

The Alchemy of Her Grace

Grateful Reminiscences



V. MADHUSUDAN REDDY

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INSTITUTE OF HUMAN STUDY
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Om Anandamayi Chaitanyamayi Satyamayi Parame

Madhumayi Ma
Pranam

For
My granddaughter Auropriya
And

The many other children of the Mother
who nestle joyously and always in Her
lap of light and love

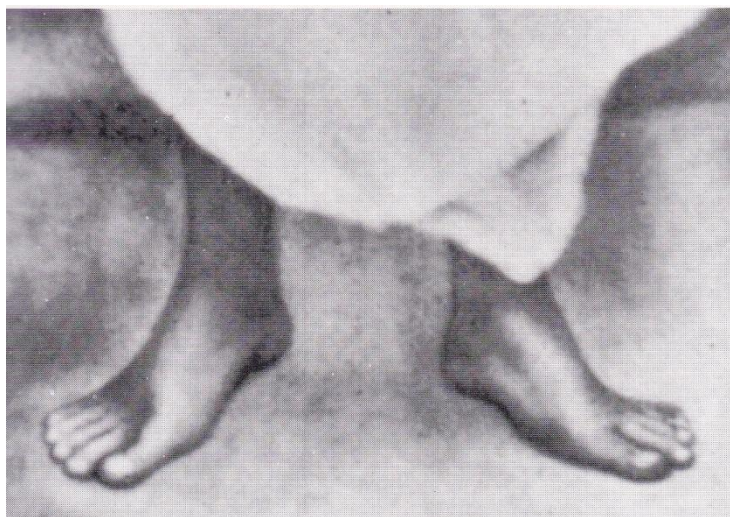
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Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Aravindaya



SHRADDHANJALI

*Divi sūryasahasrasya
bhaved Yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadrśi sā syād
bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ.*

Gita XI.12

If the light of a thousand suns
were to flare forth all at once
in the sky that might resemble in
some measure the splendour of that
Supreme Being.

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1. 'Encounter' with the Infinite

It was in 1941 that I first saw the 'siddhi' photograph of Sri Aurobindo in the house of V. Chandrashekharan's niece. His bright eyes transfixed on some distant splendour, he looked a Jnani of the Timeless with a special magnetism of his own, and destined to salvage the human race. An unaccountable wonder captivated me forever. Thereafter I kept my initiation alive by reading whatever little informative literature I could procure from friendly sources. A few booklets on his sublime philosophy and Yoga served only to whip up my hunger for the Illimitable.

Five years later, in 1946, as a student of M.A. Philosophy, I had the singular opportunity of reading the first volume of *The Life Divine* for detailed study as part of our post-graduate syllabus. And Prof. S.K. Maitra was our esteemed teacher and guide. Indeed it was providential. In a well modulated voice he would slowly read line by line the Master's *magnum opus* leaving us all not a little dumbfounded and bewildered- dumbfounded because of the overwhelming theme, and bewildered because we could not understand by ourselves the high argument of the supreme Yogi. Moreover, our Professor would not at all condescend to explain it. With the result that while our interest in the monumental work steadily increased, our enthusiasm was not correspondingly

served or spawned. After three months of painful endurance, at the behest of two of my close friends and benchmates, I ventured to request our sage-professor to explain the text to which he said simply, "Even if I explain it now you will not understand it, but a time will come when you will understand everything." The truth is that nothing of Sri Aurobindo can be understood except by the merciful agency of the Mother's Grace.

None of my friends then knew anything of the Ashram at Pondicherry. The stray stories that wafted in the groups were both amusing and mystifying. One such incredible narration bordering on fabrication was that Sri Aurobindo remained in his room ever absorbed in the Transcendent oblivious to the earthly environment. And that during Darshan time he was wrapped up in *dhoti* by his close disciples and presented as the presiding Yogi-figure of the Ashram. During this period I scribbled a few lines of poetry, entitled it 'Consciousness', and sent it to the Ashram as my humble tribute-offering to the great Master. Promptly I received a postcard from Anilbaran who while acknowledging receipt of my letter significantly observed: "We are happy to note that people in the universities are taking interest in Sri Aurobindo,"

I was in the final year of my Master's programme when I discontinued my studies to contribute my wee bit to the freedom struggle in my home State. Soon I got disillusioned by the nature of the struggle, and withdrew to a distant place where I could read all the three tomes of *The Life Divine*. Finally, I decided to go to

Pondicherry to have Sri Aurobindo's Darshan on 15.8.1949.

To go to French Pondicherry in those days it was required to have a visa-permit of sorts both from the Nizam's Government as well as from the Madras Central Secretariat. The City Police Commissioner, Hyderabad, very wryly remarked, "Why do you want to go to Pondicherry? Those who have gone there have either never returned or keep commuting again and again." I did not answer, and kept quiet. It was a call-an irresistible summons from beyond. Earlier I had written to the Mother for permission to visit the Ashram. She graciously permitted me to do so. Subsequently I obtained her permission also for my brother, L.

Parc Charbon was the place of our stay in the Ashram, it already gave us a mystic feel of the unique 'grotto' of dynamic *tapasya*.

* * *

Here is an intimate account of my adoring encounter with the Infinite-of the meeting of a wayside human man with the almighty Divine Man, of a close reckoning of the mystery· of new birth of an almost lost soul. Wandering for long through the wilderness of Time the pilgrim had at last arrived at the gates of the Timeless. Voyaging aimlessly across the uncharted seas of stark ignorance he had stepped on the frontiers of infinite Light.

It was the 15th of August, 1949. The Ashram was more like a veritable beehive resplendent with immortal Soma. Seeker-souls from different parts of the world had converged upon the place to drink to their fill the ambrosia of divine life. In the very atmosphere there was the charge of effulgent silence; a celestial peace had precipitated as it were around us all. And we waited patiently and prayerfully for the great event. In addition to the inmates there were several hundred visitors waiting to have a glimpse of the great Master. At the scheduled hour the queued up devotees fully drenched with devotion started moving slowly in a state of semi-trance towards the Darshan room on the first floor.

On entering the front room, to my utter surprise, I found it fully charged with golden light. The meager, furniture, the windows and walls seemed to radiate a powerful vibration. Verily, it was a chamber of golden sunshine. Very soon I discovered the radiant source. It was Sri Aurobindo sitting in an empyrean posture in the adjoining front room facing the approaching devotees. Lo and behold, I saw the one and only God-the Purushottama, the Golden Purusha. I was deluged by a flood of deep silence and honeyed light. There was installed in our midst the very embodiment of celestial splendour-a Guru with sublime dimension, a God with infinite span. The cosmos itself was like a temple built in honour of his advent, and I felt certain that a thousand suns must have borrowed their radiance from the glowing face of Sri Aurobindo. The wonderment is too towering and massive for words!

*Divi sūryasahasrasya
bhaved Yugapad Utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadrśi sā syād
bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ.*
(Gita XI.12)

If the light of a thousand suns were to flare forth all at once in the sky that might resemble in some measure the splendour of that Supreme Being.

His eyes of light had transformed me into a transparent facade, his distant luminous look transported me into another world of pure consciousness. The exhilarating and extraordinary Vedic experience. once again came alive and vibrant before my soul's eyes:

*Idam sreshtham jyotistam jyotir uttamam
visvajid ucyate brihat*
(RV X.170.3)

It is this Light, the best and foremost of all Lights, the Veda declares, is the all conquering and radiant winner of felicities many.

The Supreme, for the ancient Rishis, is suffused with light; he is the perennial source and the unbounded body of light. Diffusing glory and grace, the All-Creator is the apotheosis of infinite radiance:

*Vibhrajñin jyotiṣhī svar
apācho rocanam divah;
yenema visva bhuvaniṇy
abhṛita visvakarmanai visvadevyiivatī.
(RV X. 170.4)*

Illumining the universe with thy radiance Thou
hast scaled the shining score of heavens. It is
by Thee that all living beings are supported,
Thou art indeed the all-Creator and the divine
substance of everything.

His lambent looks penetrating through all inner
spaces, indeed he appeared as the very embodiment of
the Infinite and Eternal. He was here upon earth to give a
new lease of life to earth itself and radically change
forever its course of evolution. Seized with an
unnameable beatitude I felt pulled towards his radiant
feet in utter gratitude.

After seeing Sri Aurobindo on 29.3.1914 the
Mother wrote in her diary the next morning:

*"It matters not if there are hundreds
of beings plunged in densest ignorance.
He whom we saw yesterday is on earth:
His presence is enough to prove that
a day will come when darkness shall be
transformed into light, when Thy reign
shall be indeed established upon earth. "*

* * *

And what must have happened to the limited and vainglorious mortal human mind of a university educated youth? A tidal wave of super-reason had swept him off his feet. No longer was seen anywhere the rule of limping dialectics, only the logic of the Infinite reigned supreme. The very presence of the Supreme had melted down all that dross and gross of his embodied existence. Verily, it was an alchemy of Grace! Did not Sri Aurobindo precisely come for that, come to totally transform, nay to spiritualise our inconscient earth?

By the side of Sri Aurobindo, to his right, was seated a figure of tangible Love and Grace wrapped up in sheer compassion-the Mother of infinite felicities. With folded hands, totally soaked with the sovereign radiances of the twin infinitudes, I offered my humble Pranams to Them from an intimate distance as no one was allowed to touch Their hallowed feel. The world around had lost its solidity, Time itself had stilled, and I returned to my lodgings in a state of mystic somnambulism.

In the evening I went to the nearby beach; sitting on the seafront wall I watched the immense expanse of waters. But compared with what I had seen in the morning it was a mere play-plaza.

Nearly thirty years later when I happened to narrate to N my 'golden' experience of Sri Aurobindo, he listened with solicitous silence, and thereafter asked me to repeat what I had seen of the Lord. Yes, he was of golden complexion, radiating golden light -the supreme

Sun of all suns. Many years of intense Yoga had indeed mellowed down his otherwise light brownish dark complexion but still he was not golden yellow as I had seen him, said N. He then added: "Once he (Sri Aurobindo) told us that his subtle physical body had that complexion." Nevertheless I had to go by what my eyes had seen, *pratyaksa pramana*. When I had the unique good fortune of having his darshan again in August, 1950, then too I saw him as before as the ultimate of golden radiance. What could be seen only after absolute and impeccable purification of the senses and by deep and profound reflection was revealed to me by his transcendent Grace.

My adoration and my gratitude
are laid at his refulgent feet.

2. The Mother's Ministry – Preordained Capitulation

All was preordained; in the womb of Time everything was preplanned. Only the manner of its unfoldment had to be witnessed.

For several years I had secretly cherished the desire of offering my humble bit to the growing volume of literature on Sri Aurobindo. And with the completion of my Master's degree in philosophy it became clear to me that I should do my Ph.D in some area connected with Sri Aurobindo's 'Meta-philosophy'. In the evolving scale of species in creation man cannot be final; in the perception of the Master he is only a transitional being, and Nature is secretly preparing the way for superman. No spiritual exercise known to human history or the assiduous practice of any religious ritual can ever succeed in bringing to surface this truth of the earth. It is the descent of the supramental Truth-Consciousness, affirms Sri Aurobindo, that alone can make mother Earth vibrate differently and enable her to give birth to an entirely new race-the gnostic race. It is the rationale or otherwise of this marvel that fascinated me as a university student and I chose the subject, *Sri Aurobindo's Concept of Evolution and the Problem of Human Destiny* for my doctoral dissertation. But the admission was not that easy, for the Academic Dean,

though a classicist by predilection, but relentless rationalist by training and who himself had a Ph.D 'from Germany, would not allow my choice for the simple reason that Sri Aurobindo was a great 'mystic' and that the treatment of the subject could not be rationally satisfying. I did not agree with the learned scholar. There are scores of scholars, if not hundreds, who have their expertise in Kant or Hegel, Schopenhauer or Sankara, and insisted that I would not join their ranks. I made it clear to him that Sri Aurobindo was my first and final choice. After about three months our good-natured Professor conceded, and immediately after, at the earliest opportunity in the following summer, I went to Pondicherry where I was destined to realise that the choice of my research theme was also the choice pursued by me through many of my past lives. Yes, 'He who chooses the Divine', the Master says, 'has already been chosen by the Divine'. There is no escape from the Hound of Heaven; in fact, without knowing, I was moving in the direction of my Grand Hunter. It was all Her Grace.

* * *

It was Her Grace again that I was lodged in Golconde-our modern Himalayas-charged ,with Peace and Silence. Room No.2W4 was a veritable cave of *tapasya* conducive for the celebration of Her omnipresence-the place where I was destined to stay for the next most memorable twenty four days of my life, days that changed the very course of my destiny. Cloistered as it were, at first by necessity and then by a

self-induced love of solitude, I kept myself mostly confined to my 'cave'. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual 'autobiography' as well as his revelations of the Mother's inner dimensions contained in the book *On Himself and on the Mother* had just then been out. And I hungrily plunged into it ; with it my appetite to know the Mother increased all the more. My evening schedule was almost fixed, and I spent all my time in the Playground watching the Mother and her 'multiple' play. The Mother then was coming to the Playground every evening. She distributed salted peanuts to her children assembled there. Each of us would go to her by turn, do *pranam*, and receive the *mahaprasad* from her luminous hands. Silting meditatively at a distance of about 30-40' from her chair placed near the map of spiritual India I would alternately look at her and the starry sky above. My limited mind with its rationalistic set up for a long I, me would not digest the Master's statement, "There are three ways of being of the Mother of which you can become aware when you enter into touch of oneness with the Conscious Force that upholds us and the universe. Transcendent, the original supreme Shakti, she stands above the worlds and links the creation to the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. Universal, the cosmic Mahashakti, she creates all these beings and contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Individual, she embodies the power of these two vaster ways of her existence, makes them living and near to us and mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature."* (SABCL Vol.25, p. 20.) Occupying an infinitesimal space in the infinitely vast universe, my mind argued to itself, how

would she determine the entire cosmos. A mind that was accustomed to move only within the parameters of space and time could by no means understand the language of cosmic consciousness. Though physically a part of the phenomenal universe, the Mother in her consciousness embodied the entire universe. The universe is of the nature of consciousness, and consciousness indeed holds the key to the riddle of the universe. Theoretically of course I was a student of Vedanta and had read the Upanishads and Brahamasutras as a teenager. Our universities and colleges, by the very reason of their establishment, do not initiate their students into the secrets of existence, nor do they ever believe in any secret purpose of creation. My national ethos and my cultural environment did help me in inducing a belief of sorts in the phenomenon of Avatarhood, but I had never expected to encounter an Avatar in flesh and blood in my life time.

Lo and behold, I was face to face with the Supreme Mother herself. In answer to a query:

"Q: There are many who hold the view that she was human but now embodies the Divine Mother and her "Prayers", they say, explain this view. But to my mental conception, to my psychic feeling, she is the Divine Mother who has consented to put on her the cloak of obscurity and suffering and ignorance so that she can effectively lead us-human beings to Knowledge and Bliss and Ananda and to the Supreme Lord.

"A: The Divine puts on an appearance of humanity, assumes the outward human nature in order to tread the path and show it to human beings, but does not cease to be the Divine. It is the manifestation that takes place, a manifestation of a growing divine consciousness, not human turning into divine. The Mother was inwardly above the human even in childhood, so the view held by "many" is erroneous."

• SABCL Vol. 25, p. 48.

This and the other revelations about the Mother's divinity in the said work kept me totally absorbed until I was wholly converted. It was not conversion, it was altogether a reversal of consciousness-a rebirth, or rather, a new birth into a different dimension of Reality . In Tagore' s language what I saw was no longer real , and the really real could not be seen by or known by the physical mind.

* * *

Did I not go to the Ashram to collect my research material on Sri Aurobindo? Yet seldom did I realize that the Mother is the Shakti of Sri Aurobindo - Mother, the supreme Puissance that springs into perpetual action as his inseparable poise of manifestation and expansion as well as in deep and mute contemplation and concentration. She is the Divine in- manifestation, His

Law and His Will. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are inseparable in infinite quiescence and kinesis. Says the Mother:

*"Without him, I exist not;
Without me, he is unmanifest. ..*

Sri Aurobindo on Himself and On the Mother is a veritable Veda which unfolds to the seeker a whole world of spiritual felicities leading him to his integral identification with the Divine through love and surrender. I was looking for the essentials of evolution from the standpoint of Sri Aurobindo, and I was led imperceptibly by the Mother's Grace into a new perception of life itself which involved my very existence here. Instead of going through the relevant literature on the subject I found myself totally engrossed with the many-splendoured Mother. She gave me the most memorable experience of my life; it is still fresh and inerasable in my consciousness.

The whole time I was at my desk, in 2W4, I was reading Sri Aurobindo's *On the Mother*. The Mother clad in pure white *salwar-kurta* would be standing by my side all the time. Often times I wished and prayed to feel and see Sri Aurobindo's Presence but that was not to be. I had not yet become intimate with the Mother. I knew and had read only Sri Aurobindo; here also my familiarity with him was mental. For hours without any let or break the Mother would stand beside me, and when I would slip into my bed to sleep she was already there within the mosquito net. During the night whenever I woke up I found her constantly present. With

the result she was always with me, and I felt I did not have much sleep. My mental mind would even interpret it as an obsession. But that was not true as I felt fresh and energetic and perfectly normal. That again cannot be true; I was, infact, basking all the time in the sunshine of her loving Presence.

