

## GLIMPSES OF THE MOTHER'S SUPRAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

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*Spiritual significance: Beginning of the supramental realisation.*

This essay is about the latter part of the Mother's life, and in particular about the latter stages of her sadhana as recorded in the 13 volume work, *Mother's Agenda*. The *Agenda* primarily consists of a series transcribed conversations of the Mother with a disciple, Satprem, that span the years 1956 to 1973, the year of the Mother's passing. It also includes some correspondence between the two as well as some statements by the Mother dating back to 1951.

The experiences recorded in the *Agenda* pertain to a great extent to the supramental transformation of the body, or we could say, a divinization of the body. Whereas in principle the body is already divine, because the Divine is all that is, physical matter as it is presently is not consciously divine, and because it is not fully conscious, it is open to all kinds of limitation and falsehood. In particular, the body is subject to pain, illness, and death. According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in order to be truly divinized it must be transformed by the supramental consciousness, which is a particularly high level of divine consciousness that carries the full, divine power. For this transformation to occur, one must first inwardly ascend in the consciousness to this supramental level, and then it must be brought down first into the mind and life energies and then into the physical body itself. By the time these conversations were recorded, the Mother's mind and vital had been largely supramentalized, though a complete supramentalization of these also requires a supramentalization of the body. The conversations in the *Agenda* that I will highlight pertain to the action of the supramental consciousness in the body.

It should be emphasized that the processes to be discussed were primarily the result of a working of a divine consciousness and force on the body, and not so much the result of physical or vital activities or movement of energies. It is true that the Mother placed great importance on physical culture in order to train and enlighten the body consciousness. The physical education department in the Ashram was given a central position in the sadhana and most of the sadhaks were involved in a variety of daily physical exercises from hatha yoga to martial arts to sports like tennis, basketball, and swimming, to gymnastics and track and field. The Mother herself played tennis regularly until she was 80 years old. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother believed that such physical activities develop the consciousness of the body and make it more receptive to the higher spiritual consciousness and force, and this is why they gave it such importance in the Ashram. But the conscious ascent into the higher levels of the spiritual consciousness and their descent into the mind and life and body were accomplished primarily by inner psychological and spiritual methods and processes.

As a result of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's yoga, a new consciousness and force, which they called the supramental consciousness, manifested in the earth consciousness on February 29, 1956. Supermind and supramental have a specific meaning and significance in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and yoga, and I may as well begin by clarifying the meaning of these terms. There are many levels of consciousness between the ordinary human consciousness and the supermind – Sri Aurobindo described these as the higher mind, the illumined mind, the intuitive consciousness, and the overmind. Even the lowest of these – the higher mind, is far superior to the ordinary rational mind in its ability to reflect the higher truth. For example, Sri Aurobindo said that in the higher mind one is constantly aware of the Self, the One everywhere, and lives in a vast peace and calm enlightenment (*The Future Poetry*, p. 342; *The Life Divine*, p. 944). Each of these higher gradations is able to envision and express the Absolute Reality in a more luminous and comprehensive way. The Supermind is above all these, and represents a fundamentally new principle. Unlike the levels below it, it no longer simply reflects the truth of things, however purely or brightly or broadly, but is itself the very substance of the Truth.

In *The Synthesis of Yoga* there is a chapter called "the Nature of the Supermind," in which Sri Aurobindo described the Supermind. He said, "The fundamental nature of the supermind is that all its knowledge is originally a knowledge by identity and oneness... The spirit is one everywhere and it knows all things as itself and in itself, so sees them always and therefore knows them intimately, completely, in their reality as well as their appearance, in their truth, their law, the entire spirit and sense and figure of their nature and their workings." (p. 757).

He also said that the supermind is "not only a direct truth consciousness, but an illumined, direct and spontaneous truth-will. There is not and cannot be

in the will of the self-knowing spirit any contradiction, division or difference between its will and its knowledge. The spiritual will is the Tapas or enlightened force of the conscious being of the spirit effecting infallibly what is there within it..." (p. 761) The supramental will and action are therefore a will of action of the spontaneous self-fulfilling truth of the spirit, the right and at the highest the infallible movement of a direct and total knowledge." (p. 763)

On 29 February, 1956 the Mother experienced the first manifestation of the supramental consciousness in the overall earth consciousness. It happened during the collective meditation in the ashram. She said about it: "This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that "the time has come," and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow." (*Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 1, p. 69)

When the Mother said that this consciousness manifested in the earth consciousness on February 29th 1956, she meant that this Truth-consciousness and Force began to act here on a terrestrial scale, seeking and preparing instruments for its manifestation in the evolutionary formula. It began its work to prepare the field and to prepare the new species that would manifest this consciousness and replace humanity as the leader of the earth evolution. Moreover, human beings could cooperate with this new Light and Force in the manifestation of its higher possibilities in the human formula, and thereby create a transitional being between ordinary mental humanity and the full supramental species.

