



*Champaklal
Speaks*

CHAMPAKLAL SPEAKS

Champaklal Speaks

Edited by M. P. Pandit

Revised by Roshan

**Sri Aurobindo Ashram
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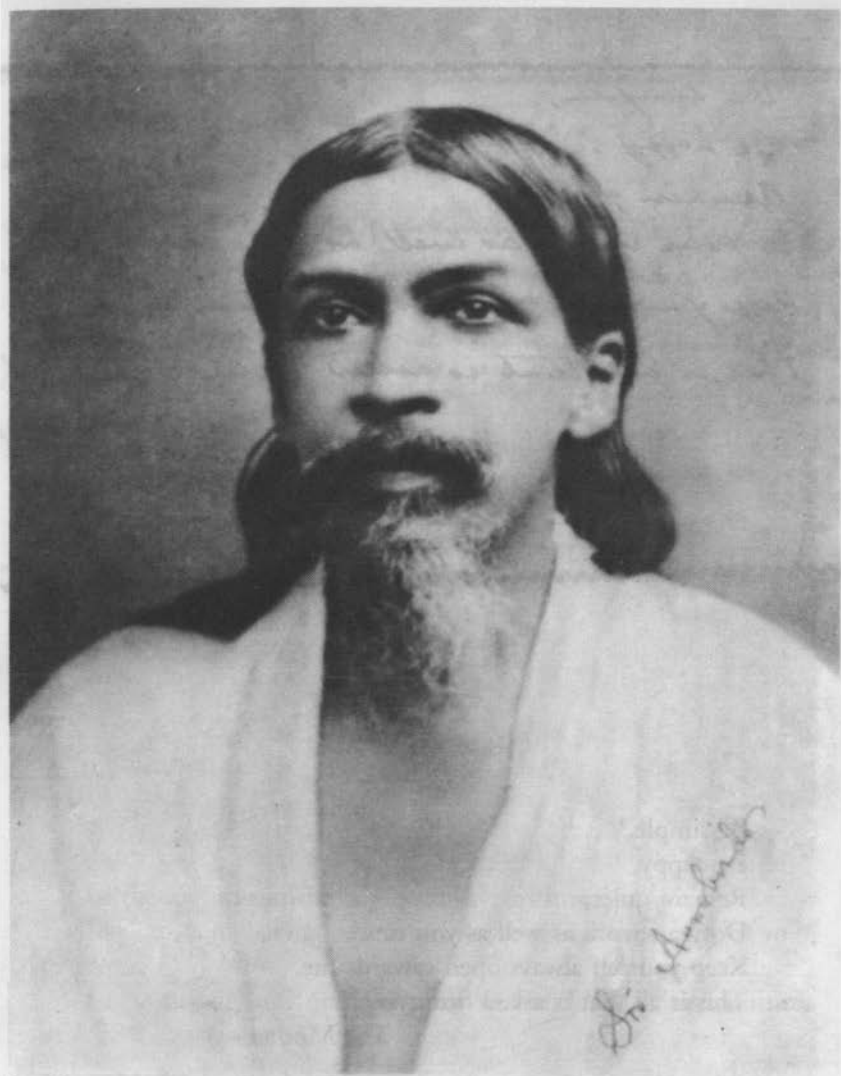
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So chempakal
My love and blessings
Flourish 1946

Sri Aurobindo in Guest House, 1915-18

Be simple,
Be happy,
Remain quiet,
Do your work as well as you can,
Keep yourself always open towards me.
This is all that is asked from you.

—

Be simple,*
Be happy,
Remain quiet,
Do your work as well as you can,
Keep yourself always open towards me.
This is all that is asked from you.

The Mother

* When Champaklal started working with the Mother, during a conversation she told him what is written above. Champaklal requested the Mother to write it and the Gracious Mother wrote and gave it to him. – Champaklal's note

In the night as in the day be always with me.

In sleep as in waking let me feel in me always the reality of your presence *

Let it sustain and make to grow in me Truth, consciousness and bliss constantly and at all times.

Sri Aurobindo

In the night as in the day be always with me.

In sleep as in waking let me feel in me always the reality of your presence.

Let it sustain and make to grow in me Truth, Consciousness and Bliss constantly and at all times.

Sri Aurobindo

* Champaklal had requested Sri Aurobindo to give a prayer to him. In reply Sri Aurobindo wrote the above prayer. - Champaklal's note

Blessings



“My Lion” — The Mother (1960)

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

Champaklalji was very fond of his book *Champaklal Speaks*. "It is the *Ramayana* of my life," he would happily tell me.

In the early 1970s, Nolini-da used to meet Champaklalji every morning and they would sit together for a few minutes. On 18th March 1975, soon after the book came out, Nolini-da said with a beautiful affectionate smile, "Champakbhai, your book is extremely nice." He said it three times and then added, "I have not read it fully, but from what I have seen, the substance is very good."

Here is what Champaklalji himself once wrote about his book: "Whatever Champaklal has written is not from a literary point of view. This writing is neither for intellectuals nor for 'advanced sadhaks' but is written only for those who are by nature and attitude like Champaklal. From the very beginning all these incidents were inscribed in Champaklal's memory; that is why now he can write about them. Champaklal's life is Sri Aurobindo and the Mother only. To write down their sweet memories is Champaklal's worship. It makes Champaklal most fortunate and his heart is filled with gratitude and bliss." No wonder, M.P. Pandit concluded his preface to the first edition with these words: "For what *Champaklal Speaks* is, is nothing but *Mother Sri Aurobindo, Mother Sri Aurobindo.*"

Champaklalji was not satisfied merely with reading and re-reading his *Ramayana* and losing himself in the memories they rekindled. He made corrections and added marginal notes in his copies of the first two editions, for he wanted to perfect his book as far as possible. Later, when he permitted me to translate the book into Gujarati, he showed me those copies so that his revisions could be included there. Whenever I sought clarifications and details, he wrote down his answers, often rectifying the published episodes. And fortunately for us, as the translation work proceeded, he wrote more than forty new episodes for inclusion. For the first time he wrote in detail about his childhood, his upbringing and the influences of saints and yogis – about all that gave form and force to his aspirations and imparted the training that proved very useful in his long service to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. When the

manuscript was ready he willingly went through it with his usual conscientiousness. Finally, he himself decided which photographs were to be printed. Throughout the work, both in preparing the manuscript and seeing the book through the press, I received much help from Dr. Ashvin Desai. The book came out under the title *Champaklalna Sansmarano*.

A few months before leaving his body he asked me to collect and hand over all the original papers in his possession to the Ashram Archives. Here I wish to mention that Bob (Robert Zwicker), with exemplary dedication and patience, helped me to organise and put everything in files and boxes specially manufactured to best preserve such documents. It was during those final days that Champaklalji gave me his copies of the previous English editions of *Champaklal Speaks* and asked me to edit a third edition whenever the publishers decided to print it. Following his instructions, I have incorporated the following material: the revisions he made in the first two editions; translations of the new episodes published in the Gujarati edition; and eleven reminiscences and Sri Aurobindo's correspondence with Champaklal, published in *Champaklal's Treasures*.

In preparing this new edition, I have checked the texts of *Spiritual Games*, *Birthday Messages* and *Correspondences* with the originals kept at the Archives. I have also added footnotes to help the reader to understand the background of certain episodes and the persons and places mentioned in them. In everything, I have made a sincere effort to follow the guidelines Champaklalji gave me. But, I have greatly missed his physical presence, which would have made my task as deep a joy as it had been during the years we worked together.

A word about the photograph before this preface. Champaklalji was extremely fond of this photograph of his with the Mother which she captioned it "My Lion". While choosing it as the cover for the Gujarati edition, he noted this incident: Once, on seeing this photo, Pranab's uncle Charubabu exclaimed, "Mother, here Champaklal looks like Durga's lion!" And Mother forcefully replied, "He is my lion!"

Champaklal Speaks illustrates how his first and foremost

aspiration – to spend every moment of his life and all his energy in the service of his Lord Sri Aurobindo and the Divine Mother – was amply fulfilled by Their infinite Grace. In fact, as Champaklaji might have put it, it is more appropriate to say that he was chosen by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who themselves moulded him into a fit instrument for their work. It is worth noting some of his reminiscences on this subject.

On 20 November 1926, the Mother told him: “The Being whom we want to manifest in you demands complete surrender. He is one of four brothers; out of them one wants to manifest in you and he is waiting for you to be ready. And that Being wishes that I should work in you.” Another day she said: “The Being has entered into you.” And the next day: “To bring down Immortality four pillars are needed. Of them... Aspiration is Champaklal.”

Once the Mother told him, “Champaklal, your time will come and you will get everything. You will be fully conscious.” This comment was made during the “game of the apron”. Later he realised that “it was not a game to amuse me. It was such a Grace!” To get an idea of the vast consciousness They granted him, we only have to turn to his experiences reproduced in *The Visions of Champaklal*, 1990. “All was revealed there none can here express.” (*Savitri*, p.30.)

Another significant incident:

“Every morning the Mother used to say to me, ‘Bonjour!’ This day, she picked up a flower, *Eternal smile*, took my hand, put the flower in the centre of the palm, pinched my palm, kept her hand pressed over my hand for sometime and said,

‘Champaklal, smile always,
smile in difficulties,
smile in pain,
smile in suffering,
smile in sorrow,
smile always, smile always,
smile.’”

I believe that the predominant memory of those who saw him was his disarming smile.

Champaklal Speaks inspires us to ponder over his extra-

ordinary life and fills our hearts with reverence for his Lord and the Mother. We can see that his observations are the expressions of profound truths revealed to him through experiences in his daily life. Let us take an extract from his correspondence of 25 May 1935. He wrote, "Where am I going, what am I doing?" Sri Aurobindo replied, "...Where you are? In the Mother's presence here and close to me. Where you are going? Towards union with the Divine through dedication and service. What you are doing here? Service and self-giving to the Divine."

For twelve years, from 1938 to 1950, Champaklalji and Nirodbaran served Sri Aurobindo together and "became sweet friends for long decades". Champaklalji passed away on 9th May 1992. In 1993, Nirodbaran concluded his long talk on Champaklalji with this statement: "Two sadhaks of recent time stand apart from all others, whose image will always remain untarnished in our memory. One is Nolini-da and the other is Maharaj Champaklal, two true yogis – one predominantly a *homo intellectualis*, the other essentially a *homo psychicus*. Both of them attained rare heights of consciousness, each following his own path indicated by his swadharma." Nirod-da also noted, "To be like Hanuman, an absolute servitor, was the *raison d'être* of Maharaj's existence."* And when Champaklalji's health was deteriorating, Nirodbaran inwardly heard Sri Aurobindo say, "*I have been waiting. He will come straight to me.*"**

I shall never forget even for a moment all that Champaklalji has made available to me, materially and spiritually. I am especially grateful to him for entrusting this work to me for it has inspired me to attempt to transform my consciousness. These reminiscences recreate the atmosphere of the days when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked together on this earth to transfigure the consciousness of their disciples and all mankind, as well as to reveal a new future for the entire earth.

I am deeply grateful to Kamalaben for taking a keen interest in this book and to Jayantilal, Apurva and all my friends for their help and goodwill. My heartfelt thanks go to Ganapatibhai and Bob of

* *Mother India*, Sept. 1993, pp. 632, 631.

** *Mother India*, March 1993, p. 173.

the Archives, who in spite of their busy schedules patiently went through the manuscript and offered valuable guidance. Above all I thank Sunjoy, who assisted me in preparing this book. He meticulously scrutinised the previous editions as well as the drafts for the present one, and did much of the research for the footnotes. I greatly appreciate his help.

My sincere thanks are due to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, the Publication Department, SABDA, and the Archives. I owe special thanks to all those at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press who have collaborated with goodwill and efficiency in printing the book.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram,
Pondicherry.
2001

Roshan

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Champaklal does not write. He may draw, he may paint, he may design new perspectives drawing encomiums from even such a profound artist as the Mother, but writing, no. He will tell you that he is not used to it.

Champaklal will not speak either. For did not Sri Aurobindo ask him as long back as in 1934 to be careful in what he speaks? He wrote to him: Be more guarded in your speech. You are in a special position and one of great trust and whatever you say is taken up and commented on, so you must be careful that nothing should go out from you which ought not to be said or known. To talk less and not be too unguarded in your speech should be part of your discipline of sadhana.

And yet who would leave him alone? Certainly not one like myself who has been used to his casual remarks revealing unsuspected depths, opening new dimensions, while waiting by his side for my turn to be called by Mother. For years I have listened and grown wiser.

For many of us he has been a model in more ways than one. I recall an occasion when someone said to Mother: Make me your child, like Champaklal. Mother replied: If you want to become like that you must undergo a very hard discipline. Ask him how hard a discipline I have given him.

Much later she was to tell Champaklal: When people ask for work and want to live with me, I give them your name and say, 'First you become unselfish like Champaklal.'

Some years ago I had occasion to write a birthday tribute to him under the title, "The man I love". I seek the indulgence of the reader to reproduce it here as I cannot improve upon it:

*

Someone had asked Mother for the meaning of her message, "Cling to Truth". What is *truth* was the query.

The Mother turned to each one who was around and looked for the answer; She passed from person to person till the turn came of this one. He replied:

There is no need to define truth; if one is sincere, one knows what truth is.

Exactly, said the Mother who was pleased with the straight answer.

That is my man. Straightforward in nature, he always goes straight to the heart of things. He may protest that he is not learned in philosophy and other such high subjects. But that is his virtue. Give him any piece of writing, make him listen to any discourse, he will immediately react to the right note if there be one.

Raso vai sah. Nothing is too high or too low for him. He will listen to the talk of a child with as much concentration and glow on his face as to a profound conversation by the Mother, music, painting (classical and futurist), handwork, manual labour – all claim his impartial and entire attention when they come before him. He exercises no preferences; to him all is *samam brahma*, the watchword of every yoga.

He will again protest that he does not know yoga and say that he is only a worker whose Mantra is Service. True, he is the embodiment of Service and the manner and the extent to which he has been privileged to serve both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for over five decades has no parallel. Neither food nor sleep has a claim over his time. But the quantum of service has no value for him. Did he not one day say to the Mother in the anguish of his soul: Mother, all these years, I have served as I wanted to serve; now I want to serve as you would want me to do.

And why has he chosen to serve? Because it is his spiritual Dharma. In his very childhood he perceived that Service to the Divine was the mould of his soul. He serves the Divine in and as the Guru, the Mother Supreme; but he also serves the Divine in the endless humanity that comes to the Mother's Feet. Yes, he serves you and me also. He will never allow a wrong to pass unrighted, however humble be the victim involved. I have always held that he is the one man in our world here who stands for principles and who will fight for them, no matter what the consequences be.

No doubt certain elements tend to exploit his nature and at times do succeed. But that is not because he is really deceived. He deliberately allows the benefit of the doubt to others, sees some

good or deliverance coming to them through whatever apparent evil.

All of us know he will not suffer fools and knaves for a moment; they call out his wrath in an ample measure. But Rudra soon yields to Shiva. He feels immediately sorry for his temper and makes up for it abundantly and gracefully. Like a child, *bālavat*, he will tell you how anger has been his curse, how he cannot help it until you begin to feel sorry for creating a situation that caused the flare-up!

Can you help loving such a man? So evolved, so privileged, and yet so transparent, so humble!

I have watched him from a distance, come into closer contact with him for some time, and what I have seen, felt and experienced made me exclaim one day, in his presence, to a friend: He is the one man who can be an *ātmaratīḥ* (one whose delight and contentment is in the Self) of the Upanishad. He is so impersonal in attitude, he is attached to nothing.¹ He, however, came down on me. He started cataloguing all his supposed defects, and vehemently disclaimed what I said. I was moved by his humility and strengthened in my conviction.

Why don't you tell us his name, you might ask. Is it really necessary to do so? Is there any other like him?

*

So that is Champaklal. Dear to all of us, as much on his own account as the rare recipient of the Grace of Sri Aurobindo and Mother for full five decades as their blessed child and privileged servitor. When I commenced work upon the book *Breath of Grace* containing testaments of some of the disciples of the Masters, some years ago, it was but natural that I should approach Champaklal first. But he was understandably reluctant to talk. I respected his feelings, admired his reticence and did not press him further. But my aspiration to record at first hand the impact of the Personalities

1. Not even the standards by which he lays great store normally. In moments of crises, I have seen him overpass them, in deference to the Divine Will, without the least regret. He has not studied Sri Aurobindo's Essays on the Gita, to be sure, but he acts spontaneously in the spirit of the Master's Call.

of Sri Aurobindo and Mother on the spiritual world of today and to convey some idea of the God's Labour they have put in for the elevation of man had its response ultimately and early this year he agreed to share with me his reminiscences, letters and notes. I was most grateful and took up pen and paper that very moment.

It has taken quite a few months to collect and sort out the vast material that is strewn in his innumerable papers, note-books, diaries etc. Everywhere the problem was what to say and what not to say at the present moment. However, with his patient co-operation and unobtrusive guidance some kind of shape has emerged. The material gathered and classified as approved by him – those who know his meticulous nature will appreciate my mention of this fact of approval – has been arranged as follows:

Recollections and Diary notes;

Spiritual Games that the Mother played with sadhaks;

Birthday Messages;

Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother;

Letters on Champaklal;

Some letters written by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother mostly to devotees connected with Champaklal;

Some valuable notes and memos left by the Mother with Champaklal now and then;

Quotes from the Mother's observations, remarks and replies, recorded by him.

A few years ago, when he received from Mother some colour pencils, Champaklal casually drew some patterns and wrote therein the Names so dear to him. On seeing the paper, Mother remarked that it would be very good for a book-cover. And naturally enough that design has been chosen for the cover of this book.* And it is apposite too. For what *Champaklal Speaks* is nothing but *Mother Sri Aurobindo, Mother Sri Aurobindo*.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

..M. P. Pandit

6.9.1974

* I had shown it in the Music Room. When Mother said "It will be a beautiful cover for your book", I thought she was joking. I had forgotten this until recently when G, to whom I had once mentioned it, reminded me. – Champaklal's note in his copy of the 1976 edition.

2-2-65

Champa Lal

This year, I feel
clearly that you
have become a
part of myself.

For ever Love

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Part I

RECOLLECTIONS AND DIARY NOTES

LOOKING BACK: THE HAND OF GRACE

I was a simple lad, somewhat introverted, unable to mix freely with others, with little understanding of things. I had no interest in studies. My teacher, whatever else he may have been, was always friendly. Another teacher was a friend of my father's and he felt he could exercise all rights upon me and say whatever he pleased. In the classroom he would openly ask me questions which I could not answer, then mock at me saying that I had grown only in body but not in mind. The students would naturally laugh and he joined in the laughter. I could do nothing about it except pray to God to reduce my body. But apparently He did not hear my prayer, for my body continued to be robust and I was nicknamed Ganesh.

In 1918, when I was fifteen, I joined the *Jnanaganga abhyasagriha* [study-home] opened that year by the famous academician Dr. Pandya in our town Patan. It was run by my mother's maternal uncle, Manilal Dave.¹ Students would spend the whole day there except meal times when they would go to their homes. I was very happy there.

Every year one of my paternal uncles used to go to a Shiva temple in a village near our town for a month-long puja in the holy month of *shravan*. When he passed away, my father asked me to perform that puja. I accepted on condition that after the month was over and I returned home, I would not rejoin regular school. He agreed. At the end of the month, I stopped going to school but continued in the *abhyasagriha*.

Somehow, a copy of *Ramakrishna-Kathamrita* came into my hands at this time and I devoured it avidly. I lost interest in everything. But I retained my interest in the *akhada* [gymnasium] which was popular in our town and where I went regularly, not so much for doing the exercise as to enjoy the freedom of the place. There I met Punamchandbhai, a very popular man who had a well-built body like that of the famous wrestler Sandow. I learnt that he not only looked after the boys' exercises, but also followed the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. I met him at his house. I was much influenced by him. Mother was to tell me later how hard she had to work to remove his influence over me; it remained

with me till 1930 when I was 27.

Some time later Shri Kesarlal Dikshit – a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and a very respected figure in the educational circles in those days – came there and met Punamchandbhai. Both of them decided to go to Kashibhai's place near Bharooch [on the estuary of the Narmada]. Punamchandbhai asked me to proceed with Dikshitbhai and said he would follow, along with his wife. Although my father knew very well that I would not be doing any studies there and it was only an excuse to leave home, he raised no objection. He did not believe in imposing anything on children after a certain age and simply kept quiet. My mother (whom we called *ji*) had two brothers. The younger was highly educated and took a deep interest in us. He had a very close relationship with Dikshitbhai. So my *ji* consulted him. When Dikshitbhai learnt of their reluctance to send me, he came to my father and said to him: "I am asking for *bhiksha* [alms], give me Champak. He is a jewel wrapped in rags." Father consented. That was how I left home when I was 17.

The ashram was on the island of Kansia, a few miles from Bharooch town. It was a fine place on the estates of Kashibhai, Kamala's father. He led a spiritual life and used to invite saintly personalities to stay there so that all of us who lived there could benefit by the *satsang* and build up good *sanskara*. He had invited Dikshitbhai to come there. Dikshitbhai's wife and son were already there when he and I reached the ashram. Kamala was then 5 years old. Later, Punamchandbhai and his wife Champaben, and Chimanlal, elder brother of Kesarimal [who later opened the Ayurvedic Section in Sri Aurobindo Ashram], arrived. Kanti, brother of Chandulal and Vasudha², left his college and joined us. Also came Natwarlal. Though in the beginning we had separate kitchens, after some time there was one joint kitchen along with Kashibhai's family. Dikshitbhai was the director of the ashram. A book can be written about what I learnt from him and about the history and management of this ashram.

Kashibhai's brother Haribhai lived in Bharooch and was a political leader at that time. Many important people used to visit him; I remember seeing C.F. Andrews at his place. Sri Aurobindo

considered Haribhai exceptional enough to give him instructions in sadhana even though he accepted the Swaminarayan cult after retiring from politics. I learnt that the instructions were such that Haribhai could go his own way helped by them.

Kanti and I went to Haribhai's house on the day of Rama-krishna Jayanti. We meditated there. Our desire to see Sri Aurobindo increased so much that I wrote to my aunt Motibai (my father's sister) about it. She had loved me very much from my childhood and I felt I must inform her. I did not want anything from home. She did not reply. I learnt later that she had not received my letter at all.

I told Dikshitbhai that we intended to go walking to Pondicherry. He declined to send us that way, on our own. He talked to Punamchandbhai and decided that all of us should start together. Dikshitbhai, Punamchandbhai and his wife Champaben, Zaverben whose husband Narayanbhai was Kashibhai's *munim* [estate manager], Chimanlal, Natwarlal, Kanti and myself formed the group. Dikshitbhai's son and the son of Dikshitbhai's maternal aunt also started with us but they went back from the next village.

We came to Navasari where Punditji, a disciple of Motilal Roy of Chandernagore, ran an ashram and published books in Gujarati. We stayed there for a while. I did not know what the elders of our party told him, but I learnt that we were to make sandals, sell them on the way and travel on the proceeds. Kanti knew how to make sandals. One big bag of leather was procured; we had to carry it by turns. Once while crossing a bridge over a river, Kanti was so tired that he wanted to throw the whole bag into the waters! Somehow he did not do that. At last we came to Bilimora from where three of us, myself, Kanti and Natwar, were to be sent by train to Bombay. I learnt that Champaben's ornaments were mortgaged in the town and tickets were purchased for us with that money. At Bombay we went to the bungalow of a disciple of Dikshitbhai, a businessman of Ghatkopar. Dikshitbhai had given us a letter of introduction to him. We procured a letter from a high railway officer, Motilal Mehta, to a certain Narandas (a C.I.D. man!) in Pondicherry. We were to stay at his place. How we met him and what happened subsequently I shall tell you next.

By the way, in the course of our journey, we all had gone for a bath in a river. Zaverben came with us saying that she could swim. While I was enjoying myself in the water, I suddenly noticed that she was struggling to keep her head above the water; as soon as I swam close to her, she caught hold of me. Somehow I extricated myself and managed to pull her back into shallow waters. I do not know how I did it or how I got the strength to save both of us. Obviously I had to come to Pondicherry. The Grace works in many ways.

1. Manilal Dave was a well-known educationist, a karmayogin who devoted himself to social service. He was so popular that after his passing, his students published a book of reminiscences about him. Entitled *Patan-na muka sevaka: Swargiya Manibhai Dave* (Silent Servitor of Patan: The Late Manibhai Dave). The book has contributions by A.B. Purani, Kantilal Purani and many others.

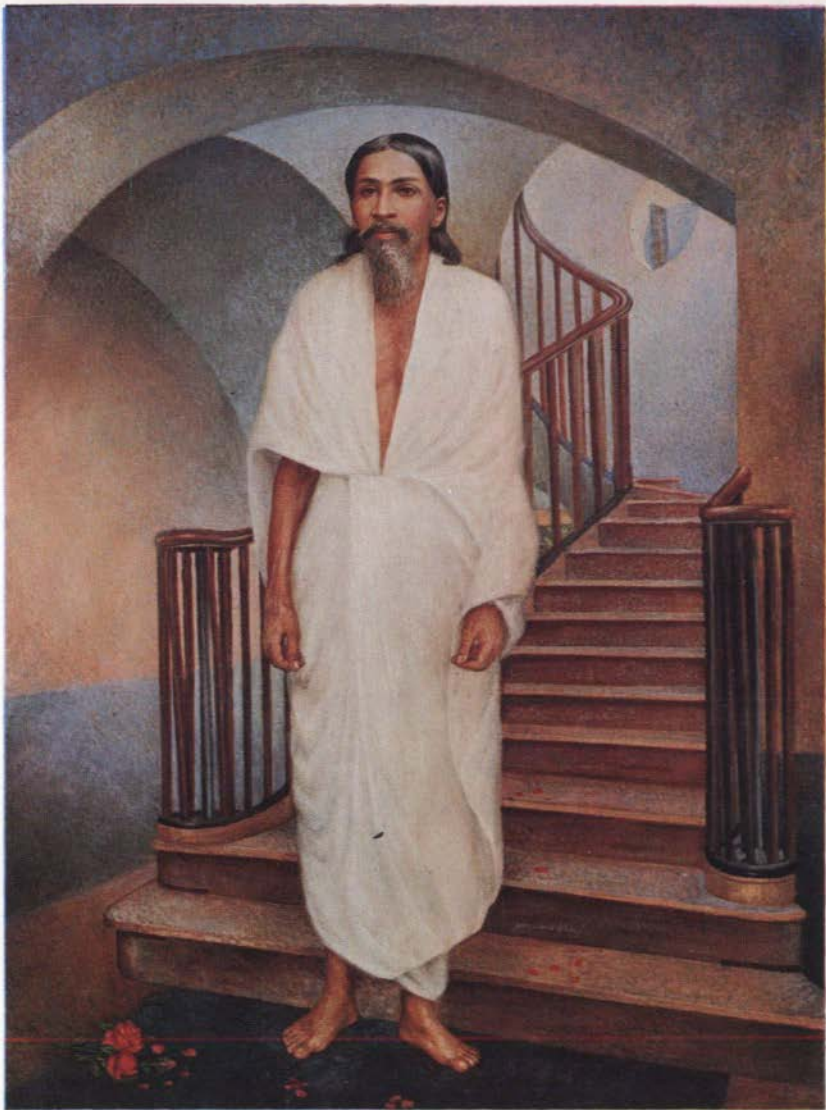
2. Chandulal Shah and his sister Vasudha came and settled in the Ashram on 17.2.1928.

WE ARRIVE

[The following account is based on Champaklal's diary.]

At last, Natwarlal, Kanti and myself arrived at Pondicherry at 6 a.m. on April 1, 1921. Feeling that it was not proper to sit in rickshaws pulled by human beings we did not hire one. We walked the distance from the railway station to the residence of our host Narandas in Mary Street. Though it should have taken only ten minutes, it took us half an hour as we did not know the way. On reaching Narandas's house, we presented to him the letter of introduction given by Motilal Mehta. After we had our bath, we were blandly informed that there was a measles case in the house and so no meals could be served to us. I cooked my own meal, as I always did, and my companions went to *Amanivasam*.¹

My mind was impatient to see Sri Aurobindo and, though I attended to the daily chores, my attention was fixed there. But when we got ready to set out we were told not to go outdoors between 11.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. as it was scorching hot. Even dogs were not allowed to run about in the streets during that time, as it was believed that heatstroke caused rabies. We were told that



Holy staircase where Champaklal had his first darshan of Sri Aurobindo



Top of the holy staircase where the Mother first met Sri Aurobindo,
29 March 1914

unless they carried a proper collar, dogs found in the streets at this time were killed by government order.

However, we could not remain confined to the house for long and started out at 1 p.m. and came to the Guest House, where Sri Aurobindo was then staying. There we met Amrita and informed him that we had come from Bharooch in Gujarat. "Babuji is sleeping," he replied (Sri Aurobindo was addressed as 'Babuji' in those days) and told us to come back a little before 5 p.m. We said we would sit there and wait. But he told us that we couldn't sit there and must go back and come at the specified time. We felt dejected.

Then we went to the seashore and, in spite of our depression, found the place beautiful. We sat under a tree and passed some time thinking about Babuji. But we were forced to get up because of ants and went to the pier. Then with our minds still on Sri Aurobindo we went back and sat under another tree. In the cool breeze and peaceful atmosphere we were overpowered by sleep. We woke up at 3.45 p.m. and with our attention once more focussed on Babuji, came back to his temple. We sat in the verandah inside and asked Amrita for some water to drink. It was given and we eagerly quenched our thirst. I may mention here that though it was true that we were thirsty due to the climate, what made us ask for water was the desiré to taste the *tirtha* in Sri Aurobindo's house. After Amrita had gone back we sat on. Some time later he came back and said, "Babuji is busy; I will call you." The call came at ten minutes to five.

Before that, as we were sitting in the verandah, we heard someone coming down the stairs. As soon as his foot touched the floor I spontaneously ran forward. I felt it must be Sri Aurobindo. I touched his lotus feet and prostrated myself in *sashtanga dandavat pranam* [with feet, trunk, shoulders, palms and head touching the floor like a rod – signifying surrender of the whole being]. Then he proceeded to the courtyard. Later I was to learn from the Mother that it was at a corresponding spot on the first floor that she had first seen Sri Aurobindo; that was at 3.30 p.m. on 29th March 1914. And I had, rather I was granted, the good fortune of meeting him just at that spot.

When we went upstairs Sri Aurobindo was seated in the verandah. I saw nothing except him and when I prostrated before him I lay there for one full hour. I just could not get up. No one disturbed me. At the end of that hour Sri Aurobindo placed his hand on my head, blessed me and said "Tomorrow." Then I got up.

A number of chairs had been placed near the table in front of Sri Aurobindo's chair. We were asked to sit there but we squatted on the floor by his side. He asked us our names and enquired about Dikshitbhai and Punamchandbhai; then he asked me: "Do you know English?" I said I did not. He began in Hindi and asked how we all had come.

C: "A group led by Dikshitbhai walked down from Bharooch to Bilimora and thence we three were sent by train."

Sri Aurobindo: "How long do you wish to stay here?"

C: "As long as you will permit us."

He looked around and smiled. Then he told us to come the next day and added that he would receive us after 4.30 p.m. He got up and we too stood up. He did namaskar and we did the same. Then he started towards his room and we remained standing till he entered it. When Amrita asked us to leave it was almost 6.10. When we left we were in a trance-like condition, our eyes could hardly remain open. No wonder we lost our way. Somehow we reached home, cooked our meal, ate it and, after some polite conversation with Narandas, still thinking of Babuji we fell asleep.

You ask me what were my reactions on my first darshan of Sri Aurobindo. Well, after getting up from my *sashtanga dandavat pranam* at his feet upstairs, I felt that I had nothing more to do in my life. This feeling itself was evident proof of our having 'arrived'.

The next day (2nd April), we went through the morning duties, had our afternoon rest and got ready to leave around four o'clock, but throughout our thoughts remained centred on Babuji. We reached his house and sat in the verandah downstairs. It was 4.30 but nobody came down and we became impatient for Babuji's darshan. Finally, at 4.55 p.m. Amrita came and escorted us upstairs. As soon as we approached Sri Aurobindo we prostrated and our eyes touched his lotus feet. For about fifteen minutes we sat quietly, then the following conversation took place.

Sri Aurobindo: "How many people are there at Kashibhai's?" He stopped after uttering Kashibhai's name. The ashram was known as Dikshitbhai's, not Kashibhai's.

C: "Twenty and a family associated with the ashram there."

Sri Aurobindo: "What are Dikshit and Punamchand doing there?"

C: "Why do you ask that? You know everything."

Sri Aurobindo smiled and almost whispered: "Yes, I know." Then looking round at all sitting there he laughed heartily.

Sri Aurobindo: "What are you doing in yoga?"

C: "I don't know what is yoga. I am practising something taught by Dikshitbhai and Punamchandbhai."

Sri Aurobindo: "What is the practice you are doing?"

C: "Whatever work I do I offer to the Lord and I offer it through you."

Sri Aurobindo: "How many practise yoga there? Give me their names."

I gave the names.

Sri Aurobindo: "Do you feel anything during this practice?"

C: "Yes, sometimes peace; I see at times light also."

Sri Aurobindo smiled very sweetly. Then he asked: "Yes, but has Dikshit explained to you how to dedicate everything?"

C: "No. He has only told us that we must be complete instruments."

Sri Aurobindo: "How?"

C: "I don't know."

Sri Aurobindo: "You see, the peace which you feel shows that God is near you. The Light you see suggests that you will be able to meet him in that peace and light. Gradually you will be able to stay in this state."

C: "Sometimes I feel that the light is inside me."

Sri Aurobindo: "It means God is within you. Are you practising this?"

C: "Yes."

Sri Aurobindo remained silent for some time. Then asked: "What made you come here?"

I answered in some detail.

Sri Aurobindo: "Do they read any papers there?"

C: "I don't know."

Sri Aurobindo: "Do you read the *Standard Bearer*?"

C: "At times. When I find there something that ought to be practised I note it down."

Sri Aurobindo: "How long did you stay in Bombay?"

C: "Four days."

Sri Aurobindo: "Where did you stay?"

C: "Near Motilal Mehta's bungalow."

Sri Aurobindo: "Now what are you going to do at your place?"

C: "We have not decided yet. We are thinking of doing some farming."

Sri Aurobindo: "Someone went to Chandernagore with Dikshit. Who was that?"

C: "Dwarkanath Harkare who lived in Gandhi Ashram."

Sri Aurobindo: "Who is he?"

C: "A Maharashtrian." (Harkare had once stayed in our study-home in Patan and taken a keen interest in me.)

It was 6.05 p.m. by now and Sri Aurobindo went into his room saying: "Now, tomorrow."

Now the third day. We got up at 6 a.m. After the day's routine we sat waiting for 4 o'clock. Our hearts were full of expectations and ardent for Babuji's darshan. Today, my mind had decided, there must be a long discussion with Sri Aurobindo; specific questions needed to be asked, and if time was too short, at least one particular one was indispensable. Joy seemed to be overflowing. But time refused to move! A thought came that we could pass the time in sleep! But today that too became difficult; finally, since we were determined, the goddess of Sleep enveloped us. After waking up we got ready quickly and set off. We went to the seashore and after a brief walk reached Babuji's temple at 4.10 p.m. Several times we sent word to Amrita. He would only say: "Babuji will see you at five. You will be called." Thereafter we tried to spend the time in japa and meditation, but it was very difficult to keep waiting. Finally we were called at 5 p.m.

After pranam when Sri Aurobindo started speaking, I said: "Please indulge us by speaking in Gujarati."

He laughed and said: "I knew Gujarati when I was in Baroda but now I have forgotten it."

C: "You know everything."

He laughed and laughed.

C: "You can speak at least in Hindi."

Sri Aurobindo: "That too I don't know."

C: "You certainly know Hindi."

And then he spoke in Hindi explaining what is meditation.

During our stay of eight days, several other things happened. Sri Aurobindo asked me to try to see the Divine Shakti of the Lord that is at work everywhere, in everything. When I asked him what books I should read, he told me to read *Prakriti Rahasya* (Secret of Nature) in Gujarati and Shandilya's *Bhakti Sutra*. He explained the subject dealt with in *Prakriti Rahasya* and told me that it was written by a disciple of Motilal Roy of Chandernagore who lived in Navsari.* When I read that book I experienced the awakening in me of something that perceived beauty everywhere.

Once I asked Sri Aurobindo: "When will I have realisation?"

In reply he told me the following story of Narada:

Two devotees were doing their sadhana in a forest for many years. Once when Narada passed by, one of them asked him, "Bhagavan [a form of addressing holy and venerable souls], you are regularly visiting the Lord. Would you kindly ask Him on my behalf when I shall be able to get His darshan?" A little further Narada met the second devotee. He too entreated him to ask the Lord the same question. On his return Narada told the first devotee, "You will see the Lord after as many births as there are leaves on the tree under which you are doing your tapasya." The devotee was utterly disappointed and gave up his sadhana. When Narada met the second devotee and told him the same thing, he felt unbounded joy and began to dance in delight: "Oh, after all I am certain to see the Lord!" The promise filled him with such an intense joy that he lost all sense of self and realised the Lord that very instant.

Thus Sri Aurobindo described to us how the time when we will realise the Divine depends on the one-pointedness and intensity of our aspiration.

When I asked Sri Aurobindo if we could see his room, he

smiled, said "Yes", and pointed towards his room. The three of us went inside unescorted. There, on his table, I saw an old pocket-watch. A thought crossed my mind that if I had the means I would get a better watch for his use and request this one for myself. The thought arose and disappeared like a sudden wave. (It had an interesting sequel. One day, after I had settled here and started working with the Mother, she brought that watch and asked me if I would like to keep it. I was amazed but did not answer because I had firmly decided never to take anything from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but to offer whatever I could.† All the same she gave it to me.)

We had not decided on which day we would leave Pondicherry. On the eighth day we all felt it to be the last day; for every evening, when we took leave of Sri Aurobindo after being near him for an hour, he used to say, "Now, tomorrow." But this time he said, "Whenever you meet with a difficulty, remember me", and after a pause, "Write to me." So we understood it was the last day. The wonder was that all that we wanted to ask Sri Aurobindo, all that we had to tell him, was over in the first two or three days, and yet every day, when we were leaving he used to say, "Now, tomorrow." This shows how he showered his infinite grace to keep us in his presence for some more days.

1. Situated on Duplex (now Nehru) Street, it was for decades a most popular restaurant.

* Interestingly, it was the same Punditji at whose place we had put up on our way to Pondicherry! Later, in one of the evening talks Sri Aurobindo was to say: "Tell Motilal I am also reading the Gujarati translation of his book *The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*." [Champaklal's note]

† This attitude has remained with me. Another instance: once when I was working in her room in Library House, the Mother came towards me with a smiling face beaming with tender love and joy, looked at me and stretching out her hand said, "Champaklal, take this. I give it to you for your pocket expenses." I saw in her hand a French currency note (the first one from her, it is still with me), but I could not extend my hand and receive it. Noticing my hesitation and unwillingness she said, "Champaklal, take it. Sri Aurobindo has said that it is indispensable to have a rupee or two. So I give this to you for your pocket expenses. Take it." I did take it, but I still remember it was not in the attitude with which I should have received it. I was then under the influence of some of my orthodox beliefs. Later Mother started giving each sadhak two rupees as pocket expenses in the Prosperity on the first of each month. The practice was stopped during the World War. [Champaklal's note]

SRI AUROBINDO'S PACING

Sri Aurobindo used to pace for hours together. This he did in each of the houses he lived in. I remember clearly, when we first came to Guest House in 1921, we saw a long narrow passage in the middle of his rooms – it was at least a quarter of an inch deep and ran from one end of one room to the other end of the other room through the connecting door. The floor, of course, was not made of cement but of *chunam*. We could guess that the depression must have been made by his walking and that was later confirmed.¹

1. Sri Aurobindo lived in the two rooms with a small terrace in front, on the northwest corner of Guest House. See also K.D. Sethna, *Light and Laughter*, 1974, p.25.

CHAMPAKLAL'S LETTER TO SRI AUROBINDO

OM

Kansia, P.O. Ankleshwar,
28.4.21, 3.00 p.m.

My Ishwara,

I have a persistent desire since many days to write to you; but I cannot decide which things to write. I feel like writing down everything but am unable to put all in front of you in words. Kindly shower your grace on this son of yours who has taken refuge in you and yourself see all I have to tell you, all that I need at present and all my difficulties, and kindly grant what my being aspires for and all that it needs.

Still, as I cannot control my impatience, I am writing a few things to you. As directed by you I sit in meditation but do not get any joy in it. Although I do wish to meditate, I cannot do it with joy. And as told by you, during the meditation I pray to the Divine Shakti but cannot surrender myself to you. While trying to surrender, my eyes burn and my head feels heavier and heavier. Once during meditation something happened, but only for a second. What happened I do not know, but I felt that if it happened always I could meditate for longer periods. It would be good if one can sit peacefully and happily without being disturbed by thoughts. I pray

for your Grace that I may be able to meditate in peace and joy and also do the practice you have given in the same way.

Next, I talk too much. I want to stop that. Talking too much is a great hindrance in my sadhana, yet I cannot stop it. I wish to remain quiet all the time, so please do whatever needs to be done. Also, please do what you need to do with my mind.

Sheltered at Your Lotus Feet,
Your servitor and obedient son Champak's
sashtanga dandavat pranam in Your holy service.

P.S.: I had finished writing this letter. But this morning, when I was half awake, I received a question coming from you: "You want a practice which you can do peacefully and happily, don't you?" I tried to listen to the instructions you gave for doing it but failed to hear anything. Kindly let me know if the question really came from you or it was just my imagination.

REMINISCENCES OF MY CHILDHOOD

My Father

Of all my recollections about the elders of my family, the ones about my father are perfectly clear. His life was most *sattwic* due to which those who knew him well addressed him as 'Purani Maharaj'. Though externally he appeared to lead the life of a *sanatani* [practitioner of Vedic rituals], compared to others of his time he was quite liberal in his views.

"It is said that children inherit their parents' assets, then why did I not inherit anything from my father?" I sometimes wondered, in the early years of my life in Pondicherry. But now I realise that my *sanskaras*, my inner orientation, is the wealth he has bestowed on me; a treasure no amount of spending can diminish.

The sweet voice of my father is still ringing in my mind. When he read *Okhaharan* [a religious epic] in his melodious voice, not only would the room be filled up but, what is surprising, more than half of the audience would be children. And they came early to occupy their seats, such was their interest. So captivating was

my father's discourse that no instructions were needed to keep the children quiet; even those of them who could not understand sat quietly. It is only now that I understand fully how deep an impact the vibrations of his voice must have left on their inner beings.

I recall an example of his liberal thoughts. Once I went on a pilgrimage with him to Nashik and Tryambakeshwar. I was to perform my uncle's *shraddha* [a ceremony for the dead]. As is customary, the priest asked me to shave my head but my father told me, "If you do not want to do it, it does not matter." In spite of his apparently orthodox ways, he never insisted on our observing every custom.

But in all matters of daily life he insisted on discipline. He himself observed it strictly even in the smallest detail and taught us to do the same. Thus some of our clothes belonged to us only to the extent that we wore them but we could not emphatically say that they belonged to us alone; for instance, there was a coat which was used by two or three of us. However, each of us had a separate peg on which to hang our clothes. There were two roads from our house to our school, but we were told to use only a particular one so that in case one of us was wanted at any time it would be easy to find him.

My father did not interfere much in our lives once we reached a certain age. Thus, he never rebuked my brother Kantilal.¹ My mother would complain, "You see everything but you never scold him; that is why he does not listen to me." At such times, to pacify her, he would recite this Sanskrit couplet:

लालयेत् पञ्च वर्षाणि, दश वर्षाणि ताडयेत् ।

प्राप्ते तु षोडशे वर्षे, पुत्र मित्रमिवाचरेत् ॥

The first five years pamper the child; the next ten years, if necessary beat him. But from the time he attains the age of sixteen, behave with him as with a friend. ...५

I recall another apparently trivial maxim. When I was young my parents often said, "You must wash your hands and feet before eating." I never followed this advice. Some years back, I noticed that every time I sat down to eat there was a sort of tremor in my

feet, but when I washed them and sat down, there was an immediate relief. Thereafter, interestingly, if for some reason I forgot to wash my feet, I had to get up in the middle of my meal to wash them. Once, long after I began doing it regularly, I read in a magazine that someone had researched this subject and showed why it is necessary to wash our feet before meals – in brief it helps digestion. It is from various big and small experiences of *rishis* and *munis* that such social customs have come up.

My father often said, “Ask and even the *muktaphala* [fruit of liberation] can be yours.” But he himself never asked for anything from anybody.

I remember another thing. Usually my father did not allow us children to be present when elders were talking. He would send us away saying, “Go, do your homework or read your lessons; if you don’t have anything to study go out and play. You must not listen to our conversations here.” But sometimes it was the contrary; “You may sit here if you wish to,” he would say and ask us to pay attention to their conversation. Whenever he had thus permitted us to attend these talks we always learned many things. I fully understand now what was the purpose behind this apparently contradictory ways of my father. In this connection I remember another incident.

Once my father and my maternal uncle were talking. I was sitting there, listening attentively. When my father said, “God’s Grace is always there; whatever I desire is fulfilled on that very day or the next day”, my uncle exclaimed, “Purani Maharaj, what a strange man you are! If this had happened to me, the first thing I would ask for would be a mansion!” My father quietly replied, “By God’s Grace, I have no such desire.” My uncle said, “I would not be able to live like you, Purani Maharaj. You amaze me.” My father said, “But I am fully satisfied. When God’s Grace is with us, what more is required?” When I heard this conversation I was five or six years old. What my father said has left a permanent impression because of something in his voice and the way he expressed himself. But I did not follow some of the other things he said and wondered what he meant. But the Gracious Mother is explaining all that to me now, through personal experiences.

Taking a nap in the afternoon was never the practice in our family. On the contrary, one should walk at least a hundred steps after lunch. That most people take a nap, sometimes sleeping till late in the afternoon, was something I saw only after I was about eighteen and began visiting other places. Nowadays, when I go out for some work or I am working at home, I am repeatedly asked to take rest. At such times I remember something my father used to say: "Who needs rest in the afternoon? Only people who are tilling their lands in the scorching sun or doing heavy physical labour need to rest."

Having mentioned farming, I am reminded of another anecdote. In those days, houses did not have a separate room for taking bath. In the severe cold of winter, my father would be taking his bath early in the morning, sitting on a small stone bench alongside the outer wall of our house. At that time our farmer neighbour would be going to his fields with his plough. Seeing my father he would remark, "O Lord, may I never be born a *baraman* (Brahmin) so that I do not have to take a bath early in the morning in severe cold." Referring to this, my father told us, "Saying such things as 'I cannot do something' or 'I cannot do it in that way' are only mental ideas. That farmer goes to the fields on that same early winter morning wearing only thick *khadi* (hand-spun cotton) instead of woollen clothes or wrapping a shawl around himself, but bathing seems difficult to him!" By such anecdotes, my father used to illustrate the peculiarities of human nature. These stories have proved most useful in my life.

On occasions he taught us through couplets, verses, poems, or fables. At that time these things interested me but were not fully understood. Now I understand their deeper meanings only by the Mother's Grace.

A lesson that my father taught me through a *doha* of the saint-poet Tulsidas has had a lasting effect on my life. In a very melodious voice he would sing:

*Kahān kahoon chhabi āpaki, bhale bane ho Nāth;
Tulasī mastak tab name, dhanushaban jab hāth.*

Explaining this he said, "God appeared in front of Tulsidas as Sri Krishna and Tulsidas told Him, 'Lord, I have no words to

describe Your Beauty; but my head will bow to You only when you come with bow and arrows in the form of Sri Rama.' And the Lord was forced to appear to him in that form." Then, explaining the deeper meaning behind the lines my father said, "You see, we may bow to all gods and goddesses, but our total surrender ought to be only to the form of the Divine that we have chosen to worship. Devotion and surrender have to be absolute." This too I liked but did not fully understand.

After coming here, when the Mother explained the same thing I found it perfectly natural. Nowadays I can understand such things easily, without making any effort. One day I saw Mother asking a sadhak not to read books on Sri Ramakrishna. It reminded me of my father's words which I had not properly understood; on the contrary they had surprised me. But this time I understood because Mother explained it through experience. To avoid misunderstanding I may add that Mother had specially asked the same sadhak, whom she was now telling not to read Ramakrishnadev's writings, to read other works besides Sri Aurobindo's. How Mother guided is now becoming clearer to me. Then I had only faith in her words and her workings. Now, the Gracious Mother has added to that faith an understanding even of the deeper mysteries.

In the early days I felt no desire to meet great personalities or read their books, though I did look upon them with respect. But now I can read books by any of them; not only that, I go to meet them on my own; yet my head bows only to the one to whom I have surrendered my all. Of course, when I admire someone I do *namaskar* to them, but never *pranam*. But that does not mean I believe I have progressed more than them. I write all this now only because nowadays Mother reveals everything to me. Sometimes some people wonder: "Why does Champaklal need to meet these people after staying so long with Sri Aurobindo?" Let me clarify that I do not go to them for guidance. I have an absolute faith in the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. They are doing and will continue to do everything that needs to be done for me.

1. Kantilal first came to Pondicherry in April 1927 and lived in the Ashram for several spells up to 1942.

What have you given to the Lord?

My father once narrated the story of Krishna and Sudama. I write this only for the moral of the story as he told it to us.

When Sudama goes to meet him, Sri Krishna is overjoyed and rushes out to meet Sudama. He embraces his friend lovingly and receives him with great honour. Later he himself gives Sudama a royal bath. Now Sudama's wife had given him some *paunva* [flattened rice or rice flakes] in a tiny cloth bundle to offer to Lord Krishna, but seeing the opulence there, Sudama is unable to do it. He tries to hide the bundle under his armpit but Sri Krishna snatches it away. Opening it he takes a handful of *paunva* and eats it; then he eats a second. But as he is about to put a third handful in his mouth Queen Satyabhama holds his hand and stops him. She says, "Lord, with the first handful You turned his hut into a palace, with the second You gave him *riddhi-siddhi* [prosperity and attainments]; if You take this one You Yourself will have to go to him."

The moral is that even if the Lord wants, until Sudama himself offers Him something, He cannot bestow anything. That is why in order to grant Sudama what He wanted to give him, the Lord has to snatch away his tiny bundle. Only when we surrender all to Him, does He abide eternally with us.

When our maternal cousins visited us on certain occasions, our parents gave us special instructions such as, "Do not say anything that might hurt their feelings. Behave nicely with them even if they do any mischief or are rude to you, and not only when they behave well. Then alone can we say, 'How generous are our children!' It will be a matter of pride for us."

Once my father rendered great help to a relative, financial and otherwise. Still that person's behaviour towards our family was disagreeable and this greatly angered my mother. My father then told her, "There is nothing unusual in treating someone well who behaves decently. To do so even when he mistreats you, would show the generosity and nobility of your nature." I remember very well how these words calmed my mother.

Whenever we were to visit somebody our mother would

instruct: "Remember, work is appreciated by everyone, so wherever you go do some useful work and do not keep playing or sit idle." In this regard our mother was very particular. She inculcated in us four brothers the habit of working and being useful to others. In those days, certain chores such as sweeping, fetching water and washing vessels were done only by girls. But it was not so in our house. We boys were made to do all these things. I recall my mother once asked my sister who had just swept the room, "Have you finished sweeping?" When she said yes, my mother pointed out the corners behind the doors: "Have you cleaned here?" My father told us that whatever the work, if one does it methodically and with an attitude to do better, we learn more and more things.

In my work with the Mother all that my parents taught me about work proved very useful. Mother was always happy with my work, and often expressed her happiness in words.

Nowadays, when I read letters sent to me, I recall my father's remarks regarding handwriting. He often told to me, "Your writing resembles brambles. You should form the habit of writing in fine curved letters. In the beginning the letters may not be well formed but if you write slowly, patiently and attentively, they are bound to improve." Then pointing to certain letters in my writing he said, "See these? How nicely they are shaped. There are others like them. So, if you decide to write beautifully, and remember your decision, you will be able to do it."

Along with such encouragement he would also give specific hints. One must always re-read what one has written so as to correct mistakes and make certain that the reader will not mistake one word for another. Sometimes letters are illegible and the reader is put to much trouble. This should not happen. He would stress the point about legibility and ask me never to forget it. My father's handwriting was remarkably beautiful; while our letters largely depended on the kind of pen or nib we used, his came out the same, whatever he wrote with.

"When you write a letter," he would say, "pay great attention to the words as well as the numbers in the address on the envelope. Practice makes one a good scribe, so form the good habit from now and your handwriting will become beautiful."

Recently, a man came to me with a family problem. "My wife is simple, kind-hearted and innocent, but the behaviour of other family members towards her is not good. They constantly insult her and are often unjust to her, treating her as if she were insane. I am unable to say anything to my elders. As yet I am neutral, but what should I do?" Then by Mother's grace I was reminded of an incident my father told me in my childhood. I recount it here because it may help some in their own progress and in their behaviour with others.

My father had a lawyer friend whose wife was mad but he took extremely good care of her. Sometimes for this he had to disregard others in the family, yet he always favoured her. His family complained about this to my father who also saw for himself that his friend did take excessive care of his mad wife.

One day my father asked him, "Don't you think you are doing too much for your wife?" (My father had many admirers and devotees but only one friend, this lawyer.) He replied, "I understand all this. Don't I know that my wife is mad? But do you know what her plight would be if I were not partial to her – how my relatives would treat her in my absence? Now, in order not to displease me, they behave nicely with her. If she had not been mad, if she had even a little understanding of things, I would certainly not act like this. But since she is not sane, unless I behave as I am doing, my wife would be totally neglected by all, I know that too. It is only sometimes that they have to suffer some inconveniences. But I do consider their needs and am careful not to neglect or disregard them; I am always conscious of that. Now do you have anything to say? The others have someone or the other to support and console them, but who is for her? Because I take care of this mad woman others behave properly with her. That is human nature. In a family, we have to sacrifice something for every individual. I am not as blind to my wife's shortcomings as they think, I can see very well who is at fault and who is not. Tell me, do you want me to prove it? If I change my behaviour towards her, in just two days the behaviour of the rest towards her will change and then you will see the pitiable fate that will befall her."

Traditional learning and Champaklal

As you know, every Brahmin must learn certain rituals after his *upanayana* [sacred-thread ceremony]. My father taught me *sandhya* [worship at dawn, noon and dusk] but I was never interested in this ritual. My elder brother, Sunderlal, who was brought up under the same *sanskaras* was just the opposite. My father sent us both to a well-known pundit for coaching. This pundit was very particular in the matter of pronunciation. Now, when it came to pronouncing the alphabets स (*ś*), श (*ś*), and ष (*ś*). Sunderlal learnt it in one day, but I could not do so even after a week. So Punditji was very displeased. I too felt very uneasy. He was taking a lot of trouble but, I don't know why, I simply could not pronounce them correctly, especially the last one, ष (*ś*). I did not know what to do.

Our town Patan is an ancient place with many *poles* [localities]. Generally, at the entrance of each of them there is a large gate, often with a watchman or two. The watchman at the gate of the pole in which our punditji lived, used to keep a pack of donkeys. Now hear what happened.

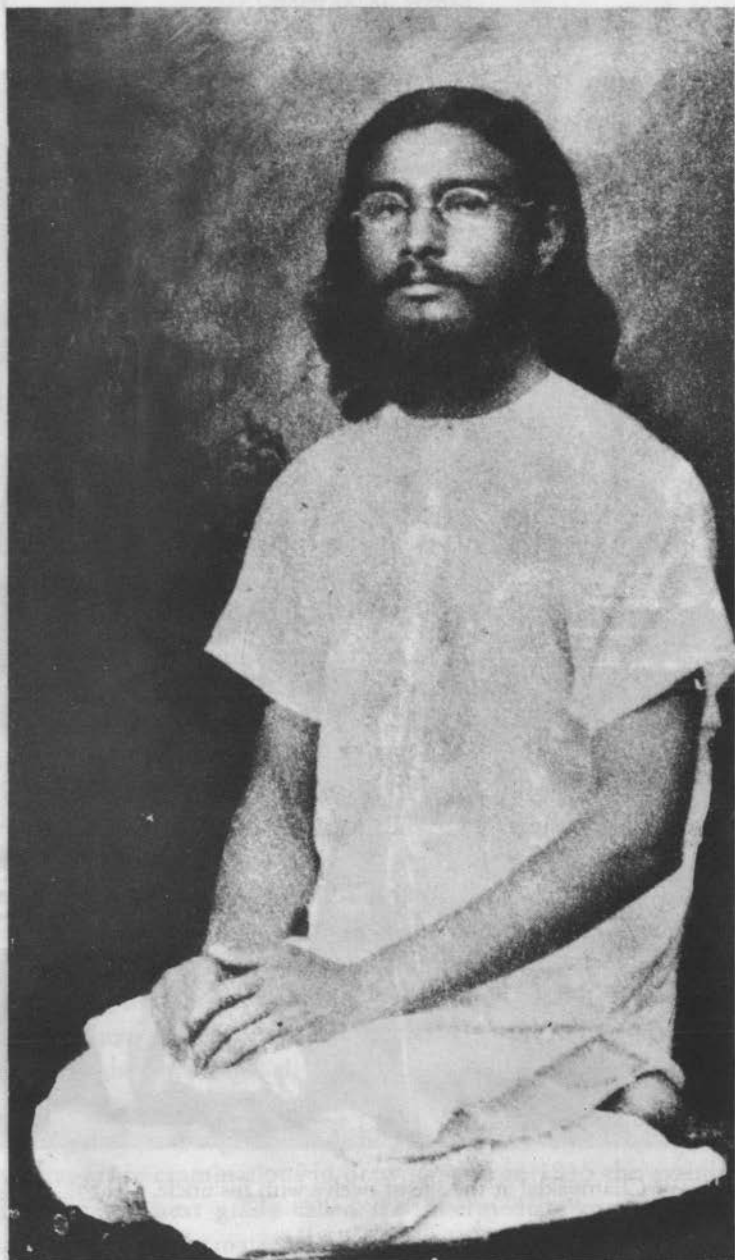
I had told Sunderlal that I was tired of our punditji. All the same we would start off from home with *pothi* [text-book] in hand. I would sit at the gate and wait there for about four hours till my brother came back after his studies, then we returned home together. A month passed this way. One day something unexpected happened. Usually punditji did not go out of his pole. But that day he came to the gate and saw me. I did not know it. On going back he asked my brother: "What? Champaklal is grazing donkeys there?" My brother kept quiet. Later, punditji reported the matter to my father, but he, unique in many ways, did not say anything.