During the hours that I spent in the evenings in the Playground my mind would be a swarming mass of confusing questions relating to the individual, the universe and God, and more so the possibility and purpose of an Avatar. Relentlessly, I was made to toss, as it were, between my loving traditions and so called modernity, between faith and reason. With my head filled with such ignorance and confusion I would get up 10 go to her to do *pranam* in the hope that I would be answered. No sooner I would enter the orbit of her special presence than I would forget everything, all queries totally erased, and would fall at her lotus feet, and with my head on her knees and in her lap of light I would implore, "Mother, liberate me from all ignorance, liberate me from myself. Grant me the faith and the vision to see thy light." The Mother, in her infinite compassion would bless me with both her hands gently pressing my head. And with a heavenly smile slip into my half-folded palms a bag of peanuts -her *mahaprasad*. As soon as I moved away from her aura my mind became once again the cauldron of confusion and chaos which it was a little while ago. This continued for about three weeks at which point I decided to seek an interview with her and place at her lotus feet my problems. The Mother graciously granted me permission. I was to see

her in the late afternoon on 4th May, 1956, in the Playground. The expected hour was closing in, and I was getting ready for the most unexpected things to happen. It was to be an engagement with the Infinite, and I was only too aware of my limitations. A white cloud of abundant love, as it were, descended upon the place. and I was filled with peace and joy. On arrival from the tennis ground she went straight to the room where she was to see me. Like a prodigal son I fell at her feet, and did a long *pranam*. Recovering quickly from the spell of her divine proximity and the welcome shock of the transforming touch, J narrated to her briefly of my human predicament, of my ignorance and of the divine encounter and awaited her illuminant answer. She said softly, "Evidently, the force was working in you, do not resist." The transformative initiation had begun, the capitulation set in. That was the beginning of a new life for me. Slowly and imperceptibly the change had to take place.

I thus placed my hands and my head on her lap, and felt helped to open up my heart freely to her. Day after day, for more than three weeks of my stay in the Ashram, I used to see a squirrel coming from the eastern side on the parapet wall of the main Ashram building to see the Mother during balcony *darshan*. It was both regular and punctual. On days when the Mother would be a bit late, this tiny devotee would return and synchronise its coming with the time of the Mother's arrival. In fact, I would be assured of the Mother's arrival when I would see the squirrel coming towards the balcony jumping and running over the parapet wall.

Hearing this the Mother said, "So you have observed it... .. And continued to the effect, "many great souls come to see the Divine in different Bodies . It is not unusual. They come disguised as tigers, huge serpents etc."

She then recalled one of her war-time experiences. During the war, she remembered, a mother and her two children had died of shell-shock. Because of intense fear they underwent a change in their form. In their new guise - that of a cat and two kittens - they would not move out anywhere. Obviously, they were still fear-struck, and remained secluded. The Mother continued, "Seeing this I intervened and assured them of safe dispensation." The mother-cat then brought her young ones, one after another, .and placed them at the Mother's feet. The Mother in her infinite compassion absolved their fear and restored to them their original forms. This incident was narrated by the Mother when I put her the questions whether human souls after death take forms lower in the scale of existence. She made it quite clear that this does not happen. It is possible that souls because of *karma* might gather around them movements and desires which exercise a drag upon them, and do not easily allow them to take new birth necessary for their progress. The departed souls thus keep lingering in some region close to the physical until the many movements and desires clustering around them do not get absolved. And this happens, she explained, when they gain entry into some kindred medium, animal or sub-human, for satisfaction. This is the general rule; a conscious change of form is only temporary, and for a special purpose.

Another important item on the agenda was my Ph.D programme. After the disillusioning experience with the Divine herself, I had lost all my confidence both in the veracity of choice of the subject as well as my capacity to complete it to the satisfaction of university academics. Unhesitatingly, I confessed to the Mother, "Truly speaking I do not know even the basics of the subject, let alone its scope and its philosophic range. I feel myself utterly unequal to the task. I neither have the required intellectual training nor the necessary spiritual acumen to do justice to the subject. Only Your Grace can come to my rescue.' , The Mother gave me an encouraging smile. Emboldened by her affirmative gesture I pleaded, "Mother, if only You sit with me and help me to write that I can venture to undertake to accomplish the work. I will be only Your most inefficient scribe." The Mother put both her hands upon my head and blessed me. The real work was already over, the rest was merely a ritual. I fell on her lotus feet and did *pranam* to my heart's content. I had inadvertently exceeded my allotted timelimit, it was well over twenty four minutes. From the exit doorstep I turned back, and once again, fell on her radiant feet, and did a long *pranam*.

Yes, she is truly the Mother of infinite love. She is here to give us all a living, conscious perception of the Supreme. She is the first and the final initiation as well as the supreme consecration. Verily, she is the embodiment of the Lord's Love among men and upon the earth. Armed by her Grace, and enthused by her blessings, I then returned to Hyderabad.

Within the next one year I gathered as much material as it was possible and started writing the dissertation. I would get up at 4.00 a.m. and after finishing my chores sit at my desk at 4.30 a.m. With a brief meditation and a sincere invocation I would call for her help and begin writing. By about 8.30 a.m. I would complete the chapter and take the manuscript to college for giving it to my typist. Being a university teacher I had to attend to my regular class work and devote the rest of the day towards its accomplishment. With her abundant Grace I completed 31 chapters of my thesis. in 31 days. The last chapter entitled 'The Supramental Avatar' including the Preface took five days to finalise. The typist too took 36 days to complete it. In this case, the Mother was truly both the author and the adjudicator. As such I submitted the first bound copy of the dissertation at her lotus feet, upon which she graciously put her divine signature. The thesis was later published under the caption *Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution* with an Introduction by A.B. Purani.

3. The Master with a Crown of Peacock Plumes

Subdued streams of religious faith were found blended in the family ambience. While my mother performed *kedari gouri vratam*, and worshipped the White Mother, my father followed the Sri Ramanuja *sampradaya*, and recited the Anjaneya *dandakam*. The family guru, a great *upasaka* of Hanuman, had granted him a glimpse of Virat Maruti, and since then he believed in the efficacy of the unique *dandakam*. Also, in the company of devout and orthodox Muslims, my father would be seen as a practising Sufi of sorts.

Brought up in such a wholesome cultural climate, I was attracted first towards Shiva. Shiva for quite some time was my sovereign deity. The many symbol legends woven around his magnificent presentiment had a special fascination for me. The breath taking myths of holding the hemlock in the throat in order to save the earth from infernal pernicious contamination, his aeonic *tapasya* in the Himalayas of utter solitude as well as his dance of destruction, the *tandava*, swooping down upon the universe of manifestation in all his sovereign fury and force are part of the nation's immortal ethos. I am particularly beholden to Shiva's legendary ecstatic dance of creation coupled with Parvati with whom he is envisioned as moving upon the chaos of Inconscience with his mighty Will to create light. Tearing apart the terrible darkness he brings to birth the eternal Dawn. These and many other fabulous accounts of his infinite

compassion and generosity have enriched and immortalized the Shiva tradition in the country.

Then came Krishna into my life-Krishna of Brindavan, Krishna of Dwaraka and the sovereign Sri Krishna of the Kurukshetra - the Purusahottama. Krishna for me was the eternal Avatar of Ananda, the one who makes all creation possible, Krishna the embodiment of Love, Ananda, Devotion and perfect Beauty, *Syamasundara*. The divine flute-player of the Bhagavata is also the immanent and universal Divine of the Bhagavad Gita. Vaishnavism had a special attraction for me in as much as it reveals the secret 'relation of God in man to man in God by the double figure of Nara-Narayana'. Krishna is the Lord who abides in the heart of all creatures.

*aham iilmii gudakesa
sarva bhutasayasthitah
aham adis ca madhyam ca
bhiilaniim anla eva ca
(Gita X.20)*

Verily, O Gudakesa (Arjuna) I am the self seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.

Apparently, he is the Purushottama who manifests himself, again and again, to raise up humanity to higher and ever higher divinity. But even the Avatar does not manifest at any given time all the splendours of the Divine. Avatarhood is inscrutably but invariably

connected with the evolution of the race. The procession itself of the ten avatars as enumerated in the Puranas could be understood as a parable of evolution. Unlike Rama, who represents the sattwic mental man, Krishna is the overmental superman who opens the possibility of Supermind. He supports the evolution through the Overmind leading beyond towards the domain of Ananda. Overmind is the highest of the many ranges of consciousness beyond mind, but it is at the same time the line of the soul's turning away from the Superconscious and its descent towards the Inconscious. The next normal step in evolution is the supramental. The descent of Krishna into the physical on 24.11.1926 in the body of Sri Aurobindo signifies the greater preparation for the descent of the Supermind. The descent of Krishna, the Overmind Godhead, into the physical, supports the evolutionary process leading it towards the Ananda. And this helps Sri Aurobindo, first to prepare the earth to receive the Supermind, and then to bring down the Supermind into the earth-nature. It is the resistance of the earth to the luminous superconscience that terribly impoverishes his endless manifestation. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have been the chosen divine 'intermediaries' to bring about the incredible divine change. Sri Aurobindo is the Avatar of this extraordinary intervention who gives birth to 'a new and more adequate conception' of the Lord's supreme Law of progressive manifestation. It is Truth-Consciousness that will produce a 'more rapid germination' of the seeds of more perfect beauty, light and love which will transform the earth into the Kingdom of God. In the Mother's words:

*"Higher, always higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is accomplished, let us not stop at any realisation, let us march always, without stopping, energetically, towards a more and more complete realisation, towards an ever higher and more total consciousness.... The victory of yesterday must be only a stepping stone to the victory of tomorrow, and the power of the morrow a weakness with the effectivity to come."**

* *Prayers and Meditations*, September 6, 1914.

* * *

And the milestones that stake out this luminous ascent and consequent manifestations are infinite and ever new. It is the vision of this endless progression and the wondrous epiphany that fascinated me most, and I felt imperceptibly and most convincingly drawn towards Sri Aurobindo. Though Krishna was still my darling deity, finally I found myself lying prostrate at the radiant feet of Sri Aurobindo. The *anandamaya*, *pranamaya* Krishna lingered still in my subconscious -the bewitching flute-player with his peacock crown was too difficult to be forgotten so easily-the Avatar of divine Love too hard to be avoided. There was no ostensible conflict in me in accepting both as my *ishta devatas*; however, as I found myself increasingly subsumed by Sri Aurobindo, I surrendered totally to him for the final Word.

And his Word came to me as a dream-vision. The dream was profoundly significant in as much as it was fully satisfying, erasing all traces of any spiritual polemics out of my consciousness. It was a special *darshan* of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, specially arranged, as there was no one else except myself to have Their *darshan*. I felt fully overwhelmed, nay soaked in the light and love that flowed from Them. I had tasted the Soma of a nameless delight, sufficient for a life-time. I then turned round, and to my surprise ,saw in the hall itself the younger Sri Aurobindo, the like of which is in the Reception Room of the Ashram, wearing a crown of peacock plumes, very much in the manner of Krishna among the gopis of Brindavan. The message was too clear and powerful. I fell immediately at his feet. Filled with a subtle sense of remorse, I implored and pleaded for forgiveness: "Lord", I said, "You look most beautiful without the crown of peacock plumes. Verily you are Krishna, you are for me more than Krishna; you are Krishna fulfilled. You are both Krishna and Kali come for a greater epiphany. You are the Golden Siva come to recreate and new create the universe of manifestation. O my supreme Master, I would live only in Thee."

4. A Dream - vision of Her Transformed Body

Whenever I visited the Ashram I was granted permission to do Pranam to Her. It was indeed a privilege, a gesture of Her Grace.

It was the year 1973. I reached Podicherry around May 10, and the next day as usual I went to Counouma-da with a letter for the Mother with a prayer to permit me to do Pranam. But the Mother had stopped darshan to everyone from that very day itself. My disappointment knew no bounds; I was never to see Her any more, at least for an indefinite period.

That very night the Mother granted me a dream vision. It was a different setting, an altogether new place - spacious, quiet and absolutely celestial. On my way to the large and elegant residence I had to pass in front of a wide and imperious hall, generous and boundless, as it were, with no enclosing walls except for a massive column towards the front like the Vedic Skhamba, against which I saw Sri Aurobindo reclining majestically, and leisurely watching the entire unfoldment like the supreme Witness-Purusha. As I moved up to the extensive first floor of a beautiful mansion I saw several senior sadhaks standing quietly in a queue. It occurred to me to count their number, but I did not have to count them. The number came to me; there

were twentyfour. Many of them were familiar faces. Each of them was holding in his folded hands a unique flower-cup, and the cups were brimful with some nectarine fluid. The cups were flower-like, tender and delicate, each of a different shape. They were all moving towards the Mother slowly and quietly and expectantly; their faces lit up with a calm certitude. The Mother was seated as it were on a crown chair, but there was nothing concrete about the chair. The chair was made of some luminous substance. The Mother was seated on one side of the wide chamber. The walls themselves likewise were not concrete ones, they offered no solidity, and allowed, so to say, moving objects to pass through them. The Mother's presentiment was a luminous and transparent phenomenon. She had a transformed body, of a radically different composition; her head was of diamond blue and the rest a blend of liquid gold and bright yellow. Even as she looked at the approaching disciple-children and raised her right hand in benediction they felt charged with peace, and transported into a radiant world of *ananda*. All was soaked in an ambience of pure love and bliss and peace. When the *darshan* was over the Mother gracefully got down from her lambent seat and moved out of the empyrean lodging. She did not walk in the ordinary human way; with ease and benignance she glided, as it were, across the chamber and left the place. All felt frozen with effulgent peace, they all were now denizens of a new world-a creation of perfect earth and perfect heaven.

Filled with the ecstasy and wonder of the vision-experience I went to Andre-da. After hearing me patiently he said, "You saw the Mother's golden body."

Let us all prayerfully await Her second coming.

5. A Telephone that Connects the Future - A Dream - vision

It all happened in a dream:

During one of my several visits abroad I picked up a rare gift for offering to the Mother. It was a telephone with which one could speak to the Future.

After wrapping it up in a beautiful gift pack, I took it to the Ashram for offering. It was a different Ashram, perhaps in the subtle physical world and the true one located in a celestial setting. I entered one of the big halls therein and kept the most precious and unique gift on a raised counter. I saw many familiar faces including Nolinida, Amritada, Rishabchand and Purani. This made me happy and comfortable in some sense. All of us were anxiously awaiting the Mother's arrival. The atmosphere was filled with a feeling of expectancy but there was a deep and quiet ambience about it, absolutely relaxed and joyful.

Within a short time the Mother appeared; she was youthful and beautiful, charming and disarming in her demeanor. Her bearing was absolutely imperious and graceful. She looked hardly thirty years, *tridasii!!*, and was dressed in a pearl white flowing gown. She was heavenly, she was divine, and radiated peace and joy and love. Everyone around there received her with folded

hands, and their hearts filled with infinite gratitude stood there, transfixed in peace and joy.

The Mother straight came to the counter where I was waiting with the gift. After doing my humble and loving *pranam*, half nervous and half excited, I started opening the gift-pack. Then I offered the singular gift to the Mother, and told her that it was a telephone that could talk to the Future, a gadget that could connect with individuals and events in the distant future. I then started looking for its key in all my pockets to be offered to the Mother for the operation of the instrument. My nervousness and disappointment knew no bounds when I failed to show up the key. The Mother heartily laughed though not entirely at my helplessness but certainly at my enthusiasm to offer her the said key. And all the disciple-children joined her.

Immediately afterwards, I wrote to Nolinida from USA, which I was then visiting on a lecture-tour, giving him a graphic account of my dream-vision. Nolinida promptly replied to my letter; he endorsed it all. It was true, he wrote, that I had seen the Mother in the 'true' Ashram above and that I had offered her the 'speaking machine' that could contact the Future. But he made it implicitly clear that though I did not have the key with me, nevertheless he held the assurance that the Mother one day would certainly help me with the key to the supreme Future. Everything depends upon one's sincerity and receptivity. For truly the Mother is the Future and has the 'key' to it.

(Nolinida' s letter to Madhusudan Reddy)

"I have read your beautiful letter and your beautiful experience. The experience was true in the sense that it gave you the living contact with the Mother whose presence is still concrete upon earth and acting upon earth consciousness. The dial and the machine are symbolic of means to communicate with Her living Presence. I am glad to tell you of my happiness to see you having such an experience.

About Chhalamayi, certainly Mother remembers her as I do vividly and think of her often and on.

With greetings and good wishes and Blessings from the Mother."

Nolinida

On going through the letter I felt imperceptibly yet powerfully drawn towards her lotus feet. It was an experience of loving surrender to the Mother of us all.

6. Towards the Realisation of Tomorrow

The Mother declares:

"In the eternity of becoming, each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a more perfect realization..."

The animal-mental man is the creation of yesterday. The spiritual-supramental man will be the creation of tomorrow. Sri Aurobindo comes not only to announce this new creation but to realise it. Sri Krishna, the Lover and Friend of humankind, transform the animal-man into a lover of Light and Beauty, and with his supreme allurements and charm compels him to walk on the road to Overmental realisations. Sri Aurobindo, the perpetual Shiva and indefatigable Yogi by the help of Krishna and Kali transforms the surrendered human, and sets him securely on the sunlit path of supramental realisation. He lights in the heart of humanity the eternal flame of gnostic consciousness, and induces the earth to undertake the Yoga of endless transformation.

