, I thought I would take the Mother’s views on the matter, though I suspected that she had already been consulted before the step was taken.

It was the usual morning Pranam time and people had gathered, among whom were Nolini, Amrita, Pavitra, Champaklal, Madhav and others. The Pranam being over, the Mother was on her way to her room on the top floor, when I asked her,

“Mother, what should I do? Shall I join the Group?”

The question led to a discussion lasting nearly half an hour, the entire assembly listening with rapt attention and the Mother standing all the while.

Mother: “That was what A was telling me about. He said that he had been doing regular exercise; so he need not join the Group. Besides, he said, all his friends were keeping out. Of course, he can’t carry the flag[#].”

Myself: People are making two objections to the scheme, one about the “Mass Drill”. It is neither interesting nor useful.

Nolini: (suddenly raising his voice) Why, I find it very interesting.

Myself: *It seems more like some amusement; that was the impression given by our captain.*

Mother: *I don't know why he gave that impression. The drill is meant as a preparation for the December show. If one starts learning it very early, then there is a chance of its being perfect. The previous ones had many defects. Though I am not an expert judge of these things, I have seen the photographs taken of them and there the defects can be seen. So they want to give training very early.*

Myself: *Next is the point of compulsion.*

Mother: *Compulsion is necessary. If you want to remain in the Group, you have to obey the Group discipline. That is quite reasonable. I will tell you one thing: without discipline, strict discipline, no progress can be made in life. No yoga is possible without it. You can't take one step forward without strict discipline. You may utter a mantra for a hundred years, but without discipline you won't be able to see beyond the tip of your nose.*

Another point is about the uniform. You know it costs quite an amount of money. Those who won't join shall not have uniforms. They don't need them, besides. Not that a few uniforms cost much, but when it comes to a big number, the expenses become quite heavy.

No, I have read the whole programme; it is quite reasonable. You have a choice: you can go to the Non-Group. But once you have made your choice, you have to stick to it till the end of the year. If you can't follow any discipline yourself, well, then submit to the discipline of those who have some experience of life. So make your choice. Au revoir!

With these words, the Mother went up, leaving us stunned in an atmosphere charged with force and silence. As soon as I had touched upon the last question, that of discipline, the tempo of her voice had begun to rise in a crescendo till it reached its peak at the end of her advice.

All the while, her gaze had been fixed on my eyes and the words hit like bullets my vital nature's self-will in the name of freedom.

The entire assembly had listened, standing still like statues. Many years have passed since then, but I am continuing my compulsory Monday attendance, so much force had been generated in that dynamic utterance. Only we have named it "Black Monday", à la Charles Lamb.

Nolini who was one of the listeners was also in our Group; he did not, of course, need any such compulsion from outside, neither was Monday black for him; it was golden. But Nolini is Nolini. He joined also the Mass Drill which, as he said, he found interesting, and attended both the items regularly till he retired due to age. There were others too who had left for other reasons, but somehow, however reluctant and antipathetic I am to this Black Monday, when the day arrives some force drags me on to the Playground.

[...]

One word about discipline.

We hear very often that the Mother has given us freedom. Freedom and discipline are therefore contradictions and people justified their free ways by quoting the Mother's authority.

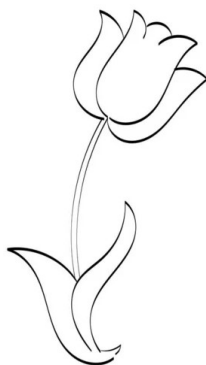
When it was referred to her, she vehemently protested and said,

"Where and when have I supported indiscipline?"

Well, this strong admonition should now dispel all such wrong ideas still going about in the Ashram.

Notes:

#During the Darshan and 2nd December March Past, the Groups are led by standard bearers. P says March Past will be done without the flag. Well, what I want is that everyone should do regular exercise, not doing it one day to drop it the next. It must be done regularly to keep the body fit. There is also a provision made for those who don't want to join the Group. All the facilities will be given to them except the March Past on special days. That also does not matter very much since it is held only four or five times a year.



Mother's Answers on Sadhana and Life

Tara Jauhar

Editor's Note: In Volume IV, Issue 2 we featured a few selections from the book '*Growing up with the Mother*' by Tara Jauhar. In these passages (selected from pages 8-27), the Mother answers to Tara di's questions on a range of subjects such as psychic growth, eliminating the ego, connecting with the Mother in the dreams and also about Overmind. The book was published in 1999 by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch.

PSYCHIC GROWTH

Sweet Mother,

What is the difference between the psychic change and the spiritual change?

The psychic change is the change that puts you in contact with the immanent Divine, the Divine who is at the centre of each being and of whom the psychic being is the vesture and the expression. By the psychic change one passes from the individual Divine to the universal Divine and finally to the Transcendent. **The spiritual change puts you directly in contact with the Supreme.**

* * *

Sweet Mother,

How can one draw energy into oneself from outside?