My father provided all facilities for our education but never imposed anything. Thus from childhood he fostered my love for drawing and painting. In 1914, he sent me to Ahmedabad to take the first-grade examinations in drawing, and in 1915 the examinations for the next grade called the intermediate examination. I passed in both. My maternal uncle Shankarlal Bhanabhai Vyas also took the same examinations with me.¹

1. For a collection of Champaklal's paintings see *Champaklal as an Artist*, 1995.



Champaklal at the age of twelve with his uncle, 1915



Champaklal at the age of twenty in Pondicherry, 1923

Champaklal does not understand

Once my maternal uncle complained to my mother, "When Champak comes to our house he refuses to eat, even if we insist!" So she told me not to refuse in future.

Unexpectedly, the very next morning an occasion arose and I was sent on an errand to Uncle's house. He asked me to have my lunch there. Now, that very day both our families had been invited for dinner to some other place, and, as is usual in such circumstances, my aunt had not cooked a regular lunch. But not knowing any of that, I promptly accepted and my aunt was forced to serve whatever was available.

Back home, when I related this to my mother she exclaimed, "But this evening we are all going out for dinner!" I replied, "Well, Uncle asked me to eat, so I ate." Everyone laughed.

The next day when Uncle came to our house, he told my mother, "Champak does not understand anything! Yesterday nothing was cooked because we were all going out for dinner, but the moment I asked him merely out of courtesy, he promptly sat down to eat! He does not understand anything!"

Meeting an *avadhut*

In 1921, after returning from my first meeting with Sri Aurobindo, I accompanied my father and my aunt Motiben on their pilgrimage to Nashik, Tryambakeshwar, etc. On our way back we visited Chanod and Karnali¹ where we bathed in the holy Narmada. The stone stairs of the *ghat* along the river start unusually higher than the level of the water. I was sitting on the topmost stair, enjoying Nature's beauty all around, when suddenly I heard someone singing in a grand but melodious and soothing voice. Two lines of this song specially drew my attention:

The Soul is all, the Soul is all is the refrain;
But who gives up this bodily attachment?

These words were sung again and again, and were infused with

such feeling that they could penetrate the listener's heart and awaken his inner consciousness.

The voice came from the window of a house on the riverside. I was attracted to it and felt like going there. While I was wondering which way to go, a student passed by on his way to the ghat. I asked him, "Which way should I go if I wish to meet the singer of this melody?" He said, "It is not possible to go there now. You are extremely fortunate to have heard him sing at this time. He sings only at the evening collective devotional singing; and he never meets anyone, whosoever it may be. But all are allowed to attend the evening singing; that is the only time you will be able to meet him."

C: "What is his name?"

Student: "He calls himself *Paagal* [Madman], *Ghanchakkar* [Idiot] etc. His real name is Janardan."

C: "I want to go there; will you show me the way?"

Student: "There is no point in going there now. It will be in vain. Even if you go, he will definitely not open the door."

But I made him show me the way and managed to reach the place on my own. I knocked on the door and at once it was flung open as though he had been waiting just behind it for me. I was astonished to see him; it was the same saint I had met at Jhadeshwar² – his father was once Kashibhai's secretary! There was a lady beside him and he told her, "Now you see? Hasn't he come?" Turning to me he said, "I saw you sitting there. At this time I rarely open my window and look out, but today I spontaneously opened it and looked to where you were sitting and felt impelled to call you here. I told this lady that the man who is sitting there will soon come, for I am going to call him. Then I sat down with the *tanpura*. I sang just to bring you here. And see, you have arrived! Otherwise, I never sing at this time."

Then he asked me to attend the collective singing in the evening. My father, aunt and I went there. Some of his melodies were so touching and so simple that they just stuck in my memory:

Abandoning your hankering after earthly tastes,
Echo, O tongue, His nectarous Name.

Who is Chhagan and who is Magan, who Chandu or Bandu,
Mere illusions are these names and forms!

When *vairagya* has not stung you,
what can your guru do?

When there is no child in the womb,
what can the midwife do?

Thus we saw that he was an impromptu composer. These couplets seem quite ordinary but when he sang them the effect was so powerful that one would forget everything and just sit there. At Jhadeshwar, I had seen Kamala's father spend the whole day in his company. He used to keep a *dhuni* [a sacred fire tended with pungent herbs etc.] constantly lit in front of him. His massive physique reminded one of Bhimasen of the Mahabharata but his loving and carefree personality captivated everyone. As we were already concentrated on Sri Aurobindo's yoga, his personality did not touch us to that extent, but had I not already come in contact with Sri Aurobindo, I might have joined him.

To resume the tale of Chandod-Karnali. After he finished singing in the evening he told me, "Come tomorrow to my house at midnight. I will take you to an *avadhut* [ascetic]. Even if he abuses you or loses his temper and asks you to get out, do not leave." The next night we went to the *avadhut*. His fair complexion and white beard added to his luminous personality. He was sitting peacefully in front of his *dhuni*. Smilingly softly at me, he gestured to me to sit near him and asked: "Is it going on constantly this way?" At that time I was following the sadhana given by Sri Aurobindo. I replied, "I am trying." Then he said, "*Jumna-maiya*³ will fulfil your *sankalpa*. I can see your Guru behind your head. *Jumna maiya* will help you attain your goal. I may get a chance to meet you again." He thus welcomed me very nicely and instead of abusing, blessed me.

On our way back, I was shown another sadhu, but from a distance: "That man too is a saint." His dress was in tatters and his actions seemed those of a madman; but he was only pretending to be mad, so that people stayed away from him. He filled a vessel

with water from the river and, standing on the last step of the ghat, splashed it all around. I had met this 'mad' sadhu before in a small hut in Jhadeshwar and had been very impressed by his carefree nature. He had spoken a lot about Swami Ramatirth but as we had already met Sri Aurobindo, we enjoyed his company without being overwhelmed. When we first met, he wanted to make me his disciple. But nowadays, when we meet, he introduces me to his disciples as his close friend.

1. Chandod is on a tributary of the Narmada; Karnali, only a few kilometers away, is on the Narmada. It was during a visit to Karnali that Sri Aurobindo had a vision of the World Mother in a Kali temple. He described it in his poem "The Stone Goddess". *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, December 1978, pp. 209-10.

2. Jhadeshwar is near Bharooch; both are on the estuary of the Narmada.

3. Mother Jamuna or Yamuna – a holy river of North India.

Paul Richard and Champaklal

When Paul Richard¹ visited Gujarat [in 1921], he made our ashram in Patan his headquarters. He visited other places from there. He became like one of our family.

The first thing he would ask us when we met him in the morning was, "Did you have a good sleep? Did you have good dreams?" He asked us to keep a notebook and pencil at hand when going to bed so that whatever happened in sleep could be noted down. Today I find this suggestion quite appropriate. Interesting experiences occur in the night which one thinks of writing down in the morning, but much is lost in the process.

He loved us very much. He would sit crosslegged and make me and Kanti lie on either side with our heads in his lap and caress our heads simultaneously.

He was a lover of beauty. He took us out to enjoy the sunset and meditate. Since then, sunset has become my favourite sight and I never miss any opportunity to watch it.

He also put great emphasis on cleanliness. He carried a small but powerful magnifying glass. Holding it over our palms he would say, "You see how difficult it is to keep the hands clean?" He insisted that food should not be touched by the hands.

Once he was very angry on seeing the black marks made by a washerman on his clothes. After some time he laughed and said, "This has happened because there must be a black mark in me." He did not know that washermen make such marks in order to distinguish clothes belonging to different customers.

He took me and Kanti along when he visited Palanpur and from there we went to Balarama Mahadev. We were also with him when he went to the Sahitya Parishad in Ahmedabad.

Later he went away to the Himalayas. When he learnt that our ashram in Patan was closed, he wrote two letters to me calling me to join him. I was to wire to him if I wished to go. Though I wanted to live in the Himalayas, it never materialised because I was destined to come to Pondicherry. Just as Paul Richard invited me to the Himalayas, Sri Aurobindo asked me to come to him. Pondicherry is not Himalayas, but for me it is the best place in the world. By Sri Aurobindo's infinite Grace I was fortunate to come here.

1. See *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, December 1988, pp. 198-203.

Lele's miracles

Our ashram shifted from Kansia to Patan. We hired two bungalows belonging to a businessman, outside the Fatipal Gate on the way to the famous Kali Temple. Near our ashram, but on the other side, along the road leading to the Saraswati, was a Jain hostel for students in charge of a certain Fulchandbhai, who was interested both in the works of Sri Aurobindo and in our ashram. He had deep respect and affection for Dikshitbhai and helped us as much as he could.

Once Lele visited our place and that of one of his devotees and accepted to dine at both the places. One morning, Fulchandbhai came with the students of his hostel to see Lele and requested him to speak to them. Lele said, "Lakshmi, Champaklal's sister's child, will say something." Immediately, Lakshmi gave a short but powerful and impressive speech. It reminded me of the speech that Sri Aurobindo had given in Bombay following Lele's instructions. After her speech Lakshmi burst out in tears pleading loudly, "Give

me the complete darshan! Show me the face! show me the face!" Lele commanded, "Take her outside." One of us took her out but she would not keep quiet. Then Lele asked us to divert her attention to something else. She was taken to a garden where she finally calmed down.

Lele said, "She had a vision of Sri Krishna's face, but not of the upper half; that is why she was pleading so much to be shown His whole face." Then added, "Take great care of this child; see that she is never disappointed or dissatisfied."

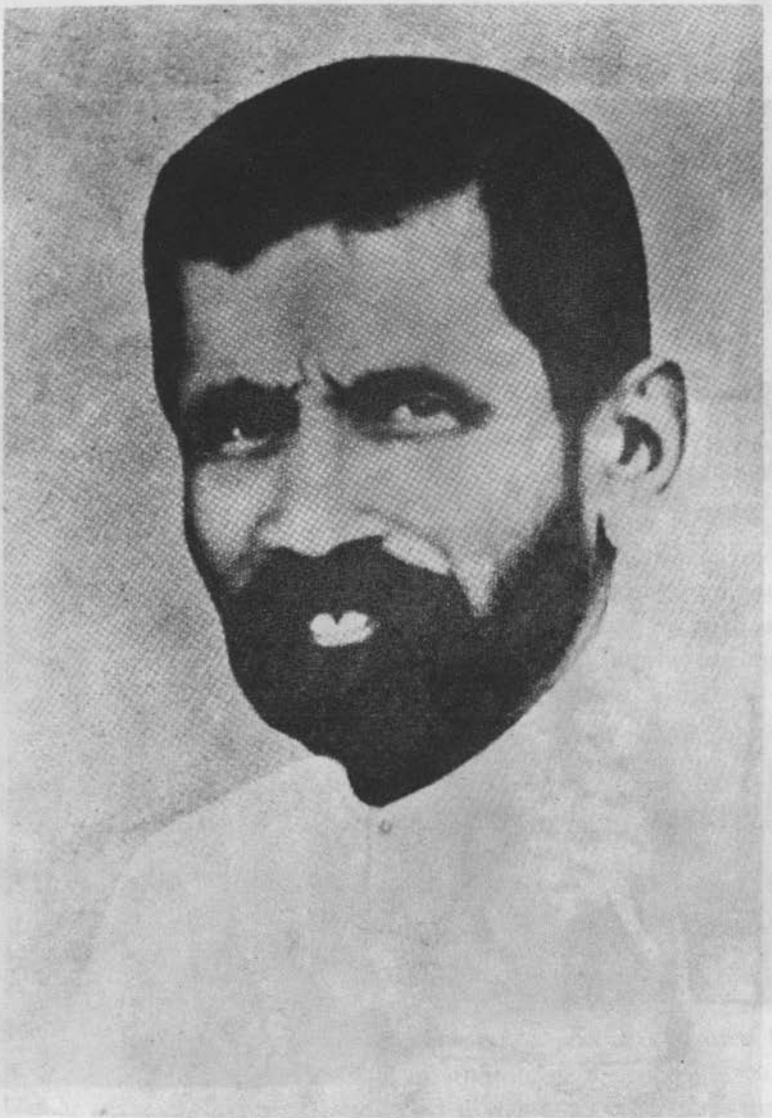
Thereafter Lakshmi began to have many visions and she and Lele grew deeply attached to each other. Lele used to chew *pan'* and place his half-chewed pan in Lakshmi's mouth. Though she had never before accepted food tasted by anyone else, such being the *sanskara* of our Brahmin family, yet she happily accepted that pan. I was amazed at this but did not feel Lele had done something unacceptable – he had merely displayed his power. (As far as I know, in the Vallabh cult gurus distribute their half-chewed pans to devotees as prasad. This may not be liked by some, but spiritual masters have used all sorts of physical means for imparting certain experiences or capacities. And that outward form seems to have hardened into a tradition in that cult so that now even the juice of chewed pans is spewed out on devotees! Lele at least could impart real experiences.)

Lele used to ask people to look into Lakshmi's eyes and that produced various experiences in some of them. Lakshmi's eyes were like Lele's, luminous blue, like in some cats!

I remember an incident that occurred when Lele came to our ashram in Patan. It was the day of an eclipse and at the time of the eclipse he made us sit in meditation. I had no experience during this meditation and I cried a lot because of that.

There were two pequiliar characteristics of Lele that I observed in those days: he could not tolerate the slightest bad odour and so always kept with him a scented handkerchief; and he added a lot of *ghee* [clarified butter] to his tea.

After he left Patan, Lele wrote to me that I should take Lakshmi and go to him in Ahmedabad where he was staying. He had arranged with the famous industrialist Ambalal Sarabhai to keep



Yogiraj Vishnu Bhaskar Lele



Lele's favourite Lakshmi

Lakshmi in his house for study along with his children. But my father did not consent. I don't remember whether I went there alone or with Lakshmi. Lele was there with Pandit Lalan, a *shatavadhani*.² I saw how much respect Pandit Lalan had for Lele.

I had great affection for my niece Lakshmi and she was so attached to me that she insisted I take her along wherever I went. Lakshmi had a younger sister who also was quite attached to me. Once she fell seriously ill when I had gone out, but she went on calling for me. As soon as I was back, I took her head in my lap. She kept staring fixedly at me and then left her body. I asked everybody not to weep, but when some tears spontaneously welled up in my eyes everyone started weeping.

Before he left our ashram in Patan Lele instructed us to dissolve it. He asked Dikshitbhai to leave without telling anyone where he was going and Punamchandbhai to proceed to Bombay where Lele would arrange for his stay. To me, he gave two alternatives: go out of our neighbourhood and help anyone in need, or take up work as a blacksmith in a nearby factory. I knew that my mother, being quite orthodox, would not be happy to see me, a son of the well-known Purani family, working among people who were poor, sick, blind, lame etc. So I took up the work of manufacturing brass nut-crackers in the factory.

There was a temple in the compound where the factory was located. The priest who lived in it had renounced all his earthly possessions. There was a narrow lane which was a short-cut to the factory but it was rarely used because it was strewn with rubbish and very dirty. One day I went by this way and was suddenly stung by a scorpion and could not suppress a scream. On reaching the factory I told some people about the incident and they insisted I relate it to that priest as he had an antidote to scorpion poison. When we reached there I found that it was none other than the Sanskrit pundit whose classes I had avoided! You can imagine how amazed I must have been. He was surrounded by devotees and enquired what had happened, but he did not believe I had really been stung by a scorpion. "You have still not given up insulting your teacher!" he exclaimed. This annoyed me and immediately I took those who had brought me to him, to the spot where I had been

bitten. We searched a little and, finally, did find the scorpion. I was satisfied that I could prove to them all that I had not lied.

1. A popular preparation with arecanut, spices etc. wrapped in betel leaves.
2. A genius who can solve a hundred scholastic problems in one sitting.

Guru and disciples

When we came to know that Dikshitbhai was in Shinor¹, I went to meet him. On the way, in the train, I met a sadhu who related this story:

His Guru, Brahmanandji, had talked to each of his disciples in private before leaving his body. For a long time thereafter, the disciples lived happily together, in peace and harmony. But one day a quarrel started between two of them resulting in lengthy arguments. Finally one of them said, "Our Guru has given me something special, which he has not given to anyone else." The other too made the same claim. In fact every one of them had been living in the same belief! It was only then that they all realised how their Guru had imparted to each a unique experience, not merely some good words, and there was no point in quarreling like this. Afterwards they lived in a deeper and truer harmony.

1. Some miles southwest of Chandod-Karnali, not far from the Narmada.

A strange experience

It was 1922; I was then 19. As I said before, every year during the holy month of *shravan* [July-August] my uncle used to go to a village near our town Patan and stay there for worship in its Shiva temple. After he died, my father asked me to go there in *shravan* and perform the same ritual. I went with my father's sister, Motiben¹, who is now here in Pondicherry. Hardly anybody visited that *Shivalaya* and so it was very peaceful. Every day, for three to four hours, a particular type of *japa* had to be done, but instead I spent the time in my own way.

There was a beautiful pond on the edge of the village and every morning I went there for a bath. In the afternoons I would climb a tree beside the pond and jump into the water, I loved doing this

again and again. One day I spent more time there than usual and was returning with my aunt. At the entrance of the village beautiful neem trees stood on either side; flowers had begun to blossom on them. Every day I used to enjoy this sight, but that evening I stood there captivated by the scene. I told my aunt: "Look, how beautiful they are!"

After we returned to the village, I lay down to rest in the house in which we had put up. Suddenly my teeth got clenched, I could not speak. Aunt tried to make me speak but I could not. I had a feeling that all would be well after two hours but I could not make her understand. I held up two fingers, but in vain. My consciousness was indrawn though I observed all that was going on outside. Word spread about my condition and a villager who had respect for me rushed in with a sadhu. The sadhu had brought a big bundle of long peacock feathers and started passing them over me while muttering some mantras. I protested, but no one paid attention; they were busy listening to my aunt's story. At the end a villager said that the tree beside the pond was the haunt of a ghost. I knew it had nothing to do with my condition but I was not in a position to explain it to anyone. However, for me the two hours passed wonderfully and then things became 'normal'.

The sadhu who came in with the feathers, had done penance under the same tree beside the pond before he settled in the village. In 1923, he came to Pondicherry and saw Sri Aurobindo who later spoke highly of him and said: "You can see from his eyes that he has done *tapascharya*."

1. Motiben is at present the oldest Ashramite, 105 years of age. See "Champakal's Dear Aunt Motiba", *Mother India*, Feb. 1995, pp. 119-22.

HOW I CAME

It was 1923.

Punamchandbhai spoke to Sri Aurobindo about our ashram at Patan (which was moved there from Kansia). He mentioned that if his wife Champaben came to Pondicherry she would be very helpful in looking after the kitchen here. He said that he had discussed it with Purani, who was in charge of the Guest House in

those days. Sri Aurobindo approved of the idea and it was decided that Punamchandbhai would go and bring his wife. When he was ready to leave, Sri Aurobindo asked him: "What is Champaklal doing there?"

Punamchandbhai described what we did in the ashram.

Then Sri Aurobindo told him: "Bring him also when you come."

Now you know how I came here!

IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PROTECTION

Punamchandbhai, his wife Champaben, Kamala's brother Mahesh and I arrived here on 12th June 1923. After about a month, as far as I remember, plans for the marriage of Champaben's brother were finalised. Punamchandbhai did not go but sent Champaben to attend the wedding. I accompanied her during that fortnight.

Before we left, Punamchandbhai went to see Sri Aurobindo and I too went along. He told Sri Aurobindo, "My horoscope indicates a fatal accident in the near future, so I am not going. Champaklal will accompany Champa to Patan." At that time while giving his permission, Sri Aurobindo had not made any comments.

This happened some time after we had returned from the wedding. One day, Punamchandbhai went for a walk on the seashore. Accidentally, Bijoy's stick struck him on his knee and made a painful wound which later became septic. Doctor Upendra-babu of Calcutta was then living here. He used Champaben's hair-clip to examine the wound and said, "It is necrosis (bone decay)" and added that an operation was imperative. After Sri Aurobindo gave his permission, it was decided that the operation must be done in Madras and that Doraiswami¹ would arrange everything. Sri Aurobindo asked Dr. Rajangam², Purani and myself to accompany Punamchandbhai.

Interestingly, when all preparations were made Sri Aurobindo asked me not to go and told Punamchandbhai that Champaklal will not go. The next day Punamchandbhai said I should place the facts before Sri Aurobindo. So I informed Sri Aurobindo that my going was necessary because I had to attend to Punamchandbhai's correspondence. Then Sri Aurobindo permitted me to go.

Sri Aurobindo had instructed Doraiswami to see that the operation was done in his house and not in the hospital. It was performed by the famous surgeon, Dr. Rangachari. He owned a Rolls Royce car, a novelty in those days.

When, after our return, Punamchandbhai reminded Sri Aurobindo about the fatal accident indicated in his horoscope, Sri Aurobindo said, "I had thought the calamity was expected to befall your father, not you."

At that time I had felt that what was fated did happen even though Punamchandbhai did not go to Gujarat. But now I realise that in actual fact Sri Aurobindo's protective power had accomplished the work of a *shuli* [stake used to impale convicts] with the help of a *soy* [tiny needle]. It also shows that Sri Aurobindo attends to the smallest thing concerning sadhaks and insists on making on all the necessary arrangements.

1. Doraiswami Iyer (1880-1976), a distinguished barrister and early disciple, had highly-placed friends in legal and medical professions. In 1942, Sri Aurobindo was to send him to Delhi with a message to the Congress high command exhorting them to accept the Cripps proposal of dominion status for India.

2. Rajangam settled here in mid-1923. See his article "Long Back" in *Breath of Grace*, ed. M.P Pandit, 1972.

LIVING EXAMPLES

You once asked me what were my impressions when I first met Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Well, it is difficult to describe them. But I remember this much, that I felt I was in the presence of Shiva when I saw Sri Aurobindo. When I saw the Mother, I felt an extraordinary closeness to her and saw in her an embodiment of Beauty.

Now, after all these years of stay with them, the total impact on me is this:

Sri Aurobindo is a living example of complete surrender.

The Mother is a living example of perfect service to the Lord.

SRI KRISHNA AND SRI AUROBINDO

Kamala's brother Mahesh had come with me in 1923. Obviously

we both came for the same purpose, but I found a difference in Sri Aurobindo's way of dealing with us. To me he was speaking and guiding me in his Yoga but to Mahesh he talked of *bhakti* and *upasana* [worship] of Sri Krishna. Later I found out that Mahesh was intensely drawn to Sri Krishna and his path was different from mine. One day, however, he expressed his difficulty in reconciling his adoration of Sri Krishna with his surrender to Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo told him: "There is no difference between Krishna and me."

I JOIN THE EVENING TALKS

Soon after coming here for good, I asked Sri Aurobindo whether I could join in the evening talks. He smiled happily and said: "Yes, you have permission to come. But you see, there is no spare chair there."

As all were sitting in chairs it was understood that I too would need a chair! I did not know what to do, but then I remembered that during my first visit I had been introduced to a well-known Chettiar and he had been pleased to know me. I felt he would be happy to do something for me. There was much hesitation to go and ask but I had no alternative. I wanted to attend the talks, not indeed so much for the talk itself but to spend that much time in Sri Aurobindo's presence. My principle was not to ask for anything from others. It was not a *vrata* [vow] taken in a religious spirit but a principle observed as sincerely as I could. However, in this case, I set aside my principle.

I went to the bungalow of the Chettiar. There I learnt that the old gentleman had died. His son came and welcomed me. I did not know what to say but, as usual the Divine helped me. The gentleman himself started speaking. He said he was happy to see me and would be glad if he could do anything for me.

Hesitantly I said: "I would like to have one chair if possible." Immediately he requested me to follow him and took me to one of the halls where there were rows of chairs. He asked me to choose from them. There were no ordinary chairs, so the one I chose was a nicely polished and cushioned rosewood chair.

Returning home I took the chair straight to the verandah upstairs and put it at the end of the row of chairs. But when the talk was to start in the evening I did not sit in that chair. I went straight towards Sri Aurobindo and sat on the floor between his chair and the one to its left – the space was just enough for me to sit!

Sri Aurobindo looked around and smiled. All were surprised. I myself was surprised; for I had not planned to sit there at all!

LIBRARY HOUSE

When I first came here in April 1921, Sri Aurobindo was living in the Guest House.¹ When I came for good in June 1923, both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were living in Library House.² Sri Aurobindo used to see people in the morning in the verandah upstairs. At that time it was an open verandah, covered on three sides (east, west and south) with big curtains; the windows you now see on these sides were put in much later. The hall to its north, where Mother distributed Prosperity³ blessings, was then her Stores. The room to the north of this hall was Mother's room (it was later to be my room). The corner room (to the east of the hall) was Sri Aurobindo's. The room to the left, on the top of the staircase, was Datta's⁴ (later Rajangam's).

There were three doors (the upper halves had shutters) connecting the Stores and the verandah but only the middle one was used; the easternmost door was kept shut. Three chairs were placed along the eastern side of the verandah, leaving sufficient space between them. The centre one was for Sri Aurobindo, it had a small table in front. Along the southern side of the verandah, there was a row of chairs.

As I said, Sri Aurobindo used to meet visitors in the morning. Amrita would come up with the newspaper and tell him who were due to meet him that day. Then Amrita would go down and announce the order in which people had to come up. After the interviews were over and while Sri Aurobindo read the newspaper, those sadhaks who were permitted would sit there in meditation. Usually it was Tirupati, Rajangam, Kanai and myself. We used to

sit on chairs. Now, who would not like to meditate in Sri Aurobindo's presence? But in those days people did not ask for something just because it was given or permitted to someone else.

The shutters of the three doors in the verandah were kept open. And, as I heard later from Mother, whenever she was in the Stores, through those open shutters she could watch the visitors as they walked across the verandah to meet Sri Aurobindo. That was how she had first seen me and, it appears, she told Sri Aurobindo: "This boy will help me in my work; he will be very useful." That was long before I took up work with her. I may add that she said something similar of Pavitra⁶. Seeing him she told Sri Aurobindo: "He will be very useful; he will do all my foreign correspondence." And that is exactly what happened.

Now regarding the rooms on the ground floor of this house: the room which is at present the office of the Reception Service (where photographs are sold) was Moni's⁷. He had a humorous and happy disposition and his poems reflect this nature. When he left, that room was given to me. The present Reception Hall was Nolini's room and the present reading room was Amrita's. What is now the Publication Department display and sales room was Bijoy's⁸ and its office under the terrace leading to Ravindra's rooms in the back courtyard was Barin's⁹ room.

When Sri Aurobindo came down to the dining room (the present fruit distribution room) to have his food, he came down the Prosperity stairs, passed through Nolini's room, Bijoy's room and then entered the dining room. (This dining room was only for the inmates of Library House; the inmates of Guest House, where I stayed in the room that Mother had lived in, had a separate dining room.) It is specially interesting to me that everybody receives fruits from the very room where once Sri Aurobindo had his meals.

An interesting feature of those days: Cows were brought by their owners to the customers' houses and milked in their presence. Another unusual custom I saw here for the first time was that a crudely stuffed calf-skin tied to four sticks was kept in front of the cow which licked it while being milked! In Gujarat no cow would lick a dead calf stuffed in this way. After the Mother was informed



Some inmates of the Ashram, 1923

Top: Rajangam, Tirupati, Khitish, Nolinida, Satyen, Kanai, Bejoy,
Purani and Nagaratnam (a local devotee)

Centre: Punamchand, Champaben, Mrs.Kodandaraman, Mr.Kodandaraman

Bottom: Champaklal, Moni, Amrita, Manmohan



Bansidhar, Nolinimeshwar and Kantilal cooking for Sri Aurobindo
in Library House.

that the cows had been brought to the front courtyard, she would send a vessel downstairs with a cloth strainer over it and then herself come down and hold the strainer over the vessel.

1. Sri Aurobindo began to live in this house, 41, Rue François Martin in June 1913, and the Mother from 24 November 1920. In October 1922 they shifted to 9, Rue de la Marine, which now forms the southwest part of the main Ashram building. Thereafter some inmates and visitors resided at 41, Rue François Martin which came to be called the Guest House.

2. The present reading room to the east of the Reception Hall in the Ashram main building became Amrita's room after Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved into this house in 1922. On 8 February 1927, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved to the first floor of 28, Rue François Martin, the house that now forms the northeastern part of the main Ashram building. Nolini and Amrita were given rooms on its ground floor. Amrita's room was then turned into a library and the whole house began to be known as Library House. Punamchandbhai was the first librarian; he was succeeded by Premanand.

The new house (28, Rue François Martin), the last that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother occupied, is called Meditation House. Later, in the hall outside Amrita's room, Mother used to preside over collective meditations. For many years she also distributed flowers etc here.

3. The word "Prosperity" in this context means the materials, such as toilet articles, clothing, stationery etc., given to Ashram inmates on the first of every month. It is also used for the department (originally known as Stores) in charge of the purchase, storing and distribution of Prosperity.

4. Datta (Offered), name given by Sri Aurobindo to Dorothy Hodgson, an Irishwoman who joined the Mother in 1916. Later she shifted to the house to the west of the Ashram, now 14, Rue de la Marine.

5. Kanailal Ganguly settled here in July 1923. See his "As I Remember" in *Breath of Grace*, pp.33-41.

6. Pavitra (Pure), name given by Sri Aurobindo to Phillipe Barbier St. Hilaire who settled here in 1925. He fought in the First War in the French artillery, then lived in Japan and Mongolia among Buddhist monks.

7. Moni, pet name of Suresh Chandra Chakravarti. Sri Aurobindo sent him to Pondicherry in March 1910 to arrange for their stay here. "v"

8. Bijoy Nag, a revolutionary, chosen by Sri Aurobindo as his companion in the passage from Calcutta to Pondicherry in April 1910.

9. Barindra, Sri Aurobindo's younger brother. Sentenced to life imprisonment in the Alipore Bomb Case in 1908, he was released from the Andamans in 1920 and came to stay here in 1923. He left for good on 25.12.1929.

SWEET MEMORIES

Roshan: "Champaklalji, did you know English when you came here the first time? In which language did you communicate with the Mother?"

C: "When I first came here I talked very little with Mother but I listened attentively to whatever she said. In childhood I had learned a little English, so I could talk with her when necessary. But in those days Mother did not meet the sadhaks in the way she did after taking charge of the Ashram; she remained mostly with Sri Aurobindo. Thus she had more time for herself. She loved to talk and laughed freely, often bursting into peals of melodious laughter which was a joy to hear and made me very happy. Later this laughter became quite rare and in the last days I never heard her laugh.

"Gradually, I could talk freely with her in English. Now I realise that it was actually she who made me speak.

"Mother said so many things but much of it cannot be related, for two reasons: firstly, I do not have the power to express it in words; secondly, personal matters of the sadhaks should not be divulged. Those days I always wondered why Mother was telling these things to me. Mother was not meeting people then but due to my work I was with her most of the time, even during her breakfast and lunch. It was only late in the night that I went to my room and returned early next morning. I had no time to come in contact with others, no opportunity to talk with them. I am talking of the very early years, after I began working with the Mother.

"Once, in reply to one of my questions, Sri Aurobindo said, 'Reading is not indispensable. Knowledge can come even without reading. You can read the letters written to Motiben by the Mother; there she has explained how work itself is a sadhana.' But at that time, I did not care to know anything except how best to serve Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. So I did not even care to read those letters. But now when I want to read them, they cannot be traced. Motiben used to give them to X to read; perhaps she never got them back.

"When Mother lived in Library House, she used to take her

bath very late in the evening; while bathing she would sing very sweetly. I used to listen sitting on the terrace above the verandah where today notices are kept. In those days most of the southern side this verandah had a tiled roof and the terrace I sat on was a small one. Incidentally, in the verandah downstairs, under the tiled roof, Nolinেশwar, a Bengali sadhak, used to cook a few dishes, especially luchis, for Sri Aurobindo. Later the Mother named the terrace Champaklal's terrace."

R: "Champaklalji, you keep writing 'went home' but where is that house?"

C (laughing): "I should have written 'to my room' instead of 'home'. First I stayed in Guest House with Punamchandbhai in the room which had been the Mother's. Then I was given a room downstairs in Library House, the one which is now the Reception office; then, when Mother moved to Meditation House, I was allotted her old room upstairs in Library House, the room where my aunt Motiben is now staying. After Sri Aurobindo's accident, I moved into Meditation House. Since then I am staying there. What a grace! She has always showered her infinite Grace on me."

MY WORK WITH THE MOTHER

I once asked Mother: "Do you find in me the right attitude in work?"

Mother: "Otherwise why should I call you? When I was ill, I wanted someone who could take care of my things. I spoke to Sri Aurobindo about it and mentioning you I told him, 'This is the boy who can stay and work with me.' But at that time you were not ready; now you are and I have called you. Your way, your development is quite different; you will get experience, you will get everything you want."

C: "But Mother, I feel my progress is very slow."

Mother: "No, no, no, I don't think so. (Then she drew a line on my forehead, moved her finger thrice from end to end, continuously.) Sometimes you are dreaming of something and I have to pull you out. That is why you feel that."

C: "I am becoming more and more egoistic!"

Mother: "No, no, you are becoming more and more free from your mind; your personality is developing. You must become completely free."

Later, one day Mother asked: "I am very severe, am I not? Do you feel like that?"

C: "No, no, I feel it is my own home."

Mother: "Ah! Then it is all right."

THE GRACE ARRANGES MY WORK

One day I said to Mother: "Mother, I would like to wash my father's dhoti." She smiled and said that she would ask Sri Aurobindo. The next day when I went to Sri Aurobindo he looked at me and said: "You want to wash my dhoti?"

C: "Yes."

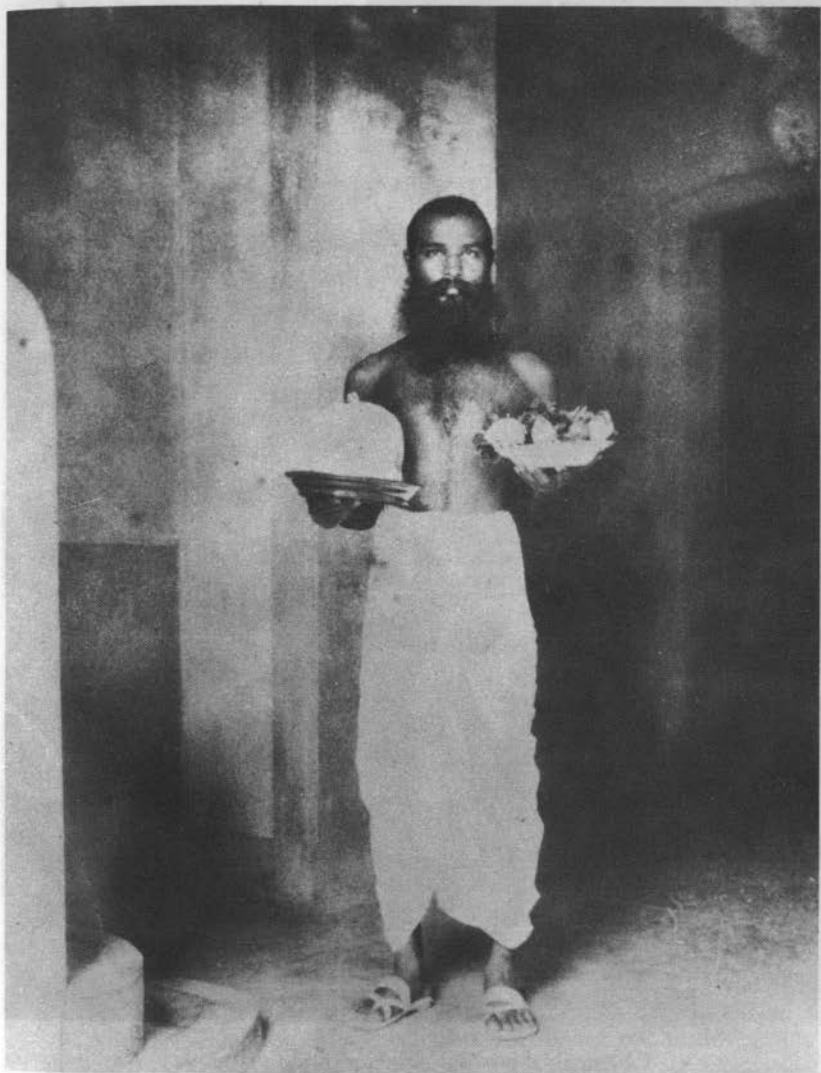
Sri Aurobindo: "Are you ready?"

I looked at him in surprise and wondered why he asked that.

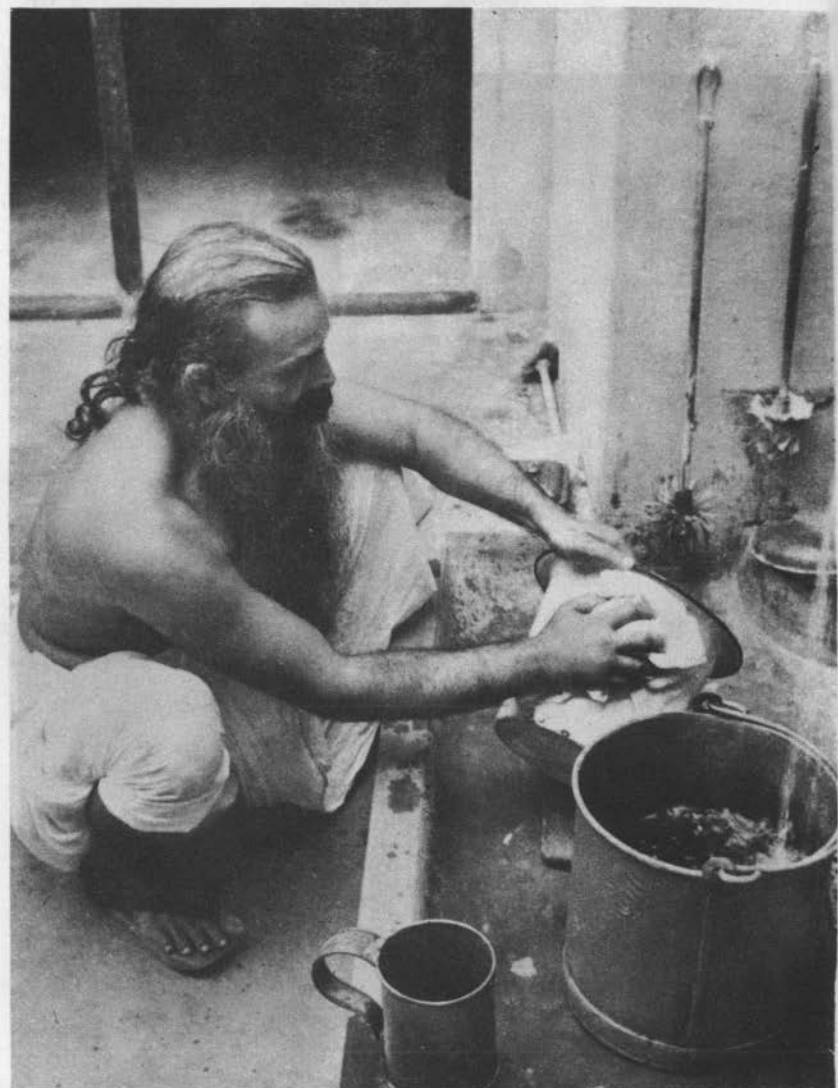
Sri Aurobindo: "You know, people will mock at you, laugh at you, joke about you. Are you ready for all that?" When he saw that I was eager to do this work in spite of such possibilities, he looked at me affectionately and smiled. He said so because the Ashram atmosphere was like that at that time. But very soon Mother changed it entirely.

As I look back, I clearly see that it was the Mother who made me ask for this work. For it is not in my nature to ask anything for myself. True, I always aspired to be able to spend all my time and all my energy in the service of Mother and Sri Aurobindo. This aspiration got fulfilled in different ways, often to my utter surprise.

When I came here for good, cooks were from the pariah caste. In Library House the cook was an old pariah woman who was fair-skinned enough to be taken for a Brahmin. Afterwards I came to know that she had also worked as a cook in France. Pariahs are considered a low caste like that of scavengers but the ones I saw here kept themselves clean. A pariah named Ratnam used to wash Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's commodes; at first sight he too did not seem to me of a low caste. When Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved into Meditation House, the commodes were



Champaklal carrying flowers for the Mother and tea for Sri Aurobindo



Champaklal washing Sri Aurobindo's comode

washed at a tap in the small shed where they now distribute flowers and incense for the Samadhi. (The tiny room behind was the boiler room; the contraption is still there.) I have read in a book by Kishensingh¹ that when he asked for permission to wash these commode pots Mother refused it. In my case however, the gracious Mother herself gave this work, which I had wished to do but had never asked for.

There are thus many incidents where the Mother herself arranged my work without my asking. Actually her grace is constantly showered on each and everyone of us, but we cannot see it. When the time comes she herself makes us aware of it.

Madhav: "Once when I was sitting by your side on the landing, waiting for Mother to call us, you told me that every aspiration of yours had been or was in the process of being fulfilled. At that time, I asked you why you did not spend all the time in Mother's room, a thing which you could very well have done. But you said: 'No, it has to be arranged by itself. The aspiration is there, of course, but I know it will be realised in due time.' And in the course of a few months I did see it come to pass. You found yourself there practically all the time. That made a deep impression on me and convinced me that sincere aspiration, even when not expressed in words, evokes response from the Grace. Your life has been a standing example of this truth. Sorry to interrupt you, Champakbhai, please proceed."

In the early days, Mother used to prepare a pudding. She would set aside a small quantity in a saucer, add a little milk and stir it with a spoon till it became smooth and consistent. She showed me how to do it and was particular that no grains should be left unmashed. And when she passed on the work to me, I followed her directions to the letter.

And do you know for whom this portion of the pudding was meant? For the cats! Later on I learnt that they were not mere cats but something more. You would be interested to know that at one time Sri Aurobindo himself removed bones from the fish meant for these cats. It was a sight to see him doing it with Chinese chopsticks.

There was another work. In those days there were no filters as

we have now. But Mother was drinking filtered water. The mechanism employed was quite simple. A filter candle was placed in a big enamel jug kept on a window sill. A tube joined it to a kuja [earthen pot] kept on the floor. I had specially arranged for a big kuja. Mother washed this candle every day with a brush. As she brushed it, I would pour water over it from a kettle. It was such a joy to work with her.

One by one, different kinds of work went on being added, each one giving me the privilege of working with her that much more. Of course this was possible then because she was not seeing people as she did later on and so she had more time to herself.

Though I have not written down details of the life in those days, as perhaps you may have done, I have such sweet memories of them. As I recount them to you, I relive them and my being bows to Them in gratitude.

1. Kishensing Chavda stayed in the Ashram for six months in 1927.

RAPID CHANGES

You know I came here with the object of God-realisation. Here I found the stress on Transformation. Very soon, however, both receded and Service took hold of my being entirely.

WORK OR MEDITATION

I was holding strong views on the subject of sadhana. I had always felt that meditation was not at all necessary. When I came to Mother, this idea became stronger. One day, however, I asked Sri Aurobindo whether work was not enough and meditation was at all necessary. He replied emphatically that meditation was very necessary. He explained why it was necessary to sit in meditation. Among other things he said that when one sits quietly one can receive fully what comes from above. This habit must be formed.

I may add that my subsequent experience has confirmed what he said.

SITTING ERECT

Madhav: "Champakbhai, I notice that you always sit erect, never leaning or bending. I am curious to know how you do that."

C: Ah, there is a story behind it. During my childhood, even at 6 or 7 years of age, I could not sit without leaning. Once my father asked me, "Why do you sit in that way?" I replied that I could not sit otherwise; my back ached much if I sat erect. He was surprised and remarked that it was strange, for such backache comes only in old age. Things continued in this way till I came here to Mother at the age of 20.

One day I told Mother of this difficulty. She told me: "Champaklal, you do what I say. Take a towel and rub your back with it, first vertically and then horizontally."

I started doing it for a short time after bath, regularly. Once I looked at the watch to see how long it took. The time taken was short though it seemed long to me. Since then I started counting the number of times I did the rubbings: I used to do the up and down movement 60 times and an equal number sideways. Nowadays I do it a 100 times each way. 60 should suffice, but when I do more the hands also get some exercise. As you know I was 20 when I came here for good and next month I will be completing 73. This exercise has lasted all these years and helped me to sit erect.

I find that generally people do not care for such natural ways of curing things; they prefer to take pills. They do not realise that medicines bring in their own interferences.

UNFORTUNATE

On 10 October 1923 one of my classmates in Patan (after I left, he too turned to Sri Aurobindo) came to Pondicherry. This boy was very poor. In order to save money for his travel and his stay here, he was having only one meal a day – and that too not a full meal.

I had done exactly the same thing when I came here for good, the same year in June. I did not want to ask for money from home but wanted to stay here as long as possible. So I used to have only

one meal, not a full meal, and carry on. That went on for about two months. Having undergone the same experience I could appreciate his sincerity.

He wanted to see Sri Aurobindo. To see Mother was out of the question; she was not meeting anyone. Now I myself could have asked Sri Aurobindo, but his destiny was different and it so happened that his request was conveyed by someone else. Sri Aurobindo said: "Tell him I will give darshan at Patan." So he had to go back. But he wrote later that he did have Sri Aurobindo's darshan in his house in Patan.

Later I learnt that the person who spoke to Sri Aurobindo about this boy had said: "The boy is unbalanced; if he sees you he will lose his head." Naturally, Sri Aurobindo's answer was what it was. Besides, he himself was not eager to see anyone. I was very sorry that someone I believed to be an advanced sadhak could behave so irresponsibly. Anyway it was the Divine's Will; otherwise I would have been made to ask for permission and arrange his interview with Sri Aurobindo.

STEADFAST AND METICULOUS

I was not 'educated' in the sense the word is commonly used. Yet Sri Aurobindo showered his infinite grace on me and called me to his Ashram. My ideas were indeed somewhat conservative and I was, and still am to some extent, quite temperamental. I did not possess the insight to see things in the overall perspective nor was I aware in those days that one ought to have such a comprehensive view. It was Mother who taught me this. I still lack that integrality, but when it is necessary, she herself will grant it to me. Of course, I was not absolutely stupid. Whenever someone tried to clarify his point I kept myself open to understand it, and I acted with equality and love to the best of my ability. However, when I came in contact with others I often felt that they could not understand me. It was said, "Champak is obstinate and trying; once he decides to do something he does not let go."

I remember Mother once commented about this aspect of my nature to Sri Aurobindo, just by observing me from far.

When Sri Aurobindo lived in Library House, the present Fruit Room was his dining room. Nolini, Amrita, Bijoy and Moni, who lived in Library House, also dined with him. One day while eating, Sri Aurobindo said, "Mirra (as Mother was then called) told me that Champaklal has a steadfast and meticulous mind. It is the first time she has found such a mind in an Indian."

Later, one of those four told it to Purani who narrated it to Punamchandbhai but told him not to tell me as it might make me proud and hinder my progress. But Punamchandbhai told me. On hearing it I could not see what was there to make me proud or hinder my progress. On the contrary, I was happy to know that at least Mother understood me – the one whom all had called obstinate and trying she had found steadfast and meticulous.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are my All; they alone are my *aradhyadeva*, the Form of the Divine that I worship. Whatever they have taught me, through words or gestures or writing, I follow to my utmost capacity. In actual fact, it is they who make me do it and it is by their grace that it is done.

Nowadays when someone observes my reactions and then shows me some writing of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, saying, "This is what they have said" or quotes them from memory, if I find it appropriate I do accept it. But if I don't accept it, it does not mean I consider what Sri Aurobindo and Mother have said to be wrong, but that the time has not yet come for me to follow it. When the time comes for me to put it into practice, they themselves will make me do it and that I believe absolutely. What has been written to others cannot be wrong, but it is possible that it is not meant for me.

HOUSE FOR MEMENTOS

This happened in 1923, when I had just started my work with the Mother. She used to write letters to her mother. At times she would show me the address she had written on the envelope. She wrote it with a Japanese brush; it was so pretty to see. At times she sealed the cover. Once I was present when she was sealing: she lit a candle, kept the match-stick aside and sealed the cover with lac.

After she finished, she gave me the match-stick to throw away. I asked humbly: "Can I keep it?"

Mother looked at me and smiled. Affectionately she said: "You can, surely. But you see, you will require a whole house to keep things like this." Again she smiled. Then she placed the match-stick in my palm, pressing it gently.

On another occasion, when a similar thing happened, I said to Mother: "In Gujarat, my mother had a separate house for storing things. Whenever something was needed from there I went and brought it for her. I was then very young but did this work with great enthusiasm."

PRICELESS

There was a small tea-pot in which the Mother served tea to Sri Aurobindo. One day when I came for work, I saw it broken into pieces and lying in a corner; obviously the servant had thrown it there. I collected the pieces, glued them together and remade the pot. It is still with me!

The Mother was extremely pleased and said: "Wonderful! You are a genius, a genius!" She appreciated it very much.

This tea-pot was very precious to me because Sri Aurobindo himself had handled it. For me it was priceless. For it was in Sri Aurobindo's presence that Mother used to pour tea from it into his cup. Later when the routine changed, this same tea-pot would be covered with a tea-cosy and kept on a tray on his table. Sri Aurobindo himself would remove the cosy and pour the tea into his cup from this tea-pot. Having witnessed all this I was inspired to put the broken pieces together.

CHAMPAKLAL DOES NOT UNDERSTAND JOKES

This incident took place when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were living in Library House. Sri Aurobindo used to come to the bathroom to wash his hands and feet; when he went in he left his slippers outside the door. I would be present there and would turn the slippers around so that he could put them on easily when he

came out. Then, while he washed his feet, I would stand inside, in a corner of the bathroom, near the door. It is through Her infinite Grace that I was able to receive such opportunities to serve.

I recall what Sri Aurobindo said to me one day when I was standing quietly in a corner of the bathroom and he was washing his feet. A letter had come from my aunt Motiben saying that preparations had been made for my marriage; even the bride's ornaments were ready. It was only my presence there that was awaited. Mother had been informed about this letter and she had already spoken to Sri Aurobindo.

And now, in the bathroom, Sri Aurobindo said: "Champaklal, you have to go to Patan. We shall send you away." I became very serious but seeing my face Sri Aurobindo started to smile mildly.

In those days Sri Aurobindo believed sadhaks should not marry and never gave his permission for it. So when he seemed ready to send me away to get married I was speechless.

That evening, Sri Aurobindo recounted this incident to all during the talks and remarked: "Champaklal does not understand jokes."

My nature is still the same.

A FEW CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO

The Mother relished macaroni. There was a cook here who had been to France and she alone among us could make it with a truly delicious taste. In the early years, I remember, olives and macaroni were practically the only food for her. Afterwards Dyuman¹ tried his level best to find out what other dishes she liked and provided them.

When she was living in Library House, Mother always had her bath late in the evening. While bathing she would sing, and the song often continued for a very long time.

In the beginning the Mother always wore tabi—a type of Japanese socks split at the toe, which can be kept on indoors like slippers and when going outdoors sandals can be worn over them. For many years she did not permit anybody to touch her feet, as she did not

like it at all. But later she stopped wearing them for the sake of her children – because they wanted to touch her feet during pranam.

Sri Aurobindo always kept his feet bare however cold the weather; he never covered them at night. They were always bare.

Sri Aurobindo had the utmost dislike of flies. If any fly suddenly touched his body or came near during meal-times, though we tried our best to ensure that no flies came, yet, if ever it happened, an expression of dislike would immediately appear on his face. It was the only thing that brought dislike to his face.

1. Dyuman (the Luminous One), name given by Sri Aurobindo to Chunilal Patel (1903-92) who settled here in 1925. The Mother gave him charge of the Dining Room, and in 1955, when she created the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, she made him one of the Trustees.

CLAIRVOYANCE

The Mother once said to me: “I saw you when Dikshit came. I remember.”

C: “But Mother, I did not come with him; he came alone.”*

Mother: “But I did see you, I remember very well!”

I have heard Mother saying such things many times; some of them I distinctly remember. Someone brings a letter from his friend. While reading it she sees that friend.

Or to tell you of a particular incident: Once Sri Aurobindo said to Mother that Barin was bringing a letter and he was on the staircase. Mother told Sri Aurobindo that Barin was coming along with another man. What had happened was that Mother saw the writer of the letter accompanying Barin, though only his letter was in Barin’s hand.

* Dikshitbhai came in November 1920 and I in April 1921. [Champaklal’s note]

“YOU ARE AN ANGEL!”

Sri Aurobindo gave a small pencil to the Mother and she kept it very carefully guarded. It was of a kind not found nowadays. Whenever she showed it she would say, with a specially notable expression: “You see, this is Sri Aurobindo’s pencil.” Her expres-

sion when she said this was far more striking than her words.

Once, no one knew how, it was lost. I managed to find it and gave it to her. She exclaimed joyously: "O Champaklal, truly you are an angel! Champaklal, truly you are an angel!" Then she gave me a pen holder as a present saying it was her *cadeau* (the French word for gift).

In olden days one could buy a type of "paper" pencil which did not need to be sharpened as the lead was covered with paper instead of wood. At short lengths there were grooves into which one inserted a finger-nail and removed one length of paper which came out in circular strips and exposed the lead. Children were fascinated by these pencils.

Once I was present when the Mother removed a strip of paper from this pencil. I took that strip and opened it carefully to make a circle which I pasted on a card. Mother was extremely pleased with that card.

DILEMMA

In the early days, as you know, Sri Aurobindo used to smoke cigars. It was my work to collect the empty boxes and sell them in the market. Each time, on the way to the market, I wondered: the boxes in which Sri Aurobindo's cigars have come, which have been handled by him and also touched by the Mother, how can we give them away to people who don't value them for all this? So I was always tempted to keep them and pay their market price to the Mother, but I managed to resist the desire and control my wish.

One day Mother brought an old timepiece from Sri Aurobindo's room, gave it to me and asked me to sell it to a watch repairer at whatever price he offered. Dutifully I took it to the shop and he offered a rupee and a quarter or perhaps two rupees and odd. I could not bring myself to part with the timepiece. So, I brought it back and told Mother what had happened.

"May I keep it?" I asked her with trepidation.

She smiled beautifully. "All right," she said, but took it back.

Imagine my surprise when the next morning Sri Aurobindo took the timepiece in his hand and smiling sweetly asked me:

“Champaklal, you want the clock?” And he placed it in my hands.

Thereafter it stayed with me. Once, however, Dikshitbhai who had come on a visit had no watch with him and Punamchandbhai suggested I give this clock to him. Naturally I was reluctant, but finally, thinking that my reluctance was due to what many called my ‘bugbear of selfishness’, I yielded. And the tragedy of it was that the clock was stolen from Dikshitbhai’s room. When occasion arose I mentioned the incident to the Mother. To my mind the clock was invaluable because it was used by Sri Aurobindo – it used to be kept on the table near him when he saw people in the mornings in the verandah of Library House.

From childhood I disliked anyone using my things. Instead when possible I used to buy books, pens etc. and give rather than loan the ones I used to others; in fact I did this several times; only I could not understand why I behaved like that. But when I heard that Mother too did the same thing, I was sure that this behaviour was not rooted in selfishness. And when I asked Mother about it she explained everything to me very nicely, in detail, and finally said, “There was no selfishness at all in your not wanting to lend the clock to Dikshit.” Then she added, “It was a lesson.”

MOTHER TENDS A BANANA GARDEN

When Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lived in Library House, there was a small garden in the front; and at the back of Library House, where there is the Prosperity and Fruit Room building now, there was a banana garden. I learnt from Barin that the front garden was under his charge and the banana garden was looked after by Mother and she took very great interest in it. Of course, there was a gardener for the manual work.

After I started working with Mother I saw why she was taking such a deep interest in the banana garden. Sri Aurobindo was taking these bananas with milk. A milk preparation with fully mashed bananas was served to him. Naturally Mother also gave it to some others.

The fruit was the green variety which in its raw form is used in making vegetables and other dishes, especially here in the South.

CHAMPAKLAL'S PALM TREE

One day I went to the Oosteri Lake area. I saw a delicate and beautiful sapling of a new variety of palm tree in a garden there.* I liked very much its fresh leaves and asked the gardener if he could give me a sapling. Traditionally, palm leaves symbolize Victory. He had many such saplings and readily gave me one. I brought it to the Guest House and planted it in a pot which I placed on the terrace outside the room Mother occupied when she lived in that house and was later given to me.