The Mother graciously showed me this wonder of distinction-in-identity and the supreme consummation in a dream-vision. Sri Krishna stood in absolute relief against a sky-scraping mighty grey mansion, himself touching the sky. His relief provided the necessary cosmic backdrop for a supracosmic *mahayajna*. Overawed and dumbstruck I stood still for quite some

time. When I found the grey cosmicity much too static for my flaming thirst, I turned aside and discovered not far away a huge and magnificent canopy-like structure located in the adjacent valley. The dome-akin erection radiated waves upon waves of lambent light. Inside, it was filled with mellow golden dawning. Involuntarily, I was drawn towards the magical mystery construction, and entering it I found Sri Aurobindo at the centre, seated solemn and crosslegged, giving an uplifting sermon, as it were, to those few gathered around him. It was a transporting experience for me, and I moved closer and sat among the rest. He was in fact initiating them and leading them by his personal example into realms of Light and Truth hitherto unknown to spiritual history. He was giving them a taste of the supramental Truth, and the foretaste of Soma-the divine delight of all existence. The whole place was filled with subdued ecstasy and love and light and peace. Indeed, an entirely new creation was taking shape, a new destiny was in the making. Surely a new Brahma and a new Vishnu were at work, and Sri Aurobindo, the Golden Shiva, could be seen consecrated to the endless manifestation of the Lord's inexhaustible splendour.

Filled with the golden experience my whole being resounded as it were with the words, "Victory, victory, victory to the Supreme."

7. Glory to Her Powers!

After my most blessed interview with the Mother on 4.5.1956 I returned to Hyderabad. I had repeatedly done my *pranams* to her moon-gold feet and placed my head on her divine lap. It was her Grace; it is her abundant love for her children that sustains the human race. Her advent upon earth and her assumption of a limited human body was an act of her supreme benediction and Grace. She is here to carry on heroically 'the great terrestrial struggle', to manifest the Supreme in all His splendour and glory. For the hour of combat is also the hour of manifestation. She is here to effectuate upon earth "the integral union between the smallest things below and the sublimest and most vast above."

*"Thou hast said to me ", says the Mother,
"Work as an ordinary man in the midst of
ordinary beings; learn to be nothing more than
they are in all that is manifesting; associate
with the integral way of their being; for.
beyond all that they know, all that they are,
Thou carriest in Thyself the torch of the eternal
splendour which does not waver, and by
associating with them, it is this that thou wilt
carry into their midst. "*"*

**Prayers and Meditations. Jan. II . 1915.*

And the Mother accepts this work, and makes it the governing law of her mission upon earth. She is here, to quote her own words, " to let loose the Volcano of His love and Light ... from the heart of this heavy and obscure Matter. "

She is the Supreme; the Supreme is she who depriving herself of transcendental bliss and peace, as well as all spiritual ecstasy, has taken a plunge into the uttermost material inconscience. Verily, she has descended here to make the earth worthy of His love and lasting peace.

After a few days stay in Hyderabad, I proceeded to my native village. Our house is outside the village located almost in the midst of paddy fields, quiet and secluded. One night I had a significant dream. The Mother in white *salwar-kameez* and sports head-gear was walking in front of me. She was all smiles and full of some limpid promise. She was walking on a pedestrian path running through the fields with myself closely following her. At some point she stopped; her human delineation disappeared, and in its place I saw standing before me a Virat-figure of Mahalakshmi, her head touching the sky. The divine configuration closely resembled the great goddess of the Hindu tradition. She stood there beaming with sweet and intoxicating delight; she was the very embodiment of rapture and grace and charm. And I felt seized with an unfathomable peace and bliss. She was the All-Beautiful spreading harmony and beauty all around, an apotheosis of passionate attraction

of the Divine for the human. When I felt drunk deep at the fountain of sweetness and love she vanished, and in her place once again was found the Mother. She resumed her walk. After a couple of minutes she disappeared, and I saw in her place a giant-figuration of the goddess of infinite perfection, Mahasaraswati. Seated on the white swan-throne and with the magical instrument Veena in her hands, she was the very world-Spirit toiling through endless time for perfect perfection. With the twin weapons of sincerity and straight forwardness she seemed to suffer without end innumerable human imperfections. My head bowed down in utter gratitude. When she too disappeared I saw the Mother casting a compassionate look at me. Once again when she vanished, I saw Mahakali, high and overwhelming with her distinctive power proper to her mighty role in Mahashakti Ma's dealings with the universe. Bursting with fiery force, wearing a garland of skulls, and with varied weapons in her many hands she stood there Titan-like, the passionate warrior of worlds galore. Granting me the terrible and concentrated look of a ruthless victor combined with the deep feeling of passionate dispensation she too faded out after a while. Once again I could see the Mother looking at me with love and happy solicitude.

A few more minutes passed by, and the Mother discreetly disappeared leaving me in a world of beautiful ambience, most attractive and charming. There was no figure or form, no configuration or traditional myths, only Nature sparkling with light and beauty. I could hear the singing of birds; I saw peacocks dancing, and felt the

winds gently blowing around. For a moment I savored nonplussed, but soon it was refreshingly revealed to me that Maheshwari has no specific form, that she is formless but not faceless. She has the face of sun-lit beauty, the look of luminous intelligence and the demeanor of imperial wideness. My body and being basked for a long time in the sunshine of her boundless compassion and loving envelopment. Glory to the Mother Supreme!

I turned to my right and found our Sweet Mother waiting for me with infinite kindness in her eyes. Child-like I fell at her lotus feet and did a long *pranam*. My humble gratitude to her; she had revealed to me her four great powers.

Glory to the Mother.
Glory to her Powers.

8. The Mother's Eyes - Veritable Pools of Blue Light

It was an instance of seeing within seeing, a deeper experience within a deep and luminous experience.

The Mother is the one Consciousness-Force playing in several personalities; she is at once one and multiple. So far as her children are concerned, she is equal to all. The more developed and receptive ones have more lines of contact with her. There are some special beings who have come to the Ashram and have close connections with beings of the higher planes of consciousness. These are the chosen ones in a special sense, and are especially fitted to undertake the great work and be her collaborators.

However, each one is concerned with himself and the Divine, and is granted his own quota of singular experiences. The devotee-child has to keep confidence in the Mother's guidance and Grace. He should constantly and persistently turn to the Mother and let her Force work in him. For those who work for her in all sincerity are prepared by their work itself for receiving her Consciousness and Force.

One day when I went to do her *pranam* and looked into her eyes I saw before me two veritable pools

of blue light. And I found myself happily swimming in them. Like a doting, upbeat child I lodged my head in her loving lap. Later, the experience repeated a couple of times, leaving with me the realisation that she was the sea, she the ship and the sole captain.

9. Mistaken Medicine

Medicine, observes Sri Aurobindo, is mostly 'theory and experimental fumbling' coupled of course with luck. It is a way to health though it seldom reaches it. Different systems of medicines subscribe to different lines of processes of Nature, and therefore have their own share of successes and failures . They are merely external means, whereas unseen forces working from behind are really those that matter. In fact, all ailments themselves have psycho-physical origins. A persistent inner action is therefore necessary for curing an illness. This entails use of one's will-force, of course with the sanction and support of the Mother's Force behind him.

Faith and hope have an important role to play in curing diseases; they are the great healers all the time. This applies both to the doctors and the patients. They act on the subliminal and the subconscious, and set in action the powers of the inner being and the hidden divine forces from above. The subconscious is the vilest enemy, for it is from there that suggestions come which create unhealthy conditions resulting in illness. Absolute cure of an illness as such depends on clearing the mind, vital and the body consciousness of their suggestions. The most effective way to good health is to refuse to have obscure thoughts and to reject them. And the perfect way would be to draw the Mother's Light on the ailment and put one's inner will to cure it.

"If the faith and opening are there," says Sri Aurobindo, "medicines are not indispensable." * SAbEL Vol. 24, p. 1568. This means an integral opening of the entire being down to the most subconscious to the Mother; ultimately it is the Grace that cures. Also, more than the medicine it is faith in the doctor that goes a long way in the remedy.

In my case, I reposed some faith in K, my doctor, because of his devotion for the Mother but not as much in the medicine he prescribed for me. I had developed fat feet, and fearing elephantiasis I consulted K who almost confirmed it. At least I was on my way to have it, and certainly would have it if I would not take his medicine. He suggested an unusual prescription-that of taking some Ayurvedic powder daily in the morning with cow's urine.

Wanting to take guidance of the Mother I wrote to her praying if cow's urine was good enough for the purpose. Noliniida who took my letter to her conveyed to me her views in the matter: he said simply, "Mother says that cow's urine is taken as medicine in France." And I took her observation as her tacit approval of K's prescription. After my return to Hyderabad, my home city, I started taking K's medicine with the 'sacred' cow's 'sacred' urine day after day with almost an overworked religious zeal. Yet nothing happened; there was no improvement, not even signs of its remote amelioration. When I visited the Ashram next, I felt deep within me the urgency to bring the whole thing to the Mother's notice. The fear of possible filariasis made me both

impatient and nervous. After obtaining her gracious permission I bumped into her presence in her anteroom in the Playground. Pulling up my pantaloons I laid bare my fattened Legs, and bemoaningly as it were, blurted out: "Mother, for more than three months now I must have taken bucketsfull of cow's urine together with that dung-like powder given me by K. Yet the malady remains the same, unabated and undiminished." The Mother laughed heartily, she must have enjoyed my naiveness and ingenuity. She intently looked at my legs, and when I knelt down to do *pranam* she put both her 'healing' hands upon my head for quite some time and blessed me. I was more than compensated: I had made the Supreme Mother laugh! A laughter that must have cheered up the very heavens and turned the joyous attention of all the gods towards happenings upon the earth. And the long and deep and loving touch of her luminous hands... ! I totally forgot my ailment. I was transported into a different world, the world of love, light and bliss.

The next morning I met Nolinida and briefly recalled my loving encounter with the Supreme on the previous evening. His face lit up with a broad smile. He then simply said: "But the Mother never asked you to take cow's urine. She had only said that it is used as medicine in France." That put a cold seal on the entire episode. It was a case of mistaken medicine.

To my pleasant surprise soon I found a great change in my legs. The entire ailment had disappeared within a week's time; it was, indeed the miracle of her

Grace. Here I can only recall the Master's words echoing and re-echoing in my being:

"The spirit within us is the only all-efficient doctor and submission of the body to it the one true panacea. ""*

* SABCL Vol. 17, p. 127.

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10. Kyoto: Divine Guidance

Ever since I had read of the Mother's mystic identification with all cherry blossoms deep in her consciousness in Japan, I was seized with the aspiration to visit Japan. One such opportunity was unexpectedly granted to me when on my way to Honolulu in 1961, I broke my journey in Tokyo for three days as an intransit passenger, and stayed in the house of a fellow-passenger, an Indian settled in Tokyo. I very much enjoyed his hospitality, and had the good fortune of visiting the famous Shinto temple as well as the great sitting statue of the Buddha in Kamakura. It was here that for the first time the Mother was introduced to Rabindranath Tagore, who was deeply impressed by her mystic personality and spiritual poise, and is believed to have invited her to take charge of the affairs of Shantiniketan. But that was not to be for she had verily come to change the destiny of the earth and not just help any single institution.

Thirty two years later, in 1993, when I had gone to participate in the Parliament of the World's Religions meet in Chicago that my wife and I decided to go to Japan and visit the house in Kyoto staying where the Mother had reshaped the destiny of Japan. The soul of Japan indeed must have aspired through the ages for the Mother's decisive advent, and her prayers were completely answered. She had prepared Japan to manifest a new form of her Will and her Law

commensurate with a totally new nation, and as a part of her master plan for the earth's transformation.

Our host Kiyohito Kitagawa, a scholar and seeker, had earlier visited the Ashram. Himself a priest and a devout Buddhist he was in search of a new expression of the Spirit, a working model of dynamic Buddhism of sorts. As a first step he wanted to translate *The Life Divine* onto Japanese, and also to give to his followers an easy and understandable version of the *magnum opus*. Tokyo airport is more like a labyrinth of technological modernity and jigsaw puzzle. Had not my friend and host come to receive and rescue us we would have remained stay put in the vast terminal, and never entered the great and most beautiful theatre of Mahalakshmi-Japan. Kiyohito had travelled a couple of hundred miles from Funage, Hyogo, to receive us, indeed it was most generous and kind of him. Journey by bullet train back to Funage was quite an unforgettable experience. We reached his home town past midnight quite tired and exhausted. The loving and traditional hospitality of our host-family greatly revived us and pumped life back into our fatigued bodies. Soon after we shifted into massive mattresses filled with silk wool and soft feathers.

Next morning we were shown a beautiful temple on the first floor; it was the temple house of Kitagawa of which he was the chief priest. We were shown two deities, one, the many handed mother-figure corresponding to Mahakali of the Hindu pantheon, and the other resembling the elephant god Ganesha. These

are Cundi Bodhisattva and Ganapati of the Japanese esoteric Buddhism.

Later in the day Kitagawa took us to Nara, the city of ancient temples and shrines. At one point Nara flourished as an important centre of learning and culture. Among many other well known temples we visited Todarji, the magnificent spiritual headquarter of Emperor Shomu. We saw therein installed the world's largest bronze statue of the Buddha, the Daibutsu, built at the behest of Emperor Shomu in 8th century A.D. Coincidentally and to our pleasant surprise it was the day of some grand celebration organised once in several decades and marked by elaborate ritual and sophisticated and abstruse symbolic ceremony known as the Memorial Service.

The hall of the Great Buddha, we were told, is the world's largest wooden structure measuring 57m. long 51 m. wide and about 48m. high. The casting of this legendary statue must have indeed taken several years to complete. The gigantic statue of Daibutsu representing Buddha Vairocana in a sitting posture stands 15m. high and weighs an incredible mass of 452 tons . In Nara we found ourselves face to face with authentic Japan.

My good friend Kitagawa in the meantime tried desperately every means of tracing in the telephone directory as well as through other agencies the exact location of Madame Kobayashi 's house. Having failed to do so he lost all hopes of helping his loving guest. His graduate friend Takaji Maeda too had tried

independently to track down the elusive address. The address that my daughter had taken from the Archives Dept. of the Ashram was itself wrong, and as such no one could help me out. Still I did not lose hope and my faith in the Mother's infallible guidance remained much the same.

Next morning we took the fastest train to Kyoto. On this journey Takaji was my friend, philosopher and guide. He felt genuinely sorry for not being in a position to take me to Madame Kobayashi's place, the house which I had aspired to visit for more than three decades. Yet my faith in the Mother's guidance remained intact, and I knew secretly that the miracle would happen. Outside the railway station we entered a taxi which had queued up in front of us. And filled with sense of half-nervousness I asked the cab-driver if he would take us to the most sacred place. Takaji must have certainly felt uncomfortable at my crazy request for he was jolly well cocksure that the address being faulty the house could not be located. Our friendly and enthusiastic *sarathi* being an extrovert and emotional good natured by temperament readily replied in the affirmative. He seemed to say in Japanese to the effect: "God willing, we will certainly seek out the place." We were on our way to Ryoanji Temple founded in the fifteenth century best known for its Rock Garden consisting only of white gravel and fifteen rocks skilfully placed. What the garden signifies is left to the depth and receptivity and flight of imagination of the visitor. However it is considered to be a masterpiece of Japanese culture. It is strikingly simple and exudes purity and transparency of

feeling and inspires philosophical meditation. It is rated as the apotheosis and the ultimate of Zen art.

When we came out of the main building of the temple there was a slight drizzle, and we saw our ingenious driver-friend running up with two small umbrellas. He was visibly excited for one cop at the parking-lot below had given him the hope of tracing the house. His face aglow with optimism and confidence, he drove miles after miles through the wide and crowded roads of Kyoto. Kyoto is Japan's best known city of culture; it is known as the heart of the country, and presently is a gentle blend of much tradition and modest modernity. Surrounded by numerous tranquil mountains and beautiful sites it is a vast treasure chest of history and architecture, crafts and beauty. With magnificent imperial villas, scores of Shinto shrines and hundreds of Buddhist temples Kyoto is also a city of festival celebrated round the year. One time capital of Japan we found it a living, thriving and throbbing centre of her age-old culture and civilisation.

We had neither any map with us nor the correct address to locate the place, and yet our enthusiastic friend hastened up in the direction of some unknown destination. We drove on many main roads and passed through several criss-crossing narrow but clean and well-laid lanes. Finally, our car stopped about 30 yards away from a small two storeyed building one wall of which was totally painted red. The owner chauffeur immediately jumped out of the car and walked with a sufficiently fast pace towards it. I knew at once that it

was a county post office. At this time something significant happened; I felt a sudden shower of rain, rather a gentle drizzle had descended upon us. It was a shower of peace, and I felt totally drenched in peace. Filled with assured expectation I told my wife that the hallowed house must be somewhere close by. In the meantime our excited friend returned from the red-walled building and bumping into his seat hurried the car through one of the sidelanes. Hardly we had moved a few meters when we saw a two storeyed house to my right which clearly beckoned us towards it. As if I had seen and known it for long it called me with a certain intimacy, and I immediately asked the driver to stop the car. It was the house without doubt where the Mother had stayed. But the driver unheeding my request sped past that house and drove much further down the macadamized lane. He then stepped out, and after making a couple of enquires returned to the same house that had so endearingly invited us. Getting down the car we all moved towards the house with silence and reverence in our hearts. Across the low half-gate we saw all elderly but energetic lady, and I introduced myself as coming from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India. On hearing the name of the Ashram her face lit up with joy, and she welcomed us all into the house.