That depends on the kind of energy one wants to absorb, for each region of the being has a corresponding kind of energy. If it is physical energy, we absorb it principally through respiration, and all that facilitates and improves respiration, increases at the same time the absorption of physical energy.

But there are many other kinds of energies, or rather many other forms of Energy, which is one and universal. And it is through the various yogic exercises of breathing, meditation and concentration that one puts oneself in contact with these various forms of Energy.

What are these other forms of Energy and how do they help us in our sadhana?

Each region of the being and each activity has its energies. We may classify them generally into vital energies, mental energies, spiritual energies. Modern science tells us that Matter is ultimately nothing but energy condensed. **Our yoga being integral, all these various forms or kinds of energy are indispensable to our realisation.**

* * *

Sweet Mother,

How can one make one's psychic personality grow?

It is through all the experiences of life that the psychic personality forms, grows, develops and finally becomes a complete, conscious and free being.

This process of development goes on tirelessly through innumerable lives, and if one is not conscious of it, it is because one is not conscious of one's psychic being—for that is the indispensable starting-point. Through interiorisation and concentration one has to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being.

This psychic being always has an influence on the outer being, but this influence is almost always occult, neither seen nor perceived nor felt, save on truly exceptional occasions.

In order to strengthen the contact and assist, if possible, the development of the conscious psychic personality, one should, while concentrating, turn towards it, aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and be very careful each time that one receives an indication from it, to follow it very scrupulously and sincerely.

To live in a great aspiration, to take care to become inwardly calm and remain so always as far as possible, to cultivate a perfect sincerity in all the activities of one's being—these are the essential conditions for the growth of the psychic being.

* * *

[...]

Sweet Mother,

How can one silence the mind, remain quiet, and at the same time have an aspiration, an intensity or a widening? Because as soon as one aspires, it is the mind that aspires, isn't it?

No; aspiration, as well as widening and intensity, come from the heart, the emotional centre, the door of the psychic or rather the door leading to the psychic.

The mind by its nature is curious and interested; it sees, it observes, it tries to understand and explain; and with all this activity it disturbs the experience and diminishes its intensity and force. On the other hand, **the more calm and silent the mind is, the more can aspiration rise up from the depths of the heart in the fullness of its ardour.**

* * *

Sweet Mother,

How can one eliminate the will of the ego?

This amounts to asking how one can eliminate the ego. **It is only by yoga that one can do it.** There have been, throughout the spiritual history of humanity, many methods of yoga—which Sri Aurobindo has described and explained for us in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

But before eliminating the will of the ego, which takes a very long time, one can begin by surrendering the will of the ego to the Divine Will at every opportunity and finally in a constant way.

For this, the first step is to understand that the Divine knows better than we do what is good for us and what we truly need, not only for our spiritual progress but also for our material welfare, the health of our body and the proper functioning of all the activities of our being.

Naturally, this is not the opinion of the ego, which thinks it knows better than anyone else what it needs, and claims for itself independence of judgment and decision. But it thinks and feels this way because it is ignorant, and gradually one has to convince it that its perception and understanding are too limited for it truly to be able to know and that it judges only according to its desires, which are blind, and not according to truth.

For the desires are not the expression of needs but of preferences.

* * *

Sweet Mother,

Why has the Divine made His path so difficult? He can make it easier if He wants to, can't He?

First of all, one should know that the intellect, the mind, can understand nothing of the Divine, neither what He does nor how He does it and still less why He does it. To know something of the Divine, one has to rise above thought and enter into the psychic consciousness, the consciousness of the soul, or into the spiritual consciousness.

Those who have had the experience have always said that **the difficulties and sufferings of the path are not real, but a creation of human ignorance**, and that as soon as one gets out of this ignorance one also gets out of the difficulties, to say nothing of the inalienable state of bliss in which one dwells as soon as one is in conscious contact with the Divine.

So according to them, the question has no real basis and cannot be posed.

* * *

CONNECTING WITH THE MOTHER

Sweet Mother,

You have written that to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being, one must "aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and be very careful... to

follow it very scrupulously and sincerely". But, Sweet Mother, I don't know how to do this. I find it easier when I think of You, try to enter into contact with You and open to You.

This too is a way which is certainly as good as the other. There are many ways to attain self-realisation, and each one must choose the way that comes to him most naturally. But each way has its demands in order to be truly effective.

In thinking of me, you must think not only of the outer person, but of what She represents, what stands behind Her.

For you must never forget that the outer person is only the form and symbol of an eternal Reality, and it is to this higher Reality that you must turn through the physical appearance. The physical being can become truly expressive of the eternal Reality only when it is completely transformed by the Supramental manifestation. And until then, it is *through* it that you must find the Truth.