One day Barin (who also lived in Guest House) saw the palm sapling and liked it very much. He asked me whether I wanted to offer it. I said, "Yes, certainly." I was very happy to give it. New leaves had sprung up and it was so pretty. Barin offered it to Mother saying that it was from me. Mother said: "Yes, it can be put in a corner of our terrace."

Barin had not expected that but he liked the idea very much and placed it accordingly. It remained there for some time and then was taken down and planted in the front garden at the entrance of Library House, on the left as you enter. Later one day – I do not know how it had happened – I found the palm in the large compound near the garage [opening into Saint Gilles street] in the Mother's new house [Secretariat House]; this time also it stood on the left side.

Whenever new leaves sprouted I used to inform Mother and she would come to the window and look at the palm for a long time. She would happily exclaim: "Magnificent! Beautiful!"

This tree yields rare but really beautiful flowers. Those who have lived here from those old times know it as 'Champaklal's palm'.

Madhav: "Ah, I see. It is the one which has survived so many cyclones that uprooted other trees in the compound – the one of which Mother was so proud for having defied the storm."

C: "Lucky palm!"

* At that time the garden belonged to someone else, but later Mother purchased the property and put Louis Allen, manager of our Lake Estate, in charge. Now our school children go and work there twice a week. I find this development very interesting. [Champaklal's note]

CARPENTRY AND MASONRY

Mother used to order a number of things from France so that sadhaks would not have to go to the bazaar for them; besides they were cheaper when so purchased. The dealwood boxes in which they were parcelled were kept for storing things. Lids for these boxes were made from planks which she herself joined by nailing sidebars on both sides. She asked me if I could undertake that work. I willingly agreed to try and she was happy to see me doing it. She would sit on a low Japanese stool and watch me doing the work, giving instructions when necessary. It was a very pleasant experience. Mother had ordered some fine carpentry tools from France. Later Pavitra also joined in my carpentry work. We made a table from these dealwood planks for ironing clothes. At that time there was no table for this purpose. Mother used to come and watch us working on the table and when it was ready she expressed great happiness. After this Pavitra took up some other work and did not join me any more in my carpentry work.

In Library House, there were a couple of holes in the floor of Mother's room: one in the middle and another near the door leading to the store-room. There was a third, a deep one, in the bathroom.

One day Mother told me, "Sri Aurobindo asks, 'Can't Champaklal do something about them?'"

I was naturally very happy that Sri Aurobindo should have thought of me and immediately took up the work. Rajangam supplied all requirements, as always he was very helpful. Later when Mother told me, "Sri Aurobindo said, 'Now it is very convenient.'" I was extremely gratified.

I must record here that such works too I had learnt from my physical mother. Whenever she was doing these things I used to help her and that experience proved useful.

SWASTIKA

One day I drew a circle, a square within that circle and within that square, a swastika. On seeing it, Mother exclaimed: "How did you get the idea! Very interesting!"

FULFILMENTS

In my boyhood days whenever I read and thought about Sri Ramakrishna I felt a strong wish that I must be always close to a great spiritual personality like him. I had heard of Sri Aurobindo at that time but always discounted the possibility of closeness to him as I thought he was rather 'modern'.

Years later when I came here to stay, things started happening. At that time permission was necessary to attend the Evening Talks. I have told you how happily it got arranged.

One day Sri Aurobindo suddenly stopped coming downstairs. Mother sent word to Bijoy to send Sri Aurobindo's food upstairs but asked him not to expect the dish back. Of her own accord she gave the dish to me as my lunch, after Sri Aurobindo had finished. And that continued as long as we were in Library House.

As you know, when Mother wrote to Chandulal she used such adjectives as 'faithful' for him. I would wonder why the Mother did not write it to me also, but I never mentioned it. Imagine my surprise when I received a card on my birthday with the inscription: "First Prize in Faithfulness."

MEDITATION ON THE BATTLEFIELD

In the 1920s, as you know, the building now known as 'the Ashram' used to be four separate houses which we called Library House, Rosary House, Secretariat House and Meditation House.¹

I speak here of Rosary House where today [early 1970s] Pujalal's rooms are and the *cartonnerie* [box-making room] where Navinchandra makes cardboard boxes for Prosperity. The entrance to Rosary House has not changed, only the doors of the gate have been replaced. Upstairs, on the eastern side, where Abhay Singh's rooms are, there was just one room and it was allotted to Doraiswami. On the opposite side, where Navajata's rooms are, there was a large terrace in which pots of rose plants were kept. Mother was deeply interested in roses, so Amrita maintained that garden and Barin tended the plants. This is why that house was called Rosary House.

Incidentally, the roses were taken to Mother in an interesting way. They were placed in a tin and closed with an almost airtight lid. When the lid was opened in her presence, the fragrance of the roses would spread all around her.

My story belongs to the time when Mother was conducting occult experiments on cats and took great care of them. They roamed around freely. Just inside Rosary house, very near the gate there was an open well and there was a chance of their falling into the well. So Mother thought of covering it with a lid. Though in those days Mother neither met people nor went out of Library House, one day, to my great surprise, she took me with her to this uncovered well and asked me: "Could you prepare a cover for this well?"

I said, "Yes, Mother, I can try."

She asked me to buy dealwood boxes, giving detailed instructions including their price and where those boxes would be available. I went and bought a big box.

In my schooldays I had learnt a little bit of carpentry. In fact at my uncle's *abhyasagriha*, I was not interested in anything except drawing and carpentry, both of which were useful things to know. Possibly if I had studied well, I might have become a scholar but in the process I might have lost the opportunity of becoming a servant of the Divine!

To come back to the story. I took the box to Guest House (where I was then living) and started working in the courtyard where at present Green Group children play in the evenings. Naturally it made a big noise and one sadhak came out of his room and began to grumble that it was disturbing his meditation. In those days sadhaks were very fond of meditating.

When I informed Mother about it, she said: "Sri Aurobindo and I are not disturbed by noise. If one cannot meditate amidst noise it only proves that one is not truly meditating. One must be able to meditate on the battlefield. We are not particular. If they are disturbed there, you may work here; disturb here."

When the poor sadhak who had complained came to know of this, he was very sorry and asked to be pardoned. Of course I had not said anything to him. Thus I did not have to change the place of work and when the cover was completed, Mother was very happy

– happy both for the completion of the work and the change in the sadhak.

1. Library House (9, Rue de la Marine), into which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved from Guest House in October 1922, was rented some months earlier and purchased on 6.4.1929 for Rs. 21,000. Meditation House (28, Rue François Martin), into which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved on 8 February 1927, was rented from 1.1.1927, and purchased on 13.7.1927 for Rs. 14,000. Secretariat House (8, Rue Saint Gilles) was rented in May 1926 and purchased on 23.3.1929 for Rs. 3000. Rosary House (10, Rue de la Marine) was purchased on 16 December 1937 for Rs. 15,000.

UNDERSTANDING WITHOUT LANGUAGE

25.6.1926

The kuja used for storing drinking water for Mother had been kept on the terrace for drying in the sun. While talking to Champaben I asked her: “Have you cleaned this kuja?”

Before Champaben could reply, the Mother who was present, said “Yes,” and smiled. Then she added: “I have replied without knowing but I would like to know your question. You see, I didn’t know what you said in Gujarati but I understood it. I understand all the languages.”

C: “All the languages?”

Mother: “Yes, but the person who wants to say something must be clear in his mind, absolutely clear. I don’t know Tamil, but sometimes when people are clear in their mind, I understand everything.”

C: “Then did you understand everything that Champaben and I were saying? Does your knowing depend upon external circumstances?”

Mother: “Of course, I cannot understand immediately, everything on every subject. But there is another method of knowing. I concentrate and enter into your mind, and I know. But I do not always take the trouble to do this.”

C: “Suppose something is very clear in my mind but I cannot say it, not knowing the language well enough. I then sit quietly near you. Can you know what I want to say?”

Mother: “Yes.”

C: "What is the meaning of 'clear'?"

Mother: "People think that their ideas are clear, their feelings are clear; but generally they are not. Very few people have that kind of clear thought in their minds. Take for instance, Madame Potel [a French disciple]. When she wants to send something to me, a letter or bread or anything, I come to know of it as soon as she thinks of it, – even before I receive what she has sent. That lady has this capacity. Though spiritually she has not advanced very far (she has only recently started her sadhana) she has worked very hard along this line."

C: "Do you know her thoughts by your power or because she directs it towards you?"

Mother: "Many are advanced in their sadhana but do not have this capacity. They may have big ideas and all that, but not this power. I had a friend who was a beginner in sadhana; yet every time he wrote a letter I used to know its contents before I received it. Only a few have this capacity by birth. So when I want to know exactly about the sadhaks I enter into their consciousness and I know what I want to know."

THOUGHT COMMUNICATION

Mother used to place a vase of flowers on the table in the verandah of Library House where those who were permitted would meet Sri Aurobindo in the mornings. One day I found that the vase was no longer there and there were no flowers. This continued for some time. Finally one day I arranged some flowers in a vase and put them on the table. When she saw them, Mother asked me: "When did you get this idea of keeping flowers here?"

C: "I had been thinking of it for many days. But I felt you may not want it and what you do not want I did not want to do. Why do you ask, Mother?"

Mother: "Why I am asking is this: the other day when we spoke about clarity of mind I put this idea of keeping flowers in the atmosphere – that somebody should bring flowers for Sri Aurobindo. I wanted to see who receives it first. Now I see that you have been the first. Very interesting, very interesting."

TEN TIMES WORSE

11.7.1926

Mother: "When I came here I was ten times worse than you."

C: "No, no, how can it be?"

Mother: "I tell you, truly, I say."

SPECIAL

31.7.1926

Mother: "The thing you have got here, most have not got."

"YOU WILL GET IT"

25.8.1926

Mother: "I have been trying something in you since the last three weeks. You have been coming to me and talking to me (not this way, but in another way) and I know when your time will come. You will have to be patient. I have also told Sri Aurobindo. We know what you want. And you will get it."

"AS IF I AM HUMAN"

5.9.1926

Mother: "You consider me a human being and you act as if I am a human being."

"HAVE PATIENCE"

6.9.1926

I made pranam to Mother and wept and wept, placing my head in her lap.

Mother: "Yesterday your condition was very good. You were very close to receiving what is coming down. But again you have brought back these things. I told you to throw them away and I also told you that you will get the result. You don't remember? Keep patience. You don't remember that you have to keep patience?..."

Sleep very quietly. I have broken what had to be broken down. And you saw the result? You had to weep.... Now I expect that you won't call these things back again. I have broken them down. If you don't call them, they won't come back. I have told Sri Aurobindo also and I think they won't come back again. I have told you that after coming here you have to begin everything anew. And all the past shall be dead. You are not to listen to anyone except us. Have patience, have patience. You will get what you want."

"I AM YOUR MOTHER"

13.9.1926

Mother: "One day you came running and weeping to me and fell in my lap. 'Be my mother, be my mother,' you told me. I answered, 'I am your mother.'"

"YOU WILL BE PROUD"

26.9.1926

Mother: "I do not want to speak, I do not want to tell you because you will become very proud."

"I NEVER TAKE THINGS BACK"

27.9.1926

C: "Mother, what is happening?"

Mother: "I never take things back unless the other person pushes them back. You saw the result yesterday?"

"WHO IS WORKING?"

3.10.1926

After the day's work was over, Mother said to me: "Do you think that you are working? No, your Mother is working."

(Two days later.)

Mother: "You know, only one Purusha is working in the whole world."

MOTHER'S FORCE

4.10.1926

C: "Mother, I want to see your Force."

Mother: "Oh, you want to see my Force? If I draw out my Force you will completely collapse; you will be flat. Do you want to experience it? You will not be able to go even up to the railway station."

"YOU ARE DEPENDING UPON US"

17.11.1926

Mother: "Surely, we know you are depending upon us. But only when the body will change, you will realise what you want."

"YOU WILL BE GIVEN"

18.11.1926

While giving me my soup cup after sipping a little of the soup, Mother said: "Take this cup and you will be fully conscious."

Later she said: "Whatever you have asked will be given. You have to do nothing. Your sadhana depends on mine; it is being done and will continue to be done with mine."¹

1. See the 'soup ceremony' described by Mrityunjoy and Sahana Devi in their articles in *Breath of Grace*, 1972, pp. 57-61, 112-13, 120, and by K.D. Sethna in his *Light and Laughter*, pp.63ff.

"SURRENDER YOURSELF COMPLETELY"

20.11.1926

While giving me something, Mother said: "Surrender yourself completely to me – you will realise your Self."

THE BEING WHO WANTS TO MANIFEST

20.11.1926

While giving Sri Aurobindo's lunch dish to me after he had

finished, Mother said: "The Being we want to manifest in you demands your complete surrender. He is one of four brothers. He wants to manifest in you and is waiting for you to be ready. And that Being wishes that I should work in you.

*

On another day she said: "The Being has entered into you."

*

The next day, she said: To bring down Immortality four pillars are needed. Of them

Purity is Kanai,
Faith is Tirupati,
Adoration is Rajangam,
Aspiration is Champaklal.

SIDDHI DAY

24.11.1926

Datta spoke:

Krishna the Lord has come.
He has ended the hell of suffering.
He has conquered pain.
He has conquered death.
He has conquered all.
He has descended tonight
Bringing Immortality and Bliss.

As each one made pranam to the Mother and she gave her blessing, Sri Aurobindo held his palm above hers in blessing. I was the only person to do pranam to both. It was a spontaneous movement; something in me rushed out and made me do it.

DESCENDING

December 1926

Mother: "Now things are descending upon you, everything will be all right."

CHAMPAKLAL BECOMES A DEMIGOD

Long back, I had once told Mother: "I want to see the Divine with these very physical eyes."

Mother had replied: "Yes, you will see Him."

*

On 22nd December, Mother told me: "There is something in your nature that has to be removed. It is not an easy task. Leave it to us, we shall do it."

Later, on the day fixed by the Mother, Amrita, Purushottam and I presented ourselves before her in the verandah upstairs. Mother called Amrita 'the Hound of Heaven'; she often did some of her occult work through Purushottam.* When we three went upstairs we found Mother seated in Sri Aurobindo's chair. She looked very different that day, really magnificent.

The occult work began. I was made to lie on the floor and went into a half-conscious state. The Maheshwari aspect of the Mother commenced her work through Purushottam. He sat on my body and pummelled and kneaded it thoroughly; I could hear the sound of his blows but, I was completely passive. The pounding went on for almost an hour. (Hearing the noise, Purani rushed upstairs, but seeing the Mother, he went back quietly.) Also, a lot of hairs were pulled out of my head; later they were offered to Mother who took them in her hand and gave certain instructions regarding them.

Immediately after the work was over I rushed to Mother and embraced her. For a long time she held me close to her like a small child and made me a divine child. What can I say about my experiences during that session?

When Mother narrated all that had happened to Sri Aurobindo, he remarked, "Champaklal has become a demigod."

I do not know whether I became a demigod, but I do know that for a long time afterwards I felt very different, as if my very existence had become Their instrument. I felt like I was walking in the air, not on the earth, though my feet were on the ground. It was something peculiar. I felt totally changed. I don't remember when this experience stopped. The whole thing was mysterious and beyond imagination.

I recall another session of the Mother's occult working. One day some of us were meditating around her in the same verandah. Among us was Suvrata.¹ The meditation began; suddenly, I saw Purushottam getting up, going straight to Suvrata and giving her a resounding slap. Hearing this unexpected sound many opened their eyes and were astonished at what they saw. The Mother's eyes had remained open and steady throughout; she looked majestic. Later she told me that this action had removed some of Suvrata's difficulties.

I have heard how certain adepts, when approached by someone bitten by a poisonous snake, nullify the effect of the poison by giving a slap. I have narrated the above two incidents to illustrate how occult work is also done in this yoga.

*

I have always been interested in watching the expressions of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Especially during meditations with the Mother it was almost impossible for me to sit with closed eyes. My gaze would remain fixed on her face. In the same way I have learned much from Sri Aurobindo's expressions. In fact it is a boon from their boundless Grace and is unforgettable.

It is impossible to write anything about my experience on 5 December 1950 [the day Sri Aurobindo left his body], when, holding me in his intimate embrace, Sri Aurobindo kissed me again and again. Those of his attendants who were present were a witness to that scene. I mention it here only to emphasize how he responds to one's aspiration – as I said earlier, since childhood I had aspired for the same intimacy with my Guru that Vivekananda had experienced with Sri Ramakrishna. That was the fulfilment of my aspiration.

Even now, in an ever increasing measure, Sri Aurobindo is

showering his infinite Grace; its boundless action is felt everywhere and anywhere. Though he is not in his body, his response is even greater.

* Whenever Mother was to conduct an occult session, the food meant for Purushottam would be brought up and kept before her. She would concentrate on the dish for a long time and send it back for him to eat. One day, I don't remember the exact date, Purushottam announced in front of everyone, "From today Sri Aurobindo will retire. He will take a saffron bath made with Parijat flowers." Then Mother gave instructions to collect a large quantity of "Aspiration" flowers (the significance she gave to Parijat flowers) and boil them in water. Sri Aurobindo took a bath with this water. [Champaklal's note]

1. Name given by Sri Aurobindo to Madame Gaebele, a French disciple.

OCCULT WORKINGS

In Library House, meditations were held in the verandah upstairs with people sitting around Sri Aurobindo.

After some time Mother started a group meditation in Sri Aurobindo's room. She used to sit on Sri Aurobindo's cot. This meditation was meant only for women but Mother herself asked me to join saying I could do my work afterwards. People used to joke that Champaklal is a woman. But I continued. And, you will be surprised to know, gradually, one by one, all asked for permission to join, and meditations with Sri Aurobindo automatically stopped.

During these meditations the occult work was highly interesting. Once, on a deep impulse from within, I collected a number of lotuses, counted the number of persons in the Ashram and took as many lotuses inside the room. I had counted along with those who were present, those who were not in the room. When my turn for pranam came, I took the lotuses to Mother. I held each lotus in my hands, looked at Mother, concentrated and identified myself with one of the ashramites, then offered it to her on behalf of that person; in this way I offered one lotus for each ashramite. As I was doing this Mother's face changed completely and it gave me the impression that she had become the Lord of the Universe. At the end of the meditation Mother asked me: "How did you get the idea? Very interesting."

Another day, when I went to the Mother for pranam, I arranged lotuses all around, keeping seven buds by my side. As I offered each one to her, she opened the bud carefully, petal by petal, and kept it on one of the centres of her body and then kept it on the corresponding centre of my body. Seven for the seven centres. I became aware of a big change in her appearance – a change in relation. Magnificent!

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S PHOTOGRAPH

Do you remember my coming to you [Madhav], now long ago, and asking you to send photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to anyone wanting them, irrespective of whether they were in a position to pay for the photographs or not? I came to you after hearing from Mother the nice things she said about your work, the spirit in which you do it and so on. And you readily agreed to carry out my wish.

Madhav: "Ah, yes, I remember; I still send photographs free to those who ask for them but cannot pay."

Very good, continue it. If you fall short of copies, let me know. I shall draw some from my stock and give them to you. But first let me tell you the story behind the wish I expressed to you at that time.

It was in May 1919. Punamchandbhai had visited Pondicherry and when he returned I asked him whether he had seen Sri Aurobindo's room. I put to him several questions regarding the room. He said there were two rooms connected by a door. The inner room was his private room. In the front room there was an almirah and on it was placed a framed photo of Sri Ramakrishna in a dancing pose.

After some time I came across the same photo in a special number of a journal brought out by the Ramakrishna Mission. I was happy on seeing it and thought of getting one for myself. But I had no money, not even a single pie. You know that in those days youngsters were not allowed to keep money with them. My father was ready to give whatever was asked, but somehow I could not bring myself to ask for money for this purpose. If I had asked, he would surely have given me the necessary money. Then I wrote to

the Ramakrishna Mission saying that I was a student, I had no money but would like to have a print of the photograph of Sri Ramakrishna in a dancing pose that was included in their special number. I wrote that I was very eager to have it and requested them to send me one free of cost.

I waited and waited, but I am sorry to say, there was no response. I felt it sorely at that time that such an institution following the great saint should have turned a deaf ear to the plea of a young aspirant. Then I forgot about it.

What happened later is interesting. As I told you, when I came to Pondicherry for the first time in 1921, I asked Sri Aurobindo if we could see his room. He stretched out his golden hand and pointed to his room. That sight of him, sitting in his chair and stretching out his beautiful hand still remains etched in my memory. It is unforgettable. As soon as I entered the room I remembered what Punamchandbhai had told me about Sri Ramakrishna's photo; I looked for it in every corner of the room, but I did not see it anywhere. I thought it must have been removed.

Later in 1923, when I came for good and got the privilege of working in Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's rooms in Library House, I again looked for the photo but could not trace it. But I did not ask Mother about it. When they moved to Meditation House from Library House on February 8, 1927, Mother told me to carry certain things of Sri Aurobindo to Meditation House. At that time I found this photo in one of the drawers of Sri Aurobindo's table. I showed it to Mother. And without my asking she gave it to me.

So there you are! Another instance of sincere aspiration ultimately getting fulfilled, is it not? Now you will understand why I am particular that when anyone who has no money to pay asks for a photograph of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother out of aspiration or devotion, it must be supplied to him.

..†

PROTECTION

28.3.1928

Mother said of someone: "How can he expect me to protect him if he is constantly going out of my protection?"

HUMILITY

28.3.1928

Mother had put up some quotations on the notice board. She asked me: "How did you find my quotations?"

C: "Just what is necessary, Mother. Is it not?"

MAGNIFICENT CHAMPAKLAL

1.9.1928

Mother said: "This afternoon when you were coming with the tray of fruit juice for Sri Aurobindo, he saw you through the shutters of the meditation hall¹ and said, 'Champaklal looks magnificent; he looks like a priest.'"

She smiled and added: "You understand?"

And again she gave a smile.

1. The hall on the first floor of Meditation House, with the Darshan room to its east. Its tall shuttered windows overlook the courtyard.

"TIE YOURSELF WITH DEVOTION"

1.2.1929

Today, on the eve of my birthday, Mother tied a tulsi garland around my neck, saying: "Tie yourself with devotion." As you know, devotion is the significance she had given to tulsi.

HER TRAINING

15.12.1929

C: "I feel like going away."

Mother: "Oh, even after being trained by me?"

MY ROOM IN THE LIBRARY HOUSE

After Mother and Sri Aurobindo shifted to Meditation House [February 1927], Mother gave me her room in Library House. One day Barin came to my room and was very happy with the way I had kept my things. He said, "Your room is really nice and beautiful. I like it very much. I wish my room too were like this." At that time,

I could not understand whether he was joking or telling the truth. It is not easy for me to distinguish between a joke and a serious statement. But from his expression he seemed really impressed.

That same evening Anrita came to my room and said, "Barin told me that Champaklal's room is worth seeing and insisted I come and see for myself. So I have come." This is how the Mother cleared my doubts about Barin's statement.

You may wonder what was there in my room that Barin liked it so much. There was no furniture, just a thin narrow quilt and a pillow; in a corner, on a small chest (for clothes etc) covered with a cloth, I had kept a photo of Mother and Sri Aurobindo and a single flower of *Divine's love*. The chest also served as my table. In my present room, there is no space left to keep any extra piece of furniture. In those days, Barin's room was like my present room. However, I was happy in that Library House room and I am equally happy now in my present room, in Meditation House.

I saw this happening also in Mother's life. In 1953, when her new room on the second floor was ready, she told Soli Albless (the sadhak-architect who built it), "I do not want to keep anything in my room." Though she did not in the beginning, gradually everything came in.

For me too, it was possible to keep nothing in Library House because in those days I had no interest other than serving them, not even reading books. One single aim: to be with them and serve them. But afterwards it was not possible because my work kept changing. It is one thing to want to do something but quite another to be able to do it. For instance, visitors to the Ashram highly praise the food served in our Dining Room; they often say, "When we come here, we eat only Dining Room food." We hear such glowing praise of this food but I have never heard of anybody preparing the same things in their homes. Some may actually have prepared to cook such food at home, but they must be very few. ...

ROOMS CHANGE, SIGNIFICANCE REMAINS

My rooms have been changed so often. In 1923, the room I was given in Guest House was the Mother's room when she stayed in

that house. So too, when she moved into Meditation House, she gave me the room she had occupied in Library House. And my present room in Meditation House, which was Sri Aurobindo's bathroom, was earlier Mother's room.

Don't you find that interesting? Of course I have spent more time with her, wherever she was in the day, than in my rooms. But that – being able to stay all the time in her presence – is another story, another play of her boundless Grace.

A PORTRAIT BY THE MOTHER

After Mother left Library House and I moved into her room, I found three of her old study-portraits done in oil when she was in France, lying in a corner unattended.

After some time, I asked Mother: "Can I hang the study-portraits which you left behind on the wall of my room?"

Normally I never interfered in the arrangements made by the Mother but in this case I felt that they should be cared for.

Mother: "No, they are not good enough for that."

But when I persisted she reluctantly permitted me to hang them on the wall of my room. One of them has been reproduced here. They are still in my room which is now occupied by Motiben.

CONSIDERATION

[In Library House] Mother used to prepare a soup for Sri Aurobindo. Later she asked me to prepare that soup.

She would take a cupful for Sri Aurobindo and leave some for me, after sipping it. One day it so happened that the cat, Bushy,¹ put her mouth in the cup meant for me. On seeing it, Mother quickly removed the top layer of the soup, herself took a mouthful (normally she used to take just a sip) and then told me: "Take it." She expressed her love and grace in this way in order that I may not shrink from drinking that soup.

1. Bushy also attended the soup ceremony and meditations. She would carry her new-born kittens to Mother and the Master and lay them at their feet. Sri Aurobindo's poem "Despair on the Staircase" refers to her. – See Pujalal's "A Few Reminiscences" in *Breath of Grace*, pp. 80-82.



Oil painting by the Mother done in 1898



“A living image”

– Sri Surobindo

SELFISH?

From my childhood I was always disinclined to share my things with others. I did not like to lend books, for instance, to people. But within myself I used to feel that I was being very selfish and I would castigate myself for it.

It was only when I came to Mother and mentioned it to her one day that she assured me that it was not selfishness but an attitude based upon a sound principle. And that is, every article used by a person has its own atmosphere. If given for use to others, that atmosphere is likely to be disturbed. This explanation satisfied me completely. I too had vaguely felt the same way.

WISH FULFILMENTS

I mentioned to you before that every wish in my life has been fulfilled and that if more arise they also will be fulfilled. That has been my observation and conviction. I have a firm faith that all that I have to attain has already been decided above.

I once asked Mother if this is true in everybody's case.

Mother: "No, no. You live in faith and by faith you get everything. Every man does not wish pointedly for only one thing. It is mixed with many other things and that is why it is not fulfilled."

METER READING

You would be interested to know that after Sri Aurobindo moved into Meditation House, he was himself recording the reading of the electricity meter which was fitted in the bathroom upstairs. He stopped doing this work after the meter was shifted to the ground floor.

EXPRESSION OF CLOSENESS

I recall an incident that occurred the first time I was asked to prepare the Darshan room for a Darshan day.

Mother's bathroom was then in the adjoining room. After her bath she used to go to the Darshan room to put on her sari where there was a large almirah with a dressing mirror.

I was working in the Darshan room that day when she entered as usual after her bath, and began to put on her sari standing before the mirror. Immediately I started to go out but she stopped me, saying: "No, no; finish your work." This expression of trust and closeness filled me with gratitude and happiness.

When I recall the numerous occasions of this kind, my heart is overwhelmed by the Grace she bestowed on me. And she is still showering the same boundless Grace.

VASE OF ROSES

As I told you, when Sri Aurobindo and Mother lived in Library House, Sri Aurobindo used to remove (with Chinese chopsticks) the bones from the fish that Mother fed the cats.

After coming to Meditation House, Sri Aurobindo used to arrange one vase of roses every day and keep it on a small table in Mother's dressing room. We still have that vase.

At nightfall, he would take all the flower vases from the rooms and leave them on a table – it was a folding table that Mother had ordered from France – in the passage one enters on opening the staircase door. At present in the place of that table there is a small cupboard near the door.

Mother did not like flowers to remain in the rooms at night, especially the red karan flower which she has named "Surrender of all Falsehood" [double pink Nerium Oleander]. Later I heard that even from the point of view of health it is not good to have flowers in one's room at night.

"SHE HAS HER REASONS"

I once told Sri Aurobindo that I could not understand how Mother could give different explanations to different people, different answers to different persons, for the same question.

Sri Aurobindo answered: "She has her reasons for doing this."

At that time I only understood the word-meaning of Sri Aurobindo's reply. I had faith, but did not grasp the real meaning behind. Now, by their boundless Grace all this is becoming clear.

WHY SO MANY CLIPS?

It was long ago. I used to wash Sri Aurobindo's dhoti every day and dry it myself. Once it so happened that I needed clips to hold the dhoti on the clothes-line. I asked for some from Prosperity. Purushottam was then in charge of Prosperity. Every evening he would present all requisition chits from sadhaks to Mother for her sanction, in the Prosperity room (in Library House) just before we all gathered there for 'games'.¹

That day Purushottam had presented my chit to Mother. When I went in, Mother asked, "Why do you want so many clips?"

I said: "You can come and see the size of my cloth!" I spoke with a touch of vehemence. She kept quiet; she did not say anything.

The next day she started telling me, very sweetly: "Champaklal, you know, people were saying, how can Champaklal talk to Mother like that?"

I did not at all realise what was wrong and exclaimed: "What is there?" Again she fell silent and did not say anything more.

It was much later that I realised that something was wrong in my way of speaking, in my expression.

1. Some details of these games are given in "Spiritual Games", Part II of this book.

CHILDLIKE SIMPLICITY

It was when Mother was ill. Sri Aurobindo used to attend on her in the afternoon. When he was in Mother's Salon (as she called her new room), I would wait in the small passage outside.¹

It was a Sunday, and raining heavily. Sri Aurobindo came out of Mother's room and said to me, "Mother is asking if you know how to close the window?"

(The windows had a new kind of fitting.) Luckily, I had a good

look at the window-mechanism the previous day and I could say: "Yes, I know."

Sri Aurobindo went in and told her: "Yes, Champaklal knows."

Then he came out, smiled and said: "Mother says you had better close the window if you know how to do it!"

*

At that time there was no frigidaire with us. Mother had got a small wooden box made for me. A tumblerful of water was kept in a vessel which was put in this box and ice was placed in the vessel. Rajangam used to fetch the ice from the factory.

When Mother was ill I used to cool water in this way, pour it into a thermos flask and keep it ready for Sri Aurobindo to take it to Mother when he came to see her.

One day we had a new flask with a different kind of porcelain cup at the top. Sri Aurobindo took in the flask as usual, but came out almost immediately and asked: "How to open this?"

I showed him how to do it. The cup came out easily. He seemed surprised at this and went back with the flask, happy.

*

This was in the days Sri Aurobindo had his dinner around midnight.

After finishing the correspondence work in the salon Sri Aurobindo would go for his bath and Mother would retire after laying out his dinner on a table in her former room (the eastern-most room of Meditation House; later Sri Aurobindo's bathroom and after his passing my room). After his bath he came there for his dinner. While Sri Aurobindo ate I sat in the 'long passage'.

One day he came out in the middle of his meal and said: "Champaklal, come in." I was wondering why he called me but followed him. Once inside, he said: "You know, this fan was steady; now it is rotating." I did not know how to make it steady as I had not touched it before, nor had I ever used an electric fan. However, I observed it carefully and saw a button jutting out. Spontaneously my hand went there and I pressed the button and the fan stopped rotating.

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, as simple as that!"

I was truly touched by his childlike simplicity.

1. The Mother's salon (above the present Bulletin office) was constructed when the building, Secretariat House, underwent thorough repairs, probably in 1930-31. The passage where Champaklal waited is the vestibule one steps into from the staircase in Meditation House.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER

During Mother's lifetime, work and those who did the work kept changing. Bansidhar, my brother (who first came here in November 1927) was fortunate to get the work of sweeping and cleaning Mother's room in Meditation House, or rather she made him fortunate. When I remembered that he had once witnessed two aspects of the Mother, that of Mahakali and that of the compassionate, merciful Mahalakshmi, I asked him to write down his experience. Here it is in his words:

When I (Bansidhar) was cleaning Mother's room in Meditation House, I would first sweep and then do the wiping work. Once I saw some things kept on a trunk. Beside it lay a piece of cellophane paper which Mother must have removed from a biscuit wrapper. "She has many better papers," I thought, "there is no need to leave this torn piece here; she must have been in a hurry and left it here." So I threw it in the wastepaper basket.

In the mornings around eight, Mother used to meet people in the Darshan room which was also Mother's interview room. During that time I was to clean her room. Hardly ten-fifteen minutes must have passed after I had thrown away the paper, when Mother came from the interview room and asked me: "There was a piece of paper here, where is it?"

B: "I threw it into the wastepaper basket."

Mother: "If it was to be thrown away, I know how to throw it."

She used more or less these words, but when she spoke her tone and face were like Mahakali's. I froze in terror. Immediately I decided that henceforth whatever it be, I must never throw away anything. I had received my lesson.

Now I relate the other incident. My work was to clean Mother's

room and Datta's work was to clean Mother's bathroom. One day, for some reason, Datta did not come and Mother asked me to clean the bathroom. I was thrilled to have this opportunity to serve her. Who would not be? I was extremely happy and decided to clean it perfectly. There are always many things in a bathroom. I picked up a cardboard box containing a bottle of perfume to wipe it. But while the box stayed in my grip, the bottle fell to the ground and broke, the perfume spilt all over and its scent filled the bathroom. The scent brought the Mother to the bathroom from the interview room. I thought my end was imminent; I did not utter a word.

She looked at me for some time, then said: "Do not be afraid. It does not matter. Such things happen."

I think these were her words. But what did I expect to hear and what was I hearing! Where was that Mahakali, who had appeared when I threw away just a piece of torn paper, and why this Mahalakshmi, when I broke an expensive bottle of perfume! My head bows down in gratitude.

Not only this. The next day, Mother sent a message through Champakbhai: "Tell Bansidhar not to worry, and not to go and buy another bottle from the market."

When I threw away that piece of paper I was a new entrant in the Ashram. So it was only to teach me the important lesson not to throw away anything without reason that I was shown the Mahakali aspect. Since then I think well before throwing away anything and at the same time recall with happiness that vision of Mahakali.

TAKING CARE OF MONEY

From the beginning Mother used to count the money offered by visitors and devotees coming from outside. She would carefully separate the notes according to their denominations, place them head up so that the figure could be easily read, bundle them neatly etc. If anyone had put together notes topsy-turvy and somehow packeted them, she would immediately exclaim: "Such clumsy ways people have!"

She said that she herself was doing this work because only in this way did money tend to flow in more and more.

TENDER CARE

In those days Mother used to give interviews in the mornings in the Darshan room. Sri Aurobindo would be alone in his room but the doors would be closed. After the interviews were over, Mother went to his room and opened the doors. Only then would Sri Aurobindo come out.

Except on Darshan days, the sofa on which the Darshan photo is now kept was placed in the northeast corner of the room. Mother sat on it during these interviews. After everyone had finished, it was my turn. Mother had asked me to come last, on purpose.

She knew that throughout the day I was occupied with some work or the other and had hardly a few hours of sleep at night. So she told me to come to that room at this time and rest in her presence. When I went to her, she would ask me to lay my head in her lap and rest. And the wonder of it was that almost immediately I would fall asleep. Gently she would lift my head and place it on the Darshan couch on which she had been sitting. At times I would be aware, at times not. After that she would go to Sri Aurobindo's room, open the doors and return, stop where I was sleeping, caress me tenderly, and then go to her room.

In course of time, like all her programmes this too changed.

HER GRACE

The Mother asked me to lie down near Sri Aurobindo's chair in the 'long passage' while she was taking her lunch in her room. (Sri Aurobindo's chair is still in the same place. Mother called the room outside Sri Aurobindo's room the 'long passage'; sometimes Sri Aurobindo also walked there – lucky passage!)

After Mother finished her lunch, she would come out and pass her apron three or four times over me as I lay on the floor, from one end of my body to the other. And when she would finally spread the apron over me, I would get up and she would give a big smile. Thereafter I would go into her room and take her spoons and forks to my room in Library House to wash.

Even as early as the year 1923, she used to tell me: "Your time

will come and you will get everything. You will be fully conscious.” I still hear these words.

I now understand that what I took to be a ‘game of the apron’ was a ceremony of mantric passes; it was not merely a game to please me. It was her supreme Grace.

And now every prediction that she made regarding me I experience one by one. What boundless Grace!

TEA IN THE ASHRAM

Mother said to me once that she did not like people in the Ashram taking tea. Then she added: “I don’t like it. But I cannot forbid them because Sri Aurobindo himself takes tea.”

Speaking of Sri Aurobindo’s tea, which he stopped after his accident in 1938, let me tell you he was never particular about it. Look at this small note in my files:

Mother,

This night Sri Aurobindo has not taken his tea. Is there anything wrong in the milk or in the tea? Anything wrong in the person concerned? Or in me?

31.10.1932

Your child, Champak

No, I must have forgotten about it.

Sri Aurobindo

So you see, this was his attitude to tea as indeed to many other things. I remember Mother tried once to stop the distribution of tea in the Ashram; but that could only be for a short period. It had to be resumed and it continues. At first it used to be distributed by me through Kamala, then through Rajangam. Thereafter it is being done by Ravindra.

MY NATURE

On 7 February 1933 my mother, Umiyaben, came here for a visit. After some days she told me, “Now I want to go back.” All I asked

was, "Do you really want to go?" And she replied, "Yes. I must go because your father is there. Should I not go?" When she thus spoke of her duty, what could I do? I did not argue and kept quiet. Since going back was a matter of duty for her, naturally there was nothing for me to say. Finally she left on 2 April.

Some days after she had reached home, my elder brother wrote to me. In substance what he wrote was this: "Our mother really liked to be in Pondicherry. While here, because of arthritis, she can hardly walk and there in Pondicherry, she says, she could even run! She was also very happy with the Mother. But then you did not persuade her to stay on, so she came back. She says, 'Actually I wanted to stay longer, but Champak never asked me.'"

This surprised me greatly. When she talked of her duty to leave and go back to her place, should I have insisted on her staying back?

HOROSCOPE EXCELLENT

14.3.1933

Mother told me: "Champaklal, your horoscope is very, very good. It is one of the best."

Pointing at Pavitra who was present, she said: "Ask him. I am not telling a lie; ask, ask." But I did not. It was Pavitra who had seen my horoscope. He had a good knowledge of astrology.

Then Mother looked quietly at me and said: "Excellent, Champaklal, it is excellent."

SRI AUROBINDO'S DRAFT OF A REPLY

When I had to reply to letters conveying the Mother's answers to requests seeking permission to come to the Ashram for Darshan or for some other work, Sri Aurobindo would write out the full text of the answer. I would copy it out and, as per his instructions, send it in my name. Here is a specimen of one such answer:

"I showed your letter to Mother and she asks me to write to you on her behalf that you must not on any account come back until she gives you permission. You write as if you expected to come back after a few days, but that cannot be. You must wait

quietly till it is psychically right and possible for you to return. When that will be, Mother will know and decide.”

WRITING SAVITRI

After dinner, Sri Aurobindo used to sit in his chair in the ‘long passage’ outside his room (this chair is now kept along the wall) and write *Savitri* generally up to midnight. He would place the pad on the armrest of the chair. After writing down the lines he would read them to himself. I would sit in the meditation hall and listen to his reading; it was so beautiful. I had not, of course, asked him whether I could sit there. One day, however, he saw me there. For a moment he looked surprised but immediately afterwards he smiled and proceeded with his work.

TOUCHING SIGHT

It was during the period when Sri Aurobindo was attending to correspondence with the sadhaks. Nolini used to receive letters for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from the inmates, arrange them on a tray which he then brought up and left in a fixed place at the top of the staircase to the first floor. (It was also his work to distribute Sri Aurobindo’s replies to the sadhaks.) In those days the door was always kept locked. The Mother had given me a key so that I could open the door in the evening and go in for my work. I would take the tray inside, Mother would receive it from me and take it to the salon where she and Sri Aurobindo would discuss the letters and reply to them.

The Mother used this fortunate salon until her second-floor apartment was built in 1953. Here her bed used to be in the southeast corner near a big almirah. In the southwest corner, near the window, Sri Aurobindo would sit in a chair covered with a deer-skin and Mother on a small couch for this correspondence work; sometimes he would read out to her his replies. The chair and the couch are still kept in the same place. This work grew so much in the first five years of the 1930s that Sri Aurobindo often had to spend the whole night in replying. After his accident in 1938, correspondence had to be restricted to a handful of sadhaks.



The Salon with the chest of drawers
Painting by Chinmayee



Sri Aurobindo's desk and chair in the salon

Painting by Chinmayee

Those fortunate enough to be near Dyuman's room at that time must have heard Sri Aurobindo's melodious voice.

While they replied to the letters, I waited outside in the vestibule (where nowadays a life-size photo of the Mother is kept on Darshan days) with a flask of soup and a cup and saucer placed on a tray on a small cupboard. (I used to prepare the soup in the way Mother had taught me and bring it when I came in the evening.)

After their work was over, Sri Aurobindo would come to where I was standing and wait till I poured the soup in the cup and put the cup on the saucer. Holding the saucer in both hands, he then carried it slowly and carefully inside to the Mother. It was a magnificent sight to see him doing this.

Now, before Sri Aurobindo came and took the cup, the Mother would always come out to where I waited and ask me if any more letters had been sent up. Sometimes there would be a few. After she went back, Sri Aurobindo would come for the soup. I used to wonder why he had to come for the soup when Mother herself could have taken it when she came out. It was only much later that I realised the deeper significance of these actions.

Incidentally, something similar used to take place when they were in Library House. In the beginning I used to join the other inmates in the evening talks with Sri Aurobindo in the verandah outside the Prosperity hall (where Prosperity is distributed). But later when I started working with the Mother, I stopped attending the talks as that was the hour for my work. When my work was over I would step out of Mother's room and wait near the bathroom. After the talks were over Sri Aurobindo would come to where I was standing and call me in and I would follow him inside. Inside the room he would stand beside Mother while she sat on the bed and received my pranams.

Why did he himself have to walk up to where I was standing to call me in? Here too the answer dawned on me gradually.

MOTHER'S FOOT ON MY HEAD

2.2.1934

I had written to Mother that on the day before my birthday I would

leave colours and paper beside her couch and prayed that she draw something for me in the time she set aside for meditation with me. In those days Mother used to give time to sadhaks to meditate with her on their birthdays.

Today, when I went to her, she said that she would make a sketch of her foot placed on my head. I bowed my head and she placed her foot on it. Then she made a sketch and gave it to me.

Later, when the lines faded I showed it to her. Mother placed her foot again on my head and drew it again. Then she wrote, "Blessings" and signed it.¹

Many years later, when Huta asked Mother for a picture of her feet, Mother was not in a condition to draw it. But as she rarely refused any request of Huta's, she was wondering what to do. I told her that she could get the sketch she had given me photographed, leaving my name out and give it to Huta. Mother was very happy with my suggestion. She got a photograph made through Bansidhar, wrote Huta's name and "Blessings" on it and gave it to Huta.

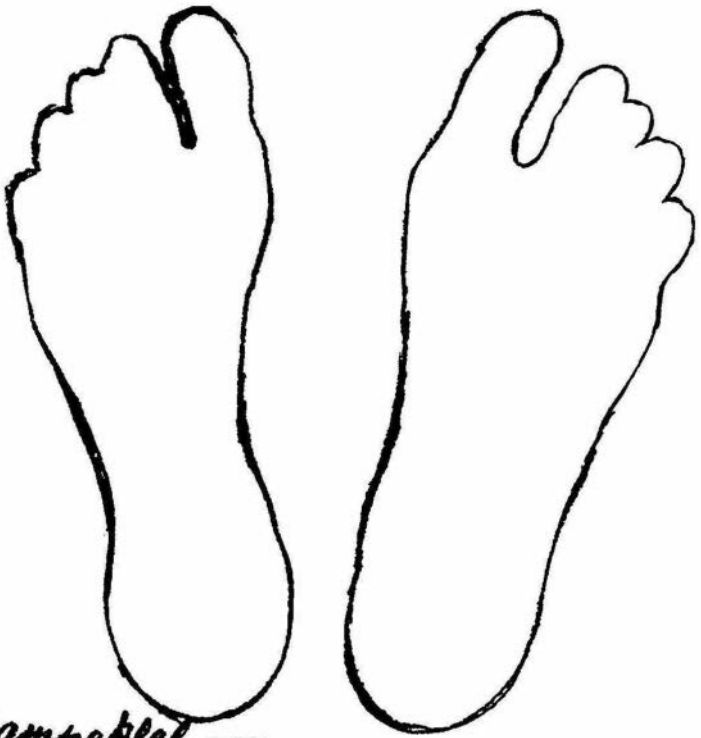
1. This sketch was printed on the cover of Champaklal's *Prarthana ane Udgaro (Prayers and Sayings)*, 1986.

FLOWERS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCES

In those days, Mother opened the door to Sri Aurobindo's and her rooms early in the mornings. It was locked in the afternoons so she had given me a duplicate key to open it when I came in the evening. A tray with handles had been specially made by Chandulal. In it Nolini kept the letters for Sri Aurobindo and Mother that were given to him by inmates. When I went in, I took the tray which Nolini had left by then at the top of the staircase. Inside, Mother would receive the tray from me and take it to the salon where Sri Aurobindo was ready for correspondence work.

One day I got the idea of drawing flowers. I painted the flower *Champa* and placed the drawing along with the other letters in the tray, without saying anything to Mother. Imagine my surprise when she came out a little later, smiling, a paper in her hand and said: "Champaklal, here is something for you."

It was unexpected, though indeed I had wanted it very much.



20 Champaklal

2-2-47.

with love and blessings

Outline of the Mother's holy feet drawn by her, 2 February 1947

The paper she gave me was my drawing of the flower. Underneath she had written the significance of that flower, *Psychological perfection*.

After that, I went on drawing one flower every day. At times I had to skip my noon meal (in fact my only full meal) in order to be able to complete the drawing. But it was more interesting to me to receive her Grace that way than to eat. Every day I carried a drawing and received it back with its significance in her own handwriting. Those days are etched in my memory. I remember with thrill and gratitude how much interest she took in my drawings. They are now in four bound books and are consulted often.

Here I must record the help given by Ambu.¹ Every day he used to select a beautiful flower and bring it to me. And in those days it was not as easy to get them as it is today; one had to go very far in search of the uncommon varieties.

1. Ambalal Patel settled here in May 1928 at the age of 17. His main work was cleaning kitchen vessels but he also helped in the Granary and in nursing invalids. However, he is best remembered as the master-instructor of asanas in the Ashram.

MOTHER'S SKETCHES

Mother used to call certain people to the Interview Room to do their sketches. Generally it was in the mornings.

Usually she was indifferent about her own paintings, though she did like some of them very much. Whenever somebody asked to see them, she would avoid it by giving some excuse such as "They are not worth seeing." At times, when she could not say them No, she showed them. To some she would readily show; that was rare. But occasionally she herself would show them. She had a special liking for a portrait of a young Japanese¹ that she had done in oil paints. Whenever the subject of painting was discussed she would mention it and praise it very highly – as if it had been done by somebody else. Her expression, when she was speaking of this portrait, was so happy, indescribable.

One day Mother arranged these sketches in Pavitra's room for



The Mother's holy foot on Champaklal's head, 2 February 1934 – Sketch by The Mother

showing to Ashram artists, most of whom she had called. The next day I mentioned to Mother that Kamala was sad and unhappy.

Mother: "Why?"

C: "You did not call her to see your paintings."

Mother: "All right. I will make her very happy. You see, Champaklal," she added with a smiling, happy expression, "there is a sketch of Sri Aurobindo which I have done but not shown to anybody. I will show her that; tell her."

C: "Then what has happened is very good, Mother."

Later, after Mother had shown the portrait to Kamala, I told Mother: "It is not out of pride that Kamala did not want to ask; she was sad because she could not help it. She wishes that everything comes spontaneously from you, not that you are obliged to do it. She knows that she is not an artist. She is only a student. But generally you call her on such occasions and so she had expected to be called."

Mother: "Now you see what she got!"

1. Poet and artist Hirasawa Tetsuo whom Mother knew in Japan. Hirasawa visited the Ashram in 1924.

BEARDED MAN AND UNCLE'S CONSTERNATION

I came to know from Chandulal that his sister's son had come and was due to go back that same night. I asked him whether the boy had seen Mother.

Chandulal: "No."

C: "Why not? Is he going without seeing Mother?"

Chandulal: "He has no permission to see Mother."

C: "Why?"

Chandulal: "Mother says it is not necessary. 'He only came to see you, and that he has done.' So it is not necessary for him to see her."

Obviously, he had not pressed the matter. A thought crossed my mind that if any of my people came, I would ask for permission once, but if Mother said No, I would not ask again. For others, however, I would ask again. But later I realised that it was not right to ask again for permission.

Then, I went to Mother and asked: "Mother, Chandul's nephew has come."

Mother: "Yes." She was a bit serious.

C: "Mother, is there any occult reason for your not seeing him? I learnt that he has no permission to see Mother."

Mother smiled, but it was not the usual smile. It was a meaningful smile though I could not understand it at that time. As you know, every expression, every gesture, every act of hers is meaningful often beyond human understanding.

Mother: "If he stays I will see him." Mother knew very well that he was going that night.

C: "If you agree to see him, he will surely stay."

Immediately I sent word to Subhadra, Chandul's wife, as she was taking a keen interest in the boy. She was overjoyed and at once ran and called her nephew. And I told him.

In the evening, the boy waited at the gate from where Chandul was to take him to the railway station. As soon as Chandul came he told him: "Uncle, I am not going."

Chandul: "Why?"

Boy: "I am going to have Mother's darshan."

Chandul: "But I told you Mother will not see you."

Boy: "Uncle, I have been told that the Mother will definitely see me."

Chandul: "Somebody seems to have played a joke on you. I am telling you, the Mother will not see you."

Boy: "A bearded man called me and informed me that Mother will see me."

Chandul was surprised. He came to me and asked if it was true that Mother was going to see the boy. I said, "Yes."

CARE OF OLD NEWSPAPERS

When Mother lived in Library House she used to take much interest in the French newspaper *Matin* which she received regularly for many years. After she moved to Meditation House, all the old issues were left in Library House in my charge for safe custody.

One day, Mother gave me a chit in which Chandulal had asked for the old numbers of *Matin* from Champaklal. Mother had replied on that note: "Champaklal can give only up to 1931 (included). 1932-33 are reserved and must not be given."

You can see how particular she was even in disposing of old newspapers.

CAREFUL

You know those small chit pads from France with perforated sheets. Once Mother wanted a sheet, and she tore out one from the pad, but it was not properly torn. Amrita tried, again not properly.

Mother: "Oh Amrita, you also have done the same thing!"

A: "It was caught by a wire, so I could not do it properly."

Then I took the pad, tore a sheet and gave it to the Mother.

Mother: "Champaklal is careful."

She wrote something on that chit, looked round and said: "This paper is to be kept by one who can remember and who can keep it carefully."

Then, turning to me, she said: "Champaklal, you keep this."

DYUMAN'S BIRTHDAY

19.6.1935

In those days Mother gave darshan from the small terrace (the one above Madhav's office) to inmates collected in the courtyard below. That terrace used to be swept by Pujalal. And it was Dyuman's work to sweep the terrace outside Mother's salon – the one above his own room. Dyuman and Pujalal would go up by a ladder from the southern side of Madhav's office.

The door from the salon to Dyuman's terrace was normally kept closed because just beside it Sri Aurobindo would sometimes sit and attend to correspondence. The Mother's couch was next to the western wall. At times Sri Aurobindo and the Mother would go on working till early in the morning. And whenever Mother wanted to speak to Dyuman while he was sweeping, she would open the door just a little, peep out and speak to him.

Mother told Dyuman that today Sri Aurobindo had answered 72 letters – a most remarkable thing!

She also told him: “Today is Wednesday, there is special cooking in the kitchen. And it is your birthday. So you will tell Tara to make some special dishes.” And so eleven dishes in all were cooked.

SRI AUROBINDO'S ACCIDENT

24.11.1938

The room to the east of Sri Aurobindo's room was once Mother's room. There they used to have their meals, and in the afternoons Sri Aurobindo rested there. The door leading from his room to this corner room used to be kept open most of the time. (In 1946, when Sri Aurobindo's room was renovated, this door was taken off; since then a curtain is hung in its place.)

On the threshold of this door, inside Sri Aurobindo's room, a leopard-skin rug was spread on the floor. (The rug is now kept with other rugs of leopard and tiger skins, with heads, in the 'long passage'. They were offered by a businessman.)

In the salon, often till late in the night, Mother and Sri Aurobindo replied to letters from sadhaks. Then Mother retired and Sri Aurobindo went for his bath. Before retiring Mother would keep his dinner ready in that corner room. At the same time I would bring tea, milk and soup from my room and keep them also there for Sri Aurobindo's dinner. After his bath Sri Aurobindo went there for his dinner. While he ate, I cleaned and wiped the bathroom; and after he finished I carried the dishes to my room in Library House for cleaning.

The accident to his leg took place immediately after I had gone to my room. The Mother had retired to her salon and Sri Aurobindo was alone. While going back to his room he slipped on the leopard skin on the threshold and his right knee hit the leopard's head.¹

This is how Sri Aurobindo explained it: “The hostile forces had tried many times to prevent things like the Darshan but I had succeeded in warding off all their attacks. At the time the accident

to my leg occurred, I was more occupied with guarding the Mother and I forgot about myself. I didn't think the hostiles would attack me. That was my mistake."²

Only those who have some occult knowledge will be able to understand the deeper meaning of this accident; and those having faith in Sri Aurobindo will accept his explanation without any hesitation or doubt.

1. The X-ray pictures revealed "an impacted fracture of the right femur above the knee, two fragments firmly locked together. Both the specialist and the radiologist took a serious view of it, and remarked that if the fragments had projected backwards, the main blood vessels and nerves running behind the bone would have ruptured and caused a big disaster!" - Nirodbaran, *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*, 1988, p. 9.

2. Quoted in Nirodbaran, *Sri Aurobindo for All Ages*, 1990, pp. 212-13.

MOTHER'S FAITH IN CHAMPAKLAL

When the new bathroom for Sri Aurobindo was made,¹ there was a proposal to instal an electric geyser there for making hot water. Mother was told that if the button was switched on without checking if the tap on the pipe taking water to the geyser was open, the result could be disastrous. The Mother immediately gave instructions that none of the attendants should touch the switch except Champaklal. However, later this plan was dropped and another arrangement made.

1. After the accident, Sri Aurobindo's attendants used to give him a sponge bath every day in his room. Some years later the room to the east of Sri Aurobindo's room was converted into a bathroom for him. See Nirodbaran, *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*. 1988, p. 26.

TWO LOTUSES

I wanted to offer something to the Mother. And I got the idea of painting two lotuses, one white and the other red.

Curiously, I received two beautiful lotuses and took up the painting. But due to other work I could not finish them in a day. These too, like my other paintings, I did during my lunch time as it gave me great joy. It took some days before I could finish them



The Avatar
Sri Anubindo



Aditi --
The Divine Mother

little by little. Naturally it would have been better if the colouring could have been done in one sitting. However the result was not bad and it was with great joy that I took the paintings to Mother on my birthday on 2 February 1940.

She received them very well indeed and exclaimed: "Oh! Very pretty! Very pretty!" She wondered how I could get time to do them. She took them in both hands and with a broad smile said: "I give them to you, Champaklal! Take them, they are for you. They are very pretty. You keep them."

I did not answer and did not take them. And she repeated: "Take them, Champaklal, I give them to you as my present."

C: "But Mother! I have done them for you."

Seeing the state of my mind she found a way out. She gave another broad smile and said softly, almost in a whisper: "Champaklal, I will take them to Sri Aurobindo and I will ask him to write on them."

I said: "Mother! Are you taking them to Sri Aurobindo? If so, it would be very nice if you ask him to write the significance. Mother! Sri Aurobindo will write on the white lotus and you will write on the red one."

When Mother brought them to Sri Aurobindo I was there. She showed them to him and said: "See, how nice they are! Today is Champaklal's birthday; he has done these paintings for me. If you write the significance on them I will give them to him. He wants you to write on the white lotus and I on the red."

With a beautiful affectionate smile Sri Aurobindo said: "Umm." Then he wrote above the white lotus:

Aditi
The Divine Mother

And under the red lotus he wrote:

To Champaklal
With blessings

2.2.40

Sri Aurobindo

After writing, he looked at me and gave a sweet smile. Then above the red lotus Mother wrote:

The Avatar
Sri Aurobindo

And under the white lotus she wrote:

To Champaklal
With blessings to my dear child

2.2.40

Mother

Then Mother told me not to show the lotuses to anybody.

But you know that after many years blocks were made out of these paintings and printed for distribution. Do not ask me why I was told not to show them to anybody at one time as later things were changed. Obviously circumstances changed and the Mother never stood rigidly by what she said on an earlier occasion under different conditions. There are so many instances of this kind.