Just 20 days after the supramental manifestation, on March 19th, 1956, the Mother wrote a brief statement about a personal experience she had (a straightening of her bent vertebrae) which she attributed to the influence of this descent of the supramental consciousness into her body. At the top of that written statement, she put the heading, "Agenda of the Supramental Action on Earth," thus giving the name that eventually became the 13 volume *Mother's Agenda*. Although Satprem used the title *Mother's Agenda* on the cover, on the first page inside the cover the full title is given.

In October of 1957, she commented more at length on these effects in her body. She said, "one of the very first results of the supramental manifestation was to give the body a freedom and an autonomy it has never before known.... For the first time, the cells themselves have felt that they are free, that they have the power to decide. When the new vibrations came and combined

with the old ones, I felt it at once and it showed me that a new world was really taking birth...." She said that this new vibration in the body allowed her to understand the mechanism of the transformation: "It is not something that comes from a higher Will, not a higher consciousness that imposes itself upon the body: it is the body itself awakening in its cells, a freedom of the cells themselves, an absolutely new vibration that sets disorders right.... This is a gradual process, but ...little by little this new consciousness will grow, gain ground and victoriously resist the old forces of destruction and annihilation, and this Fatality we believed to be so inexorable."

On February 3rd 1958, she had a remarkable experience that further confirmed this birth of a new world taking place. She said, "before, I had an individual, subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on February 3, I went strolling there in a concrete way—as concretely as I used to go strolling in Paris in times past—in a world that exists in itself, beyond all subjectivity. It is like a bridge being built between the two worlds." She said, "The supramental world exists in a permanent way, and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had proof of this today when my earthly consciousness went there and consciously remained there between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. I now know that for the two worlds to join in a constant and conscious relationship what is missing is an intermediate zone between the existing physical world and the supramental world as it exists. This zone has yet to be built, both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world, and it is being built. When I formerly used to speak of the new world that is being created, I was speaking of this intermediate zone. And similarly, when I am on 'this' side, in the realm of the physical consciousness—and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly permeating matter, I am seeing and participating in the construction of this zone." She then goes on to relate the experience in detail, which involved an immense ship that had just arrived at the shore of the supramental world. On this ship were people whom she knew, whose forms were in various stages of transformation. Those whose substance had been sufficiently supramentalized were disembarking, and there were other supramental beings on shore waiting to receive them. The Mother herself, who had a supramental substance, and a bright sun for a head, was directing the whole operation.

Probably in February or March of 1959, the Mother began repeating a mantra. On May 19th, she said that she had "come to realize that for this sadhana of the body, the mantra is essential." She said that the purely psychological method is inadequate and that japa, the repetition of a mantra, is necessary, because only it has a direct action on the body. She said that now with her mantra, she had done ten years of work in a few months. She said she repeated her mantra constantly—when she was awake and even when she slept. She said it was always there in the background.

On October 6, 1959, she said, "For the West, with all its outward development, a few centuries may be needed before the junction between the two worlds can be made. And yet these two worlds—the physical world and the world of Truth—are not distant from one another. They are as if superimposed. The world of Truth is there, close by, like a lining of the other." She indicated that shortly before August 15th, she had had an experience that exemplified this.

First she had felt the supramental light entering directly into her body without passing through the inner beings. It entered through the feet and rose towards the head, and as it rose a fever also rose because the body was unaccustomed to the intensity. As it neared the head she thought she would burst and that the experience would have to be stopped, but she called down calm and peace and widened the body consciousness so it could contain the supramental light. Suddenly there was a second of fainting, and then, she said, "I found myself in another world, but not far away (I was not in a total trance). This world was almost as substantial as the physical world. There were rooms—Sri Aurobindo's room with the bed he rests on—and he was living there, he was there all the time; it was his abode. Even my room was there, with a large mirror like the one I have here, combs, all kinds of things. And the substance of these objects was almost as dense as in the physical world, but they shone with their own light. It was not translucent, not transparent, not radiant, but self-luminous. The various objects and the material of the rooms did not have this same opacity as the physical objects here, they were not dry and hard as in the physical world we know."