* * *

Sweet Mother,

Is it possible to have control over oneself during sleep? For example, if I want to see You in my dreams, can I do it at will?

Control during sleep is entirely possible and it is progressive if you persist in the effort. You begin by remembering your dreams, then gradually you remain more and more conscious during your sleep, and not only can you control your dreams but you can guide and organise your activities during sleep. If you persist in your will and your effort, you are sure to learn how to come and find me at night during your sleep and afterwards to remember what has happened.

For this, two things are necessary, which you must develop by aspiration and by calm and persistent effort.

Concentrate your thought on the will to come and find me; then pursue this thought, first by an effort of imagination, afterwards in a tangible and increasingly real way, until you are in my presence.

Establish a sort of bridge between the waking and the sleeping consciousness, so that when you wake up you remember what has happened.

It may be that you succeed immediately, but more often it takes a certain time and you must persist in the effort.

* * *

SOUL, GOOD LUCK AND BAD LUCK

Sweet Mother,

What is the role of the soul?

But without the soul we wouldn't exist! The soul is that which comes from the Divine without ever leaving Him, and returns to the Divine without ceasing to be manifest.

The soul is the Divine made individual without ceasing to be divine. In the soul the individual and the Divine are eternally one; therefore, to find one's soul is to find God; to identify with one's soul is to unite with the Divine.

Thus it may be said that the role of the soul is to make a true being of man.

Is there anything like good luck and bad luck, or is it something that one creates for oneself?

There is nothing that can truly be called *luck*. What men call luck are the *effects* of causes they do not know.

Nor is there anything that in itself is good or bad luck; each one characterises circumstances as good or bad depending on whether they are more or less favourable to him; and this estimation itself is very superficial and ignorant, for **one must already be a great sage to know what is truly favourable or unfavourable to oneself.**

Moreover, the same event may be very good for one person and at the same time very bad for another. These estimations are purely subjective and depend on each one's reaction to contacts coming from outside.

Finally, the circumstances of our life, the surroundings we live in and the way people regard us are the expressions, the objective projection of what we ourselves are, within and without. So we may say with certainty that **what we carry in ourselves in all our states of being, mentally, vitally and physically, is that which constitutes our life objectified in what surrounds us.**

And this is easily verifiable, for **in proportion as we improve ourselves and advance towards perfection, our circumstances also improve.** Likewise, in the case of those who degenerate and fall back, the circumstances of their lives also worsen.

* * *

INCONSCIENT TO SUPREME FACULTIES

Sweet Mother,

What exactly are the subconscious and the inconscient?

The inconscient is that part of Nature which is so obscure and asleep that it seems to be wholly devoid of consciousness; at any rate, as in the stone, the mineral kingdom, the consciousness there is entirely inactive and hidden. The history of the earth begins with this inconscience. **We too carry it in ourselves, in the substance of our body, since the substance of our body is the same as that of the earth.**

But by evolution, this sleeping and hidden consciousness gradually awakens through the vegetal and animal kingdoms, and in them subconsciousness begins; this subconsciousness, with the appearance of mind in man, culminates in consciousness.

This consciousness likewise is progressive, and as man evolves, it will change into superconsciousness.

We too, then, carry in ourselves the subconsciousness which links us to the animal, and the superconsciousness which is our hope and assurance of future realisation.

* * *

[...]

Sweet Mother,

What is the work of the Overmind?

The overmind is the region of the gods, the beings of divine origin who have been charged with supervising, directing and organising the evolution of the universe; and more specifically, since the formation of the earth they have served as messengers and intermediaries to bring to the earth the help of the higher regions and to preside over the formation of the mind and its progressive ascension.

It is usually to the gods of the overmind that the prayers of the various religions are addressed. These religions most often choose, for various reasons, one of these gods and transform him for their personal use into the supreme God.

In the individual evolution, one must develop in oneself a zone corresponding to the overmind and an overmind consciousness, before one can rise above it, to the Supermind, or open oneself to it. Almost all the occult systems and disciplines aim at the development and mastery of the overmind.