We all felt thrice blessed for we were right in the house where the Mother had stayed for long. Madame Kobayashi Jr. by her candid geniality, native simplicity and loving disposition at once put us at our ease. She was happy to recall the glory of those days when the Mother was staying there as part of her *sadhana* for the

ailing and afflicted earth, and in gracious compliance to the aeonic prayers of the people of Japan. It was in Japan, wherever she went, to Tokyo or Kyoto, to Nara or Nakamura that she found 'harmony in the most intense action'. Japan for her was verily a nation of immense vitality. Through all eternity the Mother was a special and chosen representative of the Divine upon earth to bring out the Divine in all . Mother and mystery of manifestation, she has always and ever assumed the role of the radical redeemer of man as well as the active catalyser of earth's transformation. Her stay in Japan was part of this incredible play.

Madame Kobayashi Jr. pausing for a while chased out a photograph of her mother alongside our Mother carefully kept in an artistic wooden cupboard. She recalled many anecdotes of the Mother's stay and work in Kyoto as well as gave us a graphic account of the elder Kobayashi's cherished memories in this regard. I then requested her to guide me to the sacred rooms on the first floor where the Mother spent most of her time, and meditated and worked for a new birth of the earth. This she could not concede as the rooms were not used for long, and that things were not properly organised. To have an authentic feel of her presence I then reverentially touched with my forehead the railing of the staircase leading to the first floor, and gratefully remembered her. Glory and my gratitude to the Mother for having graciously accorded to us the unique opportunity to visit her divine laboratory. Sitting in the busy drawing room of Madame Kobayashi Jr. I felt transported to those resplendent times when our Mahashakti Ma sitting in

one unknown comer of Kyoto had long private conversation sessions with the Supreme Lord and passed 'apparently stormy and troubled' days, and contemplated on His Will, the Law and the goal of a new manifestation, and carved out a new destiny for the race:

"O Lord, hasten, I implore thee, the blessed day when the divine miracle will be accomplished, hasten the day of the realisation of the Divine upon earth! "

** Prayers and Meditations, Jan. 22, 1916.*

No one including her host friend could keep with the mystical life of the Mother. So very utterly common and human from outside, she was in truth the chosen mediatrix and the matrix of a divine change that the earth was ordained to undergo. Grounded on the supreme Spirit, she was aiming at the marriage of heaven and earth, and of the progressive manifestation of Spirit by the body of a transformed, resplendent earth.

My friend Takaji Maeda then took a couple of group photographs of Madame Kobayashi, my wife and I, as well as of the house. It was for us an extraordinary and rare opening when humility and love get imperceptibly blended with gratitude, and after a few minutes of meditative silence bade Madame Kobayshi Jr. loving *sayonara*.

From there we proceeded to see a few more shrines and temples of Kyoto. Kinkaku-ji temple was exceptional for its scenic surroundings and the placid

mirror pond. It is known as the temple of the Golden Pavilion. Of the three floors, the 2nd and 3rd floors are carved with gold-leaf of Japanese lacquer. There is also in the vicinity a classic tea arbor called Sekka-tei. The Kinkaku temple building, an elegant, harmonious structure, with a predominant Zen touch, is harmoniously set in a beautiful landscape garden at the foot of a hill-range.

Japan is a country of incarnate beauty. Irises of all colours, cherry blossoms ranging from white to pink and chrysanthemums arranged as it were by Nature through the successive seasons in an artistic whole make it a garden of gods. Japan is like one vast and beautiful landscape filled by a friendly ambience. People undoubtedly are rich representatives of goodwill and courtesy, lovers and makers of Beauty, yet essentially, unconsciously though, are allergic of sorts to spirituality.

The true Japanese in the Mother's words, "are perhaps the least selfish," and our loving hosts Kiyohito and his sweet wife Kazuko Kitagawa are an example of utter selflessness and great simplicity.

There is another side to their great culture crammed with elegance and endurance; it is wedded to an impression of impermanence, perhaps a strain from *k.rhanikavada* of Buddhism.

The Mother's stay in Japan was part of the unfoldment of its greater destiny. A new future awaits Japan:

*" O Japan, it is the rich apparel of thy goodwill
that is in its festival, it is thy purest offering, it
is the token of thy fidelity; it is thy way of
saying that thou reflectest the sky. "*"*

** Prayers and Meditations, April, 1917.*

11. Certificats de Grace

As part of the academic programme of the Institute at Hyderabad I thought of offering a couple of Certificate and Diploma Courses in Human Study. Certificate courses were to be of 3 months duration, and the Diploma Courses of 9 months. Among others these were to be in Integral Philosophy, Consciousness Literature, Political Thought and Human Unity, History and Human Heritage, Psychology and the Development of Human Personality, Theatre of the Future, World Drama etc. Accordingly an outline syllabus was prepared covering many of these areas and sent to the Mother who expressed her satisfaction and sent her Blessings for our novel project. There was no restriction over the qualifications of the participants. Anyone who could follow the talks in English was welcome. The professors giving the talks were drawn from different faculties and were specialists in their subjects. Generally, lectures were of one hour duration; after the main talk we all would reassemble for a second session of about two hours when I would attempt to explain the theme in the light of Sri Aurobindo, and make it relevant to his vision of the future. More than the participants, it proved to be a helpful exercise for me and I felt greatly benefited.

After completion of the course, certificates were to be awarded. And it occurred to me that we should have the first convocation at the lotus feet of the Mother, and

in her room itself, and take the certificates from her divine hands. Though a crazy proposition, I pursued it to its logical end. Suitable handmade paper was procured from the Ashram and two sets of certificates were printed in the most elegant manner possible with names of participants duly typed on them. There were 24 participants most of them drawn from the many university teaching departments-both graduates and post-graduates. I was so sure of the Mother's approval of our plan that I did not even write to her in advance informing her of our visit to Pondicherry for the unique convocation. One set of certificates bore the name of the Mother, our Permanent Honorary President, while the other. Tried that of the Chairman of the Institute. The Chairman in those days was the Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University.

After arriving at the Ashram the first thing I did was to meet Amritada and convey to him our ambitious but sincere request. After listening to me he said simply, "Madhusudan, have you gone crazy? The Mother does not believe in certificates at all. Even in Ashram school they are not given. Then how do you expect the Mother to sign them and distribute them?" I pleaded with him politely but firmly, "The Divine is not bound by the rule that she makes. She is beyond both bondage and freedom. She is a law unto herself. Please take this letter to her, and let her decide." In my letter I had prayed and implored the Mother that she should sign the certificates and distribute them one by one to all the participants in her room on the second floor. If this was not possible she may as well send them to Nolinida on the ground floor

for distribution by him. A third option was also offered at her feet for consideration: that she may at least consecrate them by her divine touch, and the certificates could then be distributed by the Institute's Chairman at Hyderabad. After giving Arnritada my letter I waited in front of Madhav Pandit's room. Sooner than expected Amrit-da arrived; he was more than happy and a bit excited, too. The Mother had not only graciously agreed to sign the certificates but also to give them away to all the participant children in her room. In addition she had also asked me to be with her in advance to help her with the certificates during distribution. Heavens were indeed too merciful! I felt inundated by her infinite love and surpassing compassion. Amritada was pleasantly surprised.

On hearing of the Mother's gracious approval it struck me that we should also receive from her hands copies of Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother*. Immediately the necessary number of copies of the book were brought and sent to the Mother with another letter. Arnritada who took them to her soon returned beaming with joy. The Mother had granted our prayer.

The next morning the entire contingent of the Institute queued up on the terrace in front of the darshan room facing the road. In accordance with the order of the signed certificates the participants too were lined up one behind the other on the terrace. Champaklalji was at the door directing them one after another inside the room, and I was sitting on the floor besides the Mother's chair. I helped her with one certificate and a copy of the

book *The Mother* as soon as the participant entered the room. After doing *pranam* and receiving the certificate and the book both signed by the Mother the participant stayed back in the room. This was not prearranged but it all happened in the natural course. One after the other all the twenty four tarried in the room. Some of them deeply touched by the Mother's love and light broke down and wept profusely. Manmohan was among them. The distribution over, I suddenly discovered one more certificate without any name inserted in it. I then fell on the Mother's feet and prayed that I be given the Certificate. Obviously she was amused at my request and graciously remarked, "You too need a certificate?" To which I replied, "Yes Mother, I have a couple of university degrees but all of them are useless. This will be my most prized possession as it will be conferred by You." The Mother wrote my name on the certificate with her felt pen, wrote Blessings and signed it. She gave me the certificate and the book and then pressed my head with both her hands. I bent low and touched her moon-gold feet with my forehead.

Our unbounded gratitude to the Mother of immeasurable love.

12. Their Blessings for an Extended Time-experience

Death in dreams is not uncommon. Death by water, death by fire or by some violent accident is a familiar dream experience. It is the principal necessity of embodied life to ferret out limitless experience on a limited foundation, and since the ground of its very constitution is limited and time-bound, it is bound to get dissolved and seek a new material form. This Change of form is what is known as death; this innovation or variation of profile entails a total change of the earlier form-type, as the process lies not in repetition of the old but moving forward towards the ever new for a progressive soul-experience. Death as much has not to be construed as a rejection of life but as a modus of its working out towards a greater fulfillment. Death is only a discarding of the body and not a termination of the individual activity. It is a transition, as the Gita puts it, from one form of life to another.

The soul takes a particular body for a special Time-experience, and having had it, it then leaves the body. The truth is that when a particular configuration grows too rigid to manifest the progressive Spirit within it, then it is time to discard it. Whereas a fully conscious being in a sufficiently conscious body can remain in the body for a longer time. A complete change of consciousness ensures deathlessness.

The dream* I had is symbolic. I was dying; wrapped up in white, I was awaiting my end. The entire land around me was covered with water; the water level was slowly rising with my body in the middle. I was serene and perfectly peaceful indicative of a stable inner condition. Whatever happens, I knew, I would have the Mother's sanction, and carry her love and blessings. At that moment I felt a significant stir in the atmosphere around, and I opened my eyes. To my enormous joy I saw Sri Aurobindo and the Mother standing together, clad as it were in benedictory radiance. They seemed to say with one voice: "You have to be here for some more time, you have still to build the big Institution** you have been planning for. You have our Blessings." Then they slowly withdrew leaving behind an ambience of promise and fulfilment.

The dream- vision came to an end.

** The precipitate reason for the dream-vision perhaps could be my admission in the Intensive Care Unit of the local General Hospital for serious duodenal ulcer, and the resultant occult blood dysentery.*

*** The big Institution referred to in the dream vision is Sri Aurobindo Darshan :The University o/Tomorrow. The Mother gave the name and blessed it on 7.8.72. Much later I issued a flier with the appeal to join the many educational and cultural projects of Aurodarshan.*

13. Enriching the Earth – A Significant Experience

It all happened one afternoon. My son and daughter-in-law, my wife and I had gone to a matinee movie in Secunderabad. Perhaps it was an art-film and a good one. In the intermission I came out of the cinema hall for fresh air. Seconds after I felt dizzy and dropped on the floor. I must have lost all consciousness. Late in the afternoon when I regained my body awareness I found myself in the city hospital.* It was during the period of my unconsciousness in the theatre lounge that I was granted a significant experience.

I was witness to a strange phenomenon. There was sphere within a sphere, a bounded dark globe within an unbounded, immeasurable radiant stratosphere with a most strange communication set up between them. Countless embodied souls were commuting between them; sentient beings with point-consciousness were taking a plunge into the bounded dark global mass from all directions, and after unloading their light and consciousness into it they would return to their home in the refulgent outer sphere closely enveloping the former. This exercise of *kartavyam karma* continued without interruption, and I could see the dark mass being increasingly enthused with light. The souls thus commissioned to enrich the earth with the manifold puissances of the Supreme were tirelessly transposing between the two realms of creation like honeybees

conveying the nectar of light and delight for storage in the the honeycomb of earth's existence.

Thus I was given to have a glimpse of the mystery and mission of the individual's short span of existence upon planet earth.

** This time too, as earlier, it was a bout of occult-blood dysentery caused due to an acute abdominal ulcer. Her abundant **Grace** once again, as always, came to my rescue.*

* * *

The Earth is a mass of creative mother-substance that puts into forms numberless living beings, constantly decimated and annihilated, seemingly without any plausible purpose. All sentient creatures conscious or otherwise do contribute to the growth of consciousness. There is a supreme Splendour operating from above that works out the earth's destiny. To begin with, the earth's body is like a globe of darkness, a night of Inconscience and ignorance. Into this den of locked struggle, between more darkness and less darkness, numberless formed souls take a plunge with their point-lights to minimise the extent of darkness. This enrichment of the earth-nature continues until it becomes as universal in its consciousness as that of the all-conscious cosmic Spirit enveloping the earth. This constant communion of souls between the earth and its luminous destiny is set up as part of the evolutionary process inbuilt in the cosmos.

14. *Supramental Assurance*

It was the year 1969' I received to my pleasant surprise a Bonne Anne card from the Ashram autographed by the Mother. That was the first and last New Year Greetings that I had ever received before 1973 from the Ashram. It was her Grace.

Later, in September the same year, when I went to Pondicherry to do Pranam to her that she softly said 'Bonne Annee' to me. I was not a little puzzled, and felt totally disarmed. I could least understand her inscrutable ways of love for her children. After offering Pranam at her moon-gold feet I looked up to have an intimate feel of the immensity of her Grace. I looked into her eyes of light and lost all earthly awareness. The Mother talked to me for quite sometime, but I did not remember precisely what she told me. I was transported altogether into a different world. May be she was ! helping my psychic being or advising the *manomaya purusha* within me. After Pranam when I returned to my lodging, I hardly remembered a few disconnected sentences. I put them all in a presentable letter form, and next morning gave it to Nolinida to be read out to the Mother. I remember now only the first and the last line of the letter. It reads-

*“ Break through all mental constructions.....
and the supramental will burst forth in you.”*

After coming back from the Mother, Nolinida returned my letter and said ; "Mother remembers only the last line which she has herself underlined." And the line is :

“..... and the supramental will burst forth in you.”

That the Mother of the Infinite would give the supramental assurance to the humblest of the humble, and an incognisant fry, was indeed her boundless Grace.

That year, since its very beginning, to whomsoever the Mother had said 'Bonne Annee', it is believed that she gave him or her something of the supramental-the year of supramental blessings for a few children destined for a new dispensation.

15. "You are remodeling America"- Nolinida's Ashirvad

Nolinida, quite characteristic of his generous disposition, must have had a track record of my foreign travels. He was aware of the nature of work that the Mother's children did during their visits abroad.

During one of my visits I accepted a teaching assignment at the California Institute of Integral Studies, in San Francisco. Among the courses I offered were a) The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, b) The Philosophy of the Upanishads c) Integral Tantra, and d) *Savitri* - Epic of the Eternal. In addition I was required to give weekly talks at the San Francisco Ashram: Cultural Integral Fellowship, on varying subjects with a focus on Sri Aurobindo and Indian Culture. These apart, I was invited by several New Age Groups in the Bay Area for talks on areas ranging from Modern Technology, Human Unity to the ultimate destiny of the human race on the planet. It was the Mother's abiding Grace that unmistakably sustained me through the arduous and sublime exercise. Also, there were not a few private sessions where seekers and devotees of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother used to assemble mostly for brief meditation and clarification of their doubts in respect of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

Among those who sincerely presented their problems was one Sarama Bloomquist,* a regular visitor to the Ashram in Pondicherry, who, presumably, used to feel satisfied with the answers given. During one such session she sprang a surprise by presenting me a mimeographed copy of Nolinida's letter to her wherein he described me as a 'wandering minstrel' and that he knew of my stay in San Francisco during that period. He had also asked her to seek answers to her questions and clarify doubts to her complete satisfaction from me. That perhaps was the reason for her frequent philosophical and yogic queries. There was nothing original, I am sure, about my answers; they were all based on Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's voluminous writings.

* A name given to her on request by Nolinida

During my several other earlier visits to USA I had taught a couple of courses in Sri Aurobindo and Indian thought at the Naropa Institute, Boulder, Colorado, and lectured to large audiences in scores of universities and colleges throughout the USA on 'The Ideal of Human Unity,' and 'Evolution and Human Destiny' and other such allied subjects. More than thirty years of my conscious contact with seekers and scholars, thinkers and intellectuals, sadhaks and devotees in the Western world, and more so in the U.S.A, has convinced me that humanity is no more at the crossroads of history; it has definitely turned the corner, and subconsciously though, has made a choice to walk in the direction of a greater destiny. After the initial euphoria of anti-establishment movements, the blossoming of New Age

Associations, the emotional effervescence of Flower Children and the like, there is at present a well settled and an organised inner life in the conscious segment of its population. Forces of Falsehood are still at large all over the world; the Lord of Nations seems to be desperately at work to withhold the positive energies of the ardent ones and give a harmful twist to their aspirations. Here too the forces seem to have failed . The sunlit path of the Mother is now clearly seen by the elect ones. It is now only a matter of time, the new millennium will see Sri Aurobindo and the Mother perfectly installed in the minds and hearts of the race.

After almost a year's stay in San Francisco, I went to California for my gall-bladder surgery. Immediately after its successful operation, as per Nolinida's instructions, I returned to Hyderabad. And well within a week I was in the Ashram. It was around August 13, 1983, in the forenoon, that I went to Nolinida for Pranam. Nolinida was seated in a comfortable chair in front of his room with Anima-di standing vigil behind him. When I did my loving Pranam to his feet he blessed me by softly pressing my head with his hand and observed: *"You are remodelling America."*

This observation coming from a great seer almost overwhelmed me and left me aghast and astounded. I could not believe my ears, and looked up to Anima-di. She promptly repeated: "Nolinida says that you are remodelling America."