MONA LISA

6.2.1940

In order to save her time Mother allowed me to show her paintings etc. while she was arranging flowers. Today when she was arranging flowers I asked: "Can I show the plates now?" Mother smiled and said: "Yes, yes."

After seeing the painting of Mona Lisa Mother said: "That is the best."

C: "Is that so?"

Mother: "I think so. We shall see. Sri Aurobindo was the artist."

C: "Leonardo da Vinci?"

Mother smiled sweetly and said: "Yes."

I pointed to the picture and asked: "Mother, it seems this is you?"

Mother: "Yes. Don't you see the resemblance?" She put her finger on the lips of Mona Lisa (in the plate); she also pointed to the lower portion of the face.

“I AM VERY PLEASED”

1.6.1940

Mother: I am very pleased with your work.

I like your faithfulness,

I like your sincerity,

I like your steadiness,

I like your regularity,

I like your courage.

CHAMPAKLAL HIDING

After Sri Aurobindo's accident my work changed. But my going down with Mother when she went downstairs to give Pranam was retained. Both Kamala and I used to accompany her. I would be in Sri Aurobindo's room. At the time of going down either Mother or Kamala used to call me.

There are two doors between Sri Aurobindo's room and the 'long passage' (when visiting his room, we enter by one and come out by the other). Once it so happened that when Mother came to call me, she stood near one of them and asked Kamala: "Has Champaklal gone?" Coming out by the other door, I stood behind her and replied: "Mother, I am here."

Mother turned round at once and said to Kamala: "See how he is hiding behind me!" Then she looked at me and smiled. And what a smile!

In itself the incident may seem small, but the way she used to act and speak made such occasions memorable. Only those who have experienced them can understand what I mean here. You [Madhav] will understand, for you also have had such experiences.

PROMODE KUMAR'S PAINTINGS

Sri Aurobindo: "His paintings are very living and very expressive. He is certainly an artist.... The artistic part is all right but there is nothing vast in the idea. Everything is all right except the figures. The faces are not satisfying. There is calm, trance or sweetness in

them but no deeper conception. He is an artist but as I said his figures... but I have not fixed my opinion yet.”

Sri Aurobindo's comments on the paintings:

Yamuna: The river is good but the figure is self-satisfied.

Krishna and Vidur: Vidur is good.

Kailas: Quite good.

Shiva with Cobra: Good.

Shiva profile: More original; there is some expression.

Durga and Fire: Good. The face is not that of Fire. They seem to have benevolent, goody-goody faces.

Cloud: Good.

Mountain: Good.

Manasarovar: Good.

SRI AUROBINDO ON PAINTINGS

10.1.1941

Purani was showing some Ajanta paintings. Looking at a palace scene of the king conferring with his wife (Mahajanaka Jataka, Part I, plate XVII), Sri Aurobindo remarked: “Oh, very fine paintings.”

He was also shown a volume of paintings by Van Gogh. Seeing Van Gogh's self-portrait, he remarked: “Very fine, excellent, wonderful. Powerful man.”

Then he saw the other reproductions in the volume and said: “The others are fine but his self-portrait is the best.”

On seeing a portrait, he said: “The expression here is somewhat like that of a ruffian.”

About a landscape he observed: “It is black and white; one can't appreciate it fully without colours. Of course it is impressive.”

He then saw other portraits and said: “The expressions are wonderful; very remarkable. His portraits are wonderful.”

11.1.1941

Purani showed some Ajanta plates. After seeing Plate XXIII (with the queen figure enlarged), Sri Aurobindo remarked: “Fine detailed work; remarkable. It is a pity that this thing is spoiled.”

Looking at the design of the ceiling, he said: "Very fine, very fine, very fine."

SRI KRISHNA

Once Nirod asked Sri Aurobindo regarding a photograph of an image of Sri Krishna: "I hear you have said about this image that it is very living. What is meant by living?"

Sri Aurobindo (laughing): "Living means living. There is some force in it."

C: "Is it a conscious force?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes, but the consciousness is not in the image but around it."

C: "Would it mean that Sri Krishna has this form?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Sri Krishna is not a human being. It is a form that a sculptor has seen. I am speaking of the photograph of the image, not of the image which I have not seen."

NO RIGHT TO BE SICK

6.9.1941

When I informed Mother that Bansidhar was sick, she said: "Here, certainly, people have no right to be sick!"

DEATH

6.12.1941

Sri Aurobindo: "All depends on the consciousness in which one dies."

"CHAMPAKLAL IS IN MY MONTH!"

Nolini came and informed Mother of the coming birthdays of certain disciples whom she generally saw.

Mother: "But Champaklal is in my month!"

Recently someone studied old calendars and he claims that the Mother was born on *vasant panchami*.¹ I too was born on *vasant panchami*. Is it not interesting?

So, had I known it that day, I could have said, "Mother, not only the same month, but also the same day."

1. The fifth day of the lunar month of *Vasant*, another name for Spring.

HAUNTED PLACES AND FEAR

29.2.1944

S spoke to Mother about a haunted house.

Mother said: "You won't find a place in the whole world where somebody has not died. That is impossible. But there is nothing to fear. There are so many things around us which we do not see; only those who are sensitive are able to feel and also see them. Fear only brings evil upon men. It is not that everyone has the power to do harm to others. That lady died there. So a few small vibrations may have been left there. But they cannot harm anybody. When a person has a strong attachment for his house or for something else, then such things happen; but there is nothing to be afraid of. In most cases it is fear that brings evil or harm."

NISHIKANTA'S PAINTINGS

29.2.1944

Nishikanta had sent some paintings of his to Mother for showing to Sri Aurobindo. He wanted Mother to choose some from them and show only those to Sri Aurobindo. Mother remarked that Nishikanta himself ought to have made the selection. All the same she chose three of them saying that they were pretty and went on looking for some time at one of them with a happy expression.

She told Sri Aurobindo: "Here he has succeeded in suggesting the fluidity of water. That is why I like them. Very few artists are able to bring out this liquid effect."

Sri Aurobindo smiled and said: "Ah!... ah!"

VEGETABLES

14.4.1944

The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room with eye-cups for

washing his eyes. She told him: "I went downstairs to see the vegetables. I had asked Dyuman to bring the vegetables that would be used this evening and tomorrow morning.¹ I wanted to see for myself what quantity is being used for the whole day so that I can have a real idea of it after seeing."

Then Mother looked at me and said: "Go and see; you also will get an idea." I went down and found several big baskets of nice shining brinjals. I found them very interesting and picked up one of the baskets and carried it upstairs to Sri Aurobindo, not only so that he also got a real idea of the quantity of vegetables are used in the Ashram but also to give a chance to the person who had grown them, as well as to the vegetables themselves to have Sri Aurobindo's darshan!

Sri Aurobindo was busy washing his eyes and had one eye over an eye-cup, but even so he looked at the basket with the other eye. I had thought of speaking to him later but as he went on looking I said: "There are four large baskets like this of brinjal and six of cucumber." And he laughed.

Mother: "You see, those who are grumbling that there are not enough vegetables will always grumble, for it is their nature."

1. The 'vegetable darshan' used to take place in the courtyard in front of the staircase beside Nirod's room.

SOLICITUDE FOR DEVOTEES

20.4.1944

News came of a big explosion and havoc in Bombay.

Mother informed Sri Aurobindo about it and said: "There is no news from Gunvant and it seems his building is in the same locality where the disaster has taken place. Manibhai's news has come; Raojibhai's also has come. I am thinking of wiring for Gunvant's news."

INJECTION

24.5.1944

Sri Aurobindo said about taking injections:

yathā buddhistathā gatih
yathā injection tathā gatih.

(As is the mind so is the course, as is the injection so is the course.)

AHIMSA

25.5.1944

Dr. Manilal: "Sir, what is the true definition of Ahimsa?"

Sri Aurobindo: "No objection to killing when it is necessary. A perfect ahimsa nobody could follow; it is impossible."

REALISTIC AND IDEALISTIC

Dr. Manilal told Sri Aurobindo: "Only today I learnt that Mridu's full name is Mridubhashini."

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh!"

M: "And another is her pet name Khendurani."

Sri Aurobindo: "One realistic, the other idealistic!"¹

1. *Khendu* in Bengali means broken or flat nosed. Mridu's voice carried a nasal tone, as if she were speaking through the nose. Mridubhashini means one with gentle speech.

NOT FOR SIDDHI BUT FOR SADHANA

30.5.1944

Dr. Manilal: "Sir, how long will the inconscient continue?"

Sri Aurobindo: "You have already asked this question. It is like the second front."^{*}

M: "Sir, when will the first transformed man appear? I am not asking of the last man."

Sri Aurobindo: "Who is the first?"

M: "I do not know Sir, *you* must be knowing!"

Sri Aurobindo: "I do not try to know. I was not born for *sādhana-siddhi*. I was born only for doing sadhana. So I must remain ignorant of what you ask. Perhaps an unexpected person may come first!"

* During the second World War, everyone was asking the one question: When will the second front against the Axis Powers be opened to relieve the pressure on the Allies? [M.P. Pandit's note]

DIVINE OBSERVATION AND HUMAN BOASTING

9.6.1944

Just after returning from the Balcony¹ at 7.15. a.m. (the time was changing from day to day) Mother met Dyuman and Pujalal. They were among those whom she used to give flowers at that time.² After giving the flowers she asked them to show her their palms. On seeing them she remarked that they were yellow. Then she asked me to show my palms. When I did, she told Dyuman and Pujalal: "See, his palms are pink. In your case your livers are not working properly." And to me she said: "Your liver is all right."*

C: "Mother, I never have any trouble."

Mother: "Don't boast."

C: "No, no, Mother, I do not boast."

Mother: "Then it is all right. You see, there are some mischievous forces always on the lookout. The moment they get the slightest opening they come out at once and show themselves."

C: "Mother, man always likes to boast; does he not?"

Mother smiled and said: "Yes, yes."

1. This balcony overlooks St. Gilles street to the north of the Ashram. Sometime before March 1938, Mother started giving darshan to disciples and devotees gathered in the street.

2. Every morning, on her way to the Balcony and back, Mother saw the disciples whom she had permitted to wait in fixed places.

* Lele also had said the same thing when he had seen my palms. [Champaklal's note]

REVISING SAVITRI

9.6.1944

When Sri Aurobindo needed to revise lines of *Savitri* he used to write on small chit pads. He would collect a few sheets and pin them on the original manuscript pages in their appropriate places. I often watched him doing it. One day I saw him having some difficulty with the pinning. What had happened was that the sheets were too many and it was not easy to insert the pin in all of them together.

Pussh, I heard and saw that the pin had slipped. *Pussh*, again I heard this sound, and again *pussh*. Then I ran to him and he showed me what he had been trying to do. It was indeed difficult to do it in the way he wanted. Somehow I succeeded in doing it. And I received a broad smile. Oh, what a look!

Thereafter he stopped doing that work himself and always called me to do it even when it was very easy. "Champaklal", he would call. How sweet it was to hear the name from his mouth! A boundless delight filled me whenever he called me by name. I remember I had even kept a record of how many times in a day (and night) he called me by name for one reason or another. It was noteworthy because he very rarely called anyone by name.

I felt the same ananda when Mother called me by name. Once Amrita told me: "How lucky you are, Champak! How sweet it is to hear Mother when she calls you by name!" Whenever he was moved, Amrita used to call me Champak.

CHANCE PHILOSOPHER

9.6.1944

Purani told Sri Aurobindo that Indra Sen¹ was anxious to know his views on co-education.

Sri Aurobindo: "I have no views. I act according to what I see."

P: "That is the difficulty with philosophers."

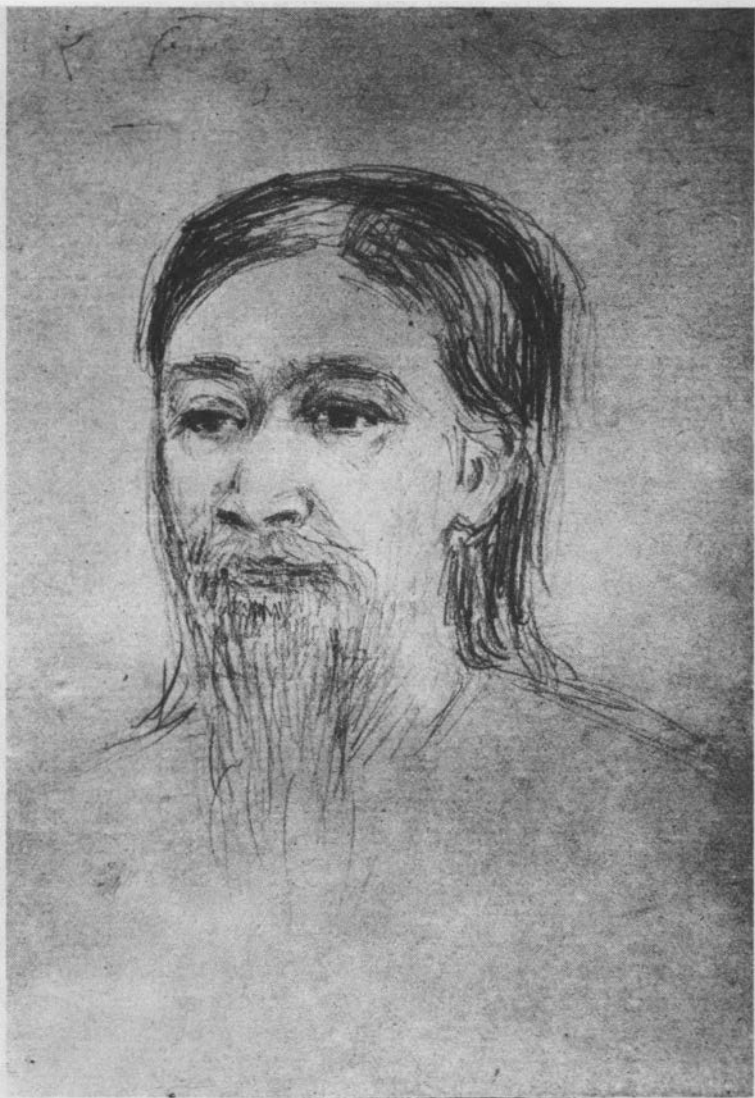
Sri Aurobindo: "But I am a chance-philosopher! Here in the Ashram boys and girls read together, don't they?"

1. Indra Sen, a disciple who obtained his doctorate in Philosophy in Germany and taught at the Hindu College, Delhi University, and later in the Ashram.

CARE OF RUBBER TUBES

10.7.1944

While combing Sri Aurobindo's hair, Mother suggested to Nirod a way to preserve the rubber tubes in his Dispensary: "Take a nice airtight tin. Put in it an open bottle of clove oil. Put your rubber tubes in that tin alongside the open bottle, and close the tin. The tubes will then remain in very good condition."



Sri Aurobindo – sketch by the Mother



Self-portrait by the Mother, 28 August 1934

TWO CHILDREN

17.6.1944

When Sri Aurobindo used to sit in his sofa for writing we used to place a writing-desk in front. Once while writing he asked for water. As he was drinking, some water was spilt; a little later some more was spilt. He asked me why that was happening.

Since his accident he used a feeding cup for drinking water. These cups have spouts like on a *jhari* [spouted pot] and he put his mouth to the spout when he drank.

I showed him the rim of this cup and said: "You see, this opening is larger than in other feeding cups. When it is tilted too much, water spills over the rim. But if you drink slowly without tilting the cup too much, water will not spill."

Sri Aurobindo exclaimed, "Oh, oh!" and laughed. Then he followed my directions and the water was not spilt.

Truly he was sometimes like a child – before another child!

MOTHER'S SELF-PORTRAIT

18.7.1944

When the Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room this morning, I showed her her self-portrait done for Chandanbala [Dr. Manilal's daughter]. And she exclaimed: "Seigneur! Qu'est-ce que c'est? (Lord! What is this?)"

Then she saw her signature and asked: "When was this done?"

I pointed out the date, 28.8.34, which Mother herself had written there below.

Mother: "But it is not good, not good. The mirror was not good and it was slanting too."

C: "What you did for Kaushiki [Doraiswami's daughter] was remarkable, Mother, it was extraordinary, wonderful. That was the best."

Mother: "Yes, but it is no longer there; it was destroyed."

She told me how and by whom it was destroyed, but I shall not repeat it. It was a sad happening. Perhaps it was destined. It illustrates how unprepared we are for her Grace.

C: "Mother, the portrait you did of me, is that not nice?"

Mother: "Perfect! If it had been signed Leonardo da Vinci, nobody would doubt it was not by him. Do not spoil it."

LATOUR THE PHOTOGRAPHER

23.7.1944

In those days the art of photography had not developed in the Ashram. Mother gave Bansidhar some of her pre-Pondicherry photographs for reprinting. She insisted that while making new negatives the old copies must not be touched up.

Bansidhar entrusted the work to Latour, son of the photographer who had taken Sri Aurobindo's photographs in the early years. He told him: "Make one negative without touching it up and one after touching up the old one. We shall show prints of both of them one after another to the Mother and order the required number of copies of the one Mother chooses."

After seeing the touched-up copy intently and also from several angles, Mother liked it very much and said: "Very good, especially the eyes. He has touched it up a lot, but it is done very skilfully. It is the first time that I see such remarkable work in India." And she took it to Sri Aurobindo who also liked it.

B: "Mother, Latour studied photography in France."

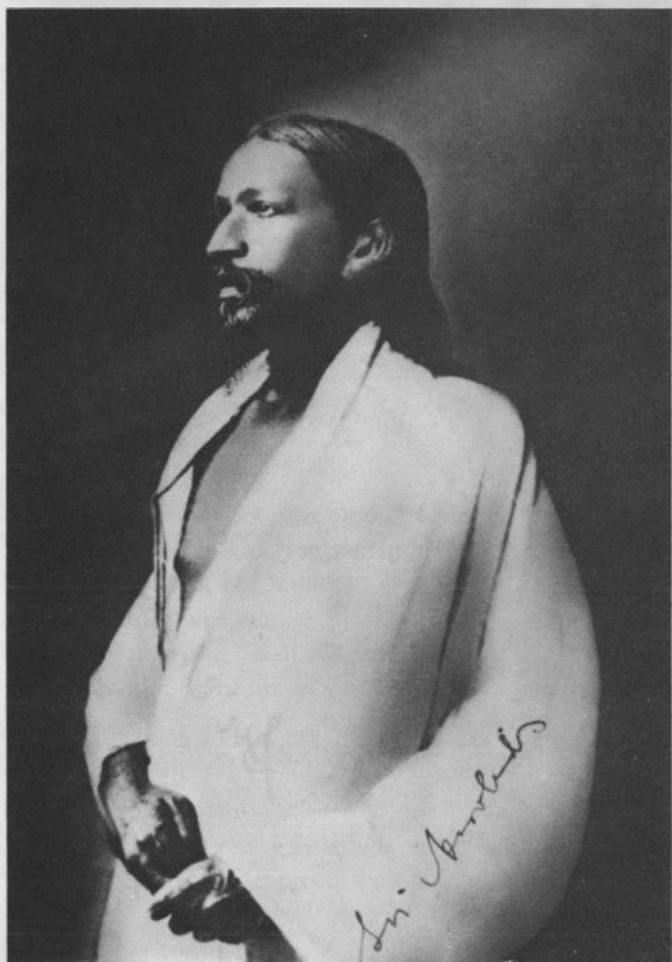
Mother: "Hmm.... Beautiful work. Really good. You may order more copies of the touched up one."

B: "Mother, others also would like to have copies."

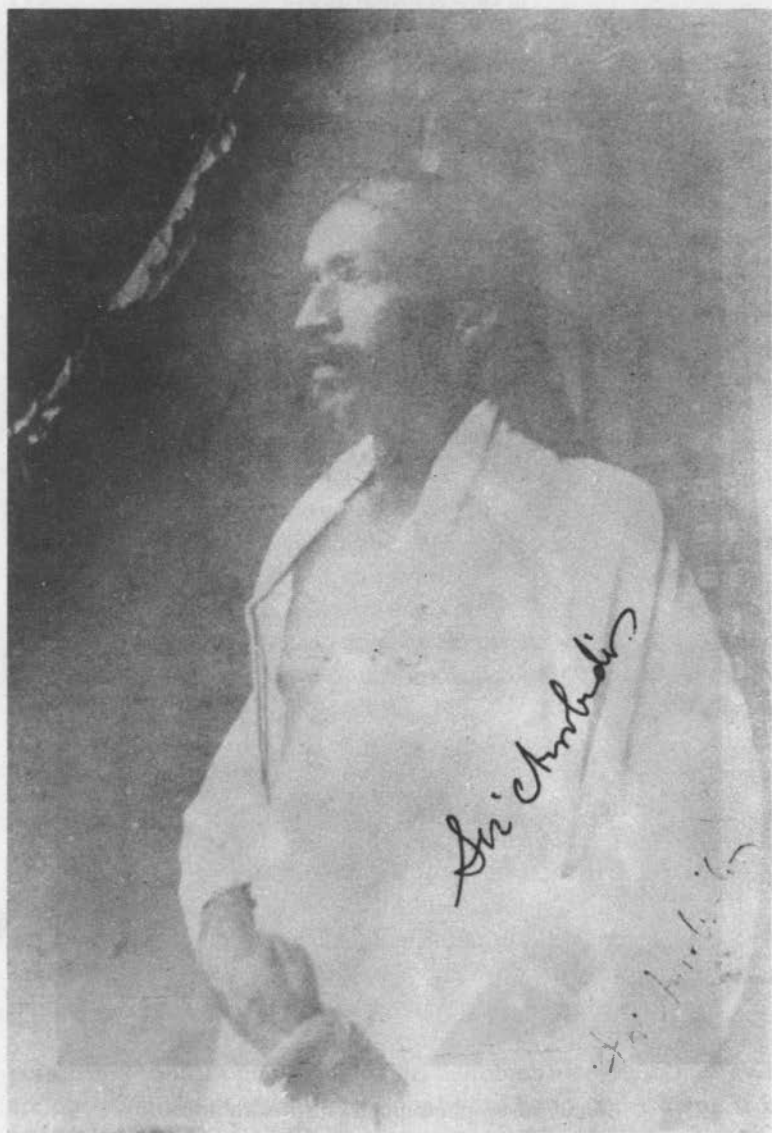
With Mother's permission, Bansidhar ordered more copies and sold them to those who wanted them. Needless to say, whatever money came from the sale was offered to the Mother.

Later Bansidhar wrote a letter to Mother requesting her permission to learn photography. Sri Aurobindo's reply came: "We are not planning to start a photography studio in the Ashram. It is not necessary to learn." Yet today we not only have studios but the art too has been highly developed. However, since Mother's time I have been getting all my photography work done by Latour.

I relate this episode also to illustrate the fact that it does not make sense to say that Sri Aurobindo said this or that, just in order to fulfil one's desire or belief.



Touched-up photograph of Sri Aurobindo



Untouched-up photograph of Sri Aurobindo

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

30.7.1944

Sri Aurobindo said that he himself had done some religious *kriyas* (rituals), and added: "If they are done sincerely, one may attain the Divine. Otherwise, one generally gets the realisation of the vital gods. Men must be absolutely sincere."

AGGRESSIVE

2.8.1944

Referring to S whom she had met for the first time, Mother said: "I have never met such an aggressive man – an image of aggressiveness."

EXPENSES

2.8.1944

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room at night, she handed him a slip of paper on which was written:

Rs. 2,000 for milk per month.

Rs. 8,000 for grains etc.

Then she remarked: "You see, how much is our expense!"

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, oh!"

DECEPTIVE

9.8.1944

X brought to Mother a gentleman at Pranam time with the intention of getting her approval before associating with him in business.

Later Mother commented: "A good-looking man; smiles nicely; a gentleman. But he is a zero. He will lose all his money. Incapable of doing anything; he will make a mess of everything. X would be a fool to take him as his partner. I advise him not to do so."*

* If Mother had stopped after the first three complimentary comments it would naturally have been thought that she approved of the man. It is only after what she added later that it is clear that she did not approve of X's associating with him in business. If she had not added that, there would have been a misunderstanding. [Champaklal's note]

MY LUCKY PHOTOGRAPH

13.9.1944

Mother took my photograph to Sri Aurobindo, gave it in his hand and said: "Respectable, looks like a yogi." She said it thrice.

Sri Aurobindo smiled, nodded his head and said: "Y...e...s."

Mother looked at me and said: "Very nice." This too she said thrice, then added: "I am not joking."

As she put the photograph in my hand, Sri Aurobindo was looking at me and smiling.

CALCUTTA PHOTO

13.9.1944

It was 12.28 p.m. Sri Aurobindo was sitting in his chair near the window. I showed him a photograph of his in which he is seated on the dais in a public meeting – the one without the garland. He looked at it for a while, smiling, then asked: "From where? Whose?"

C: "Yours."

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes, but to whom does it belong?"

C: "It is mine."

Sri Aurobindo: "It must have been taken at Calcutta. From where did you get it?"

C: "In your room in Library House. When you moved to this house it was lying in a drawer of your table. I showed it to Mother; even she had not seen it. She gave it to me. But as it was only a print I gave it to Bansidhar to get a photographic copy made and he had it done by Latour. This is the copy."

Sri Aurobindo smiled and kept looking at it.

C: "Would you sign it?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, you want me to sign?" And he smiled and signed it.

“THE WAR BEHIND THE WAR”

14.9.1944

Mother said, regarding Amal's' article on 15th August: “The War behind the War is very well written – specially well written.”

1. Amal Kiran, name given by Sri Aurobindo to K.D. Sethna, a scholar-disciple who first came to the Ashram in December 1927 and, after some decades, settled here for good. Since its appearance on 19 February 1949, he was editor of *Mother India* where he published “The War behind the War” as the editorial in the issue of 14 May 1949. All his editorials were seen by Sri Aurobindo before publication.

“LIKE US!”

17.9.1944

Mother: “Chinese soldiers quarrel in ordinary matters, without understanding the seriousness of the situation.”

Sri Aurobindo: “Like us!”

“WAIT, WAIT, CHAMPAKLAL!”

21.9.1944

I said to Mother: “Latour, the photographer, is an admirer and a devotee of Sri Aurobindo. He is very anxious to take a new photograph of Sri Aurobindo. His father had taken the old ones. He too wants to take one. He says that if Mother does not allow him to take the photograph, he can give his camera to Bansidhar, ready to be clicked. He says that his is a beautiful camera which can be operated under any circumstances. He will explain things to Bansidhar and give the camera ready in his hands.”

Mother: “Wait, wait a little more.”

C: “The time has not yet come? But Mother, I do think your time for being photographed has come.”

Mother: “No, no, my time also has not yet come.”

C: “Mother, you move like a young girl...”¹

Mother: “No, no, no, wait, wait, Champaklal!”

The time came in 1950. And we spent thousands of rupees. This too is Their Play. Whereas even if we had asked money from

Latour he would have gladly paid it for the privilege of taking the photographs. He was a sincere devotee of Sri Aurobindo.

1. During her talk in the Playground on 25.8.1954, the Mother said, “[In the thirties] when I began with Sri Aurobindo to descend for the yoga,... when we brought down our yoga from the mind into the vital... after a month’s yoga I looked exactly eighteen.” (CWM vol.6, p.303.)

WASTE OF LEISURE TIME

30.9.1944

Mother said to Sri Aurobindo: “Some people, when they have ample time at their disposal, spend it in drinking, playing, talking etc. They waste their time in drama, and cinema too. Among thousands, I have hardly seen anyone who knows how to make use of his time in the proper way.”

*

Sri Aurobindo: “Has rationing done some good?”

Mother: “Yes. Generally the English food is very heavy. I had an experience of it when I was there in England during the last War.”¹

1. On her way to Japan in 1916, the ship Mother travelled in went first from France to England because the Mediterranean was a war zone. Civilian ships going to Asia had to go round Africa.

FALL OF POLAND

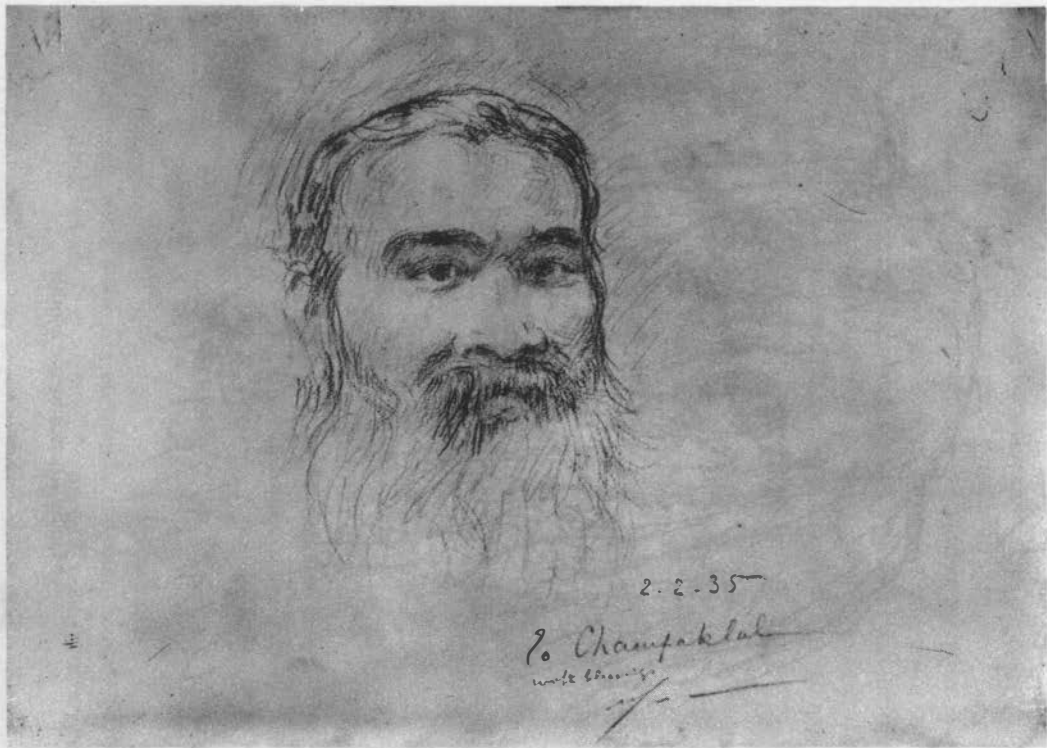
4.10.1944

After listening to a Polish visitor, Mother said: “As if they are living for the Truth only and they are the people who will give the Truth to the world! There are people there who worship the Black Mary; I think it is a deformation of Kali. But they are not sincere in their adulation.”

MY PORTRAIT

6.10.1944

I showed to Mother my portrait done by her on my birthday in



Champaklal – sketch by the Mother with eyes closed

Goldy



June 1916

Goldy - sketch by the Mother

1935. Some small yellow spots had appeared on the paper.

Mother: "That happens when the paper is not good."

C: "But this paper is of a good quality."

Mother: "There must have been some defect in the making of this paper. It is a pity. The picture is wonderful, very nice."

You know, this portrait was done by Mother with her eyes closed. She finished it in a few minutes and when she saw it, she was so happy with it that she took it immediately to Sri Aurobindo.

It was regarding this picture that she said: "If I were to write the name Leonardo da Vinci here [as the artist who made this] nobody would question it.... The pencil just went on moving."

KESHAV SASTRI AND HIS HINDI BOOK

1.11.1944

Someone had complained that there was something vulgar in the Hindi book written by Keshav Sastri. P brought the book and was reading on and on to Sri Aurobindo.

I did not see the point and asked P: "That is all right, but where is the vulgar thing about which people are talking?" But he would not stop and went on reading aloud.

Then Sri Aurobindo himself asked: "But where is the vulgar thing to which they object?"

P could not reply and mumbled: "Indra Sen said that I must first go through the book before I brought it to you."

Sri Aurobindo: "Indra Sen is rational-minded."

AMAL ON SEX

5.11.1944

While going back from Sri Aurobindo's room, Mother said: "Amal's article on sex is good, but it cannot be published in *The Advent*."

A Tamil gentleman had begun the publication of this monthly in Madras, under Mother's guidance. The Mother considered it her journal and that is why she refused to publish it there. (*Mother India* was considered Sri Aurobindo's paper.)

MOTHER'S SOLICITUDE

4.12.1944

Received a letter from my brother Sunderlal that my father had passed away. When I informed Mother about it, she asked: "How did that happen? Prior to this was there any report of his illness?"

C: "Yes, Mother, there was a letter saying my father was on his death-bed and that if I wanted to see him I should go there."

Mother kept silent, looked down for a long time and then said: "Now your mother is alone there?"

C: "No, Mother, my elder brother is there."

Mother: "Yes, that I know. She does not want to come here? When she came here she told me that she would like to come and stay here and that she would come with your father for good. If she wants to come, she is welcome here. You will write that from me."

*

Even before she had come to Pondicherry in 1933, my mother suffered from rheumatism and had acute pain while walking. But here she walked about everywhere with perfect ease – she could, as we say, even run. The Mother remarked: "She is very open." Later she asked my mother: "Do you want to stay here? If you want to, I will keep you." But my mother went back because she felt it was her duty to remain by the side of my father.

Now, after my father passed away, Mother asked me if my mother wanted to come and settle here. When she asked about my mother's daily needs, I said: "She will have no difficulty here except in using a commode." In the house in which Bansidhar lives (above the present Ashram Post Office) there was on the ground floor an Indian toilet for servants. Mother knew it because she had sanctioned it. Mother told me that she would build another toilet at the back for my mother and the one for servants would be shifted elsewhere.

I wrote to my mother to come to Pondicherry. She made arrangements to come but as her rheumatism became acute she gave up the idea. When Mother was told this, she said: "If, in spite of that attack, your mother had stuck to her determination and sat in the train, her pain would have gone."

This is why, whenever I have to go out from here I go with full faith in the Mother and she makes everything easy for me.

So much Grace was showered on her by the Mother! And she would have done the same for my father too, if he had wanted to come and stay.

*

Long before my father passed away I had shown his photograph to the Mother. She had then spoken highly of him and asked Sri Aurobindo: "Is he a Pundit?" And to me she had said: "I have seen him, of course not physically. I know him." After his passing, when I showed his photograph to Mother, she told me she liked it but asked me not to hang it on the wall. I was told to keep it in a box.

POSSESSION

9.12.1944

While combing Sri Aurobindo's hair Mother told him about V: "It seems to me it is a possession. If I do anything it is dangerous for her. Better she does not see me; that is good for her. Seeing me won't be good for her. Perhaps pining may do good. By giving shocks to the nerves, that force may go away."

DATTA

Datta was not keeping well. Mother went to see her and after coming from there, she told Sri Aurobindo: "Peaceful, detached."

Sri Aurobindo: "Ah!"

MOTHER ON HERSELF IN JAPAN

18.12.1944

Showing a group photograph taken in Japan in which she is seen with Tagore and others, Mother told Sri Aurobindo: "This one is Mahalakshmi, sweet, lovable, tender, docile; beauty, harmony.... I would like to see this woman, to meet her again. I would like to see this creature again."

Later Mother gave me that photograph in order to make from it a new photograph of her alone by isolating her figure from the others. I got it done by Latour, through Bansidhar.

INNER KNOCK

29.12.1944

Mother told Sri Aurobindo about J: "He must have got a knock due to his ambition, not in external life but in his inner life. Outwardly, it has been going on nicely."

KASHIBHAI'S OFFERING

It was long ago. Kamala's brother Mahesh passed away. Her father Kashibhai¹ wanted to offer some cows to the Mother. He asked me to inform her about it. Mother was very happy to know of this.

But I noticed a change after some days. One day Mother told me that a printing press² was going to be started and Pillai from Hyderabad was coming for that purpose. Money was needed for it. She would be very happy if Kashibhai could give money instead of cows. Then she added: "I know that for orthodox people it is not the same thing. They would like to offer cows. Can you write to Kashibhai about this?"

C: "Mother, I know he would like to do exactly what Mother wants."

I informed Kashibhai and he agreed to do as Mother wanted. I was struck by Mother's understanding of orthodox sentiments and her consideration. She hesitated to suggest this change even though she must have known that her wish was supreme to us!

1. After Kashibhai settled in the Ashram, he stayed in Duplex house where Mother had lived in 1914-15.

2. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press was started in 1945 with Mr. Pillai as manager.

GOLDY

6.1.1946

Lakshmibai used to bring Goldy – a very unusual dog – to Mother.

From there Goldy herself used to come to Sri Aurobindo's room – remarkable indeed! I would pick her up in my arms and carry her to Sri Aurobindo who would smile and caress her with both hands.

One day she went straight to where Sri Aurobindo was sitting and started to lick his feet, one after the other. Sri Aurobindo not only allowed it, but even bent over and patted her.

Goldy was free from sexuality. She never allowed any dog to come near her, and was furious if any tried. One who knew her would never permit the term “dog” to denote sexuality.

FIRST ALPHABET

18.2.1946

For a full five hours I could not rest even for a moment.

Today it was the birthday of a child. The parents wanted her to learn the first alphabet from the Mother. Mother was gracious and she gave a pen in the hands of the little one and made her write MA in English.

“FRONT-LINE FAMILY”

2.4.1946

During the Second World War Mother was taking a deep interest in the feature “Front-line Family” aired by the BBC. She used to listen to it every morning at about 4 o'clock.

The programme stopped from today. Mother said: “Henceforth it is not necessary to get up early.”

She alone can say why she took such a deep interest in it.

At one time she had taken the same interest in the French newspaper *Matin*. She also was very interested in the comic strip “Phantom” that appeared in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. Again, she alone can explain the reason behind it.

..p

DROP OF CONSOLATION

26.5.1946

When Sri Aurobindo was having his meal, something happened

and the tumbler of grape-juice was upset on the table. I picked it up and showed to Mother that one drop of juice was still left in it. Mother told Sri Aurobindo: "Champaklal says there is one drop of juice left in the tumbler."

Sri Aurobindo smiled, took the glass and said: "Oh, one drop of consolation!" And he sipped it.

SRI AUROBINDO'S HAND

27.5.1946

When Sri Aurobindo was to sign and autograph books sitting on his bed, we used to place a table in front of him. Today, however, there was only one book and so no table was placed. I sat by his side on the floor and after the book was signed, I showed him my palm, pointed out one of the lines there and told him that I wished to see how far his line had gone.

He smiled, and showing his palm and asked: "What?"

C: "It is very long and it is exactly what X asked me to see."

He smiled again and said: "Oh!"

Though I do not know palmistry I know the main three lines. On his palm I saw the lifeline fully extended. There were numerous other lines, distinct and very sharp; and there were high mounts. Altogether a very interesting hand.

BOTTLES AND CORKS

11.6.1946

Right from the time I started work with Mother, she used to give me bottles whose corks would not easily open. Somehow, most of the time, I used to succeed. In this connection she told me once: "You know, before you came, if a bottle could not be opened, I used to inform Sri Aurobindo, leave it on my table and go away; and the next day when I came and tried to open it, I found it would open easily."

This evening Mother came with a bottle with its cork gone inside. I tried and took it out. Mother looked at Sri Aurobindo and said: "How wonderfully he has managed – so nicely, he has succeeded." Both of them smiled.

CLOCK THAT CHIMES

23.6.1946

I came to know that Kapadia has offered one big wall clock which chimes. I thought that it would be very convenient for Sri Aurobindo if it were kept in his room. For every now and then he himself used to pick up the timepiece kept on a stool near his bed and look at it. But I felt that Mother might give it away. So I told her: "Mother, you ask Sri Aurobindo whether it would be useful to keep it here."

Mother: "You yourself can ask him whether he needs it."

C: "Mother, if you wish it he will say Yes. So, please, you ask him."

Mother: "That is why I am asking you to speak to him; if he really needs it he will say Yes. To you he will say what is a fact." Then I went to Sri Aurobindo and told him about the clock.

Sri Aurobindo asked: "Oh, it chimes?" Then he smiled and said: "Yes, it will be very useful. You can tell Mother." Again he smiled. And all in me smiled.

It is now over a cupboard near the window in his room. Lucky clock!

HARD WORK

5.7.1946

Today it was a record. Sri Aurobindo finished his lunch at 2.04 p.m. Since sometime it has been advancing from 12 to 12.30, 1, 1.30 and so on, due to delay in Mother's coming – Mother's time being taken up with work.

Mother has been more and more occupied. At times she has had to open the door as many as four times and receive people who came late.

BIRTHDAYS

9.8.1946

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room for combing his hair, she informed him that there were six birthdays today. Sri Aurobindo

said to Mother: "Yes, Champaklal was working till late at night."

He used to note what I was doing. I was preparing the bouquets only after he retired for the night. I would sit in the meditation hall upstairs and do the work; at times it would go on up to 12 or 1 or 2 – on occasions it even went up to 3 a.m.

Sri Aurobindo would note everything. In fact, he once told us: "I am observing you all."

CUSHION THAT WAS NOT THERE

17.11.1946

After the accident to Sri Aurobindo's leg, we used to keep a big cushion under the knee as a support when he extended his legs while sitting on his bed. After about 30 to 45 minutes in that position, he would ask for the cushion to be removed.

One day he called me. I went and stood by his side and looked at him. He gave a surprised look and said: "Remove the cushion!"

I told him quietly that no cushion had been placed there today. Then he glanced at his knee and laughed: "Oh...!"

SARDAR PATEL

22.12.1946

At the time of taking his bath Sri Aurobindo said, commenting upon developments in the country: "Out of all of them Patel is the only strong man."

SRI AUROBINDO'S FEET

It was my birthday: 2.2.1947.

I was very happy, indeed very very happy. The Mother was very gracious, as on every birthday of mine. When she came to Sri Aurobindo's room where we all were waiting for her, she looked at me with a broad smile which had a deep intimacy in it and told Sri Aurobindo: "Today is Champaklal's birthday."

Sri Aurobindo's response was immediate and equally intimate. "Umm!", he said with prolonged emphasis, and gave me a smile that touched me deeply.

For a long time I had wanted to draw an outline of Sri Aurobindo's feet. But it was difficult as I did not want to inconvenience him in any way, or break his routine. With Mother it was different; I could freely ask her whatever I wished. Once when I asked her for it she herself drew an outline of her feet. Sri Aurobindo too, when we asked and if it was necessary for our progress, did everything.

So I thought out a plan. After sitting in his chair, Sri Aurobindo would raise his feet for the footstool to be kept, and raise them again when he wanted to get up so that the footstool could be removed. I decided that after removing the footstool I would put a sheet of paper there so that his feet would automatically come down on the paper. And at that moment I would quickly draw the pencil around his feet and get their outline. But one problem remained. The paper would be on a carpet and it might not be easy for him to keep standing on the paper. Besides the pencil would not move evenly and the outline would not be properly drawn. Then another thought occurred. If a big plank were brought and kept on the carpet and the chair placed over it, the paper would remain flat and the pencil could move smoothly, and Sri Aurobindo would be able to stand steadily. With everything thus thought out, I put my plan before Sri Aurobindo. He gave his consent with a soft smile.

Then I executed my plan and I was happy that it was done without any change in his programme. His expression when I did all this was worth seeing. You know I was very fond of watching his expressions – it gave me immense joy. You have seen some of the sketches I have drawn of him in different postures and of the different expressions on his face.

Later that day, I took the paper with my drawing to Sri Aurobindo to get my name and his blessings written on it. Once again he gave me a gentle smile and happily wrote below the sketch:

To
Champaklal
my love and blessings
February 2, 1947

Sri Aurobindo

The same day I also prayed Mother to let me have an outline of her feet and she drew it with her own hand. Under it she wrote:

To Champaklal
2.2.1947
With love and blessings

Mother

NO GRIEF IN DEATH

Vyas had passed away. Mother said about him: "Do not grieve. Vyas is resting in peace. God has drawn him to Himself. Grief will disturb him. Grief has no place."

PORTRAIT OF SRI AUROBINDO

22.2.1948

A letter was received from the Danish artist who had taken Sri Aurobindo's photograph in standing profile and also done an oil painting.¹ He was offering to sell his painting for Rs. 3,500.

Mother: "We cannot afford it; it is not worth it."

C: "You had said it was very well done, very good, very good."

Mother: "To whom did I say that?" I did not answer.

Mother repeated the question but still I did not answer. She said quietly: "Yes, but it is not worth paying that much for it."

I said something which looked like I was insisting.

Then Sri Aurobindo who had been listening all the while, said with some force: "But she says it is not worth..."

C: "Yes, for Mother it is not worth, but for me it is." (I had heard that the artist himself considered it excellent.)

After Mother's passing, the artist's wife offered to sell it for \$ 6,000; but the Ashram could not afford it. Finally, through Jayantilal's efforts, Eckhard, a German disciple, purchased and presented the painting to the Ashram in December 1978.

1. Johannes Hohlenberg, an acquaintance of the Mother, came here in 1915.



The Mother in the Himalayas



Sri Aurobindo – painting by Johannes Hohlenberg 1915

MOTHER'S SELF-PORTRAITS

4.3.1948

In the evening, Mother brought to Sri Aurobindo two of her self-portraits. She gave them in his hands saying that she had found out the period when they were done.

She told Sri Aurobindo: "Champaklal wants to have them photographed. What do you say? If you find them all right they can be photographed."

Then turning to me Mother said: "In the portrait done earlier, the face is nice; in the other the eyes are nice."

C: "Mother, I find both are nice."

At this, Sri Aurobindo put both the sketches in my hand.

Then both looked at me and smiled.

SAVING TIME

19.3.1948

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room at 9.30 a.m. to comb his hair, she looked at me with a sweet smile and said to Sri Aurobindo: "Champaklal has found out a way to save my time, and today he has saved me half an hour."

Sri Aurobindo, happily: "Umm, umm, umm!"

Mother: "It was taking a lot of time to choose flowers for giving to people. Champaklal brought a big dish, arranged four kinds of flowers in different heaps and took away all the rest. So a good deal of time was saved."

This thing could have been done long ago. But only when the Mother allows it does anything become possible.

"HE IS STILL THERE?"

17.4.1948

Even at night Mother used to open the door to meet some disciples at the top of the staircase. Today it was past 11 p.m. and yet they had not finished, though they were expected just to do pranam and leave.

Sri Aurobindo enquired who was there with Mother. I told him

the name. He asked further questions about the person including his age. Half an hour passed and still he did not leave. Sri Aurobindo asked: "Why is Mother keeping him so long? He is still there?"

C: "Yes."

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCERN ABOUT MOTHER

20.4.1948

There was a film-show¹ tonight and by the time Mother came upstairs, it was 11.42 p.m. As soon as she came up she told me to inform Sri Aurobindo that she would be late today (for Sri Aurobindo's dinner) as she had returned late.

I said: "Mother, I always inform him when you are back because he always likes to know. At times on hearing the horn of your car he himself lifts up the timepiece and sees the time."

1. In July 1945 Mother asked Pranab to take the Ashram children to the Salle Jeanne d'Arc to see *Pinocchio*. "After this, on two occasions I went with Mother to a cinema outside the Ashram. One was a film on Rodin, his life and sculpture, and the other a Russian film on the May Day parade.... On both these occasions, we hired and booked the entire cinema hall for ourselves." - Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, *I Remember*, 1993, p. 118.

SWADHARMA

20.9.1948

Noted in Sri Aurobindo's room at 9.45 a.m.:

The *dhira purusha*, the calm and wise man, acts always according to his *swadharma*, his inmost nature.

Often we believe we are following our own nature, but we are actually only imitating others. As we progress in sadhana, we liberate ourselves more and more from this defect. Surrender, constant remembrance, and opening to the Divine influence help us in this process. In the beginning this demands great efforts, but later it becomes spontaneous.

Not to be deceived by others is difficult but not to be deceived by oneself is even more difficult. Do not be deceived – either by others or by yourself. How much more shameful it is to be



Self-portrait by the Mother, 1935



Self-portrait by the Mother, 4 March 1948

deceived by oneself than by others! It does not appear shameful in the beginning, but as we progress we find it increasingly so. Though from our childhood we learn by imitating others, a time comes when one becomes aware of the difference between imitating others and following one's own nature.

MOTHER'S HARD WORK

22.9.1948

Today Mother was not well and a notice to this effect was put on the Ashram notice board. And yet she went down and gave Pranam. When she returned, she was so tired that I could not bear to see her; tears welled up in my eyes. I went and informed Sri Aurobindo about this.

Sri Aurobindo said: "She ought not to go down."

But next day, though she was still unwell, she went down and gave Pranam. These were not the only occasions when she did so. They were innumerable, especially during later years. People have no idea how much she exerted herself and in what conditions.

OLD SOAP-BITS AND WORLD ECONOMY

23.9.1948

Mother gave a new soap cake for Sri Aurobindo's use and asked me if I had kept the unusable bits of the old ones. She knew that I must have preserved them¹. I said: "Yes."

Mother: "Then bring them; they will be given to Pavitra and he will make a nice big cake out of them. I give all my bits to him and he prepares a big cake from them." The war-time restrictions were still not removed and there was difficulty in getting soap from France.

Mother noticed from my expression that I was not enthusiastic. She went on to ask me: "Are you using them?"

C: "No, Mother."

Mother: "Then, why waste them? If you were using them it would be all right; otherwise why not use them this way? Now there are hardly 12 cakes; perhaps only 9 or 10 are left, maybe

even less. We can make new ones.”

C: “All right, I shall bring them.”

Now I had wrapped each bit in paper and numbered them date-wise, indicating from what day to what day each had been used. All were arranged in a box. It occurred to me that as Mother had asked only for the soap-bits, I could retain the wrappers with the dates. So I took out a few; then an idea came that Mother should see the whole box, what a pretty sight it was. So I took to her both the opened ones and the box with paper-wrapped ones.

Mother saw everything. She admired and appreciated it so much that she said: “I cannot take them away; no, Champaklal, you keep them; I cannot take them.”

She was very happy to see the box. Then she added: “But you see Champaklal, the world’s economy is in my hands; so I have to start from the Ashram.”

1. See Champaklal’s collection of souvenirs in ‘Shree Smriti’ [the Ashram’s museum of personal articles of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.]

MY HAND

6.10.1948

Mother saw my right hand when we were in her salon and said: “One aim in life. All lines are joined.”

Then Mother examined my nails and said:

“Dreamer; Writer; Poet.”

Long back, when Lele had seen my right hand, he had pointed out the three main lines and said, “Very, very interesting. These lines are rarely connected in this way.”

NOT CLAIMING ENOUGH

1948

A prominent public worker of Madras came to see Mother. Referring to Sri Aurobindo, he told Mother: “He has become an international figure but we claim him more.”

Mother: “But you are not claiming enough.”

MOTHER'S RESPONSES

To infer anything from Mother's apparent behaviour often turns out to be quite contrary to the truth. For instance when physical education activities such as marching, drills and exercises were started in the Playground, those who wanted to participate had to give their names to Mother. One sadhak who had given his name went and met her. Later Mother told me what passed between them. She asked him several questions; one of them was: "Will you be able to jump?" In answer, he immediately jumped, and from Mother's reactions he concluded that she was pleased. But in fact, as she told me, "His jump was so poor that it made me smile but he felt he had demonstrated a good jump!"

C.R. REDDY

C.R. Reddy saw Sri Aurobindo on the 20th of December, 1948, to present the award of Andhra University. That day Mother came at 8.30 a.m. and told me that she was going to come to Sri Aurobindo's room at 9.45 to prepare things. C.R. Reddy came in at 10.58 a.m. and was there for half an hour.

Afterwards Mother said of him: "He is a nice man. He understands things." She had said the same thing the previous evening, when she first met him.

He gave to Sri Aurobindo a gold medal and a sum of Rs. 1,116. Mother gave the medal to me for safe-keeping and sent the cash to be put in the box in which only money offered to Sri Aurobindo was kept.

NIGHT OPENS INTO DAY

24.1.1949

When Mother finished her day's programme it was 3.50 a.m. She turned to Dyuman and said: "No time to go to bed."

And she did not rest at all. I went for my bath and Dyuman went to attend to his work which was waiting for him.

PUZZLING

25.1.1949

After seeing some people at the door on the top of the stairs from 6.50 to 7.10 a.m., Mother went to the Balcony at 7.15. For various reasons the time of Balcony darshan never remained fixed. Then there was another programme after which she would go downstairs for Pranam and Kamala and I would accompany her.

Today I was waiting in Sri Aurobindo's room for Mother to come in as usual for combing his hair when she called me at 9.35 a.m. As she had called, I went out to her and she looked at me. I could not understand what her look meant and asked: "Mother, what is it?"

She was surprised at my question but she said: "Going down!"

Hesitatingly I asked: "Mother, you are not coming to Sri Aurobindo's room?" I was wondering whether she had changed the time of her coming to Sri Aurobindo's room, as she used to do at times.

Mother immediately said: "Yes, yes."

She would never forget anything concerning Sri Aurobindo and yet that day this happened. Only one who has known her can imagine the circumstances that made her forget this item of her programme.

WHAT IS SPECIAL?

25.1.1949

It was 9 p.m. and Mother was not yet back from the Playground. As it was late, Sri Aurobindo enquired: "Mother has still not come? Any special programme there tonight?"

C: "I do not know."

Then I went out to find out the reason and happened to meet Debu.¹ He said Mother was talking to Pranab. I went back to Sri Aurobindo and told him.

Sri Aurobindo: "Ah, ah!"

Mother came back at 9.35 p.m.

1. Deb Kumar Bhattacharya, a younger brother of Pranab Kumar; a highly gifted homeopath, he also treated the Mother.

WHERE IS CHAMPAKLAL?

27.1.1949

After his bath in the evening, Sri Aurobindo used to sit on his bed leaning against the back-rest. On hearing the approach of Mother's car returning from the Playground, Nirod and I would adjust the back-rest and arrange things a little before Mother came in. Today I was not there and when Nirod started doing those things, Sri Aurobindo asked him: "What is the matter with Champaklal?"

I was invariably present there, but somehow today I was a little late; although when Mother entered from one door I entered Sri Aurobindo's room from another – just in time for her. This was the first time I missed being there in time to arrange things. But when I heard that Sri Aurobindo had enquired of me, I realised – with what feelings you can imagine – how much he cared. He always noted everything going on around him but never asked anything in this way.

CHAMPAKLAL'S BIRTHDAY

2.2.1949

Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room in at 7 a.m. She told him: "Today is Champaklal's birthday. I am keeping his notebook (for birthday messages) here on the table."

Every year both of them used to write a message for me in it; first Sri Aurobindo wrote and then under it the Mother.¹

Sri Aurobindo looked at me with a broad smile. But I took the notebook from the table and placed it in Mother's hand saying: "Mother, it is quite enough if you write."

In spite of his failing eyesight Sri Aurobindo himself had never said it was difficult for him to write and Mother too gave him my notebook just for my sake. Both looked at me and gave very broad smiles.

1. A facsimile collection of these birthday messages was published in *Aspiring Swan*, 1992.

PRANAB'S FIST

4.2.1949

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room in the afternoon she brought the sketch she had done of Pranab's fist and profile. She showed it to Sri Aurobindo who looked at it, smiled and nodded.

On seeing the sketch, I said it was full of strength.

Mother pointed out the fist to Sri Aurobindo and asked: "The strength is there?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Y-e-s."

ON "PHYSICAL PERFECTION"

7.2.1949

The Mother asked Sri Aurobindo to write an article on physical perfection for the *Bulletin*¹. And she smiled at him.

1. The first issue of *Bulletin of Physical Education* came out on 21 February 1949. The eight essays that Sri Aurobindo wrote on the subject, the last of his prose writings, were serialised there in 1949-50 and reprinted in book-form in 1952 under the title *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*. In 1959, this quarterly was renamed *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*.

DRILL LESSON TO AMRITA

12.2.1949

It was Sri Aurobindo's breakfast time and Mother had come early, at 10.33 a.m., so Mother showed Amrita how to do the mass drill¹, doing the various movements herself in Sri Aurobindo's presence. As I was serving the breakfast, Mother was free. Amrita tried to copy her movements but the result was amusing. His body wouldn't cooperate and his expression was worth watching. All of us, including Sri Aurobindo, enjoyed the sight very much.

1. Every year, a few selected members of the Physical Education Department, compose a mass drill in which most of its members participate; it is one of the drills presented as an offering to the Mother on every 2nd December.



Pranab – sketch by the Mother



Pranab's profile and fist – sketch by the Mother

LIKE A CHILD

18.2.1949

At times Sri Aurobindo's movements were almost like those of a child. Today I noticed that he was looking for something on his bed. I went and stood in front of him. He looked up and smiled, saying: "Looking for my napkin."

We used to keep two cotton napkins, a small one for wiping his face and a bigger one for his body. They would be kept, one on the left side and the other on the right side, on the cushions that were placed, one either side, for resting his arms.

I told him: "Sometimes it slips under your dhoti."

I looked for it there and it was there. As I gave it to him, he exclaimed: "Ah, ah!" And he smiled.

SKETCH OF PRANAB

22.3.1949

Just as Sri Aurobindo was beginning his meal, Mother brought a sketch of Pranab done by her and showed it to him. She said that she did it when he was resting.

Sri Aurobindo received it with a smile and showed his appreciation more by expression than by words. She looked at me and said: "I am going to have it photographed. Champaklal, I have done this with your pencil; it is very good. I shall ask for three copies."

C: "Mother, you ask for four. I would also like to have one."

Mother: "I have counted you among the three."

C: "Can it be given to Chiman for photographing?"

Mother: "Chiman?"

C: "Mother, you can give to whomsoever you choose."

Mother: "Yes, he also does it nicely. The picture you have he has done it well."

C: "The eyes are very nice and very expressive in this portrait."

Every day, when after her bath Mother used to come to Sri Aurobindo's door, she used to allow Kamala to do pranam to her.