She said, "you see, it's not as if this world of Truth had to be created from nothing: it is fully ready, it is there, like a lining of our own present world. Everything is there, everything is there. Sri Aurobindo gave me two days of this—total bliss. But all the same, by the end of the second day I realized that I could not continue to remain there, for the work was not advancing. The work must be done in the body; the realization must be attained here in this physical world, for otherwise it is not complete. So I withdrew from that world and set to work here again. And yet, it would take little, very little, to pass from this world to the other, or for the other to become the real world. A little click would be enough, or rather a little reversal in the inner attitude."

On June 15th, 1968, she had an interesting discussion about the transformation of the body. She first indicated that it was becoming increasingly established that health or illness is the result of a choice of the cells of the body, and groups of cells. Many of her cells had become conscious, and they could choose between the true consciousness, or disorder and disequilibrium. And she suggested that there was a natural variation in cells or groups of cells in their ability to follow the movement of progressive harmony. She said most of the time it is just laziness, something unwilling to make the effort or the resolve. She called it the remnant, the residue of the inconscient. She said, "it's a sort of spinelessness ... which accepts a general, impersonal law. On the

other side, there is the sense of the true attitude, which in the cells is expressed with great simplicity: 'There is the Lord, who is the all-powerful Master. It depends entirely on Him.' For the cells it's not sentences, but expresses itself by repeating the mantra: 'May Your Will be done,' and a tranquillity—a luminous tranquillity." And she wondered, "What I don't know yet, what's not very clear, is... what will be the fate of this residue? To people's ordinary thought, it's what they call 'death,' that is to say, the rejection of the cells that weren't able to enter this plastic state of consciousness. But the way the work is being done, there is no categorical division [into groups of conscious or unconscious cells in Mother's body]: there are imperceptible (almost) states of variations between the different parts of the being." She seems to mean that some cells lag behind, have difficulty taking the proper attitude, so it takes longer.

The next year she received from within an answer to her dilemma. She reframed the question this way: "All this work of the transformation of the cells, of consciousness in the cells, with the ordinary way [of dying], won't it be wasted since the body is going to disintegrate?" And then she said, "then there came in a very precise, almost concrete manner: 'there is a way, which is, before dying, to prepare within oneself a body with all the transformed, illumined, conscious cells, to collect them together and form a body with the maximum number of conscious cells; then, when the work is over, the full consciousness enters it and the other body can dissolve, it no longer matters.'"

Then on May 9th, 1970, Mother had an experience of her supramentalized body in the subtle physical. She said, "I was walking around naked, but deliberately naked from here to there (gesture from the top of the chest to the thighs); here (above), there may have been clothes. I was deliberately showing myself to certain people.... Ah, and that part I was showing was sexless, that is to say, neither man nor woman: there was nothing; and its color was ... a little like Auroville's color [orange], like that, but vibrant, that is, as if ... not luminous, but with a sort of luminosity." In the experience, someone was with her whom she called "the physical Mother," and in another place she called "Nature." Nature was wearing a dress of the same orange color, and said, "See, I've put on your dress, I've put it on to tell you that it's accepted—I've put on your dress." Mother explained, "it means that material Nature has adopted the new creation."

On July 1, 1970 Mother had another experience in which she discovered another important aspect of the transformation, that "it is the psychic being that is to become the supramental being." She had this experience when a disciple had come to her and was kneeling in front of her. And she saw this disciple's psychic being towering above her, about eight inches taller. And it was a sexless being: neither man nor woman, that had features of both combined. It exceeded her on every side by about eight inches. And its color was, if it became very material, would be Auroville's color. "It was softer, as if behind a veil, it wasn't absolutely precise, but it was this color." And she said, "I found it

very interesting, because that being seemed to tell me, 'You're wondering what the supramental being will be—here it is! Here it is, this is it.'"

Then on March 24, 1972, Mother again sees her own supramental body. She said, "I don't know whether it's the supramental body or (what shall I say?) a transitional body, but I had a completely new body, in the sense that it was sexless: it was neither woman nor man. It was very white. But that could be because I have white skin, I don't know. It was very slender. Really lovely, a truly harmonious form." And two days later she said, "Yes, I was like that. It was me; I didn't look at myself in a mirror, I saw myself like this (Mother bends her head to look at her body), I was .. I just was like that." Satprem asked her, "But this form is in the subtle physical, isn't it?" She answered, "It must be already like that in the subtle physical."