I accepted the incredible compliment as Nolinida's loving Ashirvad, and returned to my lodging filled with deep humility.

16. Mankind on the March

Truly, the universe is not a mere monodimensional physical reality. There is a multidimensional hierarchy telescoped in it. It is too manifold and mystical, and too arcane and unaccountable to be fully proved or explained by science.

Its marathon exploration by science has led us to the frontiers of the Unknown. It has arrived at a point where investigative instruments fall back upon infinitive resourcefulness. It is the cut off point in the long process of its enquiry and search when mind prefers to merge itself in meditation.

The appearance of the human species on the earth makes matters much too complex and complicated for Reason to solve or resolve. Surely in the heavens above and in the depths of our being below, as the Scriptures say, there are signs for the initiated to discover the secret of existence. The truth is that he who sincerely seeks shall invariably find. But where to begin? And how to begin? The journey has a much greater inner dimension than mind can imagine; it is more a psychic movement within man than any coherent account of external investigations. It is this inner side of human evolution with which I was trying in vain to grapple. Verily, it involved both an unprecedented insearch and an unparalleled research. Only the Mother knew my

predicament. Her Grace alone could come to my rescue. I wrote a brief letter to the Mother placing at her lotus feet my problem-a problem whose implications I myself was least aware of. I also submitted a couple of titles under which I should proceed to accomplish the task. Nolinida was gracious enough to take it to the Mother.

The next day, in the afternoon, around 4:00 p.m., when I was standing a little away from the Samadhi, prayerfully looking at the supreme panorama of Love and Light and Grace, that I saw Dyumanbhai unexpectedly coming towards me. There was a sort of excitement too in his voice. "Congratulations, you are going to write several volumes on 'Mankind on the March'. I never saw Nolinida so very excited as when he met me early this morning. He told me that the Mother has given you the work 'Mankind on the March'." The Mother had heard my prayer. I felt both happy and diffident; I was too small to do justice to the monumental theme. In all humility I bowed down at the Samadhi and came out. To my pleasant surprise I saw Nolinida standing in front of the small door opposite the school gate waiting to go to the sports ground. When he saw me he pulled out from the hip-pocket of his blue shorts a small chit on which was written 'Mankind on the March'. In his inimitable usual composure he said simply, "Mother has given you this." And nothing more. That night I had little sleep, for never had I imagined the magnitude of that responsibility. It required both wide ranging scholarship and spiritual discrimination, and I possessed neither.

Next morning I met Rishabhchand-da to seek his guidance in the matter. If the Mother has blessed the undertaking, he said, then I should turn only to her for help. In 1972, synchronising with the Master's birth centenary celebrations, a booklet was brought out by the Institute of Human Study, with the caption, 'Mankind on the March'; though authored by me it was totally based on Sri Aurobindo's, *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

Ignoramus as I was, I slept over the project for the next twenty years, sometimes ruminating, most of the time incubating but practically vegetating all the time. There was lot of developmental activity in the Institute-construction of four four-storeyed buildings for the Sri Aurobindo International School as well as the expansion of Matridarshan orchards at Jangaon. In the meantime a couple of international seminars and world conferences were also successfully organised at Hyderabad on the themes 'Celebration Future', 'Divine Dawn' and 'Global Future'. Notably among the many books brought out by the Institute are *The Vedic Epiphany* in three volumes, *Footnotes to the Future* and *Seven Studies in Sri Aurobindo*, all authored by me.

In 1986, after retirement from the university, I felt that I should atleast write out the outlines of the long pending project. With the Mother's Grace in less than a day's time the entire scheme was set out with all its details. 'Mankind on the March' was to be completed in twelve volumes, now epitomised in three, with a brief yet comprehensive Introduction.

Mankind on the March

A research project envisaged to be brought out initially in 3 volumes: (a) The Beginnings (b) The Journey, and c) The Divine Unfoldment, contained tentatively the following twelve parts-The Vision, The Beginnings, The Ascent of Life, The Manifestations of the Mind, The Quest for Beauty, The Realm of Religion, Philosophy and Metaphilosophy, Science: Towards Terrestrial Omnipotence, Agni: The Illumined Will, The Supreme Consummation, The New Epiphany and The Golden Dawn.

A synopsis

'Mankind on the March', an evolutionary approach to the manifestation of consciousness upon earth and the vision of human destiny, will be an evolutionary history of human civilisation as well as an evaluative account of Man's quest for Truth. It is to welcome the futurist trends in our times that celebrate the advent of the next millennium by presenting an integral *weltanschauung*, a unified and wholistic world view, based on the oneness of Spirit, and to augment in some measure the great work being done by UNESCO. The project is undertaken to serve and to support the great movement towards the realisation of human unity initiated in our own times, notably by Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Arnold Toynbee, Will Durant and others. Perhaps no other single individual in contemporary history has been so close to

this ideal and sympathized so deeply with the aspirations of sensitive men and women the world over for the fellowship of man than the great seer Sri Aurobindo.

It is hoped that the project will make a significant contribution to our knowledge of the cultural and spiritual heritage of humankind and promote better understanding among the different cultures of the world. An undertaking of such a nature will be in keeping with the spiritual ethos of the nation, and will focus on India's timeless vision of the truth of creation. Also, it will reinforce in us our instinctive belief that the evolution of man is indeed the story of the increasing manifestation of Spirit in and through Matter.

Science, no doubt, has succeeded in annihilating physical distances between different communities and nations, but the social, cultural and racial prejudices can be dissolved only through the realisation of the spiritual oneness that underlines humankind. The depth and sweep and nature and scope of the proposed project will certainly inspire many to move in the desired direction and to concretise the dream of Human Unity into a living fact.

Of course, attempts have been made by outstanding people like Toynbee, Oswald Spengler, Niebur, Will Durant and A.L. Bhasam, but the present project differs from all these in that the scope of the project is more inclusive and global and not confined just to civilisation, history or other specific aspects. In a way the present project is an attempt to integrate these

earlier efforts and also extend the scope. *Mankind on the March* has its focus on the nissus of Consciousness through history, and its manifold manifestation in different cultures. Its theme is the evolutionary thrust in Nature leading to a greater understanding of the truth of multiplicity in the context of their underlying essential spiritual oneness.

Most of the works deal with either provincial or national cultures or community and racial studies, invariably, unintentionally though, tending to exaggerate and highlight local and national achievements. A more serious lopsidedness enters into the texts, for the source of ideas and information accumulated are not viewed and utilised in the total perspective of the human community. This is not due to lack of the apparatus of scholarship, but often because of it, for many matters which should normally be underrated in a history of world civilisation have been over emphasized, while several familiar grounds which have helped evolution of the human family find a casual reference, or are not even mentioned at all. This makes many of them inappropriate for posterity, for the coming generations will have to be consciously brought up in an atmosphere of complete understanding, cordiality and human fellowship.

While each nation or nation-state constitutes in itself an independent or self-sufficient unit of cultural and historical study, it cannot be self-explanatory in respect of the race except in the context of other countries immediately surrounding it. A nation, therefore, has to be studied in the wider context of the

continent or culture of which it is an integral part. Any work of human heritage and global philosophy must, therefore, key itself to this historical role of building a new human order, avoiding all obscurities and oddities of history. A history of the world-of different civilisations and diverse cultures-is bound to invite misunderstanding on a massive scale if the pitfalls of interpreting the ideas and events of a culture to fit one's own predilections are not carefully avoided. Moreover, the authors' presuppositions and subjective fallacies always introduce unreasonable accounts and restrict history from becoming a real force.

It is intended to design *Mankind on the March* as a multifaceted spaceship to support and to carry posterity into the 'inner space' of cosmic consciousness and to reinforce the faith of man in a higher destiny, to provide a creative and spiritual insight into the history of humankind and the evolutionary march of human civilisation, to fortify the forces of human unity and to enrich the aspiration of humanity to fulfil this supreme ideal.

The project will primarily be an *Exploration Consciousness*, a comprehensive study of the many maps of consciousness devised through the ages to free man from the limitations of his phenomenal nature. It will be an educational experience of the entire gamut of human achievements in natural and social sciences, psychology and sociology, world literature and world polity, philosophy and fine arts within the theme of the evolution of consciousness.

For it is the chemistry of inner change that lends us the planetary perspective and unfolds Nature's secret design of shaping man as a cosmic being. It is now becoming increasingly evident that humanity is passing through a profound crisis which is inalienably linked up with its spiritual renewal. It certainly warrants an extension of our perception to follow the big change that is coming about and to integrate the simultaneous expansion of our world in both outer and inner directions. It is a case of a new human renaissance; it is the beginning of a new cycle of all inclusiveness, the signalling of a new creation, as it were, and the birth of a planetary awareness.

The project will be a major contribution to evolutionary and inter-cultural studies intended to promote the vision of the world as a big global community with the Spirit as its foundation. It will be a symbolic and comprehensive design study of all humankind since the dawn of history with a focus on consciousness expansion and integral perfection. It will be the story of man's secret aspiration and heroic persistent effort at perpetual self-transcendence.

The story of creation is nothing else than the unfolding of consciousness. Out of Matter, practically a mass of inconscience, stirred up by a semi-awakened pulsation, came Life. There was again a period of gestation and incubation because of which emerged rudimentary Mind, and then evolved self-conscious consciousness. With the emergence of elementary

consciousness came into existence the animal world, and with the higher grades of self-conscious Mind, Man appeared. Matter, Life and Mind are the three major planes of consciousness which Man has taken up into himself, and is expected to transcend them all into yet another dimension of consciousness. Such then are the stages in the progression of consciousness. *Mankind on the March* is the story of the birth and the adventure of consciousness, and an evolutionary history of human civilisation.

History is a supremely teleological process. It is Becoming. History is a mighty experience and accomplishment, an experiment and adventure, which Nature quietly but persistently realises through endless time. It is like a growing river, accumulating, aspiring, fulfilling and ever renewing its zeal for greater life. From the world-wide view of our glorious past surrounding it on all sides, *Mankind on the March*, moves steadily towards the greater future that summons us all the time, from the valleys of scattered light towards the silver line of the endless sea. It is in the fitness of things that *Mankind on the March* is being brought out on the eve of the New Millennium symbolising humanity's aspiration and effort to comprehend and to manifest the Spirit's supreme adventure of consciousness.

17. "With Love and Blessings"

Rooted in his own supemature, Krishna makes it clear, that he is born by his own *Yogamaya*:

Prakrtim svam adhisthaya sambhavamy atmamayaya
Gita IV. 6

His is a divine birth, a conscious birth of a self-conscious Being. It is also the conscious action of a self-existent Godhead. Whereas in the ordinary birth, the Divine conceals himself by his *yoga-maya* from the lower consciousness. If the former is *vidyamaya*, the latter is *avidyamaya*; while *avidyamaya* conceals knowledge, *vidyamaya* is the effective means of true Knowledge.

Ordinarily, birth is an inevitable means of evolution in the physical. It may appear at first, as the Master puts it, as "a constant outburst of life in a general death." But, in fact, it is the coming into manifestation of the multifold power of life with soul as the principal participant.

According to the Mother's perception people are more receptive to the Light and Truth on their birthdays. And the Mother in her boundless compassion helps them to make some tangible progress on these days. On more than one occasion I did pray to the Mother to grant me a glimpse of my psychic being, but I knew only too well that neither could I make my mind perfectly silent nor

enter deep into the heart, the two necessary conditions for contacting the psychic being. Nor was I close to any silent concentration.

However, the Mother in her unbounded Grace, always, in all my birthday cards, wrote "With Love and Blessings", except on one card. Then I remembered that the Mother wrote on birthday cards various things, depending mainly on the state of consciousness of her children at that 'moment' and the year of celebration. Nevertheless, I felt dejected and sad. One has to pay a price I suppose for being too human. The succeeding year when I went to her for Pranam on my birthday she blessed me with both her hands of Love Supreme. I opened the card and to my great joy she had written, "Love and Blessings".

Her Love and Grace are indeed immeasurable.

18. Her Will Prevails

Notwithstanding the fact that the Mother had entrusted me with the work of the Institute of Human Study at Hyderabad, subconsciously I still cherished the desire of joining the Ashram. Again and again this happened. As a result I suffered a subdued inferiority feeling of sorts, and felt relegated to a status of second rate citizenship in relation to those who were in the Ashram. I would forget the divine mandate, forget the supreme truth that the Mother herself was the Permanent Hon. President of the Institute. Indeed it was a rare gesture of her Grace.

Wholeheartedly I plunged into the work, arranged regular meditation sessions, conducted weekly talks on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, organised national seminars and held international conferences. Human evolution being mental and surfacial does not necessarily reflect the deeper and inner gains. The inner conquests are realisable only by the purified heart and the soul.

We started the Institute in private lodgings, and worked hard. Our enthusiasm, our devotion and unrelenting dedication ever kept us on the crest of a celestial high tide. Thereafter, I took the Institute right into the university campus; the Vice-Chancellor was generous enough to allot us a few big rooms and halls for our use. Even the Sri Aurobindo International School

was located therein. It was a wonderful experience. We felt always enveloped by Her Grace. Years passed by and we were progressing satisfactorily.

Unnoticeably something happened; once again the Old Man was at work, and I felt a strange and unaccountable dissatisfaction within. I started constructing a big house with two floors to begin with. The idea behind it was to give it on rent and then settle down in Pondicherry. It turned out to be quite a spacious bungalow with several rooms. I sent a couple of its photographs to the Mother and prayed that a name be given to it. The Mother simply sent me Flower Blessings. Upon my request, on earlier occasions, the Mother had graciously named a couple of houses belonging to others. In my case she had chosen not to; perhaps it was her greater Grace. She must have had plans for the house which in my ignorance I did not quite understand then. And I started thinking otherwise. I decided to sell it, and with a part of the sale proceeds payoff my debts and then settle down in the Ashram. On one of my visits to the Ashram when I went to the Mother to do Pranam, I told her of my intentions. The twisted reason that I put forward before her was that there was not enough response in Hyderabad, and that the people here were least receptive. The real reason was that I wanted to shift to Pondicherry at any cost. She patiently listened to her stupid child, and did not reply. For a moment I thought that she had not paid the required attention to my request, and proceeded to repeat it. The Mother gave me a faint smile and blessed me with both hands.

Only those who are tuned to the Divine from within can know her Will. Men with one-track minds and ego-ridden profiles, however good-intentioned they might be, find themselves driven in blind alleys. And I was one of them. Champaklalji once scribbled out for me a message-a mild and loving admonition -that strongly reminded me of my primary and essential responsibility to the Mother.

I was destined to go the full circle; it was meant to be a lasting lesson perhaps in ego-transcendence. I gave an advertisement in a leading local daily for the sale of the house and waited in vain for about a year. When my son brought this to the Mother's notice, she is said to have observed, "But your father is expecting too much," I then decided to sell the house to the first customer who would come for it.

Then came a friend who wanted the house for his daughter settled in the United States. He offered Rs. 1.35 lakhs as the full sale price to which I readily agreed. I was in desperate haste to join the Ashram. Soon he paid me some amount which was adjusted towards the payment of debts raised during its construction. I felt relieved and wrote to the Mother for permission to come to Pondicherry. To which She wrote back, "but you have not yet been fully paid," Utterly let down by Fate I awaited my turn of good luck. After about a year, during one of my visits to the Ashram, I requested Dyumanbhai, who was then .going to the Mother, to get for me Mother's Blessings. It was the time when interviews and

Pranams were suspended. Only those who took care of her physical and medical needs were allowed to go to her room. It was evening time and I waited sufficiently long for Dyumanbhai's return. And when he arrived he had not brought the Mother's Blessings for me; he said, "but you are much in her consciousness. The moment I entered her room she observed: I know, Madhusudan is here, but he has yet to be fully paid." Most difficult is it to know the Divine's Will! I resigned myself to destiny, and by the time my customer friend paid the full amount by easy installments the Mother had left her body.

No longer did I take the same interest in the Institute, and because of an unfortunate turn of events at the University, I resigned my job and accepted a brief teaching assignment in Boulder, Colorado, USA. I then shifted to Pondicherry and stayed in a rented house for several months on my own. At the behest of Baba Ramakrishna Das, my friend Prapatti asked my wife and I to take food in the Ashram Dining Hall as guests of Navajyoti Karyalaya. It was indeed very generous of Babaji. On one occasion when I met him and sought his valuable advice in the matter, politely yet convincingly he deprecated the idea of my coming to the Ashram. My work as indicated by the Mother was in Hyderabad. Drawing a parallel from the Gita, he observed that Arjuna was prepared for a specific assignment. It was not for him to take refuge in the Himalayas in quest of *moksha*. So, too, each one of us is allotted a work to do by the Mother here in the Ashram or elsewhere. It is a mistake to think that by working in the Dining Room one could arrive at the goal sooner. No one from here can

replace you in Hyderabad which needs a specialized training, and the Mother has prepared you for that. Moreover, the Mother herself is the Permanent President of the Institute. Always remember her and do the work. The advice was simple, straight and effective. It immediately and directly hit the bull's eye.

In the eternity of Becoming, it is the Being that eternally manifests himself. We all are sparklings of that Supreme Fire which reflects the glory of his self-becoming. Hail Mother! Omniscient dispenser of our multiform destiny.