The next day, at this time, Mother gave the sketch in my hands. I asked her to show it to Kamala.

Mother: "Oh, you want to show it to her!" So saying, Mother showed it to Kamala and added: "The eyes are very nice and very expressive."

PORTRAIT THAT WAS NOT TO BE

25.3.1949

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room as usual, I said to her in Sri Aurobindo's presence: "Mother, there is a great chance for you to make the best portrait in the world!"

Mother: "What, what? What did you say?"

C: "Mother, you do a portrait of Sri Aurobindo and that indeed will be the best in the world."

Mother became serious and repeated: "What?"

C: "If you do not go down for Pranam for two days and utilise that time for doing Sri Aurobindo's portrait, how nice it would be, Mother!"

Mother: "No, not possible." She became more serious, obviously to prevent me from arguing any further. But I persisted: "Mother, once you promised me."

Mother: "When?"

C: "Mother, do you remember a headmaster from Madras who used to come here and once distributed badges with your and Sri Aurobindo's photographs?" Mother stopped me from continuing and exclaimed: "Oh, old stories!"

Sri Aurobindo: "What?" Mother told him the whole story of badges and what she had said to me at that time. Sri Aurobindo laughed. Though Mother was serious, he seemed to be enjoying the whole thing.

Then Mother went to the next room for putting eau de cologne in the wash-bowl for Sri Aurobindo. I followed her as usual. And there too I continued: "Mother, I have not given up hope. Mother, take one full week, do not go down, and do it little by little every day. Everyone will be very happy when the reason for Mother's not going down is known."

Mother: "If I do it, it will be an oil-painting, not in water colours. But you see now it is war-time and it is difficult to get the required colours."

C: "Mother, I will try and get them."

Mother: "And it cannot be done little by little."

C: "Then it is very good. Mother, you do it as you want to do it."

When I came back to Sri Aurobindo's room, he smiled and asked me: "What! You have convinced her?"

C: "Mother has said she will do it in oil colours if the colours can be procured."

Sri Aurobindo said, "Oh!" and smiled happily.

Later while going down, I told Mother what Sri Aurobindo had asked me.

Mother: "Nobody in the world can convince me." She said it with an emphasis that was new to me. Do you know why it was new to me? I believed, and still do, that there is one person who has taken birth at present in this world who can convince her.

C: "But I take it that Mother has granted my request."

Mother gave me an affectionate look and smiled. Subsequently I spoke to Jayantilal to arrange for the colours. But nothing was done.² Then, in my usual way, I left it to the Divine Will.

Long afterwards, I narrated all this to Jayantilal. He said that he did not know that the colours were needed for this purpose. I did not discuss it further, though I remember that I had explained everything fully to him. But I know Jayantilal and have full trust in him. Nothing can be done when the Divine Will is not there. Without His Will not even a leaf can move. The portrait was not to be – that is all. I believe that we, that is to say, humanity, were not ready for it.

1. P.A. Subramania Iyer. [M.P. Pandit's note] The badges were distributed on the 25th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry;¹ See 4.4.1935 in "Correspondence with Champaklal", Part 4, p. 362 of this book.

2. In his copy of *Champaklalna Sansmarano* where this conclusion occurs, Jayantilal wrote and signed this note: "When I had asked Mother's permission for procuring the colours, she said, No."

NIROD'S TENNIS FINAL

28.3.1949

It was Nirod's final in the tennis match today. When he was leaving after giving a bath to Sri Aurobindo he asked me to request Sri Aurobindo to give him force. I asked Nirod what precisely I was to tell Sri Aurobindo. He said: "Tell Sri Aurobindo to give me special force because today is my final match. But tell this to him after my going."

As he was leaving, within his hearing distance, I told Sri Aurobindo: "Nirod wants you to give him more force because today is his tennis final."

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh! So he wants more force?" And he laughed. It seemed to me that he enjoyed it.

SIGNING PAPERS

15.4.1949

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room, she sometimes used to bring papers that she had to sign. Today she brought a sheaf of children's reports. After signing them, she asked me: "Have you seen how long it took to sign these? If you had noted the time, we would have known how much time it takes."

C: "Mother, I did but I have forgotten as usual. If a record had been kept, it would run into thousands of signatures."

Mother: "No, no, it would be lakhs and lakhs."

C: "Mother, only signing does not take much time. It is when you go within that it takes time."

Mother: "I go inside not for nothing. When someone asks me for something I do not simply reply in words. I go within and then reply. That is why it happens like that."

C: "But Mother, when you do not want to answer, then also you do like that." Mother smiled and said: "Yes, y-e-s."

NO TIME TO SPARE

26.4.1949

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room she told him: "It has

been going on like this from morning to night for the last four days. For want of time I could not even play tennis. This is my condition at present. Today again I am late by half an hour."

Sri Aurobindo heard with an audible, prolonged: "Umm... Umm... Umm...."

Playing tennis also helped Mother to maintain her health.

MOTHER'S WRITING

23.5.1949

Mother had a new wallet today when she came to Sri Aurobindo's room. She had placed her files in it. She took out one file, counted the sheets in it and asked him: "It is not so long, isn't it?"

Sri Aurobindo: "No, it is not long."

Mother: "When can I read it out to you?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Any time."

Mother: "It will take half an hour."

"FOR GOD'S SAKE!"

24.5.1949

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room tonight she brought yesterday's file. And when he began his dinner she started reading her play to him.

I was serving him as usual. The glass-top table now kept in Sri Aurobindo's room in front of a mirror along the southern wall served as his dining table. While serving I had to move a bowl on the table and perhaps there was a little more noise than normal – a little more but not much, because I was fully aware that Mother was reading out. Immediately she said: "For God's sake! Please do not make noise!"

I was taken aback. It was not the words but the tone in which they were said that upset me completely. However the Grace acted, good sense prevailed and saved me from doing anything untoward. An idea came to this effect: Do not keep a very high notion about yourself; you wanted to serve without any demand, to render unconditional service. Is this not a test? Then I became very quiet,

as if nothing had happened.

When Mother finished reading Sri Aurobindo nodded his head and said: "Ah...; ah...."

Mother asked: "How did you find it?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Very good."

Mother: "Can it be staged?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes, I suppose it can be staged." And again he nodded his head.

Mother: "Sahana¹ will sing from the back stage. B's voice is very beautiful, it has volume, it is sweet; she understands. X knows French well. Besides, he is passing through difficulties. To whom else can I give the part? All the same, I shall see. A, who recited "The Rose of God",² does it with the appropriate expression; with eyes well rounded as required. V knows French well, but her part is brief. The men will be dressed in trousers and the ladies will be in saris because the modern dress is very ugly."

Sri Aurobindo: "Ah...!"

My report ends here. Now you should know why I felt so much over Mother's remark asking me not to make any noise. Normally, I took care to make the least possible noise in the presence of Sri Aurobindo. I tried my best to keep the atmosphere as quiet as possible. And particularly this day I was fully aware that Mother was reading to Sri Aurobindo. Even otherwise, as I said, I was very particular about not making any noise. That is why Mother's remark upset me.

I was always at my best with Sri Aurobindo. With Mother it was different; my behaviour with her was exactly as it was with my physical mother whom I had served in my childhood in the same way. I remember my physical mother saying that only a girl could have served like that.

The Mother has trained me orally, Sri Aurobindo through look and smile. I have served Mother but I could not know her fully. But as I progress she reveals more and more of herself and grants a greater and greater understanding. Only now, after so many years, I have started to know her by the touch of her Grace.

1. Sahana Devi, a famous singer of Bengal, settled in the Ashram in 1928.

2. A poem written in a new metre by Sri Aurobindo on 31.12.1934.

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

7.7.1949

Mother said to Sri Aurobindo: "I am writing the practical side of your writings."

MOTHER'S WEIGHT

7.7.1949

Mother: "When I was 21 I weighed 60 kgs. Now I am 49 kgs."

ARTICLE FOR *BULLETIN*

10.7.1949

Mother came smiling to Sri Aurobindo's room and told him: "I heard the article which you have written for the *Bulletin*. Nolini read it to me. It is wonderful, just what is wanted."

More than her words it was her expression when she was looking at Sri Aurobindo while talking that was remarkable.

Sri Aurobindo had his usual expression and said: "Ah, ah, ah!"

DATTA'S THINGS

10.7.1949

After Datta passed away, Surendra¹ brought upstairs, with the help of some boys, a big box containing her things. As Mother was looking at them, someone pulled out an old mirror. It was a Japanese mirror and one corner of its frame had been eaten away.

At once I asked: "Mother, what are you going to do with it? Is this not the same mirror that Sri Aurobindo was using in Library House?"

Mother: "Yes, but it is in a very bad condition. I will give it for repair."

C: "No, Mother, I would like to keep it as it is, without making any change. I shall only give it to Rishabhchand to treat it with solignum so that there may not be further decay." Mother placed the mirror in my hands very happily.

C: "Mother, there was also a copy of *The Mother*, where Mother had written in Sanskrit the name Mirra. Where is that book?"

Mother found it along with other books which had her autograph and gave all of them to me.

1. Surendramohan Ghosh settled here in 1930. He was an efficient manager and was in charge of several departments.

MOTHER'S WAY

14.7.1949

Mother had a way of her own in awakening people, in teaching them to aspire and develop. You will find the following incident instructive from this point of view.

When Mother opened the upstairs door, some boys came in as usual. She used to give flowers to all of them; to some she would give a rose in addition, putting it in their buttonhole herself or handing it to them; but to each she would select and give the rose. At times it would happen that the opening in which the rose had to be inserted would be too small but she would persist and spend a good deal of time over it. With some she would simply leave it there without making any further attempt to push it in.

This morning with one boy she put a rose in the pin but left it there without inserting it fully. The boy said something in French but I could not hear it; and even if I had heard, you know I would not have understood for I do not know French.

After they had left and the door was closed I wanted to know what had happened. But there was some nervousness in me, a fear that she might tell me, "Mind your own business," as she had told someone else, though never me. All the same I asked her the reason. With some Mother behaved in such a way that the person would never be able to ask anything. That it was not so with me was due to her infinite Grace.

Mother: "Generally I put the rose in his brooch because he likes it that way. He said he had forgotten to pin it on. But I know he did not pin it today on purpose. I know also that after going from here he throws the flower away. Some boys keep the flower till the

evening, some keep all the time. I see this in the Playground.”

C: “Mother, why does he act like that?”

Mother: “Resentment. He expresses his protest in this way.”

15.7.1949

The same boy came in the morning with his brooch nicely pinned. It was so well arranged that Mother could have easily inserted a rose in it. But she did not do so. Instead she gave the usual flower in his hand. He tarried awhile looking at the place where Mother had kept the roses but he did not specifically ask for one though it was obvious he wanted it. But to no avail. He had to go away without a rose. After closing the door I asked Mother: “Mother, today the boy came with the brooch neatly arranged so that you could put a rose in it very easily.”

Mother: “Yes, I noticed it. I did not put one purposely. I take note of everything.”

16.7.1949

Today as soon as the boy came Mother caught hold of both his hands and spoke to him in French very affectionately. And without his asking she put a rose into his broach. His whole approach had been different.

It was an education for me to see how she helped him to come with the right attitude without speaking a word.

UNWELL BUT WORK CONTINUES

17.7.1949

When Mother opened the upstairs door today, 72 sadhaks received flowers and blessings just outside the door, at the top of the staircase. Inside the vestibule she met 22 others, making altogether 94.

She was not well, even then she saw all these people. When she came to Sri Aurobindo's room she told him that she was not well, then added: “But if I had come away, there would have been quite a stir.”

would be back at 5.30 p.m. As she did not come as scheduled, Sri Aurobindo enquired twice about it. Finally she came to Sri Aurobindo's room at 7.19. As soon as she came in, Sri Aurobindo sat up and I started making the usual preparations. Just then she informed Sri Aurobindo that she was going to the Playground. It was 7.21.

After she left, both of us realised that she had not come back from the Playground but only returned from the military grounds; the Playground programme was still due.

"This is what she meant by coming back at 5.30," said Sri Aurobindo, looking meaningfully at me.

FLOWERS IN A DISH

8.8.1949

After Pranam, when she had finished seeing everyone, Mother used to select some flowers and give them to me one by one in my palms. Today she gathered all the flowers in a dish, then put the dish in my hands.

Certainly it was not to save time that she did that. Her ways are always difficult to understand. All the same I could not remain quiet. I exclaimed: "Mother, I have hands. Even if you leave the dish on the table I can take it from there."

At this Nolini laughed aloud and Amrita also laughed and laughed. They understood what I meant to say. Mother too laughed and said: "No, no, I have only collected them and put them there."

I said: "Yes, Mother, I know it well and you too know well what I want!"

Mother laughed and everyone around laughed again.

You may have understood what I meant when I said, "Mother, I have hands." Still I shall explain it. When she kept the flowers in the dish and gave it, I lost the repeated touch of her loving hands which I used to get when she put them one by one in my hands. I did not want to lose that, so I said, "Mother, I have hands."

MEDICINE NOT NECESSARY

8.8.1949

Dr. Sanyal had brought some medicine for Nirod. When this was told to Mother, she asked in surprise: "For Nirod? He does not need it. He remains all the time here; so for him it is not necessary."

CURE OF DISEASES

11.8.1949

This morning while combing Sri Aurobindo's hair, Mother said that when she was a child she used to get pimples on the throat, from time to time. She would simply rub them out. In that connection an outstanding doctor of France once told her that a strong will can cure human diseases. Medicine merely helps by increasing one's faith. By medicine one is convinced and that adds to the faith.

Mother added that her own experience also was that the best way of curing diseases was to develop a strong will. She said it was very interesting to see how it worked physiologically. Some kind of white cells form and fight against diseases. These cells increase when a strong will is exerted.

GRAND-DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE

12.8.1949

Mother informed Sri Aurobindo, while leaving his room: "My grand-daughter* is going to marry."

* Françoise; Ashram name: Poornaprema. [M.P. Pandit's note]

SAME OLD WAYS

14.8.1949

As soon as she came to Sri Aurobindo, Mother said: "I am terribly sick. What to do? Things are continuing in the same old way."

CHADDER ON THE WRONG SIDE

15.8.1949

It was just before Darshan was to start. Sri Aurobindo had taken his seat. I was standing behind him. I lifted his hair from behind his neck in order to place the *chadder* over his shoulders, then handed the *chadder* to Nirod who arranged it.

Mother looked at me and smiled, then she pointed to the border of the cloth. I looked and found it had been placed with the wrong side up! I felt much ashamed because I myself had given the *chadder* to Nirod ready to be placed on Sri Aurobindo. And Mother had noted it!

Mother allowed us to serve but she was observing all the time how we played our parts.

DARSHAN

15.8.1949

Darshan: 1.43 p.m. to 5.10 p.m.

More than 3,000 persons had Darshan.

ALAUDDIN'S MUSIC

15.8.1949

Sri Aurobindo sat on his cot in his room and heard Alauddin's music. Alauddin¹ was playing his instrument in Mrityunjoy's room across the street.

Alauddin had been very eager that Sri Aurobindo should listen to his music and hence this arrangement was made.

1. Alauddin Khan, founder of the Mainar *gharana* and *guru* of Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar and others, spent a few days in the Ashram. He also gave sarod concerts at Prasad House and Arogya House.

DISEASE AND FEAR

10.9.1949

The Mother was speaking to Satyakarma,¹ while Amrita and I were present. She said that once she did not take anything – not even a

drop of water – for ten full days. Since then she suffered from acidity and it was still continuing. She looked at Amrita and asked him if he remembered in what year it was. “1920,” replied Amrita.

Mother told Satyakarma: “The doctor says you must change your diet. One who normally takes vegetables must take meat and one who is used to meat must change over to vegetables.”

C: “Mother, after some time the doctors will find another remedy.”

Mother: “Of course they will. The most important thing is not to fear at all – under any condition. Most people suffer due to fear rather than the disease. Even if the heart is bad, or there is appendicitis or liver trouble, the way to cure it is to have absolutely no fear and a strong will. Under no circumstances should you have any fear.”

1. Name given by Sri Aurobindo to T.V. Rama Reddy (1904-70) who settled here in 1930. He was given charge of the Ashram bank. In 1955, when Mother formed the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, she appointed him one of the five Trustees.

DIFFICULTY

12.9.1949

Mother: “The difficulty is in yourself. Do not think that changing the circumstances will put an end to your difficulties.”

NOT PLEASANT

16.9.1949

Somebody sent an album of pictures of the 15th of August celebrations in Calcutta, to be shown to Sri Aurobindo. While taking back the album after showing it to him, Mother said: “Not very pleasant. You look ferocious here.”

BRAHMINIC ARROGANCE

18.9.1949

C: “Mother, I do not know if you remember or not, but I remember very well, it was in Library House in 1923. I distinctly remember even the spot where you had said to me, ‘You have

Brahminic arrogance.' At that time, I did not fully understand the meaning, though I followed the general sense of it. I thought I would understand it when the right time came – for that is my way, as you know, Mother. And yet, I still have not understood it. Now after a long time, Mother, I want to know from you what you meant. Is it not interesting?"

Mother (smiling): "Very interesting, Champaklal. I remember it very vividly. When it will go, you will understand very well and know what it is."

C: "Then, it is not interesting now?"

Mother: "I find it very interesting; you remember it still, and of course I remember it."

C: "Have I not waited long enough all these years?"

Mother laughed and said: "No, not enough." Then, after a pause, she added: "Probably now it is the end of it."

AMRITA THE BRAHMIN

19.9.1949

Amrita: "Mother has been saying for the last ten years that I am a Brahmin. But in what way am I a Brahmin? I have not kept any sign of being a Brahmin."

Mother (very emphatically): "I tell you, you are a Brahmin. And it is very correct."

IMPOSSIBLE

23.9.1949

Tonight when Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room, she told him: "I am very late today.... Impossible."

Then she looked at me and said that she would not go downstairs. Accordingly I went down and informed the people who were waiting for the Pranam.

SPELL-BOUND?

23.9.1949

In the course of some remarks in the presence of Sri Aurobindo,

X referred to someone who always drew crowds whenever he spoke.

I said that by itself that did not prove the man was great. Many could do that. At this point, X spoke of his own experiences and said: "You just remain open to Mother and Sri Aurobindo, think a little of what to speak and not to speak, and go on. And you find the whole audience falling under a spell."

Sri Aurobindo interjected: "But how do you know that they are not sleeping!"

PONDICHERRY OLYMPICS

24.9.1949

The Mother went to the military grounds today to attend the Pondicherry Olympic Games. Members of the Ashram's physical education department went there marching, and those among them who were selected participated.

SRI AUROBINDO'S DILEMMA

26.9.1949

Sri Aurobindo was having his lunch. On seeing a bowl on the table, he asked me: "What is it?"

C: "Lemon pickles."

Sri Aurobindo: "How is it to be taken? When is it to be taken?"

I explained. Then he started taking it along with the vegetable.

At times he would ask what day of the week it was! When the answer was given, he would exclaim: "Ah... ah!"

STRIKE IN THE ASHRAM PRESS

26.9.1949

Mother informed Sri Aurobindo that the press workers had gone on strike without giving notice and that it was illegal. She also informed him that our people had run the press very well.

SEE INSIDE YOURSELF

September 1949

Mother: "When somebody does not behave properly, try to see inside yourself."

ATTENTIVE

3.10.1949

Every evening as soon as I heard the horn of Mother's car returning from the Playground, I used to go to Sri Aurobindo and inform him: "Mother is back."

Today, however, I did not hear the horn but learnt that she was already back. I rushed to Sri Aurobindo and informed him: "Mother is already back; I had not noted."

Sri Aurobindo: "Long ago."

And he smiled. Obviously he had been attentive and heard the horn which I had failed to hear.

TILL MIDNIGHT

4.10.1949

Sri Aurobindo: "Is Mother still in trance?"

C: "Yes."

Mother came at 12.34 at night for Sri Aurobindo's dinner. She informed him that she would not go downstairs today. Both Sri Aurobindo and Mother asked me to inform the people waiting for her that she was not going to come down. I did accordingly.

Things happened this way now and then.

AVERTING RAINS

4.10.1949

Mother informed Sri Aurobindo that harvesting was going on in Cazanove¹ and that if it rained it would spoil the paddy.

It did not rain.

5.10.1949

Mother told Sri Aurobindo: "Today also there shall be no rain; up to Friday."

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, up to Friday?"

The sky was full of clouds. And when Sri Aurobindo went for his bath he was looking at the sky repeatedly through the bathroom window.

1. A farm of the Ashram. 4.10.1949 was a Tuesday.

DINNER AFTER MIDNIGHT

13.10.1949

It was 12.40 at night when Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room, talked to him and went away. She came back at 12.50 and told me: "I suppose everyone must have gone. I don't think they are waiting for me."

I did not say anything. For I was surprised by Mother's statement. Surely people waiting for her would not just go away?

Then Mother went out, sent word downstairs asking people to go, and came back for Sri Aurobindo's dinner which started at 12.52 a.m. and lasted till 1.15 a.m.

NIGHT PRANAM

16.10.1949

Today Mother was not well. Still she went downstairs for Pranam. But people were slow in coming. They were coming one by one; at times there was no one in front of Mother, then a little later some more came. And that is how it went on.

At that time Mother herself said that it ought to be that those who come after 11 p.m. will not have Pranam.

Sometime earlier Sri Aurobindo had said the same thing, namely, that Mother should suspend Pranam after a certain time-limit was reached, even though people may still be waiting.

“WHAT IS SPECIAL?”

18.10.1949

Sri Aurobindo asked me: “What is special today? Why is Mother so early today? Lunch also was early. Everything is early today.”

I did not reply. He asked again: “You don’t know? Is it a special blessings day?”

C: “No, today is Prānab’s birthday. I hear that Mother is going to take the salute and so she is going early to the Playground. I think that is why Mother must have come early.”

Sri Aurobindo smiled and said: “Ah... ah... ah!”

MOTHER EXPLAINS DELAY

23.10.1949

Mother told Sri Aurobindo: “I just opened the door and was caught by people. I had to finish. That is why I am late.”

Sri Aurobindo: “Oh!”

AMERICAN EDITION OF *THE LIFE DIVINE*

3.11.1949

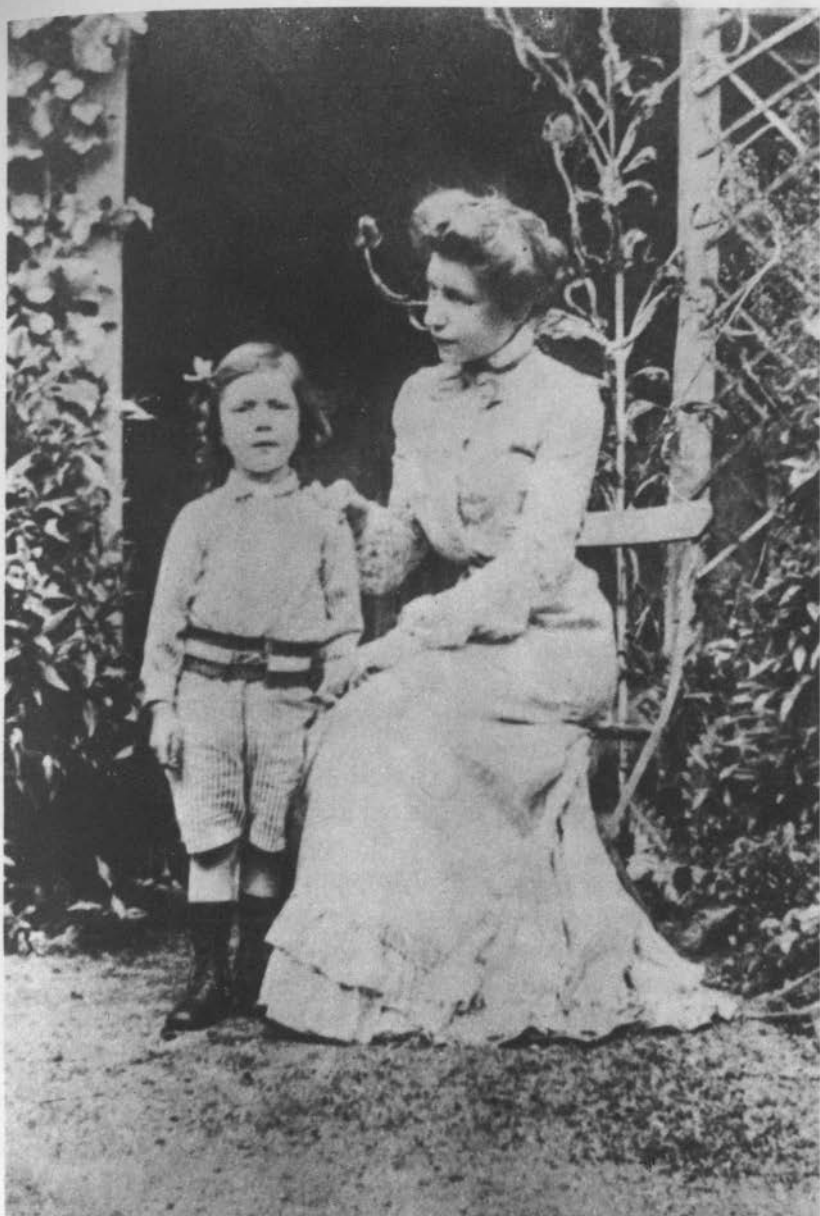
Copies of the American edition of *The Life Divine* arrived today and Mother presented them to Sri Aurobindo. He looked happy and remarked: “Oh, in one volume!” All the previous editions in India had been issued in two volumes, at times in three parts.

Mother commended the speed and efficiency with which things were being done in America.

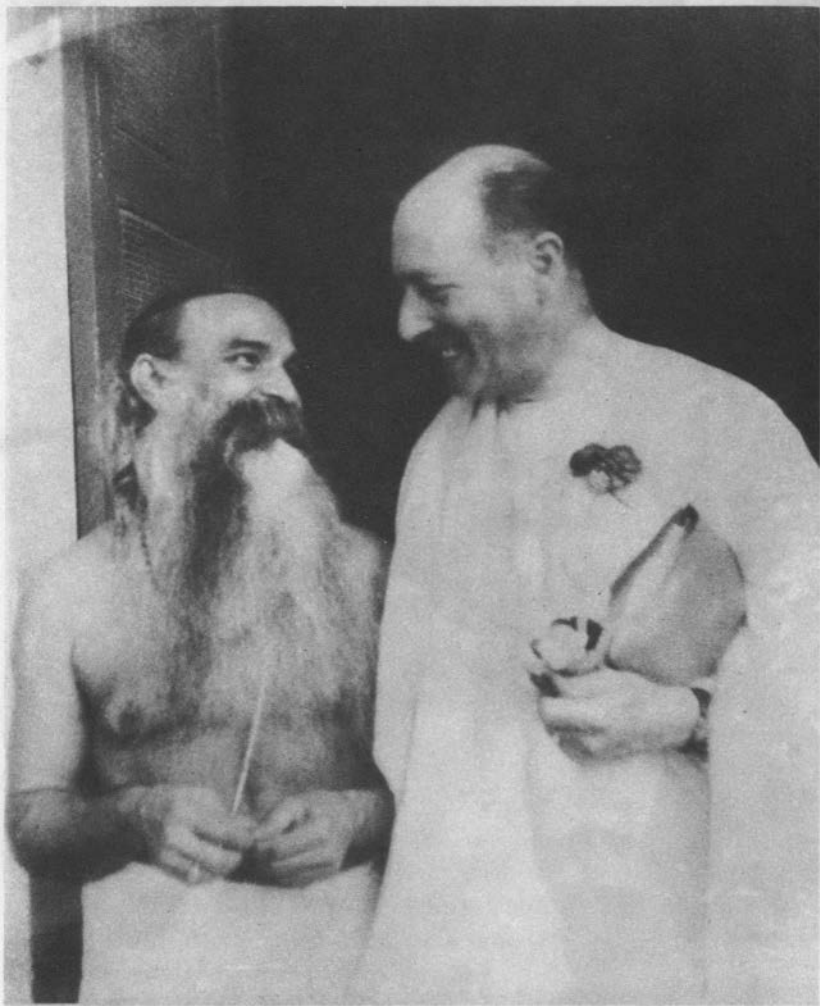
USELESS TO GUIDE

4.11.1949

The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo’s room as usual. She told him: “Today I am going to see X, but I do not feel like seeing him. Every time he says ‘Yes, yes’, and never does what I say. There are men who are creatures of circumstances, and there are those who master them. This man is ruled by circumstances. What is the use of my guidance? It is useless.”



The Mother with her son André



Champaklal with André, 1949

ANDRÉ

4.11.1949

Mother informed Sri Aurobindo: "André is coming today from France. They want to arrange things in such a way that he can meet me as soon as he comes from Madras without waiting. I do not know where to see him; there is no place where I could see him alone. Generally, I arrange these things in Mona's office at Golconde. I think I will see him there. It is many years since we last met. Perhaps if we met on the road without being introduced to each other I would not know him, and he too would not recognise me. Many years have passed, he was eighteen when I left and in all these years hardly twenty letters have been written. He reads your books and understands them too. He has sent his wife's photo; she resembles me. André also wrote to me that she resembles me very much. That is true."

1. André Morisset, Mother's son (23 August 1889 – 29 March 1982). See *Mother India*, May 1982, pp. 301-06.

THE MOTHER'S TRAINING

When Mother's son André came to Pondicherry for the first time, she told him, "Champaklal has been trained by me." I feel that she is still training me.

There were many things that I did not like, and sometimes I spoke out my opposition. But sometimes when Mother herself was doing those things, though a strong reaction would arise in me, I would not express it; but when I could not control myself, I did express myself. And when I was opposed to something but kept silent, that too Mother was aware of. Everything she is now making me understand, either by showing me actual happenings or making me do them myself. I have many instances of this before me. All this may seem banal to many, but to me writing about it is itself an offering.

I did not approve the worship of anyone's photograph.

In childhood I was attracted by the Arya Samaj. Seeing the Arya Samajists worship Dayanand I used to wonder what was the difference between the worship of idols, which they opposed, and

their worshipping a photograph! The same question used to arise in me regarding Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's photos. But later, the Mother explained to me that the worship of photographs too had its place and necessity. I was also against the opening of centres and the installing of relics but the Mother explained to me their necessity. Of course, nothing is done from the right perspective; but what can be done about that?

HIS BLESSINGS

5.11.1949

Normally when the Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room she would take his hand and kiss it. But today when she came to him she bent her head before him, and Sri Aurobindo placed his hand on her head and blessed her.

It was a rare privilege to witness it. I cannot describe what I felt.

HE ENQUIRES

7.11.1949

It was midnight. Sri Aurobindo asked me whether Mother had come up after the Pranam. "Yes, long back, at 11.40," I replied.

Sri Aurobindo: "Then, why did you not tell me?"

C: "I thought you must have known!" Usually I did not inform him about it unless asked.

BAD TEMPER

16.11.1949

Copies of the latest number of the *Bulletin* had arrived. Mother gave me one. I said: "I don't need."

Mother: "You don't need it?" She repeated the question three times.

C: "No, Mother. I don't need it."

Mother: "You are not interested in this?" She opened the *Bulletin* and showed me Sri Aurobindo's article. "You are not interested in this? Have I given you the previous one?"

C: "No. I have two numbers."

Mother went in, brought the others and said: "Take these, I give you four numbers."

C: "But Mother, I don't need."

Mother: "Bad temper! What is the matter? Take it, it will do you good." Then I took two numbers.

You want to know why I behaved this way? You know that I used to pass into different moods. At this particular period I was feeling that anyway I was not going to understand what was written in the *Bulletin* and I saw no point in taking copies and keeping them. But you see how, in her compassion, the Mother dealt with the situation. It was typical.

IN DIFFICULTIES

19.11.1949

A sadhak was in difficulties. Mother told him: "It is best to do some useful work, with selflessness and sincerity."

ANDRÉ ON MOTHER

21.11.1949

Nolini informed Mother that he had received a letter from Calcutta stating that, at a meeting there, André spoke for fifteen minutes on the Mother.

Mother: "About me? What can he say?"

N: "He spoke of his boyhood memories and said that Mother used to say even then that she has come with a special mission."

Mother: "Yes, it is true."

EXCELLENT CONCENTRATION

24.11.1949

As soon as Mother returned from the Playground she came to Sri Aurobindo's room to comb his hair. Today being Darshan day his hair had remained loose during the Darshan period. Mother came to tie it up in two plaits on either side as it was convenient for him that way.

While combing she said to him: "The concentration at the Playground was excellent. I do not know why."

Sri Aurobindo did not say anything.

C: The period between the end of the day and the beginning of the night, *sandhya*, is very favourable for concentration.

Mother: "On the contrary, today it was still daytime!"

Nirod: "Perhaps the boys and girls were tired after play."

Mother: "Perhaps."

C: "Mother, what were you doing at the time of concentration? Did you do the same thing as on other days?"

Mother said very slowly, looking at me affectionately and smiling: "That is not your business." But she said it so sweetly that the words had no sting in them, as there was on certain other occasions, when she gave the same answer to some others.

SMILE ALWAYS

29.11.1949

Every morning Mother would say "Bonjour!" to me. Today she picked up the flower *Eternal smile*, took my hand and put the flower in the centre of my palm. Then she pinched my palm, kept her hand pressed over it for some time and said:

Champaklal,

smile always,

smile in difficulties,

smile in pain,

smile in suffering,

smile in sorrow,

... (there were two more, but I don't remember them),

smile always, smile always,

smile.

There were many occasions of this type, but I have forgotten most of them. But now her abundant Grace guides me by giving me experiences instead of words.

“MAY I?”

30.11.1949

Mother said to Sri Aurobindo: “Nirod has March Past on 2nd December. But he will be engaged here at that time. What is to be done?”

Sri Aurobindo did not say anything. Mother repeated the question. But he remained silent.

Mother: “What to do?”

I could no longer keep quiet though she had not asked me. Neither had she looked at me, as she did when she expected me to say something if Sri Aurobindo did not reply. Still I spoke: “Mother, if you come earlier that day, as you do on the first of every month, everything will be all right.”

Mother asked Sri Aurobindo: “May I?”

Sri Aurobindo smiled, as usual, and nodded his head.

PASTILLE IN THE WRONG MOUTH

30.11.1949

Sri Aurobindo used to take a pastille after finishing his food. These pastilles came from France. But during war-time they were prepared here by Sujata according to the formula given by Pavitra.

Sri Aurobindo used to take the pastille at different times. They were kept in a small square silver box. I would open the box, keep the lid in my hand and place the box in Mother’s hands. She would stretch her hand to Sri Aurobindo. Today however Mother took one pastille from the box and put it in her own mouth instead of passing it to Sri Aurobindo. He looked at me and at Mother, smiling. Suddenly Mother remembered and said, “Sorry.” More than the word was her expression which was always worth observing and enjoying.

Speaking of their expressions, I must say that I was never tired of observing them. They meant so much to me; that observation was my life.

Looking back I can see how through all these means they both trained me in becoming more and more conscious. But at that time

I was not aware that I was being trained. It was always a pilgrimage from joy to joy.

“GOOD LORD!”

12.12.1949

Sri Aurobindo was waiting to retire. It was 1.20 a.m. He asked me whether Mother was still downstairs.

C: “No. Mother will first open the door; she has not yet opened it. Next she will see some people at the door and only then will she go down.”

Sri Aurobindo: “Good Lord!”

NO TIME FOR FOOD

12.12.1949

Mother told me: “For the last two days I have not been able to have food for want of time. Today also I could not. I want to eat now. Go and inform the people that I won’t open the door before 1.30 p.m.” Accordingly I went and informed the people.

This is typical of how things were going on in those days.

BONUS AND JEWELRY

15.12.1949

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo’s room, she told him: “The bonus is Rs. 20,000.* I am thinking of giving away some jewelry. But I have no time to look into it. This time there is no balance left.”¹

Sri Aurobindo nodded his head.

* In 1974, the bonus given to Ashram workers crossed one lakh rupees. [M.P. Pandit’s note]

1. “Once there was a shortage of funds in the Ashram so Mother decided to give some of her jewels in exchange for some money. It was decided that according to their capacities devotees would be given a jewel or two to keep as a sacred souvenir from Mother.” – Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, *I Remember*, 1993, p. 52.

CHAMPAKLAL DOES NOT KNOW

24.12.1949

Sri Aurobindo asked: "Mother is not playing music. It seems some people are going to sing and go round the Ashram."

C: "I do not know."

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, it may not be today. All right." So saying he lifted his hands and laid them back on the cushions on the cot.

When he was sitting on his cot, the back-rest would be raised to the angle required and cushions placed on both sides as arm-rests, so that he could lean back as on a sofa.

"WHAT DAY IS IT?"

26.12.1949

Sri Aurobindo: "What day is it today?"

C: "Monday."

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, then Mother is not going down!"

C: "On Mondays it is only in the mornings that Mother does not go down. She goes down at night as usual. She has just opened the door now. After meeting some people there she will go downstairs for Pranam."

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh!"

SRI AUROBINDO'S VIGIL

30.12.1949

Today it was 1.30 a.m. when Mother came back from downstairs. Sri Aurobindo was sitting all the time on his bed, waiting for her. Twice he enquired whether Mother was back.

BIMALENDU THE DANCER

Bimalendu was a talented and gifted dancer. He was on a visit to the Ashram and was very anxious that Mother should see his dance. It was arranged that he would dance at night in Mridu's room [in Prasad House] and Mother would watch from the Balcony from

where she used to give morning Darshan. Mother saw his dance and was very pleased with it. It was remarkable.

REMEMBERING THINGS

Once Satyendra¹ told Sri Aurobindo about an unusual capacity of Madhav. And that is, if anyone was introduced to Madhav, he always remembered the person and his name, even long afterwards.

On another occasion, I told Sri Aurobindo: "I do not remember numbers; I have to make great effort even to remember my own age."

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes, it happens very often; one cannot remember certain things. I cannot remember names." And he smiled.

1. Satyendra Thakore was one of those chosen by Mother to attend on Sri Aurobindo after his accident in 1938. For more on him see his article in *Breath of Grace*, pp. 177-182.

BURDEN ON MOTHER

As you know, in the early days people used to offer roses or jasmines with their nice fragrance. After Mother gave significances to flowers, people began bringing more and more flowers of different kinds to her. They started giving in Mother's hand flower after flower, one by one; and some would bring them in dishes, some in baskets. Of course there were those who came without flowers.

Now as long as people were few it worked. But when the number increased, Mother had to spend more and more time in receiving flowers in this manner. But she never expressed any reluctance or unwillingness; on the contrary people got the impression – at any rate some of them – that the Mother was very pleased at the way things were being done. For some it appeared a very easy way of doing sadhana. As if one had only to offer the flower *Sincerity* or *Discipline* and one automatically attained it! They felt a certain satisfaction in having done something and went on to spend the rest of the day as they pleased.

Perhaps it is human nature. Take my own case. On one of my

birthdays, in the beginning, I took the flower *Unselfishness*, and started going to Mother. Then I added one by one *Gratitude*, *Surrender*, *Humility*, *Purity*, *Devotion*, *Tapasya*, and finally a flower of *Divine's love* placed in one of *Gratitude*. Then as I was about to go to Mother with all these, the idea came to me: "What am I doing? The same thing for which I find fault with others!" Then I left all other flowers except *Gratitude* with *Divine's love* and *Humility* placed within it.

I felt – and I still feel – that one flower is enough. In sadhana if one truly gets one thing, say, devotion, or sincerity, then all else comes through it. The question is whether one really aspires for them and whether the time has come. This is not to say that sincere people did not benefit by this offering of flowers. They did.

Once I expressed my feeling in this matter to Mother. She supported what I said and added something more also, which, however, is not too pleasant for people in general. She was very particular that things should not develop into a ritual or a cult. Later sometimes, she was obliged to write notices like these:

"No flower offering tomorrow, Thursday. Only Pranam."

"Henceforth the flower offering will be only on Tuesday."

At times she had to announce that there would be no Pranam and that only flowers would be given by Mother. Still some people insisted on doing Pranam. And they were allowed.

MOTHER'S HUMILITY

I clearly remember this small but significant incident.

In those days Mother was not keeping well. She came out of her salon at night and stood near Sri Aurobindo's door. I was sitting near Sri Aurobindo's bed. She looked at me and asked: "Can I see Sri Aurobindo?"

Truly her manner of asking touched me deeply. Surely she did not need to ask me if she could come into Sri Aurobindo's room! And yet she asked.

I said: "Of course, Mother." And I went inside and informed Sri Aurobindo.

He said: "Yes."

UNFORGETTABLE TOUCH

While living at Library House, Sri Aurobindo was using a mosquito net. But after coming to Meditation House it was used only for a short time. Thereafter anti-mosquito coils were placed at the four corners of his cot. Four small round trays in brass were specially prepared for the purpose in Pavitra's workshop. The coils came in small boxes that were imported by the Mother from France; Prosperity used to issue them to some sadhaks also. The supplies stopped during war-time.

Mother would keep two boxes on Sri Aurobindo's table. He himself would separate the coils which would normally be stuck to each other; each had to be carefully separated from the other if they were not to break. One day I saw Sri Aurobindo busy separating the coils. Thereafter I started keeping them ready for his use and he left that work to me. This was before his accident.

The burning of the coils was stopped after his room was renovated in 1946. Why it was stopped has remained a mystery. When there were neither coils nor the net, it was natural that he was bitten by mosquitoes in several places. He would then ask for *Insectol*. I used to give an open tube of it in his hand; he would hold the tube in one hand and rub the ointment with the other.

Sometime afterwards this changed. He would call "Champaklal", and I would rush the moment my name was uttered and stand by his side near the bed. Sri Aurobindo would show me the different places where mosquitoes had bitten him; often there were more places than he had indicated and when I showed them to him, he would give an unforgettable smile.

The joy at the touch of his body while rubbing the ointment is indescribable. So too, I remember the unimaginable joy I felt when he would put his arm around me while walking – it is inexpressible.

MY SACRED THREAD

As you know I have always worn my *yajnopavita* (sacred thread). One day it occurred to me that I could do without it. But as I was thinking of removing it, the idea came: How can I remove it when

Sri Aurobindo has touched it so many times?

I must explain. When, after the accident, he used to walk daily, he would take the support of my shoulder by keeping his hand around my neck.¹ It was at that time that his hand touched my *yajnopavita*. Naturally only that part which came under his palm was being touched. Each day I would mark the portion that was so touched and the next day place the next portion near my neck. Thus the entire thread came to be touched by him. I had done the same with my *tulsi-mala* [a necklace of beads of basil stem].

To come back to the story. So I gave up the thought of removing my *yajnopavita*. But again another thought arose in my mind: Why that only? He had touched my body so often; and this body is going to go one day! However, I did not remove my *yajnopavita* myself. It got torn by use. I have still kept it safe.

1. The Mother decided that Sri Aurobindo must walk leaning on two persons and not use crutches. Dr. Manilal chose Purani and Satyendra but as they were not of the same height, Mother made Champaklal replace Satyendra on the left side. "Champaklal had his aspiration fulfilled. His was the last support Sri Aurobindo was to give up." - Nirodbaran, *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*, 1988, p. 24.

USE OF THINGS

Someone once gave the Mother pieces of fine paper. Mother used them. The next time the person came, she showed it to him and said: "See how I have used your paper!" Naturally he was very happy and shared the happy news with others. Very soon people started sending all kinds of paper; blocks after blocks of paper began to pour in.

One day someone brought old paper. Mother was obliged to use that paper first because it would be spoilt sooner. So it was kept on Mother's table. I saw it but what could I do? Still I said: "Mother, people like to keep your writing and they preserve the papers on which you write to them. These papers are old. Why not use good paper? You have so many kinds of nice paper. Why not give away these old ones to the Prosperity so that Harikant¹ could give them to people when they ask." I said this because I knew very well that she would not like any waste. For her it was difficult to

tolerate waste. I saw this from the very beginning. I must say, however, that things changed completely later on. She simply kept quiet when a lot of waste went on around her. I mean waste of all kinds. However, to come back to the story.

Mother said: "I know people will not use it if it is issued from Prosperity. I am sure of it."

I replied: "All right, Mother, I shall take it and use it." She was happy because she was sure that it would not be wasted and that I would make the best use of it.

Speaking of making the best use of things, I remember so many occasions when she showed appreciation of my efforts in this direction. You know the eau de cologne tissue papers which she used for her face. They were so fine. Mother would give them to me one by one after use. I kept them carefully, trying to find out the best use I could make of them. One day it struck me that out of each piece of paper two envelopes for blessings packets could be prepared. Accordingly I prepared some and showed them to the Mother. She was exceedingly pleased and started using them immediately. For people it had a double significance: the packet carried blessing petals from the Mother and the envelope was prepared out of paper used by her.

For Mother it was not enough to use a thing. She wanted the best use to be made of each thing.

1. Harikant Patel first came in October 1934 and finally settled here in April 1935. Sometime in 1944 Mother gave him charge of Prosperity. He was made a Trustee in November 1974, presently he is the Managing Trustee.

CHOICE OF ENVELOPES

Mother was always particular in choosing the right envelopes for her letters. The envelope had to be just the right size – neither too big nor too tight. The recipient should find it convenient to take out the letter easily – this was her requirement.

After the envelope was chosen, she would decide whether she would write the name of the person on the envelope or not. For some she would write it on the envelope itself; for others she would write the name on a small slip of paper and clip it to the envelope. For others she would write the name in pencil: for some it would be



Sri Aurobindo's sofa and writing table



Position of Sri Aurobindo's cot while combing his hair

in a deeper shade, for others in a faint colour. She used to keep different kinds of pencils. For some she would write in big letters, for others in small letters.

After watching these things for some time, one day I asked, when she gave me the opportunity to do so, why she wrote to some in pencil. Mother's reply was interesting: "I write with pencil so that they can rub out the writing and use the envelope again."

I said: "Mother, who would like it to be erased? People would like to preserve your writing. Do you really think anyone would rub it out?"

Mother did not answer. But she stopped clipping the slips to the envelopes. She would do it rarely, only for those whose names she did not want to write on the envelopes. At times I had to take away the pencil from her hand and place a pen in it instead. Of course I could do this because she allowed me the liberty.

COMBING SRI AUROBINDO'S HAIR

You want to know how Sri Aurobindo's hair was combed by Mother? Well, I shall describe it as faithfully as possible.

Before his accident in 1938, Sri Aurobindo used to comb his hair himself. So also for washing his eyes, he would himself pour the lotion in the eye-cup. What is described here is the daily routine after the accident.

Generally, before Mother comes, Sri Aurobindo is resting on his bed. When it is time for Mother to come, we straighten the back-rest and make the arrangements for him to sit back on his bed. Then both Nirod and myself wait for Mother's arrival.

Usually Sri Aurobindo's hair is divided into two plaits for his convenience. Before Mother comes we remove the ribbons, undo the plaits and spread his hair behind his neck over the back-rest. On a small stool nearby we keep one lotion bottle, one small saucer for holding the lotion, one small toothbrush which Mother uses to apply the lotion to his hair, one ordinary comb, and one small comb with fine close teeth which, however, is rarely used. Also a small box for keeping the hair that may come out, and two small ribbons to tie the hair.

One large towel is kept on the back-rest. When I see Mother coming I lift up Sri Aurobindo's hair and place the towel over his back. Near the bed there is always a low stool on which the timepiece is kept. As soon as Mother enters, I remove that stool and keep the other on which we have arranged the necessary things.

First, she pays her respects to him and then they look at each other and smile. Then she stands on the right side of his bed. I open the lotion bottle and hand it to her; she pours some lotion in the small saucer which I hold in my hand. I move with the saucer in my hand and stand just behind his head, behind the back-rest. Nirod stands on the left side. Mother starts applying the lotion with the little tooth-brush and combing the hair. Whatever hair come out in the comb while combing is given by her in my hand. I keep them in the box. Then she plaits the right side of his hair. I put in her hand the ribbon which I have kept on the right side of the back-rest and she ties the plaited hair with it.

After the hair is thus done on the right, Nirod moves to the right side of the cot and Mother goes to the left, to do the hair on that side. I continue to stand in the centre at the back throughout.

Then comes the washing of Sri Aurobindo's eyes.

As you know, Mother's bathroom has three doors — the eastern opens into Sri Aurobindo's room, the western into the long passage above Nirod's room, and the southern door, which is the main one, opens into the little vestibule one enters from the staircase. After combing the hair, Mother goes into that bathroom from Sri Aurobindo's room to prepare two eye-cups. She brings them to Sri Aurobindo's room and leaves one cup in the saucer and puts the other one in another saucer which has been kept on the stool. She holds the saucer with one eye-cup in front of him; he takes the cup in his hand and dips his eye in it. After one eye is washed, Mother puts the used eye-cup on the stool, takes up the other cup and gives it to him. This whole process normally takes from three to five minutes.

Mother always brings a small napkin when she comes and puts it in Sri Aurobindo's lap. After washing his eyes he wipes them with it.

Now remains the washing of his hands, face and mouth. That too I shall describe to you.

While Mother goes to the bathroom to fetch the eye-cups, I keep the following things on the stool for washing his face and hands: two big bowls with water, one for washing his hands and the other his face; two napkins to wipe his face; a small towel; a tooth-paste tube (Neem or Gibbs); a big porcelain feeding cup with water for gargling – to the water I have added some drops of an antiseptic that Mother orders from France; a small cup to keep his ring while washing the hands; and a small bottle of Oriental Balm to massage his gums. I also keep a towel on the back-rest and a spittoon on the floor.

I pour water into one of the bowls – warm in winter and cold in summer – and place it in Mother's bathroom when she is occupied with washing Sri Aurobindo's eyes. When she goes back to the bathroom I follow her. She puts some scent or perfume in the bowl I have kept there. I bring the bowl and place it on the stool beside Sri Aurobindo's cot. One of the napkins for wiping his face is put in the scented water bowl. I go to Sri Aurobindo and put in his hand the opened tube of tooth-paste. With his finger he rubs the paste over his teeth and gums. Before he begins, I lift his beard and place a napkin under his chin. After the rub, he stretches his finger for me to pull the ring off it. I take the ring and place it in the small cup intended for the purpose. Then he dips his hands in the bowl, rubs them a little and takes them out. I hand him a napkin to wipe the hands. Thereafter I hold his finger, wipe it again and put the ring back.

I enjoyed very much this operation of taking the ring off his finger and putting it back on; it gave me great ananda. How sublime was his physical touch! And I got this opportunity several times a day. The ring was taken off and put back several times: while washing his face, going to the toilet, at breakfast time, at lunch time, while taking his bath, and at dinner time.

To come back to the narrative. It is now Nirod's turn. He takes the feeding cup with gargling water and puts it in Sri Aurobindo's hands, having placed a small towel under his chin. Then he holds the spittoon for Sri Aurobindo to spit out the water. When he returns the cup, Nirod gives a towel with which Sri Aurobindo wipes his mouth. Next, Nirod takes the bowl of scented water, dips

the napkin in the scented water and rubs Sri Aurobindo's face with it in his masterly way – forehead, ears, under the eyes, and face. His hand is truly masterful because it moves with so much confidence. (I know how difficult it is to do something like that on Sri Aurobindo's body. And Sri Aurobindo allowed him to do it. Nirod cut Sri Aurobindo's nails with the same confidence.) After the face-wash he wipes Sri Aurobindo's face with a dry towel.

Then I put the opened bottle of Oriental Balm in Sri Aurobindo's hand. He puts one finger in it, takes a little balm and rubs it on one cheek, takes a little more and rubs it on the other cheek, then again takes some balm and rubs it on the inside of his cheeks, and finally on his gums. Rarely he takes the balm a second time for the gums. I then give him a napkin to wipe his hands with. At bedtime he repeats this massaging with the balm.

After everything is over, he takes a pastille.

MOUTH NOT BURNT

I used to prepare the mouth-wash for Sri Aurobindo to gargle with. Once I asked him whether what I was preparing was all right.

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes, it is all right."

C: "Is it not too strong?"

Sri Aurobindo: "It is all right. Why do you ask?"

C: "I have just learnt from Pavitra that this concentrate he prepared is very strong. Not knowing it I have been putting 20 drops of it in your mouth-wash as I used to do before. But Pavitra says that 6 or 7 drops are sufficient now."

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes, it may be too strong. Because you see, one day while gargling a drop fell straight in my eye and it burned."

C: "But does your mouth burn?"

Sri Aurobindo (smiling): "No, my mouth does not burn."

Hearing this I laughed. He also started laughing.

COMPASSION

My brother Bansidhar used to take two buckets from Sri Aurobindo's bathroom every day in order to bring hot water in

them for his sponging. Sri Aurobindo would be sitting at this time at his table working on *Savitri* etc. Every day when Bansidhar went in for the buckets,¹ Sri Aurobindo would note it and when Bansidhar brought back the buckets filled with water he would turn his gaze towards Bansidhar and cast a look full of compassion. All this he did despite his preoccupation with the writing work. Similarly he took note of Bansidhar winding the clocks. Whenever the clock stopped or slowed down or went too fast, or stopped chiming, he would ask me: "Champaklal, have you informed Bansidhar?" And when Bansidhar came to repair it, he would watch with interest.

*

Sri Aurobindo always had a special tender smile for Amrita.

For Nolini he had a deep and intense smile. As you know Sri Aurobindo often said that Nolini has clarity of mind. And he also remarked: "What I cannot read of my handwriting, Nolini can."

Sri Aurobindo greatly appreciated Prithwi Singh's proof-reading and often praised his precise and scrupulous work.

1. For a few years after Sri Aurobindo's accident his attendants gave him a sponge-bath in his room; later the room to its east was converted into a bathroom.
- Nirodbaran, *Twelve years with Sri Aurobindo*, 1988, p. 26.

OBSERVATION

It was during Pranam one morning. As usual I was standing by Mother's side. Pranab's uncle Charupada, as he came near, asked me: "Not well, Champaklal?"

Mother: "He looks that way because he has washed his hair."

Needless to say I was surprised. For I did not know that she had noticed it.

FLEXIBLE

You know the photograph of Sri Aurobindo in profile. It was taken by the Danish artist [Johannes Hohlenberg] when he came here [in 1915] to make a portrait of Sri Aurobindo. As Sri Aurobindo could

not be expected to sit for as long a time as required, the artist took this photograph to help him do the portrait. The original photo – a passport-sized one – was placed in a small frame. For long it was kept on a side-table on the first floor. When I saw that it had started fading and there was no copy of it, I humbly requested Mother to have it copied by the local photographer Latour. But she did not agree. Each year the fading was more and each time I asked her, she would refuse. Ultimately, when I saw that it had not only faded but some cracks too had appeared, I showed the photo to the Mother and told her that we would soon lose the photograph completely and left it to her to decide. I assured her that the original, the copy and the negative, all would be handed back to her. She consented on condition that the photographer must not touch up the photo.

I instructed Latour through Bansidhar to prepare a negative and print a copy and prepare another negative after touching up that copy of the original photo. When prints from both negatives were ready, I showed them to Mother. Seeing the touched up print, she exclaimed: “He is very clever, very clever” and asked for more copies. “Which one?” I asked. “The one touched up,” she replied. Later, with a loving smile, she gave me also one copy of this touched up photo.

I have seen this happen so many times. She would ask me to prepare a folder or something else in a particular way. I would follow all her instructions faithfully, but if I felt that something better could be achieved by some alterations, I would prepare one in that way also and place both things before her. And often it so happened that she chose what was prepared differently. She never declared that she will select only what she had originally asked for. The truth is that she chose from what was made and offered to her. If something better than what had been planned or expected came up, she had no hesitation in changing her decision.

MADHAV'S OFFICE

Whenever the Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room unexpectedly – at times other than in her current routine, – we used to watch her

expression and decide whether we could stay in the room or must go out. At times she herself would sign to us to go; at other times, when we made a move to go, she would say, "Not necessary."

This day she was looking so happy as she entered Sri Aurobindo's room that I did not leave the room – I wanted to hear what she was going to tell Sri Aurobindo. She was all smiles as she told him: "I went down just now to see Madhav's office." Sri Aurobindo smiled and uttered "Umm." It was longer than usual, showing that he took interest in the topic. The Mother continued: "I saw his cupboard; he has classified everything very nicely and arranged them in an orderly and beautiful manner." Sri Aurobindo responded very sweetly to Mother's happiness.

On such occasions it was my habit to go to the places appreciated by the Mother and see everything for myself. Accordingly I went down immediately to Madhav's office and saw his cupboard. I saw with my own eyes and agreed with her. I may observe that it was not always that I concurred.

HOSTILE FORCE IN NEARBY PERSONS

At one time X was very close to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. And as happened in the case of many who come too close to them, she lost her head. She became hostile.

The speech of such persons is very sweet. Mother warned me several times against it: "Champaklal, take care, it is slow poison."

X used to speak nonsense and we could not bear it. So once I told Mother while Dyuman was present: "What a dilemma we are placed in! We cannot bear what she speaks. Your ways are different; but we are afraid that if we react in our normal way, your work will only increase! In this situation how are we to behave towards her?"

Looking at me tenderly and lovingly, Mother explained: "You see, we are fighting this for forty-one years. I have spoken to Sri Aurobindo also about this and he said to me, 'You know well it is not a question of this person or that person. Sending away one person won't help us in any way. We are fighting with the hostile force – not with the person. If you send away one person, it will catch hold of another.' Now do you understand, Champaklal?"

Then she looked at both of us with great tenderness.