* * *

Sweet Mother,

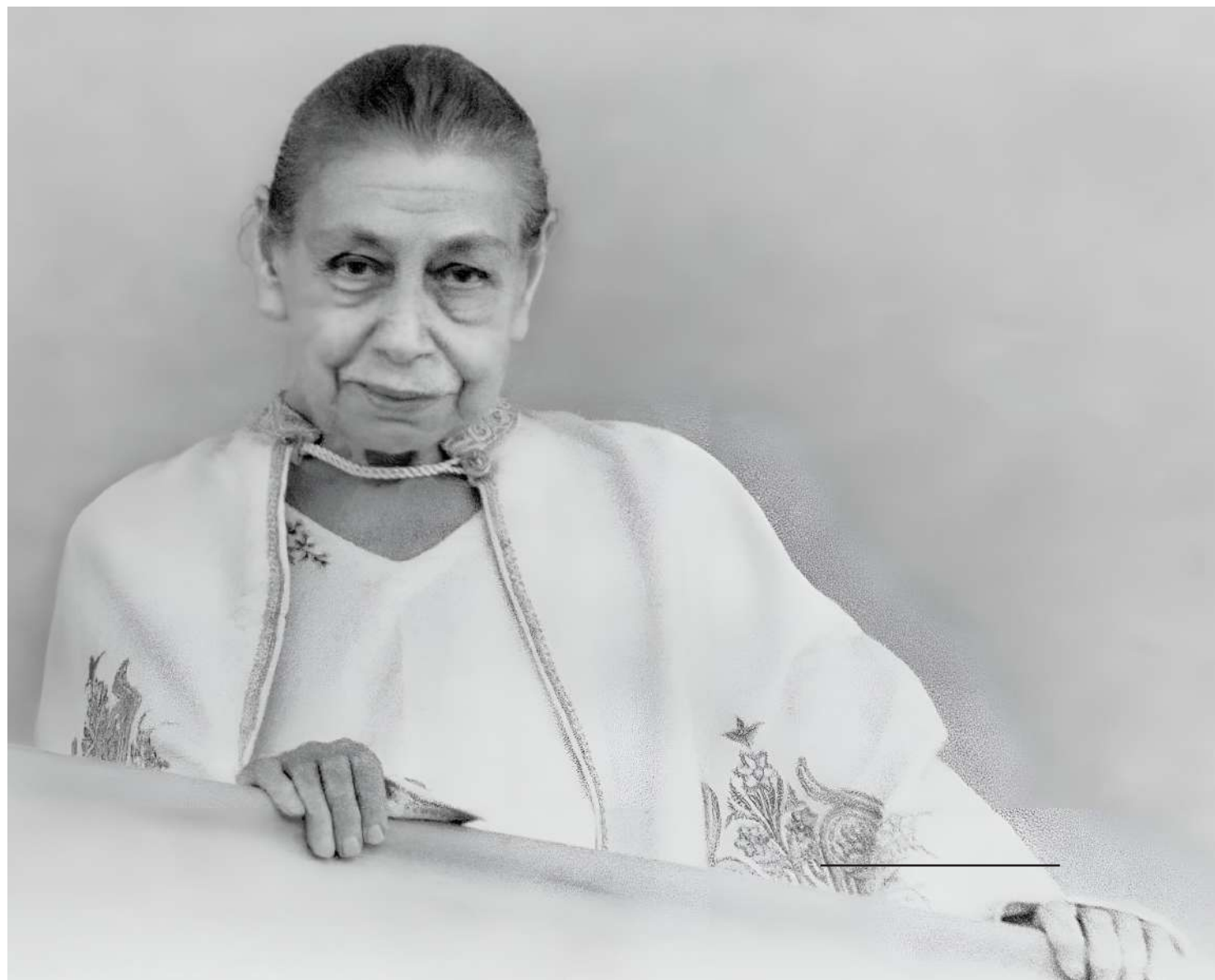
What is meant by "a zone corresponding to the overmind" and how can one develop it in oneself? What is meant by the "mastery of the overmind"?

The individual being is made up of states of being corresponding to cosmic zones or planes, and as these inner states of being are developed one becomes conscious of those domains.

This consciousness is double, at first psychological and subjective, within oneself, expressing itself through thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations; then objective and concrete when one is able to go beyond the limits of the body in order to move about in the various cosmic regions, grow conscious of them and act freely in them—this is what is called "mastery"; it is this I spoke of when I mentioned the mastery of the overmind.

It goes without saying that all this is not done in a day, not even in a year. This mastery, in whatever domain it may be, vital, mental, overmental, demands assiduous effort and great concentration. These masteries are no easier than the mastery of the physical world; and everyone knows how much time and effort are needed merely to learn the things indispensable for leading one's life properly, not to speak of "mastery", which is truly something exceptional on earth.

* * *



[...]

Sweet Mother,

What are the “supreme faculties”?

It is difficult to reply without having the context. Which “supreme faculties” are being referred to here? Those of man on the way to becoming superman, or those that the supramental being will possess when he appears on earth?

In the first case, they are the faculties that develop in man as he opens to the higher mind and overmind, and through

those regions he receives the light of the Truth. These faculties are not a direct expression of the supreme Truth, but a transcription, an indirect reflection of it. They include intuition, foreknowledge, knowledge by identity and certain powers such as that of healing and, to an extent, of acting upon circumstances.

If it refers to the supreme faculties of the supramental being, we cannot say much about them, for all we can say at the moment belongs more to the realm of imagination than to the realm of knowledge, since this supramental being has not yet manifested on earth.