Babaji's simple yet effective analysis, as well as several other indications which I could gather there, imperceptibly brought about the required big change and I decided to return to Hyderabad and resume the work. Within a couple of days came S to see me; he brought a proposal from his Gujarati friend. A nephew of his friend had died in a motorcycle accident, and the bereaved uncle offered 30,000 rupees to rename the Institute after the deceased. For me the proposal was atrocious; it was the Mother's Institute, and nobody on the earth had any right to change its name. I told him frankly and firmly that even if he would give me one lakh rupees the name was not to be changed. Six days later he returned with another offer: the good samaritan had offered the one lakh without any conditions attached. It was during that time that the gentleman who had earlier purchased my house showed his eagerness to sell the same back to us for a consideration of Rs.1.55 lakhs. It was a Mother-sent invitation, well timed, a proposition arranged and

organised for us in another world, We saw the secret hand and grabbed the resale suggestion. And on March 29, 1978, after a brief meditation in Anandamayi, the deal was struck. Our Gujarati friend joined us in meditation and gave us the cheque, and never showed up again except once for a casual peepin with one of his relative or friend. He was a follower of Sankara, and Mayavada was perhaps in his blood. We could see that it was all the Mother's game; it was an act of her Grace. Inscrutable indeed are the Divine's ways. It looked as if the house sale was effected only to save me from my debts, the full and final payment was delayed just to keep me away from shifting to Pondicherry. And when I finally went there the Mother was not in her physical body to admit me. But when I returned to the Institute, the house was given back to us placed on a platter, as it were, by her omniscient Grace. Once again the Institute was humming with activity. Expansion and construction was undertaken in right earnest. We have at present five four-storeyed buildings with Sri Aurobindo's Sacred Relics installed in the one which was sold and purchased back. It is Anandamayi.

The Mother's Will is supreme,
and always her Will is done.

19. Grace and Gall-bladder Stones

It is a story of gall-bladder stones and her Grace. As early as 1969 it was discovered in a Mid-Western hospital in Monmouth, Illinois, where I happened to be Fulbright Visiting Professor, that I had a cluster of stones in the gall-bladder. And I was advised immediate surgery, for which I was not ready. I did not like the idea of being operated in an alien country. I wrote to the Mother expressing my ailment and my predicament. Nolinida promptly sent me the Mother's Blessings and assured me of her divine help. Also that I need not then be operated in the USA. Within a couple of days the excruciating abdominal pain subsided. The stones must have decided to sit pretty in the gall-bladder without raising their ugly heads awaiting another opportune time. Several years afterwards during one of Champakbhai's visit to the Institute, the pain once again erupted, and solicitously he told a doctor friend of mine to take complete care of my ailment. And when I visited him in his room in the Ashram he wrote on each of two small pieces of paper, 'Yes' and 'No', and placed them on the Lord's bed beneath the pillow. After a concentrated prayer he then put them on the Lord's sofa. Bringing them back he asked me to pick up one of them. Looking into the piece of paper he 'declared' that I had Sri Aurobindo's sanction for the operation. It was a 'mute' declaration as he graciously wrote it out for me in his notebook. He was a *mouni*. A moment later he again

wrote, "But if the Mother does not want she will bring you back from the operation table". This was somewhat puzzling for me. Awaiting the unfoldment of events was the only way before me to understand fully the seeming contradiction.

On my return to Hyderabad, with the help of my doctor-friend, I was admitted in the General Hospital. I knew that I had the Lord's sanction for my surgery. A day before the date of surgery the entire supporting staff went on an indefinite strike. No one knew as to when it would be called off. We left the hospital and about a month later were readmitted. This time too, to the disappointment of the surgeon, I could not be operated, for again a day or two before the date, a high percentage of blood sugar was discovered. I had diabetes for quite long. A second time I came out of the hospital and started taking insulin in the hope that I would soon be able to undergo the required operation. That was not to be, and remembering what Champakbhai had written I decided not to undergo surgery at that time.

A couple of years passed by and I went to San Francisco on a teaching assignment. Within one week the stones in the gall-bladder started causing pain. I went to a nearby County Hospital; the doctors took lot many X-ray photographs of the intestines, gall-bladder, chest and other organs in the stomach. After taking regularly the prescribed medicines for a couple of months it appreciably subsided. The medical bill rose to \$ 600 although nothing by American standards, the chief on my personal representation slashed it to a mere \$ 60 with

permission to pay in easy installments within six months. That again was the work of her Grace.

About a year passed, and by then my wife and myself had visited three times the Institute of Integral Psychology, Ojai, to conduct day long workshops on the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Its Director, Dr. Lloyd W. Fellows, a follower of Swami Muktananda, had newly turned to Sri Aurobindo. He felt increasingly drawn to his supreme vision and his integral *weltanschauung*. He met me in San Francisco along with his brother-in-law, a professor of Buddhist Studies at Berkeley, and invited me to conduct courses in Sri Aurobindo at his Institute in Ojai, a cosy meditation town in Western California, with headquarters of several spiritual organisations in that county including the world famous Krishnamurthy Foundation. It was a kind of retreat for me from the busy teaching schedule of the California Institute of Integral Studies and the burden of additional courses which I was offering at the Cultural Integration Fellowship.

During the very first month when we were scheduled to go over to Ojai, we were intercepted in Los Angeles and almost hijacked by a doctor parent of my dear post-graduate student at the CIIS who had taken all the courses offered by me on Sri Aurobindo. Week after week he was sending to his father Dr. Manohar Deo Saran Singh in Los Angeles cassette tapes of all my talks recorded by him in the classes. Dr. Singh was a great devotee of India, her culture, her history and her wonderful heritage. He had left the shores of India when he was hardly four years of age accompanying his

grandparents. His beautiful house in Los Angeles was full of Indian motifs, subjects and figures. He loved Indian music, and frequently saw Indian films though he did not know any of the many Indian languages. His son had introduced me to him in absentia as an authentic Indian to whom he could turn for more on Indian Philosophy and Yoga. Of course we talked for hours during the night we stayed with him on several areas related to ancient and modern India. That very night my wife Radha had told him of my continued ailment and sought his advice. It was truly providential that he promised not only to look into my case history but also to have the surgery done in the famous *Kaiser Permanente Hospital* in Los Angeles where he worked.

At the end of our schedule, both in San Francisco and Ojai, we were the loving guests of Dr. Deo and his wife Ruth. In the meantime Dr. Deo had procured the entire record of diagnosis from the County Hospital in S.F. as well as the Insurance papers from the California Institute of Integral Studies. As luck would have it, the one who had insured me for the California Institute of Integral Studies was also a doctor working for the chain of Kaiser hospitals in the State. I wrote to Nolinida immediately and sought for the Mother's protection and blessings for the success of the operation.

While sending the Mother's Special Blessings he instructed me to remain quiet, and assured me of her Presence during the operation. Dr. Deo very avidly arranged for my daughter's attendance during the operation, and to give company to Radha. On the

operation day several tests were conducted like blood sugar level, heart beat and pulse rate. The supporting medical staff kept me hooked up to various instruments for more than an hour. Everything was perfectly normal and most encouraging. When I was being taken to the operation theatre I made a special request to the Chief Matron on duty to allow me to keep the Mother's Flower Blessings beneath my pillow during operation time. This she religiously carried out to my complete satisfaction. As anesthesia was being administered I deeply remembered the Mother and felt her loving Presence. I was in the Divine's Hands.

When I opened my eyes I found myself in the Intensive Care Unit with Radha, Chhalamayi and the doctor around me. For the surgery Dr. Deo had requisitioned the services of a well-known American surgeon and a reputed Indian anaesthetist. Later, he very endearingly told me that he did so as he was dealing with a very special guest from India, and a dear soul. I stayed in the hospital for five days and paid only \$ 4.60, a mere pittance! And the amount paid was towards the telephone calls I had made to my wife who was staying with Dr. Deo and Ruth. The hospital bills were totally paid between them by the Kaiser Insurance Company of the Kaiser Permanente.

Nolinida had written to me not to stay any longer than necessary, and return to India soon after. Accordingly, after about a month's stay in Los Angeles we returned to Hyderabad and within a week went to the Ashram. When I did my grateful *pranam* to Nolinida he

patronisingly remarked: "You are remodeling America."
It was his Ashirvad to the Mother's prodigal child who
had ignorantly squandered away much that she had
bestowed upon him.

20. Institute of Human Study – Birth of a New Light

Having a deep desire to see and to know the sources of Western civilization I was looking for an opportunity to visit the USA and Europe. And the Mother gave me one. As UNESCO Fellow, I went to the USA, Canada, U.K., West Germany, France and Switzerland, under UNESCO'S Major Project-"Mutual Appreciation of Values: East and West". Any civilisation rooted majorly in the mind has its own limitations. And especially so when mind caters merely to the requirements of the vital and physical. But when the mind of a people is receptive to planes of consciousness above it, then it is bound to give a wholesome and integral direction to their culture per se. Some such thing must have broadly happened in the governance of Eastern and Western civilisations. With goals fixed or, rather, ordained by the nation's ethos, what remains is the discovery of the most effective means of realizing them. And education is the most tangible ministry of self-effectuation, the reliable instrumentation.

To cite two parallel approaches to Truth: 1. A culture which envisions the Supreme as a co-hate whole of both Being and Becoming, as an inseparable integrate of Shiva and Shakti, is obliged to evolve and perfect a system of education that can help its followers to develop a full and complete and perfect personality. Whereas another cultivation which conceives of Reality

merely as an expanding mind, life, body totality is bound to pack its educational curriculum with down to earth pragmatic courses that are destined to lead in lopsided directions.

What we are advocating is the kind of education that will bring out the best, most puissant, most inherent and living and dynamic in man. A true education necessarily must arouse him to develop into the fullness of his intellectual and spiritual nature. It should be a flexible instrument for the effective working of the Spirit on the mind, life and body of the individual, the nation and the whole of humanity. Also, it should help the seeker to realise his own higher nature.

The child is verily the leader of Nature's marathon evolutionary march; true education should develop his psychological being towards the realisation of his inmost Truth.

*Ascending out of the limiting breadth of mind
They shall discover the world's huge design,
And step with the Truth, the Right, the Vast.*

Savitri

Man is both a trustee and a messiah of the conscious evolution of the race, the faith and hope of its luminous destiny. He needs the light of guidance by the Reason as well as the Spirit. Here education plays a major role. To dream of a change of human life without a change of human consciousness is a chimerical proposition. The sole instrument of this effective

proposition, it may be known, is within ourselves. An awakening to the presence of this psychic within, its discovery and realisation and the release of its self-power and self-knowledge are the *sine qua non* of any lasting or worthwhile change.

Education for a greater future of the race should then embrace all knowledge-physical, vital, mental and psychic with a view not only to discover the divine self within but to progressively manifest its manifold splendour in all the parts of man's being. It should include all the disciplines of knowledge in its scope not with a view to attain mere material competence but to enable the student to discover the secret truth of himself in its integrality and totality.

The age of commercialisation perhaps has come to stay, but the call of the future is different; it comes to give us the hope of a new dispensation. Though the tide cannot be so easily reversed, yet through an intense awakening of spirituality and integration of the spiritual with the material, and a conscious subordination of the political and economical considerations to the spiritual, it is possible to arrive at an affirmative, positive integral growth. All this needs a concerted and constant effort on the part of educationists to resuscitate society and give it an altogether new direction. They should reinstate the spiritual motive in education. This does not mean the revival of old religious bigotry; we mean to begin with an increasing incorporation of spiritual idealism, the deliberate admission into the curriculum of an element of

the vision and experience of the Supreme Truth of all existence of the great seers of the world.

“A new curriculum for the next future would be the first ideal step in the desired direction. To formulate in the coming generation a global awareness and make it a part of humanity's immediate destiny the seeds of a new light have to be sown now because the future demands it, and the time-spirit is totally in accordance with it. Those who are the custodians of educational policies throughout the world must now initiate a movement to educate children in the light of this imperative need of a new world order until the sun seed of human fellowship sprouts up and grows into an accomplished reality. World education cannot be defined in set formulae; tentatively it can be described as a vision of human unity, an aspiration for a global order and an effectuation of higher consciousness within the parameters of human life”*

*The Author: *Towards a Global Future, 1993.*

Filled with this vision and the ideal, and seeing no hope in the possibility of its realisation in our schools and colleges even in the distant future in the outside world, and much less in our present society, I decided to join the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future is too comprehensive and all absorbing, his Yoga most integral and satisfying. And I wrote to the Mother with a sincere prayer to be admitted in the Ashram. After waiting for about ten days I asked Nolinida if the Mother had answered my prayer. Without dilating further, he

said simply, "The Mother has some plan for you, wait". One day Rishabchandda met me on the balcony road and asked me if I could help him in the Furniture Department, in clearing up the backlog. As I was awaiting the Mother's answer I pleaded my inability to choose any work and present to her a *fait accompli*. I had no personal preferences, I was ready to serve her in any capacity and would do any work given by her. Two days later we met again. This time he told me that he had obtained the Mother's permission to help him for some time until she gave me a permanent assignment. I was happy to assist the carpenters in their regular work in the department. Three months passed, and I found that a few thoughts were formulating in my mind. I put them in a letter to the Mother. Among them was the founding of Sri Aurobindo Institute of Humanities at Hyderabad. Immediately came her benedictory answer; she named it 'Institute of Human Study'. She also blessed my proposal of a quarterly journal for the Institute, and named it *New Race*. The Mother then gave me a special symbol for the Institute and graciously agreed to be its Permanent Hon. President. On my request she painted the names of the Institute and the Journal on big sheets of handmade paper. Champakbhai later told me at length how she had asked for suitable brushes, deep orange paint and white handmade paper for the purpose. The Divine indeed takes infinite pains to reach and conquer her ignorant children ! She handed them all to me on December 13, 1964. I then wrote a long 4- page letter and prayed that she be always present in the Institute and guide its destiny . On the last page of my letter she wrote "Blessings" covering the whole sheet and gave it to me.

A special teakwood box was prepared with blue satin cloth carefully pasted inside it for carrying the name boards. The box, upon arriving at the Hyderabad railway station, was ceremoniously received and brought to the Centre.

A group of 32 promoters consisting of educationalists, sadhaks, medical doctors, and jurists, was constituted and the Institute was registered as a Society under the Public Societies Registration Act in 1965. Notable among them were: Shri Nolini Kanta Gupta (Sri Aurobindo Ashram), Dr. Indra Sen, Justice P. Basi Reddy, Prof. R.S.Bendre, Shri N. Narotham Reddy, Mrs. Edith Reams, Dr. G. Gopal Reddy, Prof. S. Vahiduddin, Lt. Col. Dr. A.S. Ramachandran, Prof. V.K. Gokak and Shri Prapatti.

Following were the Chairmen in succession: Dr. D.S. Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, Osmania University; Prof. V.K. Gokak, Director, CIEFL; Lt. Col. A.S.Ramachandran, Surgeon; Shri Dyuman (Sri Aurobindo Ashram) and Prof. V. Madhusudan Reddy, Present Chairman.

Among the more important objectives of the Institute are:

1. To promote the study of all human problems in the light of an all comprehensive higher consciousness.
2. To study the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and writings which envisage the New Race and which seek to perfect the individual and

society in the interest of an integral life dedicated to the Divine.

3. To organise education at each level in a manner that ensures the emergence of the soul as the ruler of the human personality and the elimination of the ego.
4. To organise a world centre of cultural studies in which each country finds representation.
5. To organise centres of meditation, study circles, discussion groups, libraries, societies, branches of the Society and to establish schools for the progressive realisation of these objectives.
6. To organise regional, national and international seminars and conferences for the promotion of these objectives.
7. To print, publish, sell and distribute books, periodicals, bulletins, journals and other literature for the promotion of the objectives of the Society and in furtherance thereof to produce, distribute and exhibit films.

Sri Aurobindo International School

The Institute of Human Study, to fulfil one of its main objectives of promoting education in the light of Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future, established the Sri Aurobindo International School in 1965, with the blessings of the Mother. Education as the promotive force of integral evolution in man has been the primary focus of the school.

In the beginning, to follow in the footsteps of the 'free progress system' being practised at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, we made an attempt to combine a few essentials of the Montessorie method along with the aesthetic model of Shantiniketan and the ancient Indian educational system as practised by the Ashrams of yore.

Sri Aurobindo International School is presently endeavouring constantly to discharge the fourfold functions of home, temple, playground and school within the framework of five aspects of education viz, physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual envisaged by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The school with the Blessings of the Mother and the cooperation of parents, gradually grew into a full fledged English Medium High School with two sections in each class starting from LKG to 10th, and is recognised by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. It follows the State syllabus. Children interested in foreign languages are being taught French apart from English, Telugu and Sanskrit which are compulsory. It is a co-educational school.

New Creation

From LKG to fifth class, the 'free progress system' being persued by SAICE, Pondicherry, is being followed by New Creation School. In this system children blossom fully like flowers in a free atmosphere where teachers act as facilitators , free from the fear of prescribed syllabus

and examinations. During this formative period, efforts are made to help the children in physical education i.e., education of the body; vital education i.e. , education to develop and utilise sense organs; mental education i.e., education to develop the power of concentration, capacity of expansion, organisation of ideas and psychic and spiritual education to create an environment wherein the child is made to feel his inner being. In this system there will be no formal examination. However, there will be regular assessment of the child' s progress.

From fifth class, by which time they develop the capacity to utilise all their faculties, they will be placed in the regular system of education with the regular syllabus and examinations in accordance with State syllabus.