DISHONOURING THE GRACE

In the early years just after Sri Aurobindo's arrival, many local people, Hindus as well as Christians, came to see him in the evenings when he permitted visitors. Among those coming regularly was David, an average middle-class man. Gradually, as his contact with Sri Aurobindo increased; his financial situation improved and, due to his wealth and means, his reputation too increased; soon he began to be counted among the very important citizens of the town. However, along with this his visits to Sri Aurobindo decreased and ultimately stopped. At that time, one of his friends told Sri Aurobindo that David believed that his rise was the result of his own capacities and not of Sri Aurobindo's Grace. Sri Aurobindo smiled and merely asked, "Is that so? I did not know that."

Some time later news came of David's ruin. Sri Aurobindo remarked, "For this too he himself is responsible – not me."

"MY MEMORY"

Nolini gave a book to the Mother. There was something to be done with it. She told Nolini: "Give it to Champaklal. He is my memory."

KUMARASAMBHAVAM

Pujalal was reported to have said that some critics do not consider the later cantos of Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam* ("Birth of the War-God") to be his own.

Sri Aurobindo: "They say so because these cantos are erotic. But they are certainly Kalidasa's; that is my opinion. Poetically they are on the same level as the others but they seem inferior because they may be still in draft form; he may have had no time to correct them."¹

1. Cf. Sri Aurobindo's comments in *SABCL* vol. 3, pp. 226-27, and vol. 9, p. 76.

“DO NOT HIDE”

Someone sent Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother* for his autograph. It was found that on the page meant for the autograph, he had first written his own name and afterwards tried to hide it by pasting a piece of paper over it. The Mother saw through it and wrote: "Do not try to hide things. Whatever you want to conceal becomes more visible."

MY ILLNESS

Once I was ill. Mother ascertained some things from the doctor and told me: "I have informed Sri Aurobindo what the doctor said. You will be quite all right now." And indeed, soon I was all right.

OTHER SADHANAS

Ali¹ had sought Mother's help for a friend of his and Mother had responded. When Ali asked Mother on behalf of the friend whether he could continue his usual japa of *Rama-nama* or not, she answered that for full benefit of her help, he must stop the other thing.

1. Ali Hydari, son of Sir Akbar Hydari (Prime Minister of Hyderabad and a devotee of Sri Aurobindo), and his wife Alys were very devoted to the Mother and lived in the Ashram for several years. For more about them and the Ashram of that period see Bilkees Latif, *Her India*, 1984, pp. 166-190.

ONLY ONCE

I had never known Sri Aurobindo ask for anything. He would always wait for things to come but never ask for them.

Once, however, I did see him ask for something. We used to give him a kerchief with which he would wipe the perspiration on his body during summer.

One day he called softly: "Champaklal!"

I was working outside his room and rushed in.

Slowly, hesitantly, he showed his kerchief and said, almost apologetically: "Too small!"

I was deeply moved and replaced it with a bigger one.

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF

On one occasion, Sri Aurobindo said: "As a father I am stupid."

DARA'S POETRY

While speaking about Dara's poetry Sri Aurobindo mentioned this doggerel:

Gandhi, Gandhi, what of the night?
Is it dark, or is it light?

1. Dara first visited the Ashram in June 1926. See Prabhakar's article "Among the not so great" in *Mother India*, Nov. 1999, p. 1101, and Dara's "Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo" in *Bulletin*, from August 1998 onwards. Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's letters to Dara's brother René and his sister Chinmayee are published in *Champaklal's Treasures*, 1976, pp. 21-44.

DURGA

Satyendra showed a picture of Durga to Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo said, "Durga and the Asura both look very happy and pleased. The Asura is looking at the whole affair happily. A very living image, very spirited. It is full of life; especially the lion biting the hand of the Asura is very living and also the posture of the Goddess. That was one quality about the Indian sculptors: they could put spirit into their creations; that life and expression the European sculptors could not bring out. Durga's posture is very natural and also her hands."

INSINCERE

Nolini spoke to Mother of two sannyasins who had arrived and wanted to stay here.

Mother: "Only if they stop wearing ochre robes."

N: "Yes, Mother, they will do that."

Mother: "This kind of insincere people I do not need here."

After we returned upstairs I asked Mother how they could be said to be 'insincere'? Could it not be obedience?

Mother: "You see, this does not apply to everybody; it depends upon persons."

WONDERFUL LUCK

Nolini brought a young visitor to the Mother during Pranam. He did not know English and could not answer when he was asked his age. Mother asked him to go to Dr. Nripendra (obviously for a medical check-up). Then while giving him flowers, she held his hand and looked at his palm for long. She remarked: "Wonderful luck. Wonderful luck."

Afterwards, while we were on the staircase, I told Mother: "I also have a wonderful luck."

Mother: "Let me see." And she took hold of my palm. "There is no line. Hmm, hmm."

C: "But Mother, I have that luck. I see the result."

Mother: "Yes, it happens like that." Then she added: "Let me see, let me see," and saw my hand again. She pointed out the three lines, heart, mind and life, with the heart and mind lines joined unusually and said: "Very interesting, very interesting, very interesting. Generally we do not find lines like this." And she kept looking at me for long.

Lele too, on seeing these three lines, had said the same thing.

BEST PRAYER

The Mother considered her prayer of 7 March, 1915 (in her *Prières et Méditations*) to be the best of all.

FULFILMENT OF UNSPOKEN WISHES

21.1.1950

It was Bansidhar's birthday today. I thought how nice it would be if Mother wrote something for him. But I did not ask her for it. I used to ask for others on their birthdays at times, but here I did not. It so happened, however, that Bansidhar gave Mother a small notebook and pen when he came for Pranam. Mother opened the

notebook and said: "Oh, it is quite new. Shall I write something for you?"

B: "All right, Mother. But I brought it to offer to Mother." Still, Mother wrote in it and gave it back to him.

This was no surprise to me. For, how many times I have seen her fulfilling my wish though I had not expressed it! Her grace is never-ending.

GRACE ON MOTIBEN

27.1.1950

Mother said to me this morning: "If I give the *Bulletin* to Motiben will she like it? Do you think she will be happy? I will give it for the pictures; she can see them." Mother knew that my aunt does not know English.

C: "Mother, as you are giving, you can give her the Hindi edition."

Mother: "I don't have it but I will ask Jayantilal."¹

Later, when Mother came for Sri Aurobindo's lunch, she informed him: "Motiben has offered a very pretty silver fork for you. Today is her birthday."

Sri Aurobindo smiled and said: "Oh!"

Then Mother asked Chinmayee to bring that fork. But pointing to the one which was already there, Chinmayee said: "Mother, this one also is of silver."

Mother: "Yes. But the new one is pretty and today is her birthday; bring that."

Thus Chinmayee was obliged to bring the fork offered by Motiben. Mother placed it in Sri Aurobindo's hand. He took it with a smile and said: "Oh... oh!"

It was a treat for me to watch how the Grace worked.

¹ Jayantilal Parekh (1913-99) studied art in Shantiniketan before joining the Ashram in 1938. Served the Ashram in various capacities before the Mother entrusted him with the responsibility of setting up and organising the Ashram's Archives and Research Library. See *Mother India* 1999, p. 442; and *Mother India* 2000, pp. 224-25, 295-98, 383-86.

EXCEPTIONS AND MORE EXCEPTIONS

29.1.1950

Mother told Sri Aurobindo that she had made a change in her daily programme. She would henceforth go to the Balcony at 6.30 a.m.

C: "Mother, you will find it difficult – you will have to hurry very much to be there in time." I said this because I knew her morning programme before the Balcony darshan.

Mother: "If I want to go I can be ready."

C: "Of course, Mother. I know that perfectly well."

Then Mother told Sri Aurobindo that there was only one place left where she could spend time alone; and that was her bathroom. She smiled and looked at Sri Aurobindo who also smiled.

C: "Mother, there also you have started..."

Sri Aurobindo looked at me with an expressive smile.

Mother: "No, no." Very emphatically.

C: "But, Mother, the other day you saw someone even in the bathroom. It is only after seeing it that I have spoken. This was the only place left and that also is now gone."

Mother: "Yes, but it was only one person."

C: "Yes, Mother, but that is just the beginning."

Mother: "No, no, that was only once."

DARSHAN

21.2.1950

Darshan: 1.40 p.m. to 4.10 p.m.

TO MY RESCUE

26.2.1950

Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room for combing his hair at 10.17 a.m. and was there till 10.37 a.m. When she came in, Mother said to me: "Oh, you are not ready!"

C: "Mother, Sri Aurobindo's eyes were closed."

At this, Sri Aurobindo hastened to say: "What Champaklal says is true. Just now I opened my eyes."

Then both looked at me and smiled.

COURT CASE OF A DISCIPLE

27.2.1950

Sri Aurobindo was taking interest in a person who was involved in a court case. He had asked for Sri Aurobindo's blessings. I asked Sri Aurobindo for the precise wording to be telegraphed. He said: "Our blessings for proceedings case second March."

Then he asked for the name of the place. "Mehsana," I replied. He asked me to remove the words 'second March' and put 'Mehsana' instead.

C: "Can I put your name as the sender?"

Sri Aurobindo: "What was done last time?"

C: "In your name."

Sri Aurobindo: "All right, then."

But a little later, he called me and said: "Better not put my name there."

FLOWERS UNAWARE

3.3.1950

I was busy doing something in the Salon* and was not aware that Mother had entered silently and was standing behind me. I came to know of it only when I felt something on both of my ears. Mother had dexterously put flowers on my ears, *Divine solicitude* on one ear and *Champa (Psychological perfection)* on the other. When I looked up at her, I saw her eyes were full of affection and compassion. What Grace!

* Mother used this fortunate room as her bedroom until her second-floor room was built in 1953. Mother's cot used to be where there is now a big almira that we see just on entering the room. Nearby there is a chair on which she sat to meet the department heads whom she used to call together in a group. And sometimes standing beside this chair, and facing east, she also met some sadhaks individually. [Champaklal's note]

MOTHER HAS PAIN

14.3.1950

Mother had acute pain in her back and waist. Still she went on

seeing people near the first-floor door, and throughout that time she kept standing. When she returned she was extremely tired.

15.3.1950

Today Mother arranged to sit in a chair while seeing people. The same arrangement continued thereafter. When this information was given to Sri Aurobindo he was happy to hear it.

MOTHER IS TIRED

7.4.1950

Mother used to see some people on the staircase in the morning. She opened the door for them. Today, before going there she said to me: "Today I want to finish quickly. Yesterday I was extremely tired. That is why I was often going *within*."

Before she went down for Pranam, she said that she would not receive flowers from people today. She was obliged to do this at times.

AUTOGRAPHS

13.4.1950

Mother spoke to Sri Aurobindo of the number of people to whom she had to attend when she opened the door and what she felt then.

She also told him that she had asked Nolini to stop books being sent up for signature. She enquired from me whether a notice to this effect had been put up on the board. I said it was not, but probably he informed people orally.

In the beginning Sri Aurobindo used to sign books with the name of the person and write "Blessings". For some he even wrote the date. Though it was a strain on him later, he did not express it. But Mother did not want to trouble him and so she asked him only to sign leaving place for the name and the word "Blessings". For some time Sri Aurobindo signed and wrote "Blessings" and Mother added the name, and in some cases also the date. Afterwards he only signed and Mother wrote the rest.

Thus people began to get the handwriting of both Sri Aurobindo and Mother.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

20.4.1950

When the Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room today, she spoke of Kapali Sastri's devotion and his new opening. She also mentioned the new opening that Ganapati Sastri had.

Mother said: "Ramana Maharshi had been coming to me for the last two days. I had not known, at that time, that he had passed away. But I had a very strong feeling."¹

1. Raman Maharshi passed away on April 14th. At the time of his departure Mother was sitting outdoors in the Playground taking her French class. When a large shooting star passed through the evening sky, she is reported to have said, "A great soul has passed away."

HISTORIC DARSHAN

24.4.1950

The Darshan started at 1.30 p.m. and went on up to 3.30 p.m. 1176 people attended.

There was a March Past before the regular Darshan started.

For the first time a photograph of the Darshan was taken. It was taken by Henri Cartier-Bresson.¹

1. A renowned French photographer who travelled all over the world. - *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, December 1990, p. 229.

CARTIER-BRESSON AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Madhav: "Champakbhai, do you remember Cartier-Bresson who was allowed to take photographs of Sri Aurobindo? If I remember right, Sri Aurobindo had not been photographed after he retired in 1926. I have heard that when Cartier-Bresson stood to photograph Sri Aurobindo and Mother giving Darshan on 24.4.50, his hands shook, and we see it in the haziness of the Darshan photograph we now have. Do you recollect?"

C: Ah, yes.

The day after the Darshan, when the Mother was distributing flower garlands downstairs, he took a number of photographs. Mother went down for the function specially early that day. Later,

she came to Sri Aurobindo and said something to him. After she combed his hair, she asked how long it would take to get ready. We said Cartier-Bresson was coming up at 9 a.m. Then she said: "Let him take photographs of the bust only."

C: "If he is coming to photograph, why not the full figure?"

Mother: "If Sri Aurobindo says so..."

C: "If you want it, he will not say no."

Mother: "Ask him."

I asked Sri Aurobindo and he consented. I also asked Sri Aurobindo if I could rearrange his sofa and see that the light was enough. He indicated his approval with a smile.

Then I went down and told Cartier-Bresson that he could come upstairs earlier to the room and arrange things as he desired.

But he came only at the scheduled time and took a number of photographs. But of the full figure he took only one; at any rate he had only one finally.

"EYES ON MY BACK"

11.5.1950

Nowadays Sri Aurobindo's dinner is fairly early. Mother came today at 10.54.

She sat on Sri Aurobindo's cot near him and as she always does when there is no active work to be done, she went into trance. She rarely keeps her eyes open when she sits like this. But at the same time she notes what is going on around her. I came to know this because on one occasion her eyes were closed but she surprised me by telling me all that had taken place. I remember her telling me once, "I have eyes on my back too."

Today she brought a letter to answer. She started writing but as she was doing so she started going into trance. To draw her out Sri Aurobindo asked her: "Whose letter is it?"

Mother: "Suryakumari's"; I am now answering her. I write to André twice a year. To Suryakumari I used to write every month."

1. Suryakumari, name given to Mme G.R. Lafargue, who came thrice to the Ashram between 1937 and 1938, staying a few months each time. She returned in October 1946 and remained here for several years.

“WAS I SLEEPING?”

13.5.1950

It was 12.32 at night. Sri Aurobindo asked me to put down his back-rest. After some time he asked: “What is the time?”

C: “1.45 a.m.”

Sri Aurobindo: “Ah, ah!” And he closed his eyes again and remained like that for some time. Then he called me and asked whether I had woken him up. I said: “No.”

Sri Aurobindo: “Was I sleeping?”

C: “Your eyes were closed but I cannot say whether you were sleeping or awake. I do not know.” He took a long breath and it seemed to me he was recollecting something. He said nothing but there was an indescribable expression on his face.

“Did you wake me up?”, “Was I sleeping?” Asking such questions to an ordinary man he behaved as ordinary men do. What Leela!

Tonight Mother went downstairs for Pranam at 1.28 a.m. and came up at 1.50 a.m. Sri Aurobindo went to bed at 2.25 a.m.

WRIST WATCH FOR SRI AUROBINDO

15.5.1950

Mother came to Sri Aurobindo’s room today with a wrist watch in her hand. She said to him: “A man has come from France and he believes himself to be and introduces himself as a true child of Sri Aurobindo. This wrist watch is from him for you.”

So saying, she placed the wrist watch on the stool nearby on which the timepiece was kept. Sri Aurobindo nodded and smiled.

TRANCE AT PRANAM

19.5.1950

Mother went downstairs for Pranam. As one person came in front of her she went into trance. When she opened her eyes he was still standing there. It had taken one hour and five minutes.

Today Sri Aurobindo went to bed at 2.43 a.m.

BOOKLETS FOR CHILDREN

22.5.1950

Mother came in with two small booklets in her hand. One copy she gave to me and the other to Sri Aurobindo. The title was *What a Child Should Always Remember*. It had just come out of our Press.

MOTHER'S PROGRAMME

27.5.1950

Sri Aurobindo finished his lunch today at 12.08 p.m. After Mother left, as he was rubbing balm over his teeth and gums, he asked: "Champaklal, what is Mother's present programme?"

On hearing it from me, he said: "All right."

EVEN IF HIS EYES ARE CLOSED

27.5.1950

Mother used to see a few people near the door before she went downstairs for Pranam. I told Sri Aurobindo that Mother was near the door. He told me to inform him when the Mother came back.

C: "I have to inform you even if your eyes are closed?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes."

But when I went to inform him at 12.55 his eyes were open. He went to bed at 1.12 a.m.

SUFFOCATION

7.6.1950

Mother opened the door this morning at 6.44 to meet people. She opened it a second time at 7.32 and people kept coming till 8.47.

After closing the door, she told me: "You cannot even imagine how sick I become; it is suffocating. People are so deep in tamas, unconscious; and they do not even know it."

NAME IN SANSKRIT

13.6.1950

Before opening the door in the morning, Mother wrote out the new name for Piloo¹ in Sanskrit *Sutapā*. It was her birthday today.

1. A youthful and energetic Parsi sadhika (1919-99) who settled here in the late 1940s and was close to Mother.

KILLING

22.6.1950

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room today it was 9.54 a.m. As soon as she came she sat on his cot on one side. She looked extremely tired. Looking at me, she asked: "How long?"

I understood what she meant and replied: "Two hours and ten minutes." She had to stand while she received people from 7.25 to 9.35 a.m.

Mother then looked at Sri Aurobindo and said just one word, but with full expression: "Killing."

It was painful to hear that. Can you imagine it?

Sri Aurobindo became very serious.

MOTHER'S CONCERN

26.6.1950

Today was the birthday of Sumedha, the daughter of Indra Sen's sister Rameshwari. Yesterday, Mother told Rameshwari that she had called Sumedha today early at 6 a.m., although Mother is not meeting people these days at this time for birthdays. Actually Sumedha had asked permission to see her and Mother had agreed. But it was always Mother's way to put things with grace and consideration.

I knew all this, but still Mother informed me early in the morning. Even after informing me, she kept an eye on the staircase door. When I looked questioningly, she said that she was afraid someone might turn Sumedha away saying Mother is not meeting people! Once again I was struck by the way Mother was concerned

about the feelings and growth of people.

Many such incidents were to take place thereafter.

CURE FOR INSECT-BITES

10.7.1950

Sri Aurobindo showed me his hand saying that some insect may have bitten it at night. The bite was on two fingers and the palm. He said: "Last time it was cured by your rubbing. So you can try."

So saying he stretched his hand. I rubbed ointment for 20 minutes – from 10.20 to 10.40 a.m., holding his hand in mine.

What a touch! Boundless ananda.

PAVITRA'S OINTMENT

23.7.1950

An insect had bitten Sri Aurobindo in several places. He asked me to rub the ointment, and as I began rubbing it on the knee, he asked: "Is it Pavitra's or Insectol?"

C: "Pavitra's. How do you find it?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Oh, works very well."

Rubbing went on from 10.20 to 10.40 a.m. This treatment is going on almost daily these days. And I receive boundless ananda too – at his expense!

CARTIER-BRESSON'S PHOTOGRAPHS

27.7.1950

Mother informed Sri Aurobindo that news had come from America about the photographs taken by Cartier-Bresson. Tata had been to enquire at the Company and he was told that the film had been received.¹ But as the lady in charge of that section was not there, the work of development the film had not started yet. They also told him the condition that the photographs must not be shown to anyone other than Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who had to select from them and return the whole collection. On receiving them, the company would publish those selected in some journal in

America and it was only six months thereafter that the photos could be issued by us here. Mother also informed Sri Aurobindo that she was planning to make an album which would be in great demand.

Mother told me: "I think the photo of Sri Aurobindo in his chair will come out very well."

C: "Mother, he has taken so many of you; from them some will surely come out well."

Mother: "He has taken hundreds. Out of them at least one or two will come out well."

1. V.S. Tatachari, a disciple living in New York who founded the Sri Aurobindo Library, a publishing concern. The New York company was Magnum Photos which Cartier-Bresson partially owned. Magnum asked for and was paid \$3000. – *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, December 1990, pp. 299, 233.

CALCUTTA CELEBRATIONS

27.7.1950

There was a letter from Calcutta. They wanted to celebrate the 15th of August and for that purpose wished either to have the new photographs taken by Cartier-Bresson or to send an artist to do a sketch of the Mother. Or they could send someone who would take a photograph of Mother.

Mother: "No, no."

ASHRAM RULES

4.8.1950

This morning, at 8.35, while combing Sri Aurobindo's hair, Mother asked Nirod to read out the new Ashram rules. Some changes have been made and Mother wanted Sri Aurobindo to hear them.

SARI TO CHAMPAKLAL

6.8.1950

Mother distributed saris to sadhikas today. When everybody had finished, I went to offer pranam as usual. After my pranam was over, she gave me also a sari with a radiant smile. There was laughter all round.

Indeed, the sari was like a dhoti; its border was very narrow and the texture very fine, very smooth.

Typical of her unexpected ways!

FRAGRANCE OF PERFUME

9.8.1950

When Mother came to Sri Aurobindo today she had a bottle of perfume with her. She asked me to open it which I did. Mother smelt it and then gave it to Sri Aurobindo to smell. Then she asked him: "Are you getting the smell?"

Sri Aurobindo: "Yes."

Mother: "It is good."

UNIQUE EVENT

10.8.1950

Nowadays Sri Aurobindo's time for lunch is earlier than before. Today it was 11 a.m. when Mother came – very unusual. She brought with her one small dish with a small bowl on it, some bread slices and a knife.

I started serving Sri Aurobindo. Mother sat on his cot – just in front of his table. She applied something to the bread. And as she was doing it, she told me: "Today I have no time to have food there. I shall have it here."

I said: "Yes, Mother, very good."

Sri Aurobindo smiled.

This was the first and the last time we saw them having food together. It was a rare event – from 11 to 11.29 a.m.

AUGUST DARSHAN IN 1950

15.8.1950

Time: 1.28 to 4.55 p.m. (sadhaks and other devotees)

4.55 to 5.17 p.m. (workers)

At 5.57 p.m. Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room and said: "I am going. Champaklal will give you fruit juice."

And then she went to the Playground.

“NOT ORDINARY MOSQUITOES”

8.10.1950

There was an understanding between Nirod and myself that one of us would always remain near Sri Aurobindo at night.

One night I was not in the room. Sri Aurobindo asked Nirod: “Champaklal is not there? I cannot sleep.”

N: “He is there on the terrace. Shall I call him?”

Sri Aurobindo: “Yes.”

This conversation was reported to me by Nirod later. When I came in, Sri Aurobindo showed me the different places where he had been bitten by mosquitoes.

As I was rubbing the ointment, he said: “These are not ordinary mosquitoes, that is why I could not sleep.” I rubbed the ointment from 1.32 to 1.52 a.m. This has been happening every night these days.

Only because it must have been indispensable did Sri Aurobindo say “Yes” when Nirod asked “Shall I call him?”

BOTH RESTING

1.11.1950

Mother told Kamala: “Inform Champaklal that I will go to Sri Aurobindo at 2.45 p.m. today.”

It appears that Mother had come and peeped into Sri Aurobindo’s room to tell this to me. But she went back as she found that Sri Aurobindo was resting and I was sitting with my eyes closed. Mother told this to Kamala and said that she did not want to disturb me! You can imagine how moved I was when I learnt this. Thereafter I tried to keep my eyes open lest the next time she hesitate to speak!

MOTHER’S LAST HOUSE IN FRANCE

5.11.1950

Mother opened the drawer of the table and showed me a card. She asked if I had seen it.

C: "Yes, Mother, you have given it to me."

Mother was surprised. Then pointing to the card, Kamala said: "Mother, somebody is standing in the corner there."

Mother: "Yes, it is a servant."

K: "Mother, outside also there is somebody standing."

Mother: "The servant is standing there and between him and the door his wife is standing."

Then Mother told me: "Have you noticed that all the doors in the front are kept closed? That is because this photograph was taken when I was not there. This was my last house in France."

MARBLING

7.4.1951

Long ago someone came on a visit and exhibited some of his coloured photographs in our Library. They were not of any objects but they were very colourful and impressionistic. Mother liked them very much. She called Robi Ganguli, talked to him at length about the technique and gave him some specific instructions and asked him to try it. I saw that he was very enthusiastic, but nothing further happened. I reminded Robi about it but it was no use. I had a keen interest in it and wanted to do something like that but did not know how to proceed.

Then one day Amiyo Ganguli brought some paintings and showed them to Mother. She liked them and asked him how they were done. After he left, Mother showed me the paintings and said she would ask Amiyo to show me the technique. She told me that this process was known as marbling. (Here I must record that the first person to do marbling in our Ashram was the artist Sanjiban.)

Today was the day the Mother had asked Amiyo to come upstairs and demonstrate the marbling process in the meditation room. He came at 10.30 a.m. with the necessary things. Mother had kept some colours ready and a brush in a tray which was filled with water, but not to the brim. Amiyo took a piece of paper and put it over the colours that he had put on the surface of the water. The result was marbled paper. Thereafter Mother tried it out herself on two sheets of paper. I understood the process properly.

The next day I did three paintings, using a brush in some places. I placed these paintings on the long table along the window in the corridor outside Mother's boudoir, so that Mother could see them on her way back from Balcony darshan. When she saw them she asked who had done them. She was surprised when I said they were mine. She had thought that someone must have sent them from abroad. She exclaimed: "Yours! Wonderful! Very nice! Pretty! I like it." She had not expected that I would be able to do this from what Amiyo had shown me. Seeing her happy expression I continued to make more of these paintings. She said that one day she would see all of them.

A day was fixed and I took 47 paintings to her. I showed them to her one by one and she wrote down the number and significance of each one on a small pad. At the same time she asked me to write down the number on the painting and she checked to see if I had done it correctly. In this way she saw the whole lot in one sitting.

Later on she gave significances to my other paintings also. At times she would ask for birthday folders with these paintings on them and would write the significance below them. As in everything, her encouragement was extremely helpful in my painting.

KAMALA'S PORTRAIT

12.4.1951

Kamala's portrait done by Mother had faded. I took it to her and showed it saying: "Look Mother, what has happened!"

Mother: "The drawing is very pretty." She said it as if it had been done by somebody else!

C: "Can you do something, Mother?"

Mother: "Champaklall, but it is very difficult."

C: "Mother, nothing is difficult for you. The question is whether you would like to do it or not." She smiled and immediately started working upon it. When she finished, I saw how happy her expression was. "How is it now?" she said.

C: "Mother, wonderful!"



Kamala – a sketch by the Mother



The Mother distributing fruit bags

HOW TO FEEL THE PRESENCE

22.6.1951

Mother: "My presence is always there. Only you do not see it. If you want to see it you should say:

'Grant that we may be conscious of your Presence always, at all times.'

That is the only way of asking. The other way is incorrect and also impertinent."

CARTIER-BRESSON'S NEGATIVES

26.6.1951

Negatives of the photographs taken by Cartier-Bresson have come – in all 460 of them, some spoiled, some faded. "They are all locked up in my safe," Mother said.

MOTHER ON HER BIRTH

July 1951

Mother: "I was born in France because some special education was necessary."

WRONG REPORT OF DARSHAN

July 1951

It appears that a certain journal in France reported that a curtain was hung at the time of Darshan and that only the feet of Sri Aurobindo were allowed to be seen from the little space between the lower end of the curtain and the floor.¹ To contradict this, Mother asked that the Darshan photo (No. 59-7-33 in the album) be sent to the paper. For in that photograph sadhaks are seen standing in a line in front of Sri Aurobindo at the Darshan of 24th April 1950.

1. Alexandra David-Neel, a Buddhist friend of the Mother who met Sri Aurobindo in 1910 on her way to Tibet, wrote in *L'Inde ou j'ai vécu*, Paris, 1951: "...recent visitors tell me that... once or twice a year the Master placed himself behind a curtain beneath which only his feet emerged. His admirers... prostrated themselves before the feet. [This] information [came] to me from several different sources." – *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, April 1987, pp. 115-16.

'CONVINCING' MOTHER

24.7.1951

A sadhak had written something and Mother had already answered it. He wrote again.

When he came for Pranam, Mother told him: "You want to convince me? You know I am impossible." And she repeated it.

DYUMAN AND LAKSHMI PUJA

14.10.1951

Mother told Dyuman: "Today is Lakshmi Puja. Lakshmi is your friend." Then she gave him a flower.

SEVERAL YEARS OF WORK

1.1.1952

It took several years to remove the samskaras of surroundings and parents.

DURING FRENCH REVOLUTION

3.1.1952

Speaking of the French Revolution, Mother said: "Pujalal was there. But I did not know that Bansidhar also was there, helping me. Strange!"

MOUNTING DARSHAN PHOTOGRAPHS

12.2.1952

It was Kamala's birthday. Mother gave her a silver dish with a picture of Saraswati playing the Veena and said: "I am here." She also gave a kerchief saying it was used by Sri Aurobindo in last August's Darshan. Nolini had brought a German magazine sent from London, containing Cartier-Bresson's photographs. Mother took out the pages with the pictures and gave them to Kamala.

I cut out those pictures; they were printed on both sides of the pages. Then I cut out the middle portions of some mounts as

precisely as I could and framed the pictures back to back between the two mounts so that they could be seen from both the sides.

On seeing my work, Mother said: "Very cleverly arranged." She went on to praise it very much.

C: "Mother, please sign it."

Mother: "I don't feel like doing it." In those days she was not autographing Darshan photographs.

C: "Don't do it, Mother, if you don't feel like it. It is all right." Even so, she wrote "Blessings" on the pictures.

Mother had liked the mounted pictures so much that the next day she asked me to fetch them from Kamala as she wanted to show them to Pranab. While showing them to him she remarked: "How nicely they are arranged by Champaklal! Isn't it so?"

1. The German weekly, *Heute* ("Today"), in its issue of 8 November 1950, carried a two-page spread of pictures and a brief write-up with a sarcastic slant. — *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, December 1990, pp. 231-32.

VOWS

31.3.1952

Once I asked the Mother about orthodox people making vows either to gain what they wished or to fulfil some desire. This was especially strong in the matter of eating. People took vows that they would not eat such and such a thing until some wish was fulfilled or some goal attained. I asked Mother whether there was any truth behind these things, especially in not eating certain foods.

Mother replied: "It is only to train the will and to remember the ideal, the wish etc. Generally in old religions like the Hindu and the Semitic ones, these observances are founded on the basis of hygiene and then associated with religion. That is why they are still lasting. For example in certain parts which are too hot, you are asked not to eat pork, because in that hot climate the worms do not die even after boiling. On the other hand they multiply. Hence the discouragement. In some places it is enjoined that the blood must be first let out and only then the cooking done. When the blood is thus first removed the harmful element is eliminated. And people do it."

BEHIND EXTERNALS

1.5.1952

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's books always used to be sent upstairs and shown to the Mother before being posted. Recently, the person in charge started sending books intended for foreign countries directly to the Press for despatch. When it was pointed to him that they should have been sent up to the Mother, he said that it was not necessary.

Today, when this was reported to Mother, she said: "Let him do what he likes; it is all right."

Later she explained: "You people are accustomed to look only at external things – you do not see what is behind them. You do not know what I do after seeing the books. You are all accustomed to do orderly work. This is the general thing; people see only external things."

CHILD IN MY LAP

It was in 1952. Rishabhchand's son came with his little daughter. She was only two years old. The Mother liked her very much. And though, in those days, small children were not being permitted to stay here, Mother told Rishabhchand to keep his granddaughter here. "I want her," the Mother told him.

Poor Rishabhchand was in a fix. The parents were not willing to leave her here as she was then their only child. Seeing Mother's keenness, I called upon Rishabhchand and spoke to him at length, explaining how it was a special Grace from Mother and so on. But it was of no avail.

However, things changed. On their return to Calcutta, the girl did not keep well. The parents also were feeling very uncomfortable. So they brought back the child in 1953 and Mother admitted her to the School.

The Mother was very happy and said: "I knew they would have to bring back the child."

That child is Mounnou. She received special attention and time from Mother every day as she grew up. While waiting for the

Mother, Mounnou would sit in my lap and play with my beard. She would plait the beard and I had to keep it in that position till Mother came! When Mother came, she also would play with my beard and say something each time in her own sweet way.

JEALOUSY AND ITS HAVOC

4.8.1952

Mother observed about jealousy: "Jealousy hides in a person and takes him low, low (showing with gestures and bending down). It takes you down, down, down, very far down. It comes in such a way that at times you are not even able to notice it. You do not believe it is there. You notice it only when you see it in others! You have to be extremely careful. For even when you throw it away, it comes in again. You have to be constantly throwing it out. These things are contagious. When you find it between two persons, it is at times very difficult to find out who is responsible. Only one who is conscious can notice it. There are many ways to stop it from coming into you."

KISSING AND JOY

4.8.1952

Mother spoke to me of an incident that had taken place at her grandmother's when Mother was about 12 or 13.

She said: "Two relatives, a boy and a girl, had come. The girl was sitting in the boy's lap. They were kissing each other very vigorously. I say now that they were kissing; but at that time it was only a scene, a scene of something new to me. I did not know anything about this love. I simply saw that they were busy and that they were extremely happy and enjoying themselves. To me it was just a scene. (My grandmother was a moralist.) All of a sudden something entered into me like a spark. And I experienced the joy that they were having, even more intensely than they, without the act."

Mother showed with expressive gestures what joy she had experienced.

I said: "But Mother, everybody cannot do that."
 Mother smiled.

STUMBLING

13.8.1952

Mother: "I am stumbling all the time over silly things."

SINCERITY

27.9.1952

Mother: "Simple sincerity includes everything. It leads to power, light, knowledge, experience, transformation — everything. But it must be integral, in all the parts of the being."

C: "How to speak?"

Mother: "It must be spontaneous."

C: "How to know that?"

Mother: "Right thinking, right way, sincere and constant prayer. Judge from the result."

MAN OF LONG AGO

12.10.1952

Mother: "It was in 1898, I was 20. The man whom I saw at that time you are going to see tomorrow in the cinema."¹

1. This is part of Mother's conversation with Nirodbaran; they had just returned from the Playground after seeing *J'accuse*, a French film on Emile Zola. The man Mother referred to in the sentence above was Anatole France. The next day, the 13th, two films were shown: *Paris plein ciel* and *Life of Emile Zola*. — Nirodbaran, *Memorable Contacts with the Mother*, 1991, pp. 50-51.

IN THE PSYCHIC

13.10.1952

Mother: "Neither a passionate vital attraction nor an agitated withdrawal should be there. There is no place for all this in the psychic."

CHAMPAKLAL IS A PSYCHOLOGIST

16.10.1952

Photographer Chiman's birthday. Mother told him: "You have all the photographs with you. So that is not in question. What book do you want? *Last Poems*?"

Champaklal: "Give him photographs, Mother."

Mother: "You are pleading."

C: "I am pleading because if I were in his place I would not ask but would like to have them from you without asking. I would expect that from you, Mother."

Mother then went in to fetch them from her room and then told Chiman: "Champaklal is a psychologist!"

When Mother said this I knew the meaning of the word but not the slightest idea why she was describing me like this. But now she has explained to me through experience. For instance, I see that many parents, for some reason or other, cannot understand their children and therefore do not behave with them properly. Of course I have also seen parents who do understand their children, but they are few.

DO NOT TELL

3.11.1952

Mother observed about somebody: "He has the taste and capacity to choose correctly; and if he is steady, he may achieve something."

C: "Shall I tell him that, Mother?"

Mother: "No, it will have the opposite effect. He has a rebellious nature."

OTHERS' SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES

It was always a principle with Mother to discourage sadhaks from opening themselves to spiritual influences other than those of their Gurus. As you know, Sri Aurobindo has explained why it should be so.

Once a well-known saint had come to our Ashram to see

Mother. The saint had been invited to the room of a sadhak for a function.

C: "Mother, I am going to attend this function."

Mother: "What, Champaklal! You also are going there? Champaklal, take care."

C: "Mother, I am like a stone. I do not go to take or to get anything spiritual; I go only to see."

Mother: "All right, go. Interesting."

SIGNIFICANCES OF COLOURS

Once while discussing a colour scheme, Mother gave the following list of significances:

Poetry	...	Pale Blue (Sky Blue)
Painting	...	Rainbow
Sculpture	...	Red
Music	...	Green
Dance	...	White
Thought	...	Yellow
Physico-vital life	...	Red
Mental-vital life	...	Deep Blue
Spiritual life	...	Pearl Gray
Life Divine	...	Golden

MESSAGES AND THEIR COLOURS

A request had come from the Purna Yoga Kendra for a message.

Mother gave a blank *white* card and said, "It is a silent message." Later she indicated:

Blue for Hindi messages

Pink for Bengali messages -

Yellow for Gujarati messages.

EARLY BREAKFAST

6.2.1953

Mother told me: "From tomorrow I will have my breakfast early in the morning at 6.30. You must keep my soup ready. Otherwise it

becomes 11 o'clock and I cannot take my regular food afterwards. If my breakfast is so late I cannot take lunch."

"SHE WAS AMBITIOUS"

31.3.1953

Yesterday Mother saw the film Julius Caesar at the Playground.

Today she said: "The play is very interesting. In future, some may say about me that I was very ambitious. So I have written something very very interesting. But I won't show it now. I have kept it (showing me her bag which was hanging near her chair) very secret. When people will see it in future, they will find it interesting."

I have not seen what Mother wrote. But I have found some small slips of paper on which, possibly, she made the original draft which may later have been expanded. Here are those notes:

It will be said of me: "She was ambitious, she wanted to transform the world." But the world does not want to be transformed except by a very long and slow process, so slow that the change cannot be perceptible from one generation to the other.

I find that Nature delays and wastes. But she finds that I am too much in a hurry and too troublesome and exacting.

Let me write down all I have to say; let me foretell all that will be done, and then, if no one finds that I am doing it properly, I shall retire and leave others to do it.¹

31.3.53

1. A translation done prior to the one in *Collected Works of the Mother*, vol. 13, pp. 49-50.

PEOPLE ARE SLOW

4.4.1953

Mother went down for distribution at 10.15 a.m. It was finished within 25 minutes because only a few people were there. Then they started coming in slowly, one by one and Mother had to sit there for one full hour – waiting until all of them had come. She went up only after 11.40 a.m.

ROBBERS ON THE WAY

26.10.1953¹

I read and liked the following sentence in an article by Maulana Azad: "I know the path, but what can I do if robbers rob me on the way?"

I copied it down on a slip of paper and took it to Mother. She wrote on the back of the slip:

"Call the Lord to catch the robbers."

1. Dated 26.10.1963 in *Champaklal's Treasures*, 1976, p. 7; here changed to 26.10.1953 as per Champaklal's note in his papers.

MOTHER'S MOVING TO THE TOP FLOOR

On the morning of the 9th December, 1953, after meditation, Mother informed Dyuman that she would go up to her new room on the second floor from that night. Thereafter she spent the nights there. And now and then she would spend some time there during the daytime also.

From March 20, 1962, after going back to this room from the Balcony darshan, she did not come down at all.¹

The entrance to this room is through two doors, an outer wire-net door, and inner wooden one. On the first day, when I went in with her, Mother instructed me that both these doors should not remain open at the same time. While entering, the net-door had first to be closed and then only the inner one opened. She herself was so particular about this that while entering, she would open the first door just to the extent necessary and ask me to follow her immediately before closing it.

On the first day, I said: "Mother, you go in. I shall follow afterwards." But she said: "No, you come."

By observation and experience I learnt that she wanted to open the door as few times as possible. If there were things to be taken inside, they were all to be first collected in the tiny hallway between the two doors and only then would she go inside her room. Now this was all right if there were only two persons. But when there were three? And that too when Mother was one of them! Again, as

you know, the outer door opens to the outside but the inner opens into the hallway. You can imagine the awkwardness when there were three persons together, as it used to happen on the first of the month, when Mother, Vasudha and I would find ourselves in the hallway at the same time! Of course, like all things with her, this arrangement also got changed in the course of time. You have seen how, after some years, both doors had to be kept open at the same time to allow the long line of devotees to go in for Pranam and come out with the least waste of time.

Another interesting feature. In the beginning Mother was particular that no flowers were kept in this room. But slowly this rule had to be relaxed and the result was that all sorts of insects – flies, mosquitoes, ants, spiders, cockroaches – came into the room along with the flowers. Most people do not know that when they put flowers in her hands or left them in her lap, ants and other insects used to climb on her hands and then crawl about on her body. But she would never protest.

What has the Mother not done for us?

1. One of the reasons for her not coming down after this date was a series of "heart attacks". See *Collected Works of the Mother*, vol. 11, *Notes on the Way*, for details.

ALWAYS BE CONSCIOUS

This was before Mother's second-floor apartment was built. At that time, on the southern side of Mother's salon, under the window opening on the western side, there was an old Japanese seat, on which Mother sat when she worked or met people. It was here that, before going for the Balcony darshan, Mother would write the messages for Biren¹ which have been published in facsimile. And for a period she also had her meals here with Pranab. Beside this Japanese seat, there used to be a big cupboard in which Mother kept the books she gave to people.

Now, for my convenience, a shelf had been fixed between the upper and lower parts of that cupboard. I used it whenever I had to take out the books Mother had chosen to distribute to those who had asked for them. At present, only Mother's seat is there; but

then, one big round cushion as high as a chair was kept in front of the seat, so that Mother could stretch out her legs comfortably. This made the passage narrower and one had to be very cautious while getting up not to bang one's head against the shelf that was jutting out.

Sometimes Amrita had to sit there for some work. After he banged his head several times against it while getting up I requested Mother to remove the shelf as she had got it made only for my convenience and it was not absolutely indispensable. But to my repeated requests, she gave the same answer: "One should always be conscious" and refused to remove it. It is still there.

1. Biren Chunder (1915-97), a master in physical culture and physiotherapy, settled here in 1945. He met Mother daily as manager of New Bindery. The messages that she wrote in his diary from 1 April to 31 December 1954 were published as *Mantras of the Mother*.

ON HER PHOTOGRAPHS

3.1.1955

The Yuvaraja of Kashmir¹ had asked for a photo of the Mother. Mother selected three photos:

The one in which she has a veil, taken in Algeria.

The one she captioned "Certitude of Victory", taken by Venkatesh.

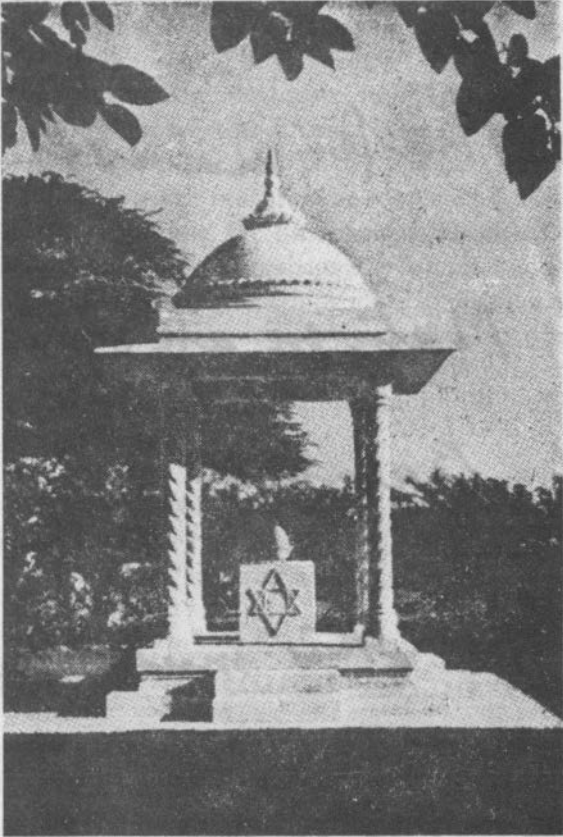
And the one she captioned "Durga", taken by Vidyavrata.

She looked at them and remarked: "Youngest and oldest, same look, same eyes, only the expression is different; same determination but here the authority is much more... much more... much more. Fearless, powerful, dominating eyes."

1. Dr. Karan Singh, an erudite scholar of Sri Aurobindo's writings, was then on a visit to the Ashram.

WITHOUT RESERVE

If the Mother asked us to surrender without reserve, on her side she gave herself entirely, without reserve. She lost no opportunity to shower her love and grace, no occasion to express her identification and solicitude.



Sri Aurobindo's ~~Shrine~~ *Shrine*

Sri Aurobindo's shrine at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch

There is only
one Mater man for
the Mater in an
of Bursville.

The others must have
another name



The other day I found this piece of Mother's writing: "To my beloved child and faithful companion in the building up of the New World."

Though no name was there, I knew immediately to whom she had written it. It could only be to Pranab. I showed it to him and asked if it was for him. In a low voice, humbly, he said: "Yes."

Then I asked him whether it could be published. He was not willing – "too personal," he said. Then I told him that I wanted it for a purpose. After a little hesitation he consented. I understood he did not want to refuse me. On further thought I told Pranab that the writing on my paper was perhaps not complete and I felt that Mother might have written something more in the message she had given to him. On many occasions, while copying out what she had written, she used to add or change things. The next day Pranab gave me the complete message given to him on his birthday:

18.10.1957

To my beloved child and faithful companion in the building up of the New World.

With my love, my trust and my blessings for ever.

The Mother

THE ASHRAM, THE SAMADHI, AND THE SYMBOLS

When I came to know that Shri Jauhar had named the centre he started in Delhi as SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, I told Mother, "There is only one Sri Aurobindo Ashram and that is in Pondicherry." Afterwards Mother asked Shri Jauhar to rename it 'Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch'.

Later, when I saw that Shri Jauhar had asked permission to inscribe SRI AUROBINDO'S SAMADHI on the vault in which Sri Aurobindo's relics were enshrined in the Delhi Branch, I said to Mother, "There is only one Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo, only the one here in Pondicherry. Nowhere else should this name be used." Then, on 28 November 1957, Mother changed the word Samadhi to Shrine. In the press proof reproduced here you can see that the Mother has struck out the word Samadhi and replaced it

with Shrine. The Mother was against using the word Samadhi and told me: "Show this to those who do not accept it." And she signed it.

These are examples of how the Mother acted on suggestions from others if she felt them to be right.

But sometimes even if she did not feel it was right she let things go on. For instance she did not like people printing her symbol. Generally she flatly refused permission but in some cases she would allow it and later remark: "Since they are asking for our permission to print it, it is better to consent. Otherwise what can we do if they print it without permission?"

Similarly Mother did not like people writing an address in this way:

Champaklal Chottalal Purani
C/o Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry

She did not like this c/o (care of) but what could be done!

Thus, to make any final pronouncement on her working is extremely difficult. We have only to see whether we ourselves are sincere or not in our work. We have to remain extremely alert to see that we are not working to satisfy our personal desires and our likes and dislikes.

PREMATURE SUPRAMENTAL WORLD

Mother wrote in her diary: "Last night I had a vision of what the supramental world would be like if the people were not sufficiently prepared. The confusion that now exists on earth is nothing in comparison with what may happen. Just imagine any strong will possessing the power to transform matter according to its liking! If the sense of collective unity did not grow in proportion to the growth of the power, the resulting conflict would be yet more acute and chaotic than all our material conflicts."¹

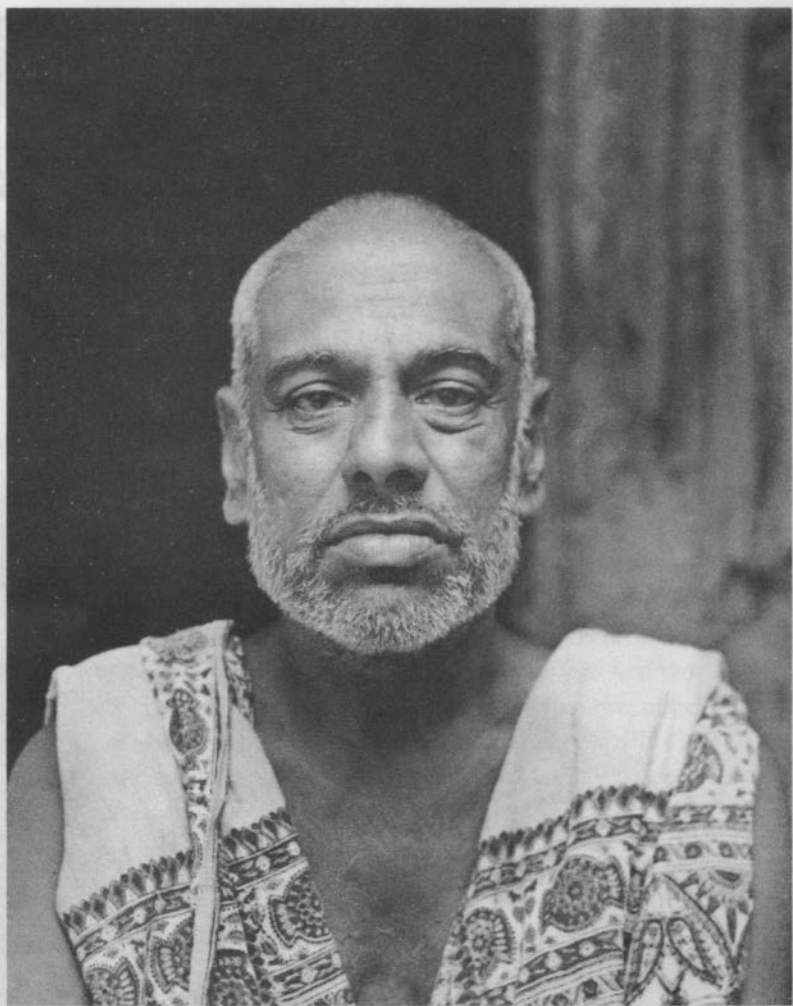
15.2.1958

The Mother

1. A translation done prior to the one in *Collected Works of the Mother*, vol.15, pp. 105-06.



The Mother in meditation, 21 february 1973



Panditji of Rameshwaram

PANDITJI OF RAMESHWARAM

Panditji¹ first came to Pondicherry in March 1959. Afterwards he used to come regularly and gained great respect here. Panditji was also a powerful occultist. Sometimes, Mother sent some people to him for solving their problems.

Whenever he went to see her, the Mother used to give him flowers. On 30 March 1959, on coming out from the interview he put the flowers Mother had given him in my hands. Later I took them to the Mother and she was more surprised to know what had happened than I had been on receiving the flowers from Panditji. She kept looking at them. Then with a smile she put them in my hands. It was as if she were giving me not only those three flowers but something ineffable and unknowable. It was a momentous experience that she gave me along with these flowers which signify *Victory*. I have preserved them carefully.

Once, talking about Panditji, Mother said that when they were meditating together, she rose higher and higher in meditation and Panditji also climbed up to that height. The meditation they had together was very interesting. I know that no ordinary person could have achieved that with Mother. And about the Mother, he once said: "The Mother is *swayamprakasha*, self-luminous."

One day, while seeing a photo of Panditji, Mother divided his face in two by keeping the side of her hand horizontal, between the upper lip and the nose. Then she said: "The upper part of the face indicates complete detachment, neutrality and deep peace; the eyes embody the sorrow of the world. The lower part of the face – the lips and chin – is just as I had seen it in my meditation with him. Complete detachment and supreme neutrality is the first stage of integral transformation." Of course, these are not Mother's exact words, but they reflect more or less the essence of what she said.

1. Yogeshananda Pandit Nilakantha Mahadev Joshi was born in Rameshwaram in 1903. In his childhood his father initiated him in temple worship and allied matters of the Shaiva tradition. A disciplined and determined youth, he spared no efforts to acquire knowledge and experience. At the age of nineteen his guru, Shri Ambananda Nath, initiated him into the Tantric discipline of *Sri Vidya* and the *Agamic rituals*, and directed him to strive only for the Love of the Divine Mother, *Lalita Tripurambika*. Panditji's deep knowledge of philosophy and his profound *sadhana* are reflected in his writings and oratory.

– Based on M.P. Pandit's *Thoughts of a Shakta*.

SRI AUROBINDO'S PROTECTION AFTER DEATH

17.5.1959

In the morning I informed Mother of the passing away of Mrityunjoy's elder sister. Mother said: "Yes, she was not keeping well for a long time. She was sick."

While Mother was having breakfast after Balcony darshan, she said that she had come to know a very interesting thing. She had seen on the forehead of Mrityunjoy's sister, the symbol of Sri Aurobindo. Mother was very much surprised and said to herself: "What? On this...." Then she heard Sri Aurobindo saying: "Henceforth whoever dies here, I will put my seal upon him whatever his condition, protection will be given." It was then 6.30 a.m.

I had heard of Benares as the ideal place to die. But now Sri Aurobindo has created a still better and safer place!

MOTHER'S PHOTO AND PEOPLE

8.8.1959

The Mother was given a copy of a photograph of her taken recently. On seeing it, she told the photographer: "You have caught the expression."

Later, upstairs, I told Mother that people were asking what she had said about the photograph.

Mother: "It is not their business."

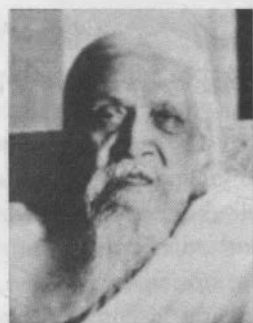
C: "But I have told them that you said it is excellent."

Mother: "Yes, it is excellent, but they ought to know it!"

On this and on many other occasions I realised that she wanted people to be sensitive and to understand things rightly by themselves, without being told.

WHY CHAMPAKLAL DOES NOT LIKE

Once it happened that some photographs were placed before Mother for signing. I pointed to a photo of Sri Aurobindo – the one without the chair at the back – and said: "Mother, I do not like this photo at all."



[Handwritten signature]

To do properly the work of the Akram one must be strong and plastic enough to know how to utilise the inexhaustible Energy which is backing you all.

I expect everybody here to rise to the height of the needs.

If we are not able to do even that much, how can we hope to be ready for the descent of the Light of Truth when it will come to manifest upon earth?...



Mother looked at me with surprise: “What?”

C: “Yes, Mother, I do not like it.” Mother became a little serious.

I went downstairs and brought another photograph of Sri Aurobindo – the one with the chair visible at the back – and said: “Mother, I like this one.”

Mother held the photo in her hand, went on looking at it for a very long time. I moved away to my place at a little distance.

At that time Amrita was with the Mother with some papers. She turned to him and said: “There is vital force, a living atmosphere in this photo; that is why Champaklal likes it. In the other photo there is supramental light but no vital life. That is why he does not like it.”

MOTHER TEACHES SANSKRIT RECITATION

Do you remember the period when the Sanskrit recitations of Panditji of Rameshwaram were played in the Playground during meditations?

One of those days Mother said to me: “Satyakarma says that you recite the *Chandi* shlokas nicely. I would like to hear it. If it is nice, we will record it and play it at the meditation.”

I never expected that. I started reciting as I was used to – like an express train. Mother said, “No, no, no.” Then she taught me how to recite. At that time her expression was worth seeing. She was not actually reciting, words were not uttered physically, but her lips moved as if she spoke. She showed how the recitation ought to be done – slowly, each word distinct and separate, in quietness. Then she added: “Champaklal, you recite like this every morning. It will help you very much.” I did so and truly it was much help.

Madhav: “Why did you recite so fast?”

C: “I knew of no other way. From my childhood I had heard people reciting that way.”

AGHORI-BABA AND THE MOTHER

Once an *aghorī-babā* came into my dream and said to me, “I have

come to take you away. This is not your path. You were with me. Purani was also with me.” I told the Mother about this dream. Immediately she said, “Champaklal, I did not want to say what I had seen, but now I am telling you. He came to take you away from me. Then I said to him emphatically, ‘No, no. I want Champaklal.’” I cannot forget the expression on the Mother’s face when she said this. But who can say why she works the way she does?

In the same dream I also saw that the *aghorī-baba* had a disciple who was very close to him. Baba believed all he told him. This disciple was for some reason extremely angry with me, so he said, “I curse you.” About this the Mother said, “I say the curse will turn into a blessing.” I shall also never forget her expression when she said these words.

At the end the Mother told me that it was not a mere dream. I believe the Mother must have witnessed this incident taking place in the subtle plane.

1. *Aghorī*: one who follows the *Aghora* path, one of the most extreme Tantric disciplines. The suffix *bābā*, father, is added out of reverence.

CARING FOR MOTHER

It was X’s birthday. When I informed Mother about it, she told me to keep Sri Aurobindo’s *Letters on the Mother*, for giving to him. I asked Mother to give him two photographs also.

Mother: “Why two? Give only Sri Aurobindo’s. Not mine. He does not care for me. Do you think he cares to see my face?”

C: “Mother, please give him your photo out of your Grace.”

Mother: “All right. Keep them ready and bring them down. If he asks for it we shall give him mine.”

C: “Mother, people like me won’t ask but we like to have things from you very much.”

Mother: “I know him, he is not like you. He does not care for my photo.”

We went downstairs for Pranam. Everything was kept ready. The man came but he did not ask for Mother’s photo. Still, as he was about to go away, I placed the photo in Mother’s hand saying “Grace...” She gave it without saying anything. (On other occasions

like this she would say, "Champaklal wants me to give you this.")

While climbing the staircase, I asked Mother: "X does not care for you?"

Mother: "When a boy is having a love affair with a girl, he does not care for me. Now he is busy with that, and so he does not care. In his case, even without that he would not care for me."

C: "Mother, do I care for you or not?"

Mother: "I hope so."

C: "Mother, are you not sure?"

Mother: "Why?"