As 1972 wore on, and up until the end, it appears Mother began to have more difficulty. Perhaps as more and more of her body consciousness was supramentalized, more and more she encountered the resistance, the remnant of the inconscient. She alternated between two states, one of absolute surrender and openness to the Divine, living in a divine peace and bliss, and living in a painful hell, the very contradiction of that peace. For example, on November 4th, she said, "The whole subconscious is .. (gesture of something rising up en masse). And then ... it's a certitude—a certitude in the perception—that Bliss is there ... right there, waiting for us, but a whole world of contradictions that have been repressed in the subconscious keeps rising up from the subconscious to prevent us from feeling it. So ... you could say it's a battlefield, but in a perfect calm. It's impossible to describe. When I remain still and enter that Consciousness, time flies with fantastic speed, in a kind of ... luminous calm. But the slightest thing that pulls me out of it seems to pull me into hell. Exactly. The discomfort is so great one feels one couldn't last a minute or a few minutes like that. So one ... one calls the Divine ... You feel like curling up in the Divine. And then it goes well."

There are several themes in this account that should be emphasized. From the very beginning, Mother seemed primarily concerned with the influence of the supramental on the consciousness of the body. There is little mention of its effect on the mental or vital levels. In one place she seems to suggest that these were instruments to knead matter, to awaken it to consciousness, and that once this was done they would be replaced by something else. In her, especially after the crisis in 1962, the mental and vital beings were sent away, and she was left with her body consciousness, so that it would itself open to the supramental light and power. She seemed often to be identified with her physical body, and preoccupied with its opening and transformation.

Another important recurring theme was that the supramental world, the supramental truth was here, already established, and the work was really in establishing a more and more complete link with it. This was for her personally and also for the earth as a whole. That world was quite real and concrete, in many ways more than this one. She seemed to sometimes find herself in that

world, and sometimes in this one. She seemed to go back and forth between the two as a result of a subtle shift in consciousness, in the inner attitude. She said it was like a lining beneath this physical world. It was very close, not far away in some rare ether of consciousness. Sometimes she would walk out into that world, do things, meet people, and the effects of her actions would be there in this physical world. It seemed as she forged this link between the two, this closeness and interpenetration increased.

A third theme that perhaps did not come out so much in the excerpts I read, but really was implied in all of them, is that Mother was like a lightning rod for the supramental action on the earth. Sometimes when she would be silent and open to the Divine and supramental forces, she would see them flowing through her to points all around her, all over the world and perhaps beyond. For she was universalized in her consciousness, parts of her consciousness, even her physical consciousness, were identified with the whole world, the whole universe. Her physical presence, her physical opening to the supramental light and power enabled these to penetrate into the physical world around us, and also to act on people and events in very specific ways.

And finally, the whole tenor of her sadhana, was in a sense unchanged, fundamentally it was the same as it is for the beginner. It was very simply a surrender into the hands of the Divine. Whoever does this sadhana must surrender to the Divine. And the more we do, the more we become conscious, we begin to see the more within us which withholds its surrender. Then this too must open up to the Divine. This progressive surrender of more and more of the being seems to be the character of the sadhana up until the very end. For Mother, this progressive opening and surrender was occurring in her body consciousness. She said one of the first results of the supramental descent was that the body began to realize its autonomy, its ability to choose between the divine and the old way of being. And her progress in the sadhana seemed to involve precisely more and more of these cells, this body consciousness, surrendering and uniting with the Divine. And as more of this body consciousness opened up, it became a part of her supramental body that would survive the death of the remnant which she laid down on November 17, 1973.

The Mother's primary mission was to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth, to establish it as a new principle in the evolving terrestrial consciousness. This she did, with Sri Aurobindo's help, in 1956. For the next 17 years, she worked to establish it into her very cells, into matter. It is fair to assume that she took this work as far as was possible in the present circumstances. It also appears, from what she has said in the Agenda, that the supramental consciousness is actively at work here, is assured of its eventual manifestation in a new race of supramental beings, and is working to manifest its light and power in human beings who are open to it. Finally, we can assume that the Mother herself is directing this work, and exists in a supramental form in a world close to ours, a world that is like a lining of our own.