Special Programmes

The school is organising the following special programme to help the children grow integrally:

- a) Sanskrit Teaching: All the children are motivated and helped to learn Sanskrit language which has the key to higher knowledge and national integration.
- b) Gifted Children Project: Children who are gifted in fields like painting, music, dance, literature, sports etc., are identified and given special coaching in these areas in addition to their normal studies. In this programme parents who

are experts in such areas are involved as resource persons.

- c) Career Counselling: Students of tenth class are exposed to various careers through lectures by experts from different professions. In this programme parents are also involved as resource persons. This helps the children to choose careers of their personal choice.
- d) Spiritual Programme: Daily in the morning and on important Darshan days, as part of the assembly and prayer the children participate in recitation of *slokas* and collective meditation. They are informed about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and their vision of the future apart from narrating about other such great spiritual leaders and strengthen in them the love of their motherland. Thus Sri Aurobindo International School aims to help children grow into enlightened and useful citizens.

Champakbhai and Dyumanbhai foresaw a great future for the Institute. In their perception the Institute is destined to be a great spiritual educational centre in the country. Dyumanbhai envisioned it as the Mother's Ashram in Hyderabad.

Let us all pray and work for the Mother's Institute.

21. Auroland - Its Story and Discovery

It was around 1966, when I was on an extensive visit to the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh giving talks on Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and his vision of a supreme future, that I had persistent dream-visions - grandiose and utopian, apocalyptic and revelatory - of a sprawling campus of education and culture, of a living laboratory of Light and Truth-seeking, an academy of seeker-souls with a spiritual focus. It was the vision of a world centre of creative 'children' aspiring and toiling for a global future of the race. It was the dream of a unique *sadhanalaya* of both insearch and research consciously endeavouring to promote an integral process converging on a 'New Creation.'

The visions virtually became an obsession; they were almost concretely converging all the time upon the earth. They envisaged and encompassed all the major dimensions of human existence including Fine Arts, Humanities, basic skills, creative writing, physical culture and all other activities of consecration for the building of human fellowship. With the result that I even made sketches or, rather, few hasty drawings of the major sectors of the luminous global cottage. In the centre of this terrestrial encampment, aspiring to bring

celestial felicities into its fold, was Auromandir- a towering *yantra* of the New Consciousness.

These visions and dreams being germinal of a new epiphany, verily, had sown within the earth consciousness giant seeds of a new and creative manifestation. Later, Champaklalji told us that they had their origins in the Mother's consciousness and that it was Her vision directed at me. He was deeply moved by the sublime phenomenon of Aurodarshan; however, we will return to this later as the chronology unfolds itself. The visions left a deep and indelible impact upon my being-my soul, my mind and my heart. They had become almost a part and parcel of my consciousness; I lived and moved and had my being in them, as it were. For days and for nights I lived with them and slept with them; indeed I gave them my poor company as they grew strong and strenuous, fecund and fertile. And when I could no longer bear their growing weight in the womb of my decrepit and feeble being, I wrote a brief letter to the Mother, the Mother of all sublime visions, for Her final approval and blessings. Upon the presentation She wrote,

7.8.72

***Sri Aurobindo Darsllan:
Tile University of Tomorrow***

Blessings
-The Mother

It was 7-8-72! - a loving blend of the centenary years of the Mother and the Master. Aurodarshan carries with it the sanction of Dual Divinities. There must certainly be a

great occult significance behind it. It was after obtaining Her approval and special Blessings that I began the long hunt for a suitable site. It took me several years of probing, of travelling long and short distances with Hyderabad as the geocentre of inquisition and enquiry with mystical and spiritual undertones. After sometime the Government agreed to allot about 22 acres of land in the outskirts of the capital through the good offices of Mr. R, the then Finance Secretary. After prolonged and quiet thinking, for some reason, I denied myself this opportunity. Deep within me was felt an inexplicable uneasiness and discomfort with the site. This was followed by a spell of inertia and inaction on my part.

In the meantime my mind was set on a site situated in the heart of a deep and thick forest called Farhabad Jungle, about 100 kilometres away from Hyderabad. It is a 3000 acre Government owned sanctuary of sorts beyond which runs the sacred river Krishna with her musical waters. It is on the other bank of the river that the famous Srisailam temple-a reputed place of pilgrimage for devotees of Lord Shiva stands impressively. During one of Champakbhai's visits to Hyderabad, I took him to Srisailam; my motive in escorting him to the great Shiva temple was to show him on the way the place which I thought was suitable for 'The University of Tomorrow' . The plus factor which weighed in its favour was its location in the heart of the great forest, the place itself is known as the Dakshina Nilgiris. Upon arrival at the site, on my request to assess its suitability or otherwise, Champakbhai sat there in deep meditation for about 20 minutes. Coming out of his

inner sojourn he made a meaningful gesture of hands indicating clearly and unmistakably that he did not find anything special about it. After which we visited the much adored shrine of Shiva and Mother Bramaramba. The description is beside the point, but I may be allowed this minor departure for reasons that it reflects obviously the spiritual personality of Champakbhai and his intense inner identity with our Golden Purusha.

A couple of devotees visiting the temple were doing *kumkum archana* under the guidance of the chief priest. Deeply drawn by Champakbhai's radiant personality the priest requested him whether he would be interested in performing *kumkum-pooja* to Mother Bramaramba. Champakbhai, the golden child of the Mother, instantly agreed to his request, where upon the priest wanted to know his *gotra*. Champakbhai beaming with joy turned to me, perhaps to answer the priest. Inadvertently though, yet spontaneously, I blurted out "Sri Aurobindo *gotra*". And I said the same thing about myself. Are not all of us, the children of Sri Aurobindo's Consciousness, aspiring through many lives to manifest His fragrant and luminous nature.

I may be excused for the avoidable yet soulful digression. Returning from our brief *yatra* I was once again in the same uneasy but piquant posture of having arrived at square one. I began the hunt all over again with renewed enthusiasm and hope. I knew deep within myself that the chosen place must be somewhere near Hyderabad. Did not Nirodada have a dream-experience of having gone to a place near Hyderabad along with Sri

Aurobindo? Was not Mother deeply drawn to the historic city for reasons known only to her? A couple of years later, a Minister-friend of mine hailing from Medak District, knowing my anguish and my quest, offered to help me with a 1000acre site right on the outskirts of the city for the establishment of 'Sri Aurobindo Darshan: The University of Tomorrow'. Apart from its being rocky and totally unlevelled and barren it was too close to the metropolis. And I felt least attracted to it; as such I altogether gave up the proposal.

A few months passed in utter despondency; hope and despair had joined hands to make the passage both painful and prayerful. Towards the end of 1980, once again the same Minister-friend called me ; this time he sounded more optimistic because a helpful and youthful officer was then the District Collector of Medak. He is a well known poet in Telugu, a man of culture and an able administrator. Moreover, earlier he was an Assistant Professor in the same University where I worked as a senior before he joined the Government as a civil servant. For me this coincidence was not accidental; it was the Mother's intervention and Grace. The Minister suggested that I should see this officer at the earliest and give him his reference. Meeting him was a welcome renewal of an old friendship, and within a week I accompanied him with the purpose of seeing a couple of sites under his jurisdiction. In fact we were destined to see only one, and that turned out to be no other than Aurodarshan itself. On our way he mentioned two or three other places in the District for my consideration. But that was not to be. No sooner had we entered the

area, now named Aurodarshan by us, than I felt a very special peace and quiet joy. Something deep and divine seemed to descend upon me, and in a brief moment I knew for certain that we had entered the promised land. The place has a unique ambience surrounded by a 2000-acre teak forest on one side, a medium mountain range on the other, and a big, wide lake boatable round the year on the third. The place is steeped in light and carries a unique vibration of *tapasya*. We drove straight to the Guest House on the top of one of the mountains; it was a magnificent sight to look at from there—a place singular and solitary, unusual and extraordinary, unparalleled and powerful for scholars and seekers of integral Truth. Yes, I knew at once that that was the place meant for sadhana through education and education through sadhana, and I requested my Collector-friend to allot the land for our educational project. The junior officers were quick in giving him the satisfied information. There were in all about 125 acres available for allotment, and the insightful Collector then and there recommended to the Government the alienation of that area for the establishment of 'Sri Aurobindo Darshan: The University of Tomorrow' on direct sale basis. I did not want to have the land on lease for in such incomplete land dealings one could anticipate nothing but trouble from everchanging governments in a democratic set up. It was a quick deal, perfect and thoroughly satisfying. After a brief stay, we returned to the District headquarters. Such is the story or the discovery of Aurodarshan.

Being naive and inexperienced in the ways Government works, and being totally new to the

complicated procedures in land revenue matters, I thought that the land would automatically be sanctioned in our favour. But there were ever so many bottlenecks. The file had to move through the hands of ignorant as well as crooked minds; bureaucracy is both a boon and a curse to our country, the last and perhaps the lasting legacy of the colonial ruler.

Having waited for nearly three months, I met the then Chief Minister and explained to him the nature of my predicament and the urgency of taking possession of the land. I had requested Champaklalji to lay the foundation of Aurodarshan on April 4, 1981, and had even sent out invitations to devotees all over the State. The Chief Minister was scheduled to visit the District headquarters two days later, and he invited me to accompany him so that in my presence he could speak to the Collector and finalise the matter. And as promised he gave instructions to the Collector before all the officers gathered there to hand over the said 125 acres to Aurodarshan. Out of the twelve district level officers it so happened that nine of them knew me, and they all assured me of their help and cooperation. The hand of Grace was once again seen at work.

The site is located about 20km away from Medak, adjoining a big lake. There are two guest houses belonging to two neighbouring districts, one located on the top of a hillock and the other beside the lake. All arrangements were properly made by our officer friends including erection of *shamianas*, construction of 12 pillars in brick of different heights around the place,

agni-kund. where the sacrificial fire was to be lit as part of the inauguration ceremony by Champaklalji. The pillars symbolized peaks of human aspiration and achievement through the ages and the sacrificial fire itself stood for the flaming aspiration of the Earth for greater and ever new heights of its creative endeavour.

Scores of well-wishers and labourers had worked for several days shoulder to shoulder for the success of the great event. And the caravan with Champakbhai as our most revered guest arrived at the hill-top guest house around noon on April 3. The entire place was replete with activity with both the guest houses occupied by invitees. There was an aromatic ambience all around, and yet I felt deep within a snag, a serious shortcoming in our readiness to request Champaklalji to light the symbolic sacrificial fire and lay the foundation stone of 'The University of Tomorrow'. The land was not yet given possession to us, and we knew that Champaklalji would not undertake to do any such thing on land which did not belong to the Mother. It was already 4.15 in the afternoon and it was scheduled to take Champakbhai and Kamalaben to the place near the lake where the 12 pillars stood in communion as it were with some invisible puissances around the proposed 'unlit' *agni-kund*.

Sitting uneasily in an easy chair in the lake side guest house, I was prayerfully remembering the Mother for intervention and help. Just then I saw a jeep park in the porch, and about half a dozen officers and their assistants jumping out of it. They had come under

express orders of the Collector to hand over charge of the 125 acres to us immediately. The great miracle had happened. Tears rolled down my cheeks, tears of gratitude and joy. Within minutes the officers did their job, and officially handed over possession of the land to us. Thereupon I requested the chief officer to hand over the certificate of transfer of possession to Champakbhai himself for he had come there as the *pratinidhi* of the Mother. It was a couple of minutes before 5.00 p.m. when we reached the hill-top guest house and fell at his feet. The officer then handed over to him the said document. The occasion was marked by an extraordinary coincidence-one reputed architect, Narendra, had arrived at the guest house along with the Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat, and his wife upon receiving an invitation for the occasion from a well-wisher of the Institute. Narendra had a vision of Aurodarshan, and learning of its inauguration by Champaklalji, had come there to help us with his architectural skills free of charge. The three belonged to a charitable group which primarily took care of temple construction particularly in their home State. Champaklalji felt gratified at the gesture, and noted their names in his pocket diary.

It was time for Champakbhai to go down the hillock and see the place where arrangements were made for the next morning's ceremony of the Sacred Fire. When he arrived on the spot he looked around and swung up both the arms in ecstasy; tears rolled down his cheeks, then sat down plumb on the ground, and went into deep *samadhi*. His face beamed with some

remembered joy; evidently he was perfectly satisfied with the site.

Around midnight something altogether unanticipated happened, quite hapless and unhappy. A senior devotee visitor who had accompanied the caravan died of a heart attack. Champaklalji came out of his retirement in bare *coupinam*, walked down the hillock and placed the Mother's Flower Blessings packet on his chest; the body was then taken to his village. Most of the night the organisers led by A and D were busy decorating the place around the *agni kund* with *rangoli*. Earthen lamps were kept on the branches of trees surrounding the place, and Sunilda's soft music filled the valley and floated on the lake to distant spaces. We all sat around the place in a circular formation with Champakbhai, our high priest seated high on a special *chowki*. After a short meditation, exactly at 5.00 a.m. we began the ceremony with the Mother's cassetted music "Let us collaborate." It was an invocation and a prayer to the earth, to the five elements and all the *devas* to help and to cooperate in the Mother's supreme task of New Creation. Champaklalji then lowered into the *agni-kund* nine dry half coconuts with oil-lamps lit within them; number nine representing the transcendent Divine and the lamps the immanent Divine. There were placed in the *kund* nine kinds of wood including sandalwood, and were poured therein nine kinds of grain. **It** was all symbolic of the ingredients of a cosmic *mahayajna*, and then the sacred Fire was lit. The flames leapt up quite high symbolizing occult-wise the prayers and aspirations of all those who had gathered there as well as of the

aspirations of the very gods. Indeed it was a sacred and singular consecration. Synchronising with the dawn was played the cassette on Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri.

*Om tat savitur varam rupam
jyotih parasya dhimahi,
yannah; satyena dipayet.*

Champaklalji then lowered into a nearby structure, improvised for the purpose, an urn containing the Mother's special Flower- Blessings and the sacred soil from the Lord's Samadhi. About a thousand devotees from the neighbouring villages as well as from other surrounding towns had gathered for the significant occasion. Distribution of a special Message and toffee-prasad took nearly two hours. This of course was followed by a sumptuous lunch for all those who had participated in the auspicious ceremony.

The members of the main party then moved up towards the hill-top guest house. On the way, Champaklalji sat on a small boulder. He was indrawn, and in a deep reflective mood when I approached him with a request. I wanted him to show us the exact place where Auromandir should be located. With a sharp gesture of hand he refused to oblige as if it was not his work to do so. Kneeling down, I then unequivocally expressed myself: I was not asking Champaklalji to guide us; I told him that I was praying to the Mother whose luminous and concrete Presence he was carrying to help us out. Within moments I saw him totally

transformed, he was wholly changed; I found him possessed as it were by the Mother. He stood up from the boulder, and gestured to follow him. He walked and walked up in a condition of semi-trance. Seeing this frail-looking Rishi go up the mountain several others followed him. Champaklalji stopped at a particular place on the top of the hillock and suddenly with his left hand pointed to the spot below. He did this with an abrupt and repeated jerk of his hand. Whereupon all of us put at the spot there small rocks which soon grew into a heap. Champaklalji then retired to his guest house. He had gone, as it were, into *samadhi*, and no one was to disturb him.

Subsequently, we set up an auspicious date for laying the foundation stone of Auromandir. Earlier, long before the Auromandir land was acquired, I had repeated visions of Auromandir. I made an elaborate sketch of it with all the structural and architectural details. Both vision and imagination had worked hand in hand in its composition; their cooperative creation is as on page 121.

It is to be 207 feet in height and 225 feet in diameter at its platform-base. It is conceived as a 6-tiered structure raised on a round base. On the ground floor are 12 spacious sections housing 12 areas of Human Study. The first floor constitutes a spiral staircase leading to the second floor which has the library. The third floor has a wide meditation space to accommodate more than 3000 devotees. This has two ramps all along the rounded walls, one going up into the sanctum sanctorum and the

other coming down into the meditation space. The sanctum sanctorum situated on the fifth level has 18'x 18'x18' dimensions with two doors one each on either side. The wall facing West will have Sri Aurobindo's symbol made in gold. The last and the sixth level will be an empty one providing a natural thermal milieu to the sanctum sanctorum. A brochure brought out on the occasion of laying its foundation stone describes Auromandir as below-

Auromandir-a towering yantra of the New Consciousness. Auromandir will be a home for the Divine, built under the Grace and Guidance of the Mother.

* * *

Auromandir is the soul of Aurodarshan, the symbol of humanity's aspiration for Truth and its progressive manifestation upon earth.

* * *

A golden tower of earth's aspiration, realisation and transformation.

* * *

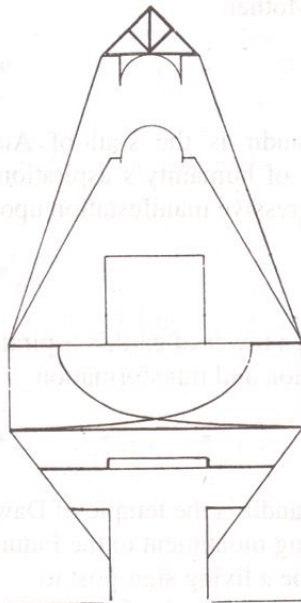
Auromandir is the temple of Dawn, a flaming monument to the Future. **It** will be a living sign-

post to The Truth-vision, the Truth-consciousness
and the Truth-force concretised in Matter.