C: "That means it may be the other way also. Otherwise you would not say 'I hope so.'"

Mother: "No, no, Cham-pak-lal. I would have been surprised if it was the other way. That would have surprised me very much."

And she patted me with feeling and gave a broad smile.

DISHONEST

Someone complained to Mother about some people taking their food home in carriers and sharing it with unauthorised persons in their rooms. Mother said: "People are dishonest." She said this thrice, and her displeasure was visible in her expression.

Later that day I asked: "Suppose I take the bread that comes to me as my quota and give it to somebody who has permission to stay here but is so poor that he cannot afford to pay for food from Dining Room. The person is very anxious to stay here. If I give my share to him, under these circumstances, is it still dishonest, is it stealing?"

Mother: "Yes."

C: "Mother, I do not ask for anything extra. I only give from my share."

Mother: "Yes, that is still dishonesty. What you are given is not meant for that."

C: "Then, Mother, you will not find a single honest person in the Ashram." Mother remained quiet, calm, serious.

It was indeed difficult for me to understand then. But today, by her Grace, I do.

SOME BOOK!

Commenting on a book purporting to be based on her talks, Mother once said: "I won't dare to open this book. I don't know what stupid things are inside."

LETTER FROM TORN BITS

The Mother had written something on a piece of paper and torn it up. I collected those pieces and kept them in a special envelope – not for reading, but because I could not bring myself to throw away her handwriting. She observed this and thereafter started passing on such bits saying, "My handwriting." At times she would tear them up; at times she would have me burn them. Occasionally she told me to burn them in her presence. At first I could not understand this. Afterwards I felt from seeing her expression that she was doing some occult work. I still remember that expression.

One day it so happened that she referred to a letter she had torn up and exclaimed: "What a pity I tore up that letter!"

I said to her immediately: "Mother, I will give you the letter."

Mother: "What?" I showed her the pieces I had preserved.

Mother: "What shall I do with these pieces?"

C: "Mother, I will give you your letter." So saying, I pasted the torn bits together and gave the letter to her.

Mother: "Oh Champaklal, you are an angel; you are an angel!"

"IF I TEAR?"

In those days the Mother used to count and arrange the currency notes that had been offered. Once it happened that some of the one-rupee notes had been stapled by the bank and she had some difficulty in separating them. I offered to do it. She looked at me and said, in a disarming manner: "If you tear any I will be angry, but if I tear them...?" And she smiled sweetly.

CHINESE LANGUAGE

On seeing the artistically designed cover of the Chinese translation

of *The Life Divine*, Mother was specially pleased and remarked on Chinese habits and referred to their language. She said: "In Japan I had also learnt some Chinese besides the Japanese language; but only so much as was necessary to read the Chinese signboards there."

MOTHER ON HERSELF

Mother: "When I was five, even three years old, I was conscious. The beginning was made in the womb."

NO EXCEPTION

Charupada (who was in charge of the Ashram Reception department) brought a Minister from one of the States to the Mother for pranam during the morning. He asked Mother if the Minister could visit Sri Aurobindo's room immediately.

Mother emphatically said: "NO. Champaklal is here."

As you know, she had given me the charge of opening Sri Aurobindo's room for visitors and she did not want to make any exceptions.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Mother said to Violette¹: "Read the first chapter in the third series of *Words of the Mother*. It is very interesting."

1. Dr Indra Sen's wife; one of the first teachers in the School started by the Mother in 1943.

REPLACEMENT NOT THE SOLUTION

Once someone asked for a copy of the *Bulletin* from me. It was, he assured me, for Mother's work. I did not ask Mother about it for I knew the person and it was for her work. After some time he returned that copy. I saw that it was not in a good condition and looked at him rather closely but I did not say anything to him. For I saw that he did not feel any regret about returning the copy in that

condition. I remained quiet. I opened the journal and looked at the pages. Seeing that in some places he had marked lines in red, I could no longer remain quiet and exclaimed: "Oh, you have spoilt the *Bulletin*!" One can understand someone marking in his own copy; there is nothing to say then.

"Oh! It is nothing. I will replace it with a new one," he replied in an off-hand manner.

"How can you replace something once you have spoilt it?" I asked him. "Once it is spoilt, it remains spoilt. It cannot be unspoilt. To replace it does not restore the situation. To bring a new one does not make any difference to what is damaged."

I doubt if he understood what I meant. However, I did not tell Mother what had happened. But one day something similar took place and at that time I told the Mother of this incident and said: "It is impossible to replace what has been spoilt. But the man wouldn't understand."

"Yes, Champaklal," Mother said softly. "You are right." She looked so happy at what I had said; her expression was beatific.

True, in the ordinary life I too might have reacted in the same way as the other man. But to have lived with the Mother made all the difference in my outlook: Things are living entities and it is an insult to damage or misuse a thing and throw it away in favour of a new one.

THE BULLETIN

The Mother took keen interest in the *Bulletin*. It is known as the Mother's journal. She used to give the necessary instructions to Jayantilal for it. She had full confidence in him and often accepted his suggestions. Sometimes she did not give him any instructions and left everything to him. At one time the Mother wanted to publish some articles on Art in the *Bulletin* and asked Jayantilal to write some pieces on the subject.¹

Mother was fully satisfied with Jayantilal's work, but those who do the work have their own difficulties. Once Jayantilal came to ask Mother to permit him to print advertisements. She did not want to print advertisements in an Ashram magazine but when Jayantilal

said that the Ashram had lost one lakh rupees in the last ten years (1949 to 1959), Mother reluctantly gave him the permission. She wanted only advertisements that were connected with education to be taken but it did not work. Finally, she had to give in to the financial situation and permit all advertisements. Jayantilal himself had not wanted it, but circumstances forced him to do it.

The Advent also was known as the Mother's magazine. In the beginning, it was published from Madras according to her instructions. *Mother India* was known as Sri Aurobindo's paper; it was at first published from Bombay and later from Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo used to give instructions and guidance to Amal Kiran, its editor. After Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi, the Mother told Amal that from then on she would give him the necessary instructions.

Once, when issues of *The Advent* and *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual* (published from Calcutta) came to the Mother, she showed them to Nolini and to me and said, "See, there are more pages of advertisements than articles. Really, it is amusing." Thus she sometimes made fun of the advertisements and sometimes showed her dislike of them. Apart from Nolini and me, occasionally, she also showed the advertisement pages to others.

The Advent was Nolini's responsibility but was looked after by Madhav.

1. In his copy of *Champaklalna Sansmarano*, in which this reminiscence was first published, Jayantilal noted: "Mother did ask me to write, but I suggested that the *Bulletin* should confine itself only to Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's writings. - Jayantilal."

BOASTING

I was once narrating to Mother something that had happened, taking care to be as exact as possible, avoiding all exaggeration. Suddenly she became serious and with a soft smile said: "Champaklal, don't boast."

C: "Mother, I am not boasting. I am telling you just what happened." Mother remained quiet.

C: "Mother, where is the boasting in that?" Still she kept quiet. I did not understand then. Years later, by her Grace, I realised

that it was indeed boasting. My account had begun well but later self-praise entered it. Many may not agree. In ordinary life nobody would have called it boasting. But, in my view, it is different in spiritual life, and indeed, very few are free from this type of boasting.

BIRTHDAY CARDS

I do not remember when the Mother started giving birthday cards. Children used to receive flowers from her when they came to her. They would be given extra flowers on their birthdays. On those days she also started giving roses.

I always had a liking for children who were open to Mother, whether I knew them personally or not. I wanted to give something on their birthdays to make them specially happy, something which they would learn to value when they grew up; but I wanted that my present should be associated with Mother or Sri Aurobindo. So I began to paint flowers and asked Mother to write the name of the child and "blessings" on the card, so that it became priceless. She might write the name, blessings and the date, or maybe only blessings, though on birthdays she usually wrote the name. I would present these cards to the children of visitors even if it was not their birthday. I used to give my card in Mother's hand and Mother would write on the card in the presence of the child so that the child would remain for more time in Mother's presence, would be happy to see her write and also, if the child were wise, would learn many things from that experience. But this was possible only because in those days there were very few children. Some children used to put both their hands on Mother's feet and look at her so expressively while she was writing that it was a very interesting sight. On some occasions, when I did not give a card, Mother asked: "Champaklal, you have nothing for this child?" That made me feel bad, and so I started making cards for all the children. Mother was very happy about it. Soon I also started making cards for adults. But I was not painting for everybody: pictures of Mother and Sri Aurobindo were pasted instead.

When people learnt that the Mother was using folders for this

purpose, they started preparing and offering them to her. Mother would look at them and remark: "Pretty", "Very pretty", "Excellent", "Beautiful", "Wonderful", etc. Sometimes she would say that the picture was useless, quite useless, and would give it to me for covering up. I would cover such pictures with Sri Aurobindo's or the Mother's picture or that of some landscape, bird or animal and take the card back to her.

When some people wrote to Mother enclosing their letters in fine envelopes she would ask me to cover her name on the envelopes so that they could be used again. In the beginning I had hesitation to cover Mother's name. But she wanted it and I obeyed; then she would often ask me to fetch a particular one from among them for her use. Of course, not all the envelopes that came were beautiful. I still have many of them.

While writing to people Mother would either choose the folders from her own collection or ask from mine, indicating which photo it had to have. At times she was particular that it should not be her own photo. Sometimes she would say that the person could not read and so she asked me to give pictures of beautiful flowers, landscapes, birds etc. Occasionally she would give me a memo in advance for special folders for the birthdays of certain people, even six months in advance in some cases. And when the cards were prepared she would always express her happiness. She would sometimes ask for a quotation that was "encouraging", or "strong", or "inspiring". She would ask for a few quotations and would choose one herself. Rarely would she write out a new message.

It is interesting to know what the Mother once said about these cards. She said that sometimes the card would speak the name of the person to whom it was to go!

To some Mother used to write one card every day and I myself had to go and give the card to them, and that too at their convenience. This led to certain comments but I got used to them. All this is good you may say. But what would you say if I tell you that some chose to return the card that was given to them by Mother with so much love!

At times it so happened that she gave a card other than the one prepared for the person or asked for one more beautiful than

the one previously chosen. To some Mother would give Sri Aurobindo's books or her own, sometimes more than one. That became a tradition and many asked for books on their birthdays; some wrote beforehand, some sent a long list, some asked for only one or two. Mother would give some all they asked for, to some only one and to some none at all.

One interesting fact. To some Mother refused to give books because she considered the person unworthy of it. To some she refused, saying that it will prevent them from paying attention to their departmental work as they would then spend all their time in reading or in meditation and, during meditation, waste time by slipping into Tamas. In this too many changes came about.

There was a time when Mother used to give toffees to some birthday persons – sometimes the number corresponding to their age.

Thus birthdays received great importance.

A BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

Once the Mother gave this message to someone:

To give to the Divine what one
has in excess is not an offering.
One should give at least some-
thing out of what one needs.

The Mother

I liked it very much and asked the Mother to write it also for me and told her, "I wish to print it at the back of all birthday cards." The gracious Mother wrote out the message and gave me the permission and cards were printed accordingly. But when the occasion arose and I put one of these new cards in her hand, she said, "No, no, I cannot give it because people do not appreciate this message." So though specially printed for giving on all birthdays, they were put aside.

However, when she wanted to give that card to someone, she would say, "Champaklal, bring your birthday card." Looking at a person I could judge which card Mother would want to give. At

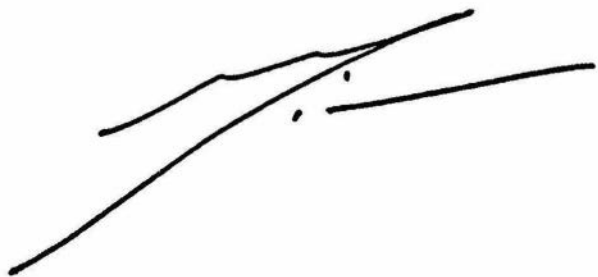
To give to the Divine

what one has in excess
is not an offering..

One should give at
least something out
of what one needs.



What have you given
to the Lord or done for
Him, that you ask me
to do something for you?
I do only the Lord's
work.



times, she gave that card to someone to whom she had previously refused to give it, saying, "No, no, I will not be able to give it."

A TYPICAL MORNING

28.1.1960

You know, Mother's programme never remained the same for long. True, she herself rarely changed it; but things used to happen in such a way that it automatically got changed.

Still, since you want me to narrate the morning programme before Balcony darshan and immediately after, I shall do so.

After my bath at 4 a.m. I go up and wait outside the netted outer door of the Mother's room. After Pranab leaves I go inside. Today he leaves at 4.22 a.m. When I go in, Mother may be there, or she may have already gone to the inner room where she remains for some time, but comes out if there is some work, something to say or do, such as to have a bottle opened.

When she comes out, she hands me two small baskets containing clothes and a plastic bag with her handkerchief for washing. I take them with me when I go down with Mother and leave them in the boudoir (dressing-room) on the first floor, from where Vasudha will take them away after Balcony darshan.

Mother comes out of her room today at 6.05 a.m. to go down to the Balcony. Dyuman is standing in the long corridor near the boudoir with a glass of lithine¹ for her to drink. Then she takes one or two pills of Cachon – a French make, black in colour, something like the Japanese *Simsin* – and taking out another Cachon from the box, she places it on my palm. It is 6.10 by the time she has come down to the first floor. I follow her through the Salon. Near the small passage she stops to say *Bonjour* to Kamala who is waiting there. Further on, in the long corridor Mounnou is waiting; Mother tells her *Bonjour* and gives her a small biscuit tin which is kept ready. Formerly – Mounnou was then ten – Mother used to hold her hand and walk with her up to Pavitra's laboratory.

Abhay Singh and Sujata are waiting near Pavitra's laboratory door; and, a little further, stands Jayantilal. Inside the laboratory are Pavitra, Noreñ Singh, Sumantra, Suprabha and Sumitra.²

Nolini and Amrita are in Pavitra's room.

On the window-side, to the south of the passage, stand Pujalal, Nirod and Biren; in front of the table, Kalyan³ and Mrityunjoy⁴. She greets them all, though not in the same way every day. She may look at them or just glance at them and go straight to the Balcony.

As Mother goes to the Balcony, Sujata and Abhay Singh follow her and wait in Pavitra's laboratory.

After the Balcony, she sees those who are waiting in Pavitra's laboratory. If anyone has any work, she attends to it and gives instructions. Then it is Jayantilal's turn to speak if he has anything to say or ask. She proceeds thereafter to the window where she gives me her veil for keeping in her room. This is where the papier-maché pigeon made at Ganapatram's⁵ cottage industries is kept. Mother had herself selected it and asked for it to be placed there.

In the corner there is Udhar⁶ who waits for Mother after the Balcony darshan. Mother says *Bonjour*. If he has anything urgent to say, she replies to him; otherwise she takes the letters he has brought with her upstairs.

Inside the Salon Dr. Sanyal⁷ is waiting near the cupboard. Mother greets him with a *Bonjour*. She glances again at the small passage near the staircase door where Kamala, Rassendran⁸, Chandana⁹, Doctor-babu's grandson Tarun and Arpita are waiting. Then Mother goes upstairs, the doctor follows. I go behind them up to the landing. Mother and Dr. Sanyal go into her room. I come down and fetch one tray of breakfast. Dyuman brings up another.

1. Lithine, as prepared in the Ashram dispensary with Mother's approval, was a compound consisting of prescribed quantities of *lithinus carbonate*, *lithinus benzoate* and *sodium bicarbonate*. Fixed quantities of this and powdered *tartaric* or *citric* acid, or fresh lime juice, added to 200ml of water made one dose. Its use was stopped in 1972.

2. Sumantra Kothari settled here in 1944, ten years after his uncle Parichand Kothari. Suprabha, Sujata, Sumitra, Abhay Singh and Noren Singh, are children of Prithwi Singh Nahar for whose proof-reading ability and dedication Sri Aurobindo expressed much appreciation (see title "Compassion" above). He was also in charge of the Publication Department of the Ashram and lived in the Ashram premises.

3. See Kalyan Chowdhury's article in *Breath of Grace*, p. 23ff.

4. See Mrityunjoy Mukherjee's article in *Breath of Grace*, p. 55ff.

5. See Ganapatram's article in *Breath of Grace*, p. 17ff.

6. Udar Pinto (Laurance Marshall Pinto) joined the Ashram with his wife Mona in 1935. An engineer, he started or developed several Ashram departments under the Mother's guidance. He was the first Trustee of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Harpagon Workshop Trust (now Sri Aurobindo Udyog Trust).

7. Prabhat Sanyal (F.R.C.S.) a disciple who attended on Sri Aurobindo in the last days and settled in the Ashram in 1953. The next twenty years he was the Mother's physician.

8. Jules Rassendran, son of one of the five distinguished gentlemen of French Pondicherry who stood guarantee for Sri Aurobindo and his companions when the local government threatened to expel them under their Alien's Act during the early years. (N.K. Gupta, *Reminiscences*, 1969, p. 55)

9. Chandana Banerjee, wife of Prof. Sanat Banerjee, former Indian High Commissioner for French Pondicherry. The two settled in the Ashram and taught in the School.

SELECTING BIRTHDAY CARDS

18.7.1962

It is Sumitra's birthday. Mother asked me to bring a beautiful folder with one of my paintings. When I brought one, she remarked, "Oh! very beautiful, very beautiful! But I cannot give it to her for I have not given such a beautiful folder to her sister Sujata. Bring another; I shall give her another one."

This was Mother's way of working. Not only did she care for each individual but she remembered what she had given them. The folder given to Sujata was beautiful but not as beautiful as this one. How careful Mother was in giving folders to each individual! To some she always gave special folders and Sujata was one of them.

PRANAM

Like all of Mother's programmes, the arrangement for her giving Pranam also underwent many changes.

In the early years Mother used to come downstairs for meditation and Pranam in the Meditation hall in which the Mother's couch is kept since 18th November 1973. During meditation and Pranam, Mother would sit on a low meditation-seat kept along the eastern wall of this hall. This ornate wooden

asana (seat) was brought by Purani from Bharooch; his father had used it during his worship and meditations. (After Mother stopped coming downstairs, Promode Kumar's Darshan painting was hung on this wall.) For many years, Mother's chair was kept beside the staircase, facing east, during the time people came to her for Pranam or distribution. (On special occasions her chair was kept along the northern wall of inner hall.)

In 1927, when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved from Library House to Meditation House, Bijoy was given the small room which later became Bula's room (the room to its north was Purani's). And for many years, after Bijoy shifted to another place, Mother used that small room to accept Pranam in the mornings.

Talking of that period reminds me that while Mother gave Pranam here I swept her two rooms upstairs. Then, when she came up after Pranam, I would sit at the door and help her take off her sandals and put on the ones she wore indoors. (In one of her paintings Chinmayee has depicted this scene.) This work, perhaps insignificant to some, was for me an occasion to feel blessed. In her infinite Grace, the compassionate Mother gave many such opportunities. I am filled with ananda when I reminisce about them.

PROMODE KUMAR'S DARSHAN PAINTING

15.8.1962

Since I have mentioned Promode Kumar's Darshan painting I shall say something about it which is bound to enrapture those with natures like mine.

Promode Kumar was one of the famous artists of Bengal. For some years he was the principal of Kalabhavan in Baroda. He was an ardent seeker and a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. An instance of Promode Kumar's absolute faith in the Mother's grace is that he never locked his room when he went out for work or a walk.

When he settled here he brought a large collection of his paintings. Mother always showered her grace on him. Now, after completing this painting of the Darshan, he wanted to show it to the Mother. But the Mother had stopped coming down, and it was

not possible to carry the huge painting up the narrow stairs.

There are two flights of stairs leading to the Mother's room from the Salon. The first one leading to "Champaklal's studio" – the name Mother gave to the landing – was too narrow for the painting; so it was decided to hoist it up directly from the eastern side of the Salon through a large opening which is normally covered with a curtain, into Champaklal's studio. The curtain was removed and the painting was pulled up through that space. Standing in the small netted hallway outside her room the Mother looked at the painting which was held up to her view.

Later, with Mother's consent, the painting was installed in the Meditation hall downstairs. This is how her incessant Grace fulfills the ardent desire of her devotees. However, after this some of those who were opposed to it being there, tried their utmost to get it removed from there. But Promode Kumar was a devotee of Shakti, and Mother had also to satisfy his devotion! So we still find the painting there.

PAINTING FOR NEHRU

30.1.1963

When Nehru came to the Ashram, I expressed to Mother my wish to present to him one of my paintings, if she approved of it. Mother liked the idea and said: "Yes."

I took a small painting to her. She liked it very much and at once wrote on it: *The last fight for the Light's Victory*.

Then she placed the painting in my hand with a broad, gracious smile.

MAGNIFICENT HEIGHT

A calendar with a picture of the Himalayan ranges was sent by V's brother from Bombay. Mother gave the calendar to me. The picture was beautiful but in the foreground there was a man sitting on a boulder. I felt that if the man's figure was covered up with a photograph of the Mother, a new picture with a different atmosphere would emerge. A photo of Mother printed in one of the early

calendars came to mind and I cut it out and pasted it over the figure – and there emerged a magnificent picture with a totally new spirit. I took it to Mother who held it in her hands and looked at it for a long time. She was very pleased and, smiling sweetly, kept it with her.

Later, when Sehra (Amal's wife) came to meet her, Mother showed her that picture and praised it a lot; then she said, "A photograph can be taken from this picture. It will look as if I am in the Himalayas – as if I have manifested there."

Sehra got two copies made here by our Ashram photographer Chiman. But since the result was not satisfactory the picture was sent to Bombay with Sehra's sister Minna. She got copies made there by V. Two copies were in colour and two black and white. Mother gave me one saying, "Your photo." Then she asked me if I had any more calendars sent by V. I said "No." During this conversation Udar was present. He promised Mother to procure some and did so. Mother was happy to receive them.

WHEREVER SHE SAW SOME POSSIBILITY

27.4.1964

Yvonne had brought Thoth¹, the monkey she had adopted, to Mother as it was his birthday today. The interview took place in the Music room². I was there by Mother's side.

It was interesting that from the moment Thoth came into the room he behaved not only with Mother but even with me as if he knew us both. He sat in Mother's lap, folded his hands and did namaskar and looked at her so wonderfully. The Mother gave him the flower *Sri Aurobindo's compassion* to eat; he was very fond of it. He played for a while, then jumped and sat on my head and played with me too! So very human!

Mother always helped wherever she saw some possibility.

1. See Yvonne Artaud's "A Child of the Ashram" in *Mother India*, November 1974, pp. 840-43.

2. This second-floor room is between the Mother's room which, since 1974, we visit on 21st February and 17th November, and the Terrace on which the Mother used to come out on the four Darshan days of the year after she stopped coming downstairs. The last Darshan from the Terrace was on 15th August 1973.

ENQUIRY ABOUT THE ENVELOPE

Once the Mother was offered some lined envelopes. She was very particular about using those envelopes. It so happened that an Ashramite offered some money or a letter in one such envelope. After he left the Mother showed it to me. I had also noticed it and was wondering from where he had got it, when Mother asked: "Champaklal, how did he get this envelope?" I could not give an answer but it set me thinking.

Here something interesting comes to mind. When Mother's second-floor room was being constructed, I once went to the landing between the two flights of stairs that take us from the Salon to that room; I felt how wonderful it would be if I could live on that landing. It was just a thought – there was no such possibility in sight then. But here too it happened as has often in other cases. Gradually when I was not upstairs, attending to the Mother, I began to spend my time there – preparing folders and doing other little jobs given by the Mother. This is why Mother named it Champaklal's studio.

To resume the story. I had kept a pile of those lined envelopes in my studio and that Ashramite had probably picked one up from there. But how could he do that? Surely no one would take anything from Mother's things without permission. So when Mother asked me how he got it, I could not answer, but when she asked me the second question, "Did you give it to him?" I denied it and Mother was surprised. Later, I told him that Mother was asking from where he had procured that cover. He became very serious and confessed hesitantly that he had picked it up from my studio, adding, "It was a great blunder on my part; I am ashamed and sorry that I took it without your permission. It is very painful that I have lost your trust. The next time if something is missing you will suspect me. I know quite well that it is not a question of taking that envelope but of losing your trust." ❧

At first I was shocked – how could this sadhak do it without permission! But when he showed his heart-felt repentance, I realised that there are people who can learn from mistakes. I perceived that he was not pretending. Of course there are people who may think, what a big fuss just for one envelope!

RAKSHA-BANDHAN

29.8.1964

I do not remember from which year Mother started tying the *raksha* to my hand on the occasion of the *Raksha-bandhan* festival. It continued for many years. Usually it would be a small simple band that had been offered to Mother.

Once, however, a fancy band, bigger in size, had come. Mother brought it to me saying: "You will look beautiful; see it is beautiful!" And she tied it on my wrist; then she said, "No, no," and tied it further up. I still have that band. The other *raksha* bands that I have preserved are equally indicative of her infinite Grace.

JYOTIN AND FLOWERS

You remember the old Bakery house just opposite the Ashram main building? A small flour-mill was also there. Now the building has become part of the School. Jyotin¹ used to live there. When this house had to be vacated for the School, it was arranged that Jyotin would move to Delafon house. But it was reported to Mother that he refused to go there. Mother was clearly unhappy at this reaction. I told Mother that there must have been some misunderstanding and I was sure that Jyotin would never go against her wish. I promised to see him and report.

Accordingly, I went and ascertained the facts from him and reported to Mother that actually Jyotin was ready to go wherever she asked him to. She was very pleased. When Jyotin came to Mother, she received him sweetly and said: "Champaklal was pleading for you very much." She then looked at both of us and gave a very affectionate smile.

All that is now an old story. Recently [early 1970s] he came with a significant smile on his face and gave me one small rose. I asked him what was special about that day. He simply smiled. When I still could not understand, he said: "Mother used to give you this flower."

Then I remembered how Mother used to give these flowers. Every day she would collect all the small pink roses (*Tender love*)

from among the flowers she had received that day and keep them for the next morning. Then in the morning, she would place these small roses in one dish, arrange them in two lots, one for me and the other for Kamala and after my pranam she would give me my lot. After me Kamala would receive hers. This went on for a long time. Then this particular flower was stopped and Mother started giving *Champa* (*Psychological perfection*). This continued for some time. Then she started with roses, special ones tinted at the tips of the petals. Once she wrote this comment on the significance of one these roses: *The inside is calm but the action is often passionate.*

Then the giving of these roses too stopped and Mother began to give me all the *Humility* and *Champa* flowers that she had received during the day.

1. Jyotin Sengupta began visiting the Ashram from 1926 and settled here in 1941. Later he was in charge of the flower service now in Delafon house.

SEEING MOTHER'S LIGHT

Bijoy Nag's wife, Rani, had been asked to shift from her room in Delafon as it was the School's primary section and the School needed it.

When I heard this, I told Mother: "Mother, there are many who look at the light in your room before retiring to bed. Surely Rani too must be doing that. So if she is shifted to another room she will no longer be able to do this."

Then I went to Delafon and talked with Rani; she confirmed what I had told Mother. I came back and informed Mother and she gave permission for Rani to continue to live in that room.

DON'T LISTEN TO PEOPLE

Often Mother used to ask for quotations. I used to select some, get Rose or Vasanti and later also X to type them out for me. Once I had given X the following four quotations from Sri Aurobindo's writings for typing:

"Live within; be not shaken by outward happenings."

"Aspire intensely but without impatience."

“All can be done if the God-touch is there.”

“All things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour.”

He said that it would be better if the first line were omitted as it was not poetic and would not go along with the other three lines. But he was prepared to do as I said. I confessed to him that in this matter I knew next to nothing. All the same I told him that I had to ask the Mother and I did so.

When she heard everything, Mother became serious and said: “Don’t listen to these people. I find it perfect. Do not remove it. Keep it as it is.” Then repeated: “Don’t listen to them.”

“YOUR WILL BE DONE!”

X’s son Nikhil came here to study in our School. Mother knew X very well and she also liked the boy. Nikhil was eager to stay here but not against the wishes of his father.

Now, he was the only son and his mother could not live without him; so the father wired that Nikhil should come back home. Mother asked me to wire back as follows: “Wiser leave Nikhil here. Take no hasty decision. Listen to your soul. Awaiting your reply. Blessings, Mother.”

But the father decided to take away the son. Seeing Nikhil thus helpless, Mother asked me to wire to the father: “Let your will be done, and not the Divine’s will. My love and blessings will remain with you. - 1.6.1965.”

Later when the father asked for permission to come, Mother had me wire: “Mother permits your coming but she will definitely not talk about your son.”

You may wonder why Mother acted in this way. Even though the parents had taken the child away against her wishes, still the gracious Mother granted the father an opportunity to meet her. Only she refused to talk about the child. This refusal can be understood in two ways: first she would not comment on it and second she would not give him a clear explanation.

MOTHER AND RISHI

C: “Mother, you say I am your child and I was so in my

previous birth also. But I have a strong feeling that I was the son of a Rishi.”

Mother: “How do you know that I was not the Rishi?”

DONATION OF THE EYES

1966

I mentioned to Mother that I wished to donate one of my eyes for anybody who needed it. If Mother did not approve of the donation of one eye, then both of my eyes stood donated after death.

Mother: “No, no, no. Your eyes belong to me. Your eyes belong to me. This is a hostile suggestion. I do not approve of this donation of eyes at all.”

EXCELLENT

Once, on seeing two paintings of mine, Mother turned to Pavitra and exclaimed: “Excellent, excellent! These are much more interesting than modern art. They have something... something to say. They are far, far, infinitely better than the others.”

BIGGEST BABY

16.12.1966

This day is observed as the birthday of the “Homes”, the student hostels of our School. All the children from the Homes had come for Pranam. When they finished, Mother looked at me, smiled and said: “Biggest baby of all.” And she patted me.

APPRECIATION OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Mother never failed to notice anything beautiful and express her appreciation of it. It might be just a wrapping paper; still, if it was attractive, she would remark upon that.

You know how Silloo, the sister of Soli Albless¹, used to bring a lot of things wrapped in beautiful paper and elegantly arranged. They were all samples of items sold in her boutique. Mother used to be very happy on seeing them; quite often she would appreciate the wrapper more than the thing inside!

I would always stand by her side watching with pleasure. Once seeing my expression, Mother told Silloo: "You know Champaklal has as much love for paper as I have."

The German couple, Eckhard and his wife, were also bringing things beautifully packed and it was a joy to see Mother's happiness.

Nothing would escape her notice. Even with letters, it was so – she noted the handwriting, the size of the letters, the direction of the lines, the flourish of the signature, etc., commenting at the same time with expressive gestures. Sometimes it would be: "Very tidy man; an orderly man!" Sometimes she would take back the letter saying, "Let me see, let me see," and then observe: "Arrogant... puffed-up" or "Confused mind" or "Disorderly nature" and so forth.

1. The sadhak-architect who built the Mother's second-floor room in 1953.

HOW THE GRACE WORKS

4.4.1967

Mother: "All your worries will go away. You see, the Grace teaches us not to plan in advance."

MOTHER'S WAY

There was a time when Mother was very particular about X, a sadhika. She would always give top priority to X's letters, needs, etc. But X had many pursuits, what you might call distractions. One day Mother gave me a letter to be delivered to X and said, "Tout de suite", meaning immediately.

C: "It will be done. But Mother, you are so particular about her, but she is not particular about you."

Mother: "I know that."

C: "Perhaps one day she will realise the value of what you are doing for her, I do not know."

Mother: "When that happens, I shall leave her."

Do you see? That was one the Mother's many ways of awakening people to the Truth, in this case X. Once the awakening

is effected in an individual, there is no need for her to occupy herself further with him or her.

DRIVING AWAY GHOSTS

Following a complaint by Roger¹ that the house rented by him on the sea-shore, next to the Selva Park, was haunted, Mother asked me and Amrita to go to that house and perform the orthodox ritual usually done in these situations. She told me that formerly she used to send Purani on such missions but now she wanted me to do it and Amrita would accompany me.

I knew that Mother was using me as an instrument and it was with that faith that we went to the house. I carried some water left in the bathtub after Mother had taken her bath; I also took a vessel with a good quantity of burning charcoal. Once inside the house, I added lots of frankincense, sandalwood powder, etc. to the burning embers and filled all the rooms with its smoke. At the same time I sprinkled that bath-water in every corner of the house to the accompaniment of the chanting of the Vedic mantra. After doing this upstairs I came down and was going through the same ceremony in the passage on the ground-floor. All of a sudden I beheld two figures – vague, indistinct, whitish – walking out of the door. On returning, I gave an account of all that happened to the Mother. She said it was interesting, and asked: “Did Amrita also see them?”

C: “No, he did not.”

Next day I learnt that a couple had committed suicide in that house and ever since it had been a haunted place. Needless to say there has been no trouble since then to anyone living there.

1. Roger Anger, the French architect who was invited by the Mother to draw up the plan of Auroville.

FORGETTING THEM

When he was leaving after his first visit in November 1920, Dikshitbhai had prayed for Sri Aurobindo's Grace so that he might never forget him. When I learnt this from Dikshitbhai, I was vastly

amused. I thought Sri Aurobindo has so many disciples and *he* might forget us, but how can we forget him? However, later, by Their Grace, I realised that *They* never forget us, it is we who forget them.

Similarly, when Mother was receiving people in the Music room, some visitors used to pray to the Mother not to forget them. Mother would normally not reply; she would only smile or gesture. Some would not understand and go back dissatisfied. On occasions, I myself used to speak to them in Mother's presence and explain things to them. Mother would approve and say: "Quite so."

ADD 'SINCERE'

22.4.1967

When I went into Mother's room with a glass of coconut water, Amrita said: "Champaklal has come." Mother immediately asked me to bring the thick sketching pen. With that she wrote "SINCERITY" and gave it to Amrita. It was for someone.

Then she wrote on another piece of paper:

Be honest, faithful, patient, enduring... and happy!

C: "Add 'sincere', Mother."

Mother: "NO!"

C: "I want it for myself, Mother."

Mother: "All right."

Then she wrote on another paper:

Champaklal,

Be honest, sincere, faithful, patient, enduring... and happy!

With love

The Mother

SPECIAL DAY

4.5.1967

Mother gave a special Darshan on this day as it was considered an important date in the Manifestation. Later, when copies of a photograph of hers taken on that occasion arrived, she gave me one

on which she wrote “Blessings” and said:

“4 Manifestation

5 Power

6 Creation

7 Realisation”

NICE GIRL BUT NOT OBEDIENT

28.4.1968

Someone sent photographs of a boy and a girl considering marriage to be shown to Mother. The parents of the boy did not like the girl, but the girl was pursuing the boy. On seeing the girl’s photo, Mother said: “She is a nice girl, clever; but she won’t be an orthodox Indian wife, gentle and obedient.”

TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

9.8.1968 (about 10 a.m.)

The following was noted by Amrita at my instance and later approved by the Mother.

The Mother said: “Something is going on which is interesting. They are saying I am not collaborating.* ‘ It is not for me personal. Something is being done in order to save them – the work of transformation.”

The Mother patted Champaklal and blessed him and said: “Do not worry.” The Mother repeated this three times to Champaklal and continued: “It is the image of the world.”

The Mother called Nolini and said: “It is not an illness. I will tell you one day what it is.”²

* The Mother was “ill” but she refused to take the medicine that certain sadhaks were insisting she take. [Champaklal’s note]

1. In a letter of 1.2.1937 Sri Aurobindo wrote: “Medicines have quite a different action on the Mother’s body than they would have on yours or anybody else’s and the reaction is not usually favourable.” *SABCL*, vol. 25, p. 376.

2. See Mother’s *Notes on the Way*, talk of 28 August 1968, CWM vol. 11, pp. 116ff; see also pp. 94, 99 and 115.

GIFT

As you know I am not in the habit of accepting presents from people. However once somebody had brought a box of chocolates or something like that. The Mother gave it to me saying: "C'est très bon [It is very good]. Take it, Champaklal, it is from me."

Along with the box was a paper on which she had written:

"Take it as coming from me."

21.1.1969

SPECIAL PRANAM

When Mother used to see people in the Music room, she would write their names and those of the birthday people who were expected to come up, in her interview book. Then she would prepare another list on a loose sheet of paper for me. I had to send everyone into her room in the order she had drawn up. At times other people would come along with the person authorised. In such cases I had to inform her. And when I informed who wanted to come with whom, she would usually say: "All right."

One day, however, she asked me: "Champaklal, are you asking or is he asking?"

C: "Mother, they like to come."

Mother: "But has he asked?"

C: "Mother, some people ask and generally you allow. You rarely refuse. But some nice people hesitate and do not ask, though they would very much like to come. You know very well Mother, that I do my best to be helpful especially to those who do not ask."

Mother smiled and said: "All right."

This happened quite often.

MOTHER HAS COME FOR WORK

One day, during the later years, Mother was ill. After her sparse breakfast, she asked me: "Champaklal, what shall I do, rest or work?"

C: "Work, Mother."

Mother: "Why?"

C: "You have come for work, Mother."

Mother: "All right, call the people."

She said it so readily and sweetly that I rushed out and called all those who were waiting outside on the terrace beside the Music room. And she went through the whole programme as if nothing was the matter with her health.

On some occasions when sadhaks threw their weaknesses or ill-will on Mother, her distress was obvious when she looked at me. And I would say, "Mother, you have come for that." At times she would smile; at times there was no expression.

CHILDREN IN SRI AUROBINDO'S ROOM

Children were allowed in Sri Aurobindo's room only after 1950.

As you know, I have always had a special feeling for children, irrespective of whether they are known to me or not. That is why I often go out of my way and take interest in them.

It is quite an education to watch people, especially families with children, when they come to Sri Aurobindo's room. When they approach the Darshan room, some parents put money in the hands of their children for offering to Sri Aurobindo. Some make the children offer it all and themselves do not give anything; some offer money after their children have done so. Some husbands make their wives do the offering, while some husbands do it themselves and give nothing to their wives to offer. And of course there are some who do not offer anything at all. At times when people bend down to make Pranam, money falls out from their pockets – some quietly put it back in their pockets, some offer the whole amount, some keep a part and offer the rest.

Now some children, when they see their parents offering money, look up expectantly at the parents but they are disappointed.

Once it happened that there was a family of three: the child was about five years old. All stood with folded hands, with eyes closed. There was a slight noise; it was the father opening his purse. He took out some money, passed it on to his wife and they both offered it. In the meanwhile, the boy had opened his eyes and was

looking intently at his parents, without speaking a word. They did not take notice of him. But seeing his expression I could not contain myself and spoke to the parents to kindly give a few coins at least to the child who was so eager to offer. The father did so immediately and said he was sorry. I told him that whoever may do the actual offering, the Divine knows very well who has earned that money and so he need not be particular about offering it himself. He admitted that it was true, and added that it was ignorance on his part. On a similar occasion, another father said he was extremely grateful for my drawing his attention to this point and he would never forget it.

Nowadays, however, I have stopped making suggestions of this kind. I have left things to the Divine Will.

You know Kishorilal's daughter, Uttama. When she was about five, she used to come with her father to this room. When they were in the room for the first time together, the little girl pulled her father's shirt and he bent down to hear what she wanted to say. She put her hand in his pocket and pulled out everything in it. A wad of notes fell down, the girl picked it up and offered it in the tray. Her father allowed her to do that. The next time also she did the same thing. It was a sight to see her doing it so spontaneously and also to watch her father indulgently smiling.

SEES OTHERS' CONVENIENCE

Almost on every Christmas Mother used to call Mona¹ who is in charge of Golconde but at a time that was convenient to her. Mother adjusted her programme to suit Mona's convenience! And she would see each thing brought by Mona with keen interest and appreciation. It was such a delight for me to watch her showering her Grace.

There are numerous other examples of Mother's going out of her way to extend her Grace to people and I am always grateful that she gave me the opportunity to be present on those occasions to share the joy.

1. Mona Pinto has been organising the Christmas celebrations in the Ashram from the beginning.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Madhav: "Champakbhai, I remember you had a very interesting meeting with the Mother on one Christmas day. I shall just recall it; would you please confirm if all the details are correct?"

C: "Yes."

M: "You had just come back from the Ashram Theatre [*where the Christmas celebration and distribution were held*] and were sitting in your studio trying out the toys you had received – the whistle etc. Just then Amrita came out of Mother's room and told you: 'Mother says that if Champaklal wants to show his Christmas presents, she is ready to see them.' Accordingly you went up to her and showed those things. She took them one by one, tried the whistle and all. Then there was a small comb. She took it, passed it through her hair, then combed your beard and left it there in the beard saying, '*Au revoir.*' Is that right?"

C: "Ah yes, I had forgotten. But now that you say it, I remember. It did take place as you have described. I had been to the Theatre on Christmas day only once, I could not go there afterwards. However, Mona would send two bags to me – one for me and one for the child in me. Mother used to take special interest and have fun with the toys – to please her child."

MOTHER'S SKETCHES

Mother had kept some sketches done by herself in a file and given it to me for safekeeping. Some years later she asked for the file. When I brought it, what took place in the case of the old soap-bits happened here as well.

Mother told me: "No, you keep the file. I give it to you." Two of these sketches were portraits, one of herself and the other of Sri Aurobindo. These two were given only for safe custody; the rest were given to me.

Long after, Krishnalal wanted to exhibit Mother's paintings in our Studio and asked her permission. Mother permitted it but asked me not to give him her larger paintings. I asked her if the smaller framed paintings which were kept with me could be given

as they would be returned once the exhibition was over. She said: "Yes."

When Krishnalal wanted to return the paintings after the exhibition, I told Mother: "Vasudev looks after these paintings and keeps them very well. I have seen him working. They both take great care. If Mother approves, I can ask them to keep the paintings with them."

She did not reply. So I asked again: "They can all remain in one place. Formerly it was different. You did not allow your paintings to be taken out at all. Now you have permitted it. Can they keep your sketches and the three portraits done by you, one of Sri Aurobindo and two of yourself?"

Mother: "They may keep my paintings. As for the sketches which I have given to you, you can do as you like. But I would like that you keep the three portraits (the one of Sri Aurobindo and the two of myself). All the rest can remain there since you say that they keep things carefully." I did accordingly.

IN DIFFICULTY

X was in great difficulty. When he came to Mother, she said: "Forget everything. Don't do again what is not to be done."

And she looked at him. The words were few but a change came over him and he went away smiling.

WHAT SHE EXPECTS

It was reported that a certain boy was not working well. On hearing it Mother said: "What I expect from people is that they must be honest, sincere, courageous and steady."

REQUIREMENTS

In the course of some remarks while dealing with a letter Mother said: "I want three kinds of people, those who can work, those who do sadhana, those who have money. At least one of these things must be there. When I say sadhana, it is not a nominal sadhana, but the true sadhana."

WHEN TO TAKE TO THIS PATH?

A doctor wanted to stay here. He asked Mother if she would advise him to take up the spiritual path.

Mother: "You should take up this spiritual path only when you cannot do otherwise, when nothing else matters to you."

INDIVIDUALITY AND EGO

The Mother said of someone: "Highly developed individuality. A magnified ego is ruling the being."

"ONLY ONE MATRIMANDIR"

5.10.1971

Some devotees who constructed a special building at their centre asked Mother to give her consent to their naming it 'Matrimandir'.

I said: "Mother, there is only one Matrimandir, the one you are building in Auroville. This name should not be used anywhere else."

Then Mother herself, without my asking for it, wrote out the note below and signed it:

*There is only one Matrimandir, the Matrimandir of Auroville.
The others must have other name.*

The Mother.

Thereafter, to anybody who asked permission to use this name she would say the same thing.

INTEREST IN NUMBERS

Mother always showed a keen interest in numbers. However busy she might be, certain combinations would not escape her attention. For instance, when she wrote the date 24.10.53, she pointed out to me that it contained all the figures from one to five.

On 27th February 1972, she remarked that from whatever direction you read the date, from left or right, it is 2,7,2,7,2.

VERY PRECIOUS

5.11.1972

The niece of our Joshibhai (Laboratory) used to bring something special to be offered to Mother each time she visited the Ashram. On the last occasion, she brought a box containing 1,111 blessing packets arranged beautifully in square marbled envelopes. In each envelope was a golden packet with a heart-shaped window; within were placed flower petals. Mother was very happy and named them "Golden Heart Blessing Packets". With a memorable expression she placed both hands over the box and moved her hands over it from one end to the other, over and over again, commenting, "pretty", "beautiful". When the girl left the room, Mother held the box near her chest with both hands. Looking at me, she said, "*Pour moi, pas pour vous*" (For me, not for you). Then she gave me the box saying, "Keep it very carefully; very precious, very precious. Give them when I ask."

But as you know she used them very rarely. She has left them for us. As I look back, I understand why she asked me to keep them carefully and why she did not use them freely.

Speaking about blessing packets, I am reminded about the special packets of *Divine's love*. You remember once Kamala wanted plastic boxes for the work and you arranged for them. Kamala would fill a box with packets and send it to Mother or give it personally. How happy Mother was, each time she received a box! It was a great privilege for Kamala. At some stage Mother stopped using these packets. I could not understand why she was still sending the *Divine's love* flowers for making packets, though she was not using them. The collection went on growing.

Then on the occasion of Kali Puja day in 1972, she said she would give these *Divine's love* blessing packets to all. It was on 5.11.1972. She distributed them freely.

MONEY FOR THE MOTHER

1973

On February 13, X, who was getting ready to go on a tour of

America, came to discuss his plans with the Mother. He told Mother that he would bring one hundred million dollars for Auroville and ten million dollars for Mother.

Later, on the 3rd of March, when he came to bid goodbye to Mother she told him:

“Don’t speak too much. Be careful.”

A PETAL OF THE RED LOTUS

24.4.1973

The Mother took one petal of a red lotus, held it in the closed palms of her hands and concentrated for a considerable time. Then she held the petal pressed to her chest, looked at me and said: “This is for you, Champaklal.”

And then she smiled.

MOTHER’S LIFE-LINE

17.11.1973

I have said little about the later years with the Mother, though some incidents were very interesting. I will say only a bit about the last day.

It was between 4.30 and 5 p.m. Kumud was giving fruit juice to Mother. She was on one side of Mother’s chair and I was on the other side, waiting to help Kumud if needed.

All on a sudden without any forethought I took Mother’s hand in mine and saw her life-line. Kumud asked what I was doing. I told her what I saw and added: “Oh, it is such a short line! But Mother has lived much longer than is indicated by the line!”

I was greatly surprised. Sri Aurobindo had a very long life-line; still he left his body early. And in Mother’s case, though she had a very short one, yet she lived so long – for us, giving herself so freely, showering her Grace so abundantly on us!

And, as you know, that was the day she left her body, at 7.25 p.m. It was only her will that prompted me to take up her hand and see her palm and that too on the very day! What Grace!

AFTER MOTHER'S MAHASAMADHI

Those of us who were attending on the Mother did not shed a single tear on her passing away. She had prepared us for it a long time ago.

You may ask, "How did she prepare you?" I am unable to explain it. And the days pass so quickly. Though the Mother's absence in a physical body cannot be denied, yet I do not feel at any moment of the day or night that she is not present.

When I look at it, I am surprised to see myself in the state in which I am. I feel her presence even more concretely now than when she was physically present. It is very, very, very concrete. Only one with the right vision perceives or feels what Mother has done by leaving that physical body – and the work she is doing. It is not an imagination. It is a living experience.

I live in her infinite Grace! Bliss! Bliss! Bliss – in body and in mind! Wonderful! Wonderful! Simply wonderful! I am more peaceful and calm than ever before.

The Lord's Infinite Grace is showering on all, at every moment. It is not my belief but my direct perception.

"I AM THERE"

Ever since Mother left her physical body, known and unknown persons have been asking for something touched by her. Once someone came and said, "Please give me something touched by the Mother; it will help me very much in sadhana." I saw that he was sincere. I also remembered seeing him with Mother upstairs. Now, you know how devotees always wanted to place their head in Mother's lap but some lacked the courage to do it. To some of them I used to say, "Place your head in Mother's lap." This person was one of them. So I asked him about it. He was so happy to recall that occasion and said: "Champaklalji, I am very grateful to you for ever. You asked me to lay my head in Mother's lap. I would never have dared to do it myself. And how she caressed me!"

C: "Oh, then you are very fortunate. But you do not have anything touched by the Mother?"

He: "No, Champaklalji, that is why I am praying for it."

C: "What about your head? Has it not been touched by Mother? You are always carrying it and it remains with you all the time. Nobody can take it away from you. Is it not so?"

He: "Yes, you have opened my eyes today. I now understand how the inner life is more important than the outer."

On a similar occasion, another person said to me: "Of course she has blessed me with both her hands. And more. First she placed her hand on her own heart and then she placed her palm on my chest, gently pressed it with one finger and said: 'See there, inside – I am there.'"

Here also I had to draw his attention to the fact that Mother's touch was stamped on his body and asked him what more he wanted. He was deeply moved; he closed his eyes and folded his hands.

"MOTHER DOES NOT LIKE"

We often hear people saying that Mother does not like this or does not like that, because she once said such and such a thing; or that Mother once did this in this way and so it must be done only and always in this particular way.

But those who have carefully observed Mother's actions know that it is childish to talk in that way. Whatever she did or said depended upon the circumstances, the work, the persons involved in or connected with it, and many other considerations. There was never any insistence or rigidity in her views or actions or expectations.

There was a time when Mother showed a strong distaste for artificial flowers. I remember watching her reaction in the Prosperity room when for the first time these flowers were offered to her. Normally Mother used to receive in her hands everything that was offered to her, useful or not useful; she would either carry them herself or give them to me to carry as I followed her back to her room. But in the case of these artificial flowers she left them there itself, though she liked the person who had offered them. Her expression was as if some unwelcome thing had entered the Ashram.

Years passed. People started bringing various kinds of artificial flowers in different colours. And believe me, Mother looked happy to receive them and praised them, admiring the skill with which they were made. She even started keeping some in her room. People in the Ashram also began to make such flowers

Supposing I had left the Ashram immediately after the scene in the Prosperity room and came back now, after some decades, and saw the long row of plastic flowers in front of the Mother's couch in the Meditation Hall, what would I say? Naturally I would express my amazement at what the Ashramites were doing, – exactly the opposite of what the Mother liked! And not having known all that had happened in between my departure and my arrival, who could say I was wrong?

Truth to tell, no one can say what Mother and Sri Aurobindo liked or did not like, wanted or did not want. For, I suppose, they had no real likes or dislikes, no wants or otherwise. Whatever was to be done in a particular circumstance or at a particular time, that they did or made us do.

GRACE THROUGH HER PHOTOGRAPH

X came to me with a photograph of the Mother which I had given to the Press for printing on the birthday folders for 1982. "Do you really like this photograph?" he asked me. It was obvious that he not merely disliked it, he was convinced it was inappropriate on birthday folders. He had come to me only after others in the Press supported his disapproval. But I replied emphatically, "Yes." He kept quiet and went away. At that time I did not explain anything more to him, but later I realised that I ought to have disclosed what I experienced on seeing this photograph. So I wrote it down in a letter to him along with my views on the subject but somehow never sent my letter.

Now I am writing it all down here.

This photograph was not created by the imagination or emotion of an artist. Nor is it that Mother struck a meditative pose at the time of taking the photograph. It was taken when the Mother was still in her physical body and she was actually meditating. I

suppose you can see this. The Mother has entered deep, very deep within. Those who succeed in uniting their consciousness with the Mother's will definitely get some experience. Of course everything depends on their receptivity. There is a great possibility that those who are bound by dogmas, imprisoned by the four walls of their beliefs, whose consciousness is more or less inert, will not like this photograph. So I knew there would be those who would dislike it. In fact some even expressed their dislike to Mother. Later she told me, "Some people feel I look like a Marwadi bride!" and laughed. But in front of those who expressed their dislike of this photo, she just kept quiet. I know that Mother herself liked this photo and kept looking at it for a very long time.

If you look at this photograph freely, without pre-conceptions, you will be surprised to find that what you initially disliked you will begin to like and, as you concentrate, it will gradually take you deeper and deeper, revealing many wonderful secrets of inner life. I repeat that you will have to keep your consciousness completely free from all narrowness.

By Her infinite Grace, the revelation came to me spontaneously. That darshan gave me unbounded ananda and made me experience absolute peace. That is why it was selected for the birthday card. To those who have a sincere and intense aspiration to experience the original aspect represented in the photo, the Gracious Mother will surely reveal herself. This is not a mere belief.

All this reminds me of an incident narrated by Sri Aurobindo. When he visited Chanod-Karnali, he had a living vision of Mahakali in a stone image in a small temple on the Narmada. So many visit the same temple but how many have this living darshan? Similarly, we have all heard that Sri Ramakrishnadev even talked with the image of Kali at Dakshineswar. And again there is the idol of Jagannatha in the world-famous temple at Puri. Nothing need be said of its outward form and colour etc. – anyone can see it. Yet we hear that Chaitanyadev sat in front of it in a long *upasana* (worship) and obtained a living vision of the Deity.

It is not easy to write about this photograph of the Mother, still I could not help writing about it.

ARRANGEMENT OF THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS

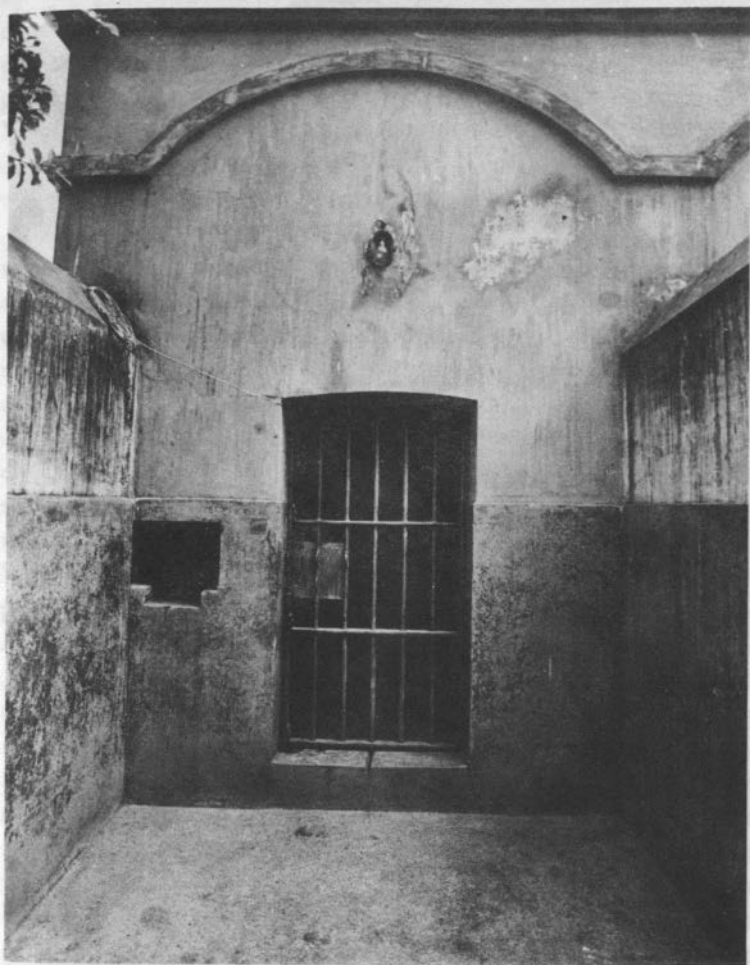
Nowadays, I am asked by people to comment on the placing of a particular photograph of the Mother alongside one of Sri Aurobindo's: "How is this arrangement? Is it all right?"

At first, I used to remain silent, but sometimes when asked, I give my opinion. For instance, Mother was against placing her photograph with a veil [taken in 1905 or 1906] alongside one of Sri Aurobindo taken in 1950. It is all right if they are kept in the same room but in different places. She would say, "It is not proper to keep a photo of a later period beside one of earlier days. I do not like it." Mother had specifically told some people that the main consideration is to keep contemporaneous photos of both together.

Now, I will give you an instance of how she conveys the same thing even at present through means other than physical words. Just the day after I wrote about this, someone brought two combinations of Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's photographs arranged by period just as Mother had wanted it! And what is more, he did not do this just for printing them in a book; he told me that even in his house he places them in that way. How interesting! By Mother's grace two combinations came to me on the same day.

PHOTOGRAPH IN ALIPORE JAIL

When we went to Calcutta we visited the solitary cell in Alipore Jail where Sri Aurobindo was detained in 1908-09. We saw that a photograph of Sri Aurobindo was kept there along with framed pictures of many gods and goddesses. I did not like it but I did not speak about it to anyone. As we came out, the Jail Superintendent met us near the gate and asked whether I had liked the cell. I kept quiet. Even when he repeatedly asked, "Please give me your opinion", I still did not answer, just smiled. Then he pleaded for some suggestions so that he could improve the condition of the cell. I felt that he was kind and sympathetic and really wanted to know. So I thought that I should tell him my reactions. I liked his attitude and wrote on a piece of paper: "I am writing because you have asked my opinion, but others will perhaps not like my suggestions."



Sri Aurobindo's cell at Alipore Jail

He repeated that he wanted my suggestions to improve the condition of the cell. Then I wrote, "Here there should only be the picture of Sri Aurobindo of that time. Not of any gods and goddesses." He asked: "Not even of the Mother?" I wrote, "Yes. Not even Mother's. Only Sri Aurobindo's and that too only of the days when he stayed here." He said, "We shall do it." Kishorilal, who was with us, offered to send that photograph to him.

I am not against pictures of gods and goddesses. Let those who want to worship them do so. But I do not think that those pictures are drawn by someone who realised them in those forms. All I say is that in the atmosphere of that room, it is not appropriate to place imaginary pictures beside the photograph of Sri Aurobindo – after all that room was his *tapobhumi* [place of yoga].

The second time we had the opportunity to visit Calcutta, we enquired whether the pictures of gods and goddesses had been removed from Sri Aurobindo's cell. And, if the jail authorities were willing to keep Sri Aurobindo's photograph, we would take it there. We were told that the Superintendent had removed all the other pictures. But at that time we did not have a photograph of Sri Aurobindo ready with us to take there.

When we visited Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, I saw a photograph there and asked them to give it if they could. They courteously gave it to us. Then we went with it to the jail. Incidentally, that day was Kishorilal's birthday. When we entered the cell, we found that the same old photo was kept on a soiled white piece of cloth spread on an old bench – God alone knows whether that cloth had ever been washed! It was not only very old, it was covered with blotches. But I had with me a beautiful gold coloured cloth for making folders given to me by Prabhaven, Kishorilal's wife. So it happened that on Kishorilal's birthday we replaced that dirty old cloth with a new golden one. And Kishorilal promised to bring a special pedestal from Pondicherry to replace that ageing bench.

Now the caretaker of that cell was worshipping Sri Aurobindo, so he had kept there a few books of Sri Aurobindo as well as other things. But everything was in an unseemly disorder. We wanted to arrange everything – photograph, books, and the other things – so nicely that the beauty and sanctity of the place could easily be



Sri Aurobindo's photograph installed in the cell

maintained. A small table with a formica top was made, so that flowers could be arranged around the photograph kept on the top, and the books and other things could be kept in the lower shelves. We had promised to give a new photograph along with this table which was designed in the classical Indian style. Finally, we installed that photograph on 15th April, 1979, the Bengali New Year Day.

Now to give an instance of how the Mother arranges everything without any outward intervention. We had approached Sanjivan for a photograph of Sri Aurobindo of that period – we wanted him to print a new copy. But at that time his stock of photographic paper was exhausted; so Kishorilal offered to make the necessary arrangements. The next problem was, which photograph was to be chosen? I came across one taken in jail, but it was a profile and we wanted one in which he is looking at us. But we had no choice so we asked Sanjivan to print that one. While we were talking, I saw some magazines lying on his table; along with them was a booklet in which there was a photograph of that period in which Sri Aurobindo is facing us and his eyes are beautiful. So I asked Sanjivan to print that photograph and not the one in profile.

Sanjivan quietly agreed to do it. But a few days later Priti came to me and said, “In the size you want, the face will become larger than life. Will it look nice? Sanjivan-da also thinks it will not look nice when enlarged so much.” I was puzzled. I wanted to keep as large a photo as possible. Usually, unless it is indispensable, I do not insist on getting something done in my way against the opinion of the person to whom the work is entrusted. Besides, Sanjivan was an artist. It was very difficult to make him do something against his wish. Yet Mother made me say, “Tell Sanjivan to make it big, I want it to be big.” Priti was disappointed by my insistence and again she said, “The face will become so big that it will not look nice.” But I insisted on making it big.

Finally, the photograph was ready. Priti said, “It looks very beautiful. We never expected that it would turn out so nice. Sanjivan-da also likes it very much.” Everybody liked it. It was so lifelike! Someone who had been to the cell before the photo was installed went there afterwards and remarked that now the whole

atmosphere of the cell has been transformed.

It was Mother's Grace that arranged everything so well.

EXPERIENCE OF THE GRACE

A small girl, Rupa, was paralysed. She was so sweet and beautiful that even an enemy would be charmed by her. Her one dream was to go to Kashmir at any cost. She begged her parents to take her there. One winter, Rupa was so adamant that they had to take her to Kashmir immediately. She kept staring at the mounds of snow everywhere and then insisted on walking on it. What a wonder! She started to dance! What had happened? A new life was begun? As though some divine energy was flowing into her! Thereafter she began to walk normally once again.

I have had the same experience. Normally walking is painful for me. But the Mother's Grace once made me climb 1500 steps in the Himalayas. Another time, in a garden in Delhi, she made me walk for an hour and ten minutes without feeling any pain or exhaustion! Yet, normally it is very painful even to walk for ten to fifteen minutes.

ON KAMALA

Roshan: "Dadaji, could you please write something about Kamala and her father Kashibhai? How did she come to the Ashram? Why is Kamala always with you?"

C: "You want me to write about Kamala? All right, I will do it."

Childhood

Our little ashram on the island of Kansia, a few miles from Bharooch, stood on the land of Kamala's father Kashibhai. When I joined that ashram in 1920, Kamala was a healthy and lively child of about five who, innocent and without inhibitions, roamed about freely in the huge estate. Once, the ladies there tried to restrain her with their ideas of dress and behaviour, but her father let her choose whether to 'learn' the worldly ways or be free. She, of

course, preferred her freedom and happily continued with her spontaneous ways. In the courtyard there were many berry trees and Kamala used to collect the best ones and bring them for me. Though many others lived in the ashram, she gave them only to me.

Her elder sister Yashoda, who later married Vallabhbhai Patel's son, was also staying there. Kashibhai has also done a lot for Yashoda.

The ashram ran smoothly and peacefully. But once a tragedy occurred. Himmatlal, the son of a relative of one Kesarimal (who was serving the Nawab of Palanpur) was very mischievous. He did not pay much attention to his studies and never listened to anyone – a thoroughly capricious boy. He was entrusted to Punamchandbhai's care. He adjusted well to our ashram atmosphere and there was a remarkable change in his behaviour. He listened to what he was told and behaved affectionately with all of us. But once he did something wrong and Narayanbhai, who was looking after Kashibhai's land, gave him a solid slap. At that time Himmatlal went away quietly but afterwards he set fire to a number of large haystacks, resulting in a loss of almost one lakh rupees – a colossal sum in those days. Just when Himmatlal started the fire Kamala's father was in a nearby ravine, on his way by foot to Bharooch. He saw the flames shooting up in the sky and sensing some mishap rushed back. What he witnessed was a shocking, unimaginable scene. But there was not the slightest sign of pain or sorrow on his face. It was a habit with him to always chant 'Hari Om'. Then too, watching the huge flames, he only uttered 'Hari Om'. I remember that vividly – it reminded me of Janak Videhi the legendary philosopher-king, father of Sita. There is a lot that can be written about Kashibhai's virtuous character. He helped many people in many ways. For instance, he willingly purchased the train tickets for those who wanted to come to Pondicherry but had no money. Later, when he settled in Pondicherry, he used to send the *Bulletin* and books of Mother and Sri Aurobindo to all those who were interested. He loved to do such work.

I recall another incident connected with Kashibhai. He was sending the *Bulletin* to someone. After some time, that man

requested him not to send the *Bulletin* or any Ashram literature to him. Needless to say, it was Kashibhai who was paying the subscription and sending the books, and yet that man wrote thus because he was a staunch Vaishnavite and did not want any other literature to influence the students studying in his college.

To come back to our story. As I have said, instead of treating Himmatlal with understanding and affection as had been decided, Narayanbhai had slapped him. And the boy returned a bigger slap by resorting to arson. This terrible slap became the cause of our leaving Kansia. Narayanbhai was so worked up by Himmatlal's behaviour that he declared he could not even bear to look at the boy, to the point that he was afraid that some day he might even kill him. So we decided to leave Kansia and settle in Patan. Except this episode, my remembrances of Kansia are memorable and joyful.

Kashibhai came with all his children to Pondicherry on 20 February 1928. Later, during one of the evening talks Sri Aurobindo remarked, "Kashibhai wishes to go to Heaven with his whole family."

Mother's Grace on Kamala

The Mother has showered her grace on her children in such a way that every child can say, "This is a special grace of the Mother for me alone. For none else she has done this." Kamala is indeed one of those children. Kamala does not write about herself, but I am interested in writing about her for two reasons. Firstly, it was the Mother who sustained my interest in Kamala, and secondly, recollecting incidents of Mother's grace to her is at the same time a worship of the Mother.

In the beginning Kamala did not speak when she was in Mother's presence. Then when she asked Mother for some work she was given the work of sweeping my room. Thereafter Mother kept giving her one work after another.

Offering fruits: In those days, Kashibhai had asked his son Maheshbhai, who was living in Bombay, to send a basket of fruits and nuts (oranges, chikoos, grapes, almonds, pistachios, etc.) every week from there for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. After

Maheshbhai left Bombay to live in Bharooch, Kashibhai arranged to get these fruits from Madras. You might ask what was done with these baskets coming so regularly. Kamala was entrusted the work of washing these fruits in water with potassium permanganate, wiping and arranging them in three big cupboards. Then she had to keep a daily check on their condition. With the grace of the Mother, Kamala's fingers became so sensitive that they would touch just that part which was getting spoiled and thus pick out and keep aside the rotting ones. Every day, I would extract three big jugs of orange juice. It took me about an hour to do this and a large basin was filled with orange peels. The Mother gave this juice to Sri Aurobindo and also to sadhaks. Kashibhai considered himself blessed for this rare opportunity given to him and his family to serve Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Counting flowers: As you go upstairs to Sri Aurobindo's Room, you first step into a vestibule with doors on two sides and one in front which on Darshan days is covered by a life-size photo of Mother (this door leads to the old bathroom). The door to right opens into the "long passage" between Sri Aurobindo's Room and the Meditation hall. It was in that passage that Mother asked Kamala to sit to count *Aspiration* flowers. Interestingly, from childhood Kamala had a special attraction for these flowers; she loved to gather them daily from the school garden and put them on her teacher's table.

Tray of Tender love flowers: There was a glass kidney-tray in which Mother would arrange *Tender love* flowers and keep them on the dressing table in her dressing room. At first she insisted on doing it herself but afterwards she gave that work to Kamala.

Bowl of roses: The Mother used to arrange all the roses in a bowl, trimming the stems herself. This work too she gave to Kamala. A large basin of roses was kept in the Darshan Room at night. Mother wanted these roses early in the morning. For this Kamala needed to come to the Darshan Room at two o'clock at night. But how was she to come from her room in Bakery house (now part of School) every night at that time? So Mother permitted Kamala to sleep in my room in Library House since, after Sri Aurobindo's accident [in 1938], I slept in Sri Aurobindo's Room. Kamala worked from two

to four in the morning cutting and arranging those roses. Thus every night while coming in and going out she could have Sri Aurobindo's darshan because she had to enter from the 'long passage'.

Accompanying Mother for Pranam: A unique opportunity Mother gave Kamala was to accompany her when she went downstairs for Pranam.

Separating grapes: Mother gave Kamala the work of separating good green grapes from bad ones. The very first day, she made Kamala sit in the upstairs Meditation hall. Kamala would enter through the main door opening into the vestibule and pass through the partition in the long passage and turn right to go to the Meditation hall. (The door at the top of the staircase, opening directly into the Meditation hall was always kept shut.) In the evening she was asked to work in Sri Aurobindo's bathroom (now my room). In those days there was no door between Sri Aurobindo's Room and his bathroom; the curtain was put there after Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi. Thus every morning while coming inside and going back, Kamala was fortunate to have Sri Aurobindo's darshan.

Pranab's bowl of flowers: The Mother used to arrange a bowl of flowers for Pranab. Later she gave this work to Kamala. After the bowl was ready, Mother and Kamala would together place the bowl on a piece of cloth and tie it up into a bundle which was kept for giving to Pranab. Of course there were many changes in this work later.

Polishing furniture: After Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi, for some time, Kamala was wiping the furniture in Sri Aurobindo's room. X, one of the sadhaks working upstairs, asked me what polish Kamala was using. I replied that she did not use any, she only wiped the wood. X did not believe it and said, "She must be using something, otherwise the furniture could not remain in a shiny condition." X has a lot of experience in cleaning and polishing furniture and so when he did not believe it, I asked Kamala whether she was using polish.

K: "I don't use any polish at all."

C: "I believe you but since X is sceptical, I want to know how you wipe so well."

K: "For such furniture, one needs a very smooth cloth and while wiping it is very essential to give an even pressure. But one must have an instinct for it. If you give too much pressure the original shine will fade. Nor should it be done too lightly, for then it would not be properly wiped. I do this spontaneously, thanks to Mother's grace. I do not use anything else."

But when I repeated this to X, he still did not believe it!

Later, while talking to someone about how most of us are bound by our beliefs and cannot appreciate anything else, I related the above incident. X, who was present, at once reacted with, "Yes, yes, I still do not believe it. Kamala is certainly using some kind of polish." I said, "I remain present when she cleans the furniture, and I have seen with my own eyes." Still X went on saying, "I do not believe it."

Stitching Mother's cloth: This is the most memorable among the constant acts of Mother's grace to Kamala. Sometimes, after Mother would go into her bathroom and shut the door, she would suddenly come out with a small piece of cloth and tell Kamala: "Kamala, stitch this immediately; I need it just now." I used to wonder: Mother has so many handkerchiefs and clothes, so what is the need for this one just now? (But even as I write this, the scene comes up before my eyes: Love is pouring out of Mother's eyes and her words are spoken with such a tender affection! But then things like this will interest only those with natures like mine.) After some time Mother would come out again and, giving her beautiful smile, take the cloth Kamala would have stitched by then. I did not then understand the reason behind Mother's behaviour, but now I do.

You may ask: "So tell us, what have you now understood?" What can I answer? All I can say is that Mother never explained such things to me in words. When the time arrived I understood deeper reasons for them. Others can also understand them in the same way. Or, I might say, those who really want to understand will be led to it by the Mother herself.

I was interested in observing all this on two counts: One was to see the Mother's ways of working; the other to see Mother showering her grace on Kamala.

You have asked why Kamala alone is all the time with

Champaklal. I have written all the above at length to show that by showering her infinite grace Mother has given me to Kamala from her childhood and has still kept me with her.

Much more can be written about the Mother's relation with Kamala. But one can understand it better by reading the birthday messages of Mother and Sri Aurobindo to Kamala and their correspondence with her.¹ How fortunate she has been to have their grace which still continues to pour on her.

Kamala's room: When the Bakery house was to be vacated for the sake of the School, Kamala was among those living there who had to move out. Mother allotted her own storeroom (above Bula's room) to Kamala. And she asked Kamala to come to the Darshan Room at night for her work with roses, directly from the terrace between her new room and the Darshan Room. There was no need any more to use the staircase in the Meditation hall.

Later Mother wished to build a room on this terrace in which she wanted to preserve all her photo albums in special cupboards. She told me that once the terrace is covered with a roof, Kamala could come and go even on rainy days. But on the terrace there was already a wooden stairway going up to Mother's second-floor apartment, made specially for going up there for any repair work. (It was only later that it began to be used on Darshan days.) Since no final decision was taken, the room on the terrace was not built.

1. Published in *The Growth of a Flame*, ed. Roshan, 1996.

ABOUT MY SILENCE

Man's normal daily interactions proceed through the medium of words and gestures. This medium is so handy and easy that we do not realise its importance and it is to a great extent even misused.

When I decided to set aside the medium of speech, it was natural that people were perplexed and sometimes I was asked about it. A friend wrote to me asking for an explanation: "Some people are saying that Champaklal has been keeping *mauna* because of some throat disease and Sri Aurobindo asked him to observe silence so that it might not spread." But when there never was any such disease, where was the question of its spreading? Secondly, Sri

Aurobindo left his body in 1950 and the Mother in 1973, while I began to observe silence in 1975. Where then is the question of Sri Aurobindo or even the Mother asking me to keep *mauna*? There are people who like such gossip; they won't believe the truth even if I told them myself. There is no basis in the talk about Sri Aurobindo asking me to keep silent. It is like this saying in Gujarati:

The wind dislodged a roof-tile;
a startled dog began to bark;
in the resulting commotion
someone cried: "I saw a thief!"

The external quiet that results from the control of speech is very helpful for inner peace and growth. Hot discussions and exchanges give rise to low and harmful vibrations which vitiate the whole atmosphere. Only that which is useful and necessary for the sadhana should be spoken and that too with full awareness. Gossip and back-biting are a great hindrance. When we remain silent how many difficulties are overcome! It was with this understanding that even while serving Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, I desired to observe silence and prayed to Mother for her permission. But she did not consent, because my silence would have affected my daily work with her.

In the month of October 1975, at times while talking my voice would suddenly grow soft and faint without my feeling any pain or discomfort but in a few moments it would automatically become normal. I doubt if anyone's attention was drawn towards it, though it was to my benefit as I could shorten the conversation. I wished to find out why this was happening. I wanted a specialist in Madras could check my voice, but Nirod said, "It is not necessary to go to Madras just for this. There is nothing wrong with your voice." Nonetheless I persisted. Then Nirod said that he and Dr. Bose would accompany me. I said it was not necessary. He insisted on coming as he felt it was his duty. He said, "Mother has asked us to look after you." I firmly refused: "It is absolutely unnecessary."

Kamala and Counouma¹ advised me to travel in a car, but I preferred to go in the bus, because it was less expensive. The doctor in Madras was a close friend of Doraiswamy and was also an

acquaintance of Counouma. (The doctor had earlier visited Pondicherry and also taken a photo of me with his wife and friend.) So all arrangements for the trip were made by Counouma who sent Purushottama, a young sadhak who assisted him in his daily work, as my escort. Puru took very good care of me. We returned on the same day, after consulting the doctor. This was the first occasion when I went out of Pondicherry.

Had Nirod and Bose accompanied me, some ashramites without ascertaining the facts would have concluded that the case must be serious since two doctors had accompanied me. The specialist in Madras had said, "There is no problem in the throat, only the nerves have been strained and need rest. You may observe silence for 21 days or speak as little as possible." For me it was like being prescribed my favourite diet as medicine. The desire to observe silence (that was born when I was still serving the Mother) awoke once again and was realised in different circumstances and time. Circumstances arranged by Mother herself! She always makes me do things by creating the necessary circumstances. I never have to worry at all. I live in her infinite grace, in joyous freedom. This *mauna* was her invaluable boon to me and thereafter I took it as a natural boon.

Thus I started to observe silence from 24th of November 1975. 21 days were over on 14th December. On 15th December I spoke. I came to know from others that my voice was perfectly normal. Then, as decided beforehand, I resumed my silence from the next day and it still continues. When some said that observing silence in this way was an austerity, I replied that an austerity is that which is strenuous or difficult, but remaining silent has become as natural to me as talking had been. My silence is not a penance nor a religious vow. I enjoy this silence.

Sometimes children ask me why I am not talking? Once a child, Hufreesh, asked me, "You have not spoken for so long, What is the proof that you have not lost your voice?" I explained to her in writing that as you children enjoy talking so I enjoy my silence. I enjoy it even more than when I was talking. It is an experience worth having. However if I do lose my voice, I will rejoice as did the famous Gujarati poet-saint Narsingha Mehta when he sang, "It

is well, I am rid of the trouble; now I will happily concentrate on my Lord!"

I remember how eager I was for the direct guidance of Sri Aurobindo long before my arrival here. When someone with a similar aspiration comes to me and asks questions, spontaneously we have a written conversation. For many the problem is the difficulty in to stop talking and observing silence, but for me the difficulty is this written conversation. I await the time when even this written conversation will cease, but for that I have full faith in the Mother. When it is time, the All-gracious will herself arrange everything; just as she created the circumstances for my *mauna*, she will create them for this too in a natural way. I experience Her infinite Grace at every moment. Every moment is a blessed one for me.

Once, asked for a message on silence, Mother told a disciple: "Why do you always expect me to tell you a thing in a written message? The power of silence is fathomless. Those who are open can hear what I have to say without my speaking and some can also experience it. My unspoken communications have sometimes been noted down and shown to me and they were quite correct."

Of course, there were also instances when the Mother commented, "This is not my message. It is your imagination and desires that are written here."

1. P. Counouma (1908-91), a distinguished lawyer-disciple who was highly respected in the official circles in Pondicherry. The Mother appointed him a Trustee of the Ashram in September 1968.

Part II
SPIRITUAL GAMES

SPIRITUAL GAMES

In those early days of the Ashram, every evening the Mother came from Meditation House to Library House, which she entered through her former room (then mine and now my aunt Motiben's). After freshening up there, she went to Datta's room. Then she came to the Stores (later named Prosperity) where, on the first of each month, she distributed articles for the daily use sanctioned to the Ashramites. In this hall, a small group of sadhaks and sadhikas whom she had permitted would be waiting for her. First she would examine the day's accounts kept by Purushottam (in charge of the Stores); then there would be talks and readings and sometimes what appeared to us light-hearted games. After these sessions she would go downstairs for the Soup ceremony for which the sadhaks and sadhikas assembled in the present Reception hall.¹

One was the Flower Game. Mother would bring some flowers and keep them on a stool in front of her. We would sit in a circle around her, each in the place she had allotted. From the significances that she had given to those flowers each of us had to make a sentence and bring our chits to her the next day. We read out our sentences and gave the chits to the Mother. Then she read the sentence she herself had composed. Thereafter, depending on how close our sentences had come to hers she would award prizes to the first three. I remember I was once given the first prize: my sentence had fallen short by just one word and that because I did not know the word. The Mother was very pleased. In the flower-sentences below I have underlined the significances of the flowers put before us each evening.²

Among the other games, there was one in which each had to write what he wanted. We wrote on a piece of paper and gave it to Mother. I have those chits even now. Except the paper of Amal on which he has written his name, you will find that the Mother herself has noted the name on each chit. There were also other questions – once it was “What is Yoga?”, another day on “Realisation”, then “Experience” and so on.

1. The informal meetings in the Stores and the grave Soup ceremony that

followed may have begun in 1927, after Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved from Library House to Meditation House.

According to Amal (K.D. Sethna), who was allowed to join them in 1928, the Stores, group gradually came to consist of 24 disciples. "The Mother answered all sorts of questions and gave many talks which appeared as the 3rd Series of *Words of the Mother*. At times there would be readings from the works of Sri Aurobindo.... At other times she invented games to test or develop our faculty of intuition. She would arrange some flowers to make up a sentence according to the significances allotted by her to them. We had to guess what she had in mind. It so happened that everyone of us had on at least one occasion the correct sentence implanted into our heads by her!... There were other games too.... Whenever we succeeded in scoring a hit... [a] slab of French chocolate was the usual gift.... All the time there would be joking among us or with the Mother." (*Light and Laughter* by K.D. Sethna 1974, pp. 65-67).

Through the Soup, says Amal, Mother gave to all participants, "her own luminous subtle-physical substance and energy – a most concrete transference of spirituality into physical stuff." The Mother had to stop the games and the soup, along with several other activities in October 1931. (See also Mrityunjoy's and Sahana's articles in *Breath of Grace* edited by M.P. Pandit.)

2. Interestingly, the Mother submitted her own flower-sentences to Sri Aurobindo who sometimes corrected them; then she made a final copy, underlined the significances and put the date. But in some cases she did not underline the significances and so, for those Champakdal copied for inclusion here, he underlined the significances. For the present edition, the published sentences have been compared with the originals. One must remember that in order to form a particular sentence with several significances it was inevitable that the participants made minor verbal alterations in them. Again, in later years, the Mother changed some of the significances.

The Flower Sentences

The *Divine solicitude* is with you (meaning, you are getting all the help you need). But keep up your *aspiration*, remain *faithful* and the *wrong movement will be changed into the right movement*, so that the *Victorious Love* may manifest.

21.9.1929

Divine solicitude is supporting you in the *disinterested work* through which you will attain *transformation*.

22.9.1929

By *loving consecration* and *faithful service* allow the *Divine protection* to be with you in your *aspiring concentration* for *integral transformation*.

23.9.1929

Love the Victor will manifest when there will be established – through the *fivefold psychological perfection*, the *love of the physical being for the Divine*, and when, through *loving consecration*, there will be a complete *faithfulness* to the Divine.

(Fivefold psychological perfection: faith, sincerity, devotion, aspiration, surrender.)

24.9.1929

Open with devotion your *vital being* to *Radha's influence* and you will get *vital peace*, the peace which leads to *transformation*.

25.9.1929

Through *peace in the vital*, *aspire* for the *beginning of realisation*.

(Peace in the vital is at once the basis of aspiration and the condition for the beginning of realisation.)

26.9.1929

To keep *Agni* burning always in the *psychic centre* is an indispensable condition for the *transformation*.

27.9.1929

Aspire for *integral and absolute loving consecration* by which will be established *faithfulness* and *purity*, the forerunners of *transformation*.

29.9.1929

With *simple sincerity* offer your *vital being* to the Divine and the *realisation* will begin.

2.10.1929

To an *aspiration for the Divine Love*, supported by *faithfulness* and *sincerity in the vital*, the *Divine's Love* will surely answer.

4.10.1929

The *devotion* that accompanies *Radha's absolute consecration*, this alone has the power of bringing down *Krishna's Light in the mind*.
5.10.1929

Only by the constant flaming up of *Agni* can an *integral loving consecration* be realised.

And only by this absolute loving consecration can there be established permanent *peace in the vital*, the peace on which is based the *beginning of realisation*, leading ultimately to *Transformation*, the goal.

6.10.1929

Aspire for gratitude – without gratitude the *mind* cannot get *purified*.

7.10.1929

Realise an *integral silence* in the being and a complete force of *faith* in this silence; then only can *power* descend and bring *mastery over the things of the earth*.

8.10.1929

Aspiration and *faithful devotion* firmly established in a *peaceful vital being* and crowned by a *simple sincerity* – are some of the most essential conditions for a *beginning of realisation*.

9.10.1929

Only to those who have a true *humility* will *power* be given.

10.10.1929

The power of *Agni* will keep the *aspiration* flaming *in the physical being*. Then can be founded and established in a *vital opened to Radha's influence* the true *supramentalised friendship* with the Divine.

12.10.1929

Approach the Divine with *loving gratitude* and you will meet the *Divine's Love*.

14.10.1929

Let your *aspiration* for *progress* be *cheerful* and you will get the *Ananda* of *progress*.

15.10.1929

Let the Divine *cheerfulness* suffuse your *work*. So your *mind* will be *purified* and this will bring the *beginning* of *realisation*.

16.10.1929

Agni steadily burning within will firmly found in you *faithfulness* and a *devoted loving consecration* to the Divine.

This is the surest way to *Transformaion*.

17.10.1929

Let *faithfulness* to the Divine be your *tapasya*. Then there will *begin* to *come* a *realisation* of the true *supramental friendship* with the *Divine*.

19.10.1929

The *generosity* of your *absolute self-giving* will bring to you the *revelation* of the *generosity* of the *Divine's Love*.

20.10.1929

Reach through *aspiration* the *intuitive mind*; then you will know what is meant by *transformation*.

21.10.1929

Peace in the physical cells leads first to *health* and then to *transformation*.

22.10.1929

Advance on the way with *peace in the physical being* as your ground and *simple sincerity* as your means and, sooner or later, you are bound to reach *identificaion with the Divine Consciousness*.

23.10.1929

Surrender to the Divine and *integral transformation* are the two great steps leading to the new *perfect creation*.

24.10.1929

Open the vital to Radha's influence; it will establish in you an absolute loving consecration to the Divine. Then there will come an integral opening of your being which will hasten the manifestation of Love the Victor.

26.10.1929

With simple sincerity, faithfulness and purity, open your vital being to the Divine's Love.

27.10.1929

Devoted loving consecration, faithfulness, purity, peace in the vital – these four are the conditions most important for conquest of the power over the most material vital.

28.10.1929

A mind quiet and filled with the sweetness of thoughts exclusively turned towards the Divine is the gate through which there will be the constant connection between the supramental light and the material being.

29.10.1929

Be simply sincere in your obedience to the Divine. This will take you far on the way to transformation.

30.10.1929

The Power in the mind, complete mastery over the sex centre, supramentalised psychological perfection, perfect transformation, Love the Victor – all these belong to and will come with the Supramental Future.

31.10.1929

Wakefulness, resolution and an integral even basis in the physical are initial conditions for the realisation.

Aspiration in the physical for the Divine's Love, a complete opening of the physical being to the Divine's Love and the turning of the whole physical consciousness towards the Divine, are the conditions for the last and entire transformation.

3.11.1929

A transformed life-energy is the dynamic power for transformation.

6.11.1929

Only if you have *faith* and *vital confidence* in the Divine, can the *Divine Help* come to you.

7.11.1929

In the *sincerity* of your *effort towards silence* lies the assurance of a *purified mind*.

9.11.1929

Let *patience* and *endurance* be your companions on the way to *physical transformation*.

11.11.1929

Turn your *consciousness to the Supramental Light*, and let the *supramental influence* permeate through a *pure mind*, your *sex centre*. Then you will obtain *mastery over the sex centre*.

13.11.1929

With *aesthetic taste* and *vital purity* build up *vital harmony*. This will make possible the manifestation of the *supramental beauty in the physical*.

14.11.1929

Let the *flame of devotion* help you to have the *patience* needed for *transformation*.

18.11.1929

Open your *vital generously to the Divine* with *simple sincerity* and *thoroughness* and keep up the *spirit to conquer the vital enemies*. So can be established a *perfect and integral purity*.

20.11.1929

The complete *opening of the vital* to the Divine leading to the entire *conversion* and to the *transformation of the power in the higher vital* and the *conquest of low vital movements like greed for food* and

sexual desire are the necessary conditions for bringing into *the physical* the principle of *eternal youth*.

28.11.1929

You must get rid of the *rising of the desires in the vital* and establish *purity in the cells* before you can be fit to enjoy *divine prosperity*.

5.12.1929

A *consciousness luminous without obscurity, turned towards the supramental light* and full of a *supramentalised plasticity* are the conditions for the manifestation of the *supramental light upon earth*.

9.12.1929

Let an *integral offering* of your being be the form of your *purified worship*.

10.12.1929

By *integral endurance, perfect mental plasticity* and the *organisation of an integral progress* conquer the *vital enemies*.

22.12.1929

By *vital stability, by purified life-energy* and by the *supramental influence in the cells* it will be possible for the *body consciousness to undergo the supramental transformation* which will fix the *ananda in the sex centre*.

23.12.1929

Be completely *obedient to the Divine's Love*. This will *transform your being* till it becomes *supramentally plastic*.

8.1.1930

First *aspire for vital purity* and fix firmly a *thorough stability in the vital*. Then only can you in truth make the *offering of your vital being* to the Divine.

18.1.1930

Silence all outside noise, *aspire for the Divine's Help; open integrally*

to it when it comes and *surrender* to its action, and it will effectively bring about your *transformation*.

11.2.1930

Resolutely keep up the *spirit to conquer the vital enemies* who stand in the way of the *opening of your vital to the Divine's Love*. The Divine's Love is the sure maker of *vital harmony* which will lead to a *very successful future*.

29.3.1930

Let *gold* be turned to the *service* of the Divine. So it will get *purified* and take its true place in *Krishna's play in the material*.

26.4.1930

Surrender all *falsehood*; your *physical mind* will be *converted* and a *mental victory* won.

1.5.1930

“What do you want?”

An all-surrendering love by which the whole vital being becomes purified and one-pointed. – Amal

Full conversion and consecration of the physical consciousness. Liberation from all sexual impulses and desires. – Pavitra

To be taken right into the Beyond in surrender. – Datta

Deep and complete Faith in all the parts (even in the physical cells).
– Chandulal

I pray constantly to Him to give me the realisation of the harmony between the inner and the outer that I may devote myself entirely and truly to the Mother. – Amrita

In the perfect peace the descent of the supramental light in the physical. – Dyuman

Make my body a perfect instrument of your work. – Satyen

Right attitude. – Champaklal

“What is Yoga?”

To feel a warmth and a glow in the heart in my relation with You.
– Amal

Transformation of my consciousness in terms of the consciousness of the Mother. – Amrita

To live in Mother and to know Mother’s Will. – Champaklal

To do as Mother directs us to do. – Chandulal

A series of experiences which the individual soul feels from the time of its contact with the Divine up to the union with the Divine.
– Dara

To be so entirely cleansed of falsehood that there may be purity to know the Divine Will and respond to the Call at any moment.
– Datta

Not to hinder Mother in making the best possible of us.
– Doraiswamy

To be in complete union with You. – Dyuman

To live only for Mother as if nobody and nothing else existed.
– Lalita

Divinising life. – Nolini

To return home. – Pavitra

Birth of the supreme harmony in matter from the union of the above and the below. – Purushottama

The process by which we transcend the ego and put on the Divine Consciousness and by which we transform the lower nature into the divine nature. – Satyen

Faith in the Divine and aspiration for the Highest. – Tajdar

“Realisation”

Let Agni lead you to Realisation. – Amal

You will have the Realisation of Faith. – Amrita

Be enthusiastic for Realisation. – Champaklal

Faith will lead you to Realisation. – Chandulal

The Star of your Realisation is rising. – Datta

Prayer will lead to Realisation. – Doraiswamy

Your Faith is the straightest way to Realisation. – Dyuman

Keep burning in you the Flame that leads to Realisation. – Lalita

Flame up for Realisation. – Nolini

Realise yourself. – Pavitra

Through Skill in Works you will reach Realisation. – Purushottama

Pray for Realisation. – Rajangam

I will give you the Realisation of Psychological Perfection. – Satyen

Have Faith in your Realisation. – Tajdar

“Experience”

Each had to write out his experience. When I told Mother that I was not conversant with English well enough to write my experience, she asked me to tell her privately what my experience was. And when I did she put it down in writing for me. Here it is:

1. Being fully conscious of the Mother's Grace I feel very, very happy.

2. I am also aware of all my being and all its parts, all the cells of my body as made out of the Mother's substance and consciousness and it gives me a feeling of complete unity with the Mother.

3. The inner being wants that the exterior being with all its energy should be entirely consecrated to the service of the Mother and I have the full confidence that nothing else is required.

29.8.1930

Part III

BIRTHDAY MESSAGES

BIRTHDAY REPORTS

Once I had a long talk with Mother and what she told me was very interesting. I was deeply moved. The next day I asked Mother if she would write for me what she had said. She wrote out:

Champaklal,

1. Be always faithful to the Divine in your heart.
2. Let nothing interfere with the absoluteness of your consecration or stop your progress which has been up to now quite satisfactory.
3. Take the present circumstances and the coming back of... as a test and face it victoriously.
4. Be vigilant.

12.2.1932

THE MOTHER

As you see she gave me four directions. I decided to carry them out in earnest. And each year I would ask Mother about my progress on these four counts. In other words, whether I had passed or failed this examination. Here is an account of the results declared by Sri Aurobindo and Mother, year by year.

11.2.1933

Mother,

Last year I received the examination paper from you. Four things were given. Mother, how many marks do I get? Passed or failed?

1. Passed well.
2. Progressing steadily.
3. Not bad.
4. Satisfactory.

THE MOTHER

February 1934

The progress has been good in all four.

THE MOTHER

19.3.1935

I pray for Mother's answers for all the four separately.

It can be generally said for all four that there is progress.

SRI AUROBINDO

20.3.1935

Isn't it the meaning of your answer yesterday that in comparison with last year there has been no progress this year? Is it true that you are not satisfied with my progress?

No, I did not mean that. I meant what I said that there had been progress in all the four points.

SRI AUROBINDO

Last year I received from Mother "good progress" and this year only "progress". Is there no difference between the two?

You are going on all right; do not worry about it.

THE MOTHER

1.2.1936

I pray for Gracious Mother's answer for all the four separately this year also.

There has been a good general progress this year and you have become much more conscious.

SRI AUROBINDO

With love and special blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1937

I pray for Mother's answer for all the four separately this year also.

1. This is progressing very well.
2. Here you have done well.
3. There is improvement here.
4. Here also.

SRI AUROBINDO

2.2.1938

1. Quite successful.
2. The progress continues to be satisfactory.
3. Quite all right.
4. There is improvement, but more is needed.

Love and blessings to our dear child.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1940¹

1. Satisfactory.
2. Satisfactory.
3. Satisfactory.
4. Be always vigilant.

SRI AUROBINDO
THE MOTHER

1. The report of 1939 is missing from the papers. [M.P.Pandit's note]

2.2.1941

We think that answers on these points are no longer needed.
You have only to go forward straight on the path.

· With our love and blessings

THE MOTHER

BIRTHDAY MESSAGES

2.2.1930

Red lotus – Symbol of the manifestation of the Supreme upon earth. White lotus – Symbol of the Divine Consciousness.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1930

To Champaklal,

Let this year be a year of progress and transformation – one more step on the way leading to the Divine Realisation.

THE MOTHER

Le 2 Février 1933

à Champaklal pour sa fête,

Et les choses qui paraissent les plus difficiles, les plus improbables, et peut-être même les plus impossibles, deviennent réalisables intégralement, puisque Ta Présence nous assure que le monde matériel lui-même est préparé pour manifester la forme nouvelle de Ta Volonté et de Ta Loi.

avec mes benedictions.

LA MÈRE

2.2.1933

To Champaklal for his birthday.

The things which seemed most difficult, most improbable, perhaps, even most impossible, become wholly realisable, because Thy Presence is our assurance that the material world itself is prepared to manifest the new form of Thy Will and Thy Law.

With my Blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1940*

Tranquillise and widen your consciousness; go deeper into your soul.

SRI AUROBINDO

This year make an effort to achieve equanimity.

THE MOTHER

* Facsimiles of these messages, from 1940 onwards, have been published in *Aspiring Swan*, compiled and edited by Roshan and Apurva, 1992.

2.2.1941

A clarified consciousness with strength to reject all inconscience and receive all that comes from the Light, this should be the aim before you.

SRI AUROBINDO

This year you must wholly overcome and throw out the hostile suggestion that has been harassing you, rejecting it in such a way that it will never come back again. Your home, your place and your fulfilment are here.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1942

Aspire always to grow more and more conscious so that all the small obstacles shall disappear from the physical consciousness and the obscurer parts of the vital nature.

SRI AUROBINDO

In front of the repeated attacks from the enemy you must keep your faith intact and endure till the Victory is won.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1943

Keep yourself ready by faith and self-opening to receive the Light when it comes.

SRI AUROBINDO

Let this year be for you the year of a complete opening and of the breaking of all limitations.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1944

Let the mind be quiet and receive the Light; let the vital be quiet and receive the Force that delivers.

SRI AUROBINDO

Let this year bring to you the true faith – a faith that no darkness can obscure.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1945

Let the year that is beginning mark a definitive stage in the growth of your psychic being and its power over your nature and your life.

SRI AUROBINDO

I am glad to be able to say that your openness and your receptivity have increased during last year. Do not stop now and let them become perfect in the year to come.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1946

Continue to open yourself and the psychic consciousness will grow in you and the Light refine and illumine whatever is left of the shadows in the mind and vital being.

SRI AUROBINDO

My dear child, now I can call you in truth my dear child as I feel you quite close to me having taken shelter in my arms for good – and you are welcome there with all my love.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1947

An increasing advance on the road to the entire psychic change is what is most important in the sadhana, for that is the straight road to the spiritual transformation. Devotion, harmony and scrupulousness in work, a growing inner perception and consciousness, more and more fading of the more vehement movements of the vital ego are among the more prominent landmarks on the road.

SRI AUROBINDO

My dear child, that which I had foreseen last year has proved to be quite true and this relation of the Mother and the child has much grown in reality, intensity and deepness.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1948

Matter, blind to the Light, deaf to the call, the material consciousness and material life are the last and most obstinate refuge of the Inconscient and its resistance. There, the nearer the light the higher it raises its wall of resistance. When that is overcome, the decisive transformation can have an open way.

SRI AUROBINDO

My dear child,

Let your receptivity increase this year, to the extent of giving you the power to fully utilise the force that is at work for restoring perfect good health in you.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1949

Sri Aurobindo's love and blessings on the occasion of your birthday.

THE MOTHER

My dear child, now it is time for the faith to become truly active and to stand unshaken against all contradictions. Have the faith, the true faith, that you are cured and the cure is bound to come.

My love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1950 and 1951

To my most faithful child, the keeper of the true remembrance I give today the assurance of my full confidence. I did not write in this book in 1950 because it was to be the most important year of your life, the year that has put a seal to what you were and opened in front of you the door leading to what you will be: a true and complete child of our Lord whose presence here is more total than it has ever been.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1952

Patience

Perseverance

Endurance

Faith and an

Unshakable courage ...

... We are approaching the goal.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1953

A steady progress and a clear understanding of what you must be. These are the gains of the finished year.

Now there is only to continue.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1954

In 1940 Sri Aurobindo wrote to you: "Tranquillise and widen your consciousness" and I insisted on achieving equanimity. Many things have happened since then, much progress has been done and yet these things remain still to be fully realised. Let these be accomplished during this year that begins for you. A silent equanimity both inside and outside will be a great achievement for you.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1955

This time it is a year of true progress which has brought you nearer to the goal and much closer to me.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1956

My dear child,

I can repeat what I said last year – but this time the progress is much bigger and the closeness to me much more true and intimate. You have advanced on the path at a great speed – and I can only tell you, *continue*.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1957

Bonne fête!

To my dear child.

You *have* continued, and this time the progress is much more concrete and complete. I have the strong feeling that I can *rely* upon you and this is very comfortable.

'Let this progress spread to the body now and give you good health steadily.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1958

To my dear child –

One more year;

one more step towards perfect service in a total surrender.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1959

My dear child.

This year, the Grace has arranged circumstances in such a way that you are closer to me than you have ever been – and all through you have proved most reliable and effective, always ready, always there when you are needed, always doing what needs to be done. I am happy to tell you that on your birthday.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1960

Champaklal, my dear child.

I am glad to be able to say that you are progressing steadily. As you yourself remarked, your consciousness is growing and with one more effort you will soon emerge in the light and become wise.

This one more effort is the control of speech... let it be the boon from the Grace for this year!

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1961

Champaklal,

My dear child,

Bonne Fête!

Few words are needed.

All is going on *well*.

Steadily we are advancing towards the goal, and you are keeping pace with me.

My love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1962

Champaklal,

My dear child,

All is well. You are progressing rapidly – there is only to continue steadily and the way will open before you more and more clear.

My love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1963

Bonne Fête!

Champaklal, my dear child

The way is wide open and it is an artistic one, a fine way of expressing your soul, which will become more and more clear and powerful with the inner growth and flowering of your heart as a sincere expression of your eternal Soul.

With love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1964

Champaklal, my dear child

A big step has been taken, a great change has taken place, the

presence of your Soul is clearly felt not only in what you do – which is steadily progressing –, but in what you are.

This is a decisive year for you, heralding the realisation.

With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1965

Champaklal

This year, I feel clearly that you have become a *part of myself*.

For ever love

THE MOTHER

2.2.1966

Bonne Fête!

Bonne Année!

Bon Progrés!

Champaklal,

Let this year see the advent of the true joy of working in the Divine's Consciousness.

With love

THE MOTHER

2.2.1967

Bonne Fête!

To Champaklal

with love and Blessings

The illness has come like a test and gone like a purification carrying away all that was standing in the way of the joy of an integral consecration.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1968

Bonne Fête

To Champaklal

with love and blessings

THE MOTHER

Champaklal,

I am happy to say that you are my true child and becoming more and more so.

THE MOTHER

(The Mother told me: "I come to you. You will read it carefully. It is concrete, my experience." She repeated it. – Champaklal)

2.2.1969

Bonne Fête!
Champaklal,

Let the full Light be with you in a silent adoration.
With my love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1969

Bonne Fête!
To Champaklal the faithful
With love and blessings for
a happy, healthy and useful year
in light, joy and love.

THE MOTHER

A new decade from 70 to 80

2.2.1970

To Champaklal,

En avant!
Toujours
en avant!¹

With love and blessings

THE MOTHER

BIRTHDAY CARDS

2.2.1956
Bonne Fête
to Champaklal

2.2.1957
To Champaklal
with love and blessings

2.2.1959
A Champaklal
Bonne Fête!

2.2.1960
To Champaklal
with blessings

2.2.1961
To Champaklal
Bonne Fête!
With love and blessings

2.2.1963

[Beneath the reproduction of a painting of a white lotus with the Mother's feet in its centre and flames all around it.]

To Champaklal
Let it be the true image of your heart centre.

THE MOTHER

(Mother said: "Champaklal, get it framed and keep it carefully."
- Champaklal.)

2.2.1964
 Bonne Fête!
 To Champaklal
 the great doer of cards
 this card to tell him my appreciation of all what he has done
 and my expectation for still better things to come.
 In a growing closeness
 with love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1964
 To Champaklal,
 Always with you
 for ever
 in eternal Love.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1964
 Bonne Fête!
 To Champaklal,
 Forward! always forward!
 Higher! always higher!
 Truer! always truer!
 Blessings

THE MOTHER

[Beneath a symbolic painting done by Tehmi¹ and offered to the Mother. The Mother gave it to Champaklal on 2.2.1964]

The goal is eternal and infinite...

THE MOTHER

1. Tehmi (b. 17.1.1917), an ardent devotee and dedicated teacher in Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education since 1950.

2.2.1964

To Champaklal,
 specially prepared for his birthday by Gautam
 With love,

THE MOTHER

2.2.1965

Champaklal
 Master of the "cards",
 how to prepare a card for you?
 Here is only some material for a card.
 With full appreciation of you, your work and your devotion
 and with blessings and love

THE MOTHER

2.2.1966

To Champaklal
 with love and blessings for a strong,
 healthy, luminous and happy year,

THE MOTHER

2.2.1966

Champaklal
 Bon Progrés!

THE MOTHER

2.2.1966

Champaklal
 Bonne Fête!

THE MOTHER

2.2.1966

Champaklal
 Bonne Année!

2.2.1966

(Card with a picture of a lion which the Mother gives saying, "friend".)

2.2.1967

Bonne Fête!

Bonne Année!

Bonne Santé!¹

Champaklal

Your being is like this aspiring swan surrounded by the Divine's Love.

Let it be with Peace and Joy

in my love and
blessings

THE MOTHER

1. Happy Birthday! Happy New Year! Good Health!

2.2.1968

Bonne Fête!

To Champaklal

With love and blessings for a wonderful year

THE MOTHER

2.2.1969

Bonne Fête

To Champaklal the Faithful

with love and blessings for a happy, healthy and useful year
in light, joy and love

THE MOTHER

2.2.1970

With love and blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1970

Bonne Fête à Champaklal!

From Mother

to

Champaklal

Love

Peace

Strength

Silence

Consciousness

THE MOTHER

2.2.1970

Bonne Fête!

Champaklal!

2.2.1971

From Sri Aurobindo

to Champaklal

Bonne Fête!

Blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1971

To Champaklal

1st Prize of

Faithfulness

With my full love

bonne fête

THE MOTHER

2.2.1972

Bonne Fête

à

Champaklal

with love and blessings

THE MOTHER

Mother said a few days before my birthday: "Champaklal, what do you want? You bring a beautiful card." And when it was taken to her, she was very happy and began to feel it with her hand again and again. The following quotation had been pasted below Sri Aurobindo's photograph:

"I do not want tens of thousands of disciples. It will be enough if I can get a hundred complete men, purified of petty egoism, who will be the instruments of God."

- Sri Aurobindo

The Mother wrote on this Card:

2.2.1972
 Bonne Fête
 To Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's Champak
 One of the hundred
 with my love, appreciation, trust and blessings for ever.
 En route vers la Réalisation*

THE MOTHER

* On the way to Realisation

2.2.1972
 Bonne Fête
 to
 Champaklal
 with my love

2.2.1972
 To Champaklal
 for his birthday,
 from Saroja and Kumuda,
 with Blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1973

Bonne Fête

To Champaklal

with all my love and confidence
and my blessings to reach the goal.

Let us all be eternally grateful to Him who has shown us and shows
us constantly the way.

THE MOTHER

2.2.1973 (*in black ink*)Bonne (green ink) Fête! (*mauve ink*)Champaklal (*brownish ink*)The Mother (*red ink*)

2.2.1973

Bonne Fête

à mon Champaklal

Blessings

THE MOTHER

2.2.1973

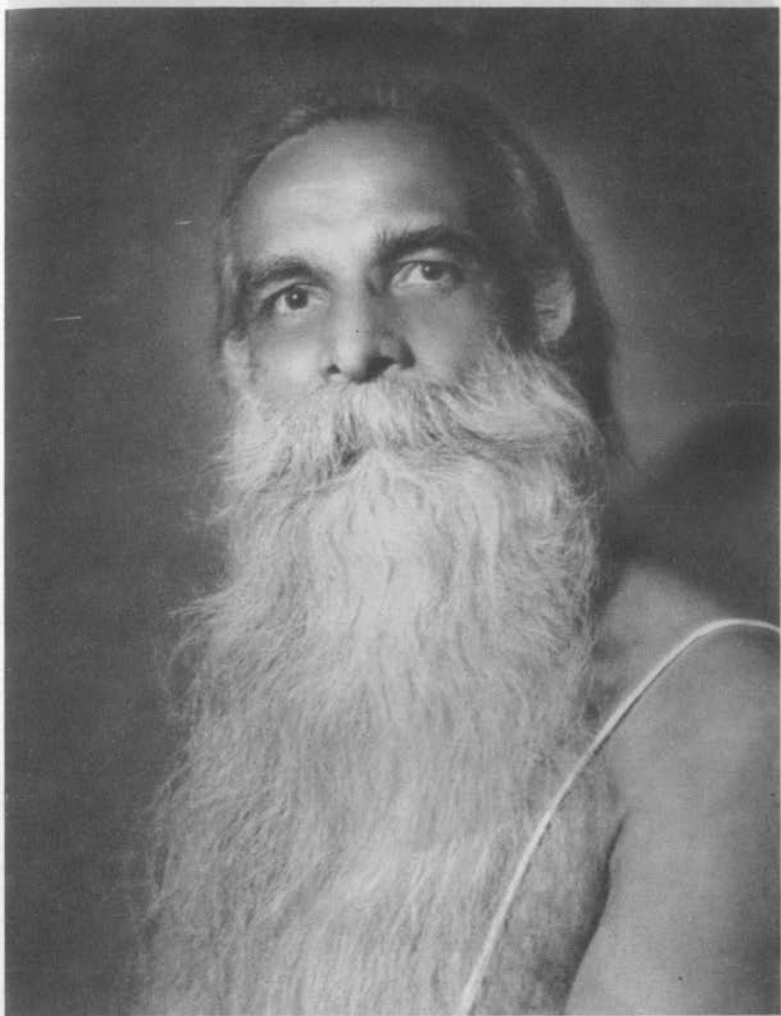
Bonne Fête

à Champaklal

Champaklal

with love
plenty of love

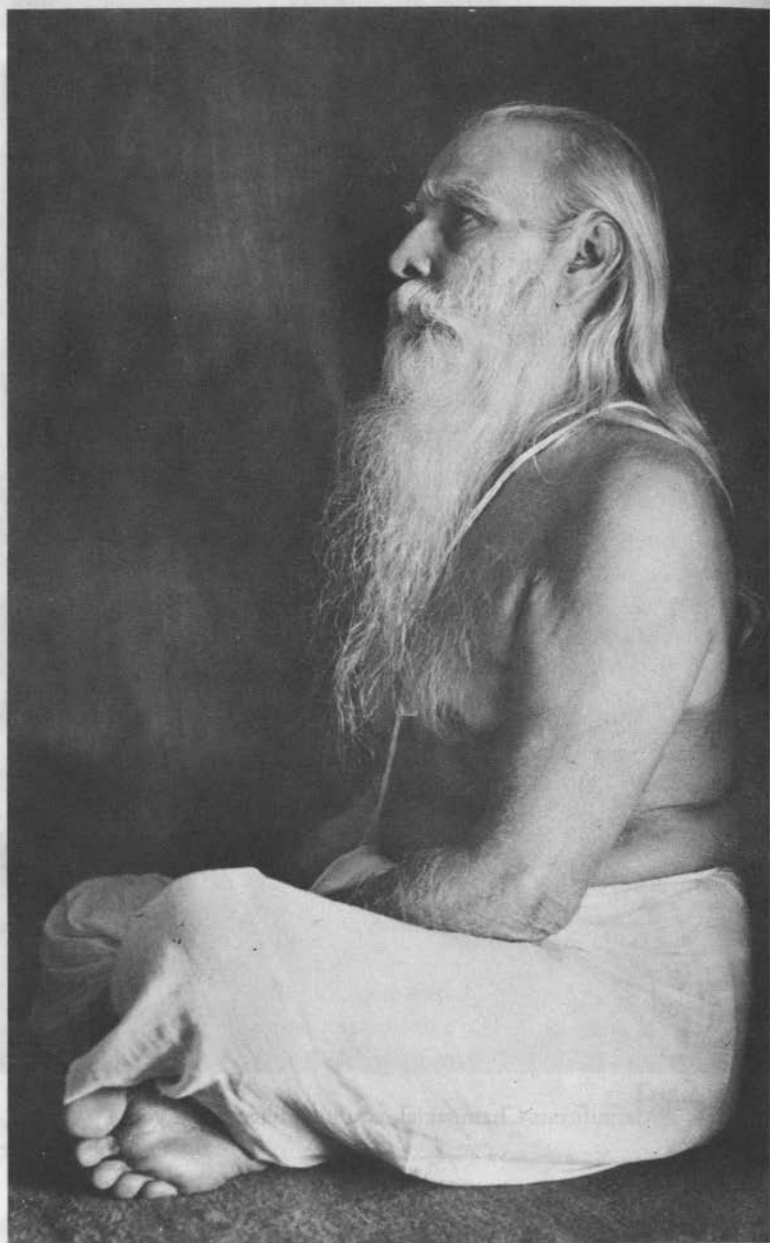
THE MOTHER



"Magnificent Champaklal, you look like a great yogi."

14.3.1968

The Mother



Champaklal at 71 (1974)

Part IV

CORRESPONDENCE

WITH CHAMPAKLAL

Champaklal,

Write to Punamchand that now that Vithaldas has seen the Mother, he should communicate his experience or his difficulties direct to her. It is not desirable that in matters of the Sadhana Punamchand or anybody else should come in between, even as a channel of communication. The Mother's force must go direct undisturbed by any other influences.

December 1928

SRI AUROBINDO

Champaklal,

As regards the Vedic "Dictionary" write to Punamchand that I do not want anything of this kind to be made out of my unfinished work. If it is to be done, it will be in the future and must be only under my express directions and supervision.

December 1928

SRI AUROBINDO

Most Respectful Father,

Yesterday, at 4 o'clock in the morning, when Mother opened the door for me to enter and I looked at her, I felt that she was displeased with me. Again, when I went for Darshan and did my pranams, I felt the same. It affected me badly. I tried to find the reason for her displeasure but failed. Could you please tell me the reason? This morning, when Mother opened the door and I looked at her, she did not even look at me. I was disturbed. When I came to offer my pranams at your feet at Darshan time, you showered your Grace on me by putting your hands on my head again and again. I was full of joy and felt your abounding compassion. But I could not maintain this condition for long only because the thought of Mother's displeasure was troubling me too much.

There was absolutely not the slightest feeling of displeasure, disapproval or any kindred feeling towards you in the mind of the Mother on these occasions. You must be on your guard against these suggestions, for they easily rise, if accepted, with the object of clouding the consciousness. Sometimes it may be the Mother has to be serious or concentrated, not to spread herself outwards as usual,

either because there has been a great strain and she is tired or because of some attack in the general atmosphere. It is possibly on such occasions that the sadhaks take her seriousness or inwardness as personal displeasure towards them, but this is a great mistake. You must learn to reject these impressions altogether when they come.

21.2.1929

SRI AUROBINDO

Champaklal, from today you will sweep Sri Aurobindo's room at about 2.30 p.m., as Haradhan will remain in his room for rest.

24.2.1929

THE MOTHER

I don't feel Mother's Grace as before. Sometimes I get suggestions of going from here; I also get suggestions that I am not fit for Mother's service and for yoga.

What is all this nonsense? The grace of the Mother does not withdraw; open yourself and you will feel it.

1.5.1929

SRI AUROBINDO

Since one month Kamala is telling me, "Mother is not putting her hand on my head. She is neither smiling nor looking at me. How can one stay here in this condition? I wonder if she wants me to go back to Gujarat." The whole day she is crying in sorrow. When I asked her to write to Mother, she said, "When I write to Mother, she smiles for a few days and then it is the same. I do not want that she smiles only when I write to her; if she smiles of her own I feel more joy." If for some reason Mother is displeased with Kamala, please, let us know.

There is absolutely no reason why Mother should be displeased with Kamala. She is not at all displeased with her and she has no wish at all that she should go to Gujarat; she wants her to be here; for here is her true home.

Mother is not at all refraining from smiling at Kamala or doing it by force; she is doing with her just as she has always done. It must be that Kamala has got into some state of sensitiveness in which she is misinterpreting Mother's looks and action – for Mother intends to be and has been very kind with her. This sometimes happens. So

you must tell her to put these ideas out of her head and be calm and happy within and open herself to the Mother – then she will find that Mother is always close to her and she to the Mother and these ideas will cease to trouble her altogether.

SRI AUROBINDO

N wanted to inform the police regarding some matter of the Ashram. Is it good to inform the police?

Such things ought not to happen here; but they do because of the vital ego of the sadhaks which makes them the instruments of wrong forces.

It is said that N is an advanced sadhak. Is his action appropriate? What is the reason behind all these happenings?

The Mother never speaks of advanced sadhaks – it is the sadhaks themselves who have invented the phrase. Whenever they used it in their letters to me, I have thrown ridicule on the phrase and said I have no knowledge of there being two classes in the Ashram, one of advanced sadhaks and the other of non-advanced sadhaks. So the question about N does not arise. If a sadhak whoever he may be, speaks or acts out of anger, rajasic violence or any other unyogic impulse, his speech or action is contrary to the spirit of the sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO

I felt some improvement in