* * *



AURODARSHAN



*Built is the golden tower, the flame-child born.
— Savitri*

AUROMANDIR

A flowering yantra of the New Consciousness

On going through it Champaklalji was most happy except for the word "Guidance". But when I explained to him that nothing worthwhile and worthy of the great project can ever be accomplished without Her 'Guidance' from whichever plane, he felt satisfied and okayed it. March 29, 1984 was the day fixed for the laying of its foundation stone by Champaklalji.

On March 29, 1984 was Mahasivaratri; it was a very auspicious coincidence indeed. The foundation stone of the supreme Temple of Dawn, a monument of humanity's offering to our Golden Shiva was laid by Champaklalji at the sacred spot shown by him. The site turned into a pilgrim centre, and hundreds of devotees gathered from all parts of the State to participate in the ceremony, and be a witness to the most important event in the annals of the State.

After meditation with the Mother's organ music, Champaklalji placed 'something very special' brought from the 'Ashram treasures' in the cube shaped marble urn especially built for the purpose at the location. It was a solemn and symbolic liturgy, which I am sure, the many gods must have attended with rare devotion. After distribution of the special Message and *maha prasadam*, foundation stones for the other buildings were also laid. We then proceeded to Matridarshan, near Jangaon, where Charnpaklalji laid the foundation stones for two structures-the *Avatar** and *Aditi*. Every year he visited the Institute, we made it a point to take him to Aurodarshan which he very obviously appreciated and deeply enjoyed. By about the middle of 1985, the

Government, instead of alienating the 125 acres in Aurodarshan's favour, wanted us to vacate its possession for some paltry reason. The reason forwarded was that the Central Government, wanted to develop a bird-sanctuary in the vicinity. I immediately put a writ petition in the High Court, and pleaded for its immediate intervention. The Court intervened telegraphically, and stopped the State Government, from taking over the site. It was during this period that I met the Executive Vice President of the World Bank as well as a high official of the International Monetary Fund in Washington D.C. When I explained at length for more than an hour the laudable objectives of our educational project near Medak and its impact in helping the younger generation towards realising a global future, he was obviously impressed. He wanted to know our financial requirement; when I told him that we needed Rs.20 crores, he said simply "No". I was almost shocked, and was not prepared to take his negative answer for ostensibly he was pleased with the elaborate account given. He smiled and said, "You ask for not less than Rs. 200 crores; normally we do not deal with amounts less than that". And when I expressed our inability to repay the amount, he consoled me by saying, "That's peanuts for us. We can always waive off that amount in cases such as yours. " The only rider he put forward was that I should get about ten well-known names in the country to sign the memorandum for financial assistance and make the State or Central Government, to recommend it to the World Bank.



THE AVATAR

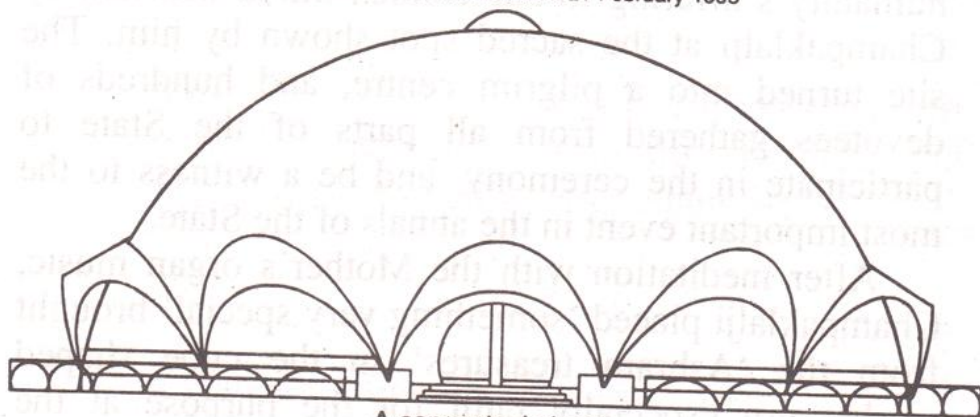
A Meditation-cum-Educational & Cultural Complex at Matridarshan

Earth's humble offering to the Lord on 15 August 2001

The New Millennium's welcome-salutations to Sri Aurobindo

Foundation stone laid by Poojya Champaklal

Construction Commencement: 21 February 1995



A conceptual sketch

Specifications

- Diameter of the arch-type dome: 90' with 9' wide passage all around it.
- Height of the dome: 36'.
- Openings of aluminium frame with acrylic sheet glass.
- R.C.C. shell-roof finished in white cement/white marble.
- Flooring is of pure white marble with aluminium strips to the design of Institute of Human Study's symbol given by the Mother.
- Raised circular pedestal in pure white marble at the centre with more than life-size bronze statue of Sri Aurobindo.

**The Avatar project is now under construction; begun on February 21, 1995, The first phase is already completed. The conceptual sketch of the great meditation complex is provided on next page.*

On this side, the Government did neither got us to vacate the land, nor could we construct any building upon it. During one of his visits to Aurodarshan, Champaklalji clearly told us that, to begin with, only 25 acres would be given to us. But some day the entire land, as far as the eye could see, would belong to Aurodarshan. He also foresaw that the hill-top guest house where he had stayed during his couple of visits would also be given to Aurodarshan. After seven years of litigation, finally, we were given only 25 acres through a decision of the High Court. But this also was not implemented, and the Government took the case to the Supreme Court. After 4 years, the Supreme Court conveyed its agreement with the decision of the High Court. Thereafter too, the alienation of the land was not smooth sailing. It took two years of *pairavi* before the Chief Minister signed the file in favour of the transfer of property. Again as ill luck would have it, the general elections intervened and the file although signed and approved by the previous Government was not implemented.

In the meantime, the Aurodarshan land has been alienated and we now possess the land. So, Aurodarshan, an educational project of the Mother, will certainly take shape with Her Blessings.

* * *

It was in 1986 that Champaklalji paid his sixth and last visit to the Institute. When he was taken to Aurodarshan and to the spot where the foundation stone for Auromandir was laid, sitting on the small structure, he wrote on a piece of paper:

"I have seen many beautiful places in the Himalayas but this is the most powerful of them all. I hope the Government will not disturb it."

After which he lay down on the plain sheet of rock nearby, and started doing several *yoga-mudras* reminiscent of several yoga-postures perhaps practised by disciples in ancient ashrams. We were about nine of us around him including himself and we took several pictures of his postures. He was no longer aware of anything around him; he was perhaps transported into a past which came very much alive to him at that time. Threading together all that he had said on earlier occasions as well as what he wrote on that day, and the experience we had of him doing the yoga-asanas, I could assuredly conclude that the place where he had laid the foundation stone for Auromandir was Sri Aurobindo's main *Kutiram* in one of his previous incarnations, and that in the area was located his ashram.

That night around 10.00 p.m., I went to Champakbhai in his room in the Institute, and told him what all I had felt about that day 's happenings. I pleaded with him to let us know if! was right in coming to that conclusion. Sitting in near *padmasana* posture, and with eyes closed, he enjoyed my inference. His face

glowed with *ananda*, his body and being enthused with ecstasy, but he did not respond to my pursuance. Undeterred by his silence, I pursued the probe further. I asked my son, who later followed him to Pondicherry, to get the final answer from him. Those days I was in the final stages of completing my book, *Champaklalji- Lion of Light and Love*. I had decided to describe in it at length my experiences with him in Orissa and at Aurodarshan. And I needed the confirmation or otherwise of the genesis of Aurodarshan. In any case I did not want incorrect entries made in the book. Confronted with such a direct question from my son, Champaklalji answered him, "What your father has said is correct." Before giving the book for printing, I read out to him everything that I had written therein about the uniqueness as well as the history and mystery of the place, now named Aurodarshan. After obtaining his explicit approval I got the book printed.

Aurodarshan belongs to the Divine. It belongs to all those who aspire to promote a global future through a new vision of education.

* * *

Aurodarshan's Aspiration (A flier brought out on Aurodarshan)

1. Aurodarshan will be our homage of aspiration and service, of love and consecration to Sri Aurobindo's sublime vision of the Future.
2. Aurodarshan wants to be an international centre of education with a soul.

3. Aurodarshan will be a place of true and living education, of endless search for Truth and its progressive manifestation and creative expression.
4. Aurodarshan will be a place of integral and future studies where seekers from all parts of the world can devote themselves wholly to the knowledge of the Truth of Tomorrow.
5. Aurodarshan wants to consecrate itself faithfully and completely to the discovery and practice of the fundamental principles of a New Society embodying and expressing the New Consciousness.

India's Gift to the New Millennium

The spirit of India has enshrined itself, as it evolved through the ages from Vedic times, in institutions and centres of education like the *ashramas*, *gurukulas*, *parishads* and *mahaviharas*-international nuclei of higher learning and culture-that summed up the various stages of its evolutionary march. Of these great institutions Nalanda, Takshasila, Vallabhi, Vikramashila, Odantapuri, Jagaddala, and Nagarjuna Mahaviharas deserve special mention. The time has now come to seek a fitting embodiment, beyond the barriers of race, religion, or nation, for the philosophy. *darshana* which believes in the divinity and unity of both Spirit and Matter, a philosophy which promises to be the highest peak of Indian Renaissance. Aurodarshan would be such a world centre which while promoting a philosophy that integrates the outlook of the East and the West would seek 'to bring the legitimate authority of the Spirit over Matter fully developed and utilised.' Centred in the

vision of Sri Aurobindo, it will be an international school of culture and research, a place of peace, concord and harmony where men of goodwill from all over the world, sincere in their aspiration could live freely as members of the larger family of *Man-vasudhaiva kutumbakam*.

Let us then make Aurodarshan a symbol worthy both of our great love and infinite gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and all that they have achieved and accomplished for us. Such a creative centre with national and international participation would enable cooperative psychic thinking on the deepest problems confronting the human race today, and must in course of time, make a profound impact on men and women and events in India and the world.

Come, let us then march from the dawns of the past towards the noons of the future.

* * *

THE VISION

The Evolutionary Nisus

Since the beginning of civilisation, the problem of human unity and human perfectability has been exercising the minds of thinking men, Today, as a result of the unprecedented and continuing scientific

revolution, mankind is undergoing the deepest crisis of its long and eventful history caused by the serious disparity between man's limited moral and spiritual capacity and his enormous achievements in the structure of his external life , including weapons of unparalleled destructive power. While science has put at man's disposal as Sri Aurobindo puts it, "many potencies of the universal forces and has made the life of humanity materially one", the human mind has as yet "nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense of power which could create in this physical drawing together of the human world a life-unity, a mental-unity or a spiritual oneness,"

Sri Aurobindo was convinced that the visible material world is truly charged with the Spirit, and that the process of evolution must bring about an ever increasing unification and spiritualisation of our life . The ultimate goal can only be the intergration of our current imperfect motivations and movements into a supreme creative harmony realisable here on earth. The evolutionary push has already converted the animal man of the past into a largely mentalised humanity. The further evolution of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity is " the need of the race and surely the intention of Nature". The age long desire to realise the triple gospel of liberty, equality and fraternity has not so far succeeded because real brotherhood, which is the key to the gospel, has always eluded us. As Sri Aurobindo put it, "Brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul.. (it) is not a matter either of physical kinship or vital association or of intellectual agreement."

Accordingly, it is the forthcoming spiritual evolution that can finally establish human unity and creative harmony on firm foundations.

Human Fellowship

A global view of humanity is becoming more and more insistent, unavoidable and inevitable. Nature seems to move between two poles of life, the individual and the aggregate, seeking integration and harmony between them. Between the two there are many lesser aggregates which Nature tries to preserve, for it has a passion for variety. But the unification of humanity is the compelling urge of Nature. A world union of free nations seems to be the goal towards which humanity is moving. This great ideal may not be immediately practicable, but it would always be well to know the ideal. Once nationalism is subordinated to a cosmopolitan human fellowship the more important differences of culture, race and religion will recede. A perfect order always comes from within. A realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which all are one is the need of the hour. Conscious men all over the world must set before themselves this supreme task of organising human life towards the creative unification of the race. The alternative is a lingering suicide, a total annihilation of the human race. To evolve such a conscious human fellowship integrating the achievements of all the cultures and peoples of the world into an intimate creative unity and harmony should be the one and only ideal before all right thinking people everywhere. The various modes of consciousness developed by man,

namely the occultism of Egypt, the moral fervour of the Hebraic genius, the sweetness and the light of the Hellenic mind, the Roman genius for law and government and organisations, the aesthetic sensitivity of the Japanese and the spirituality of India and such other elements must integrally combine their forces to build up this great godhead of humanity. Humankind, if it has to survive and evolve and move towards this destined goal, will have to establish a living contact with the enduring principles of existence-the eternal springs of inner life, and progressively weld them into the outer life.

Let us then awake in time to this anthem of the future, and reconstitute our educational institutions and make them help our children to march on the sunlit path to this supreme destiny. The present educational system is no doubt an advance over many of the ancient ones but its defects are also palpable. It is based on an insufficient knowledge of human psychology and human personality. Today, possibilities are opened out for the flowering of a truly human civilization which perhaps our imagination cannot fully grasp. The immensity of this prospect is both terrifying, challenging and inspiring. We all are admirers of the achievements of modern civilisation, of the growth of science, of its application, and of technological advancement. This progress is the product of the human mind and yet, strangely enough, the mind counts for less, its functions become less and less in the modern world, and it deteriorates in a large measure, and consequently, in a sense, humanity gets atrophied. Mind may count for a

great deal in domains of specialization, but in life itself, as a whole, we suffer from mental deterioration and spiritual degradation. This is the inner weakness of the structure of our civilization.

Ours is a civilization of ignorance and falsehood. There is a general collapse of institutional and social logic, a wide spread disintegration of our moral and cultural norms. There is a deep crack in the very structure of human making, an untranslatable and unnegotiable fissure in our personality. Our common sense as well as our human resources have all gone bankrupt and cannot anymore save us from naked despair. There is a crisis everywhere; indeed it is a crisis of consciousness. Our agony is that we cannot remain where we are, and yet know not where to go. There is without doubt, no alternative that can salvage us in the sphere of our horizontal existence, except the way of the Integral within, the way of a different dimension of consciousness.

Join the Future

These are times that try our souls and require bold thinking and concerted action . We must take the initiative to choose the world we need to live in, and be ready to pay the price to have it. Our personal lives, our national directions and international relations have reached a pivotal omega point of urgency as well as of

unprecedented opportunity. This is the time when certain conscious changes in personal perspectives can create preferred futures for humankind. It is the time now, most opportune and mature, for a passage from fragmentation to planetization. Let us then take a leap into the Future, for truly, the sea itself is the Way and the Divine himself is the captain of our sailing. If the Infinite is the ideal, verily the path too must be infinite.

We need the awakening of Earth within us; awakening of Spirit is not enough. Only together, in their joint action, can they bring about the desired transformation. The most magnificent odyssey of Spirit will now be enacted not in heavens but here on earth. the greatest epic of the Timeless will now be written in Time. The creative integration between supreme relaxation and supreme activity, *chit* and *shakti*. the two seemingly incompatible conditions will now be accomplished in the heart of conscious humanity. It is the decisive hour pregnant with a new Future. with eternal Time-time united to eternity - ceaselessly manifesting eternity.

Aurodarshan invites you to join its many educational and cultural undertakings and to participate in the unending adventure of consciousness.

SPECIAL PAVILIONS ON CAMPUS

Aurodarshan will have two campuses-Aurodarshan itself and Matridarshan.

1. On Aurodarshan Campus:

- i. Auromandir-The Temple of Dawn
 - ii. Sri Aurobindo Darshan-Centre of Integral and Future Studies
 - iii. Academy of Human Heritage-A centre for the study and synthesis of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the world
 - iv. Saura-Bharati-Pavilion of Eternal India
 - v. Mahamandala-Pavilion of World Cultures
2. On Matridarshan Campus:
- i. The Avatar Meditation Complex
 - ii. Aditi - The Temple of Love
 - iii. New Creation International-A World Centre of Integral Education. (Residential School)
 - iv. The University of Tomorrow-International Centre of nonformal higher education & research
 - v. Mayura- Theatre of the Future
 - vi. Centre of Physical Culture

In addition the campus will have meditation cottage's, writers' homes, hostels for children, residential buildings, participants ' homes, administrative buildings, guest houses, swimming pool, library, health centre, post office, community kitchen and dining etc.

You are welcome to participate in this unique adventure of consciousness.



THE AUTHOR

It was the 15th of August, 1949. The Ashram was more like a veritable beehive resplendent with immortal Soma. Seeker-souls from different parts of the world had converged upon the place to drink to their fill the ambrosia of divine life.

On entering the front room, to my surprise, I found it fully charged with golden light. The meagre furniture, the windows and walls seemed to radiate a powerful vibration. Verily, it was a chamber of golden sunshine. Very soon I discovered the radiant source. It was Sri Aurobindo sitting in an empyrean posture in the adjoining front room facing the approaching devotees. Lo and behold, I saw the one and only God—Purushottama, the Golden Purusha. I was deluged by a flood of deep silence and honeyed light. There was installed in our midst the very embodiment of celestial splendour—a Guru with sublime dimension, a God with infinite span. The cosmos itself was like a temple built in honour of his advent, and I felt certain that a thousand suns must have borrowed their radiance from the glowing face of Sri Aurobindo. The wonderment is too towering and massive for words!

His eyes of light had transformed me into a transparent facade, his distant luminous look transformed me into another world of pure consciousness. The exhilarating and extraordinary Vedic experience once again came alive and vibrant before my soul's eyes:

*Idam sréshṭham jyótistām jyótir uttamam
visvajid ucyate bṛihat*

(RV X.170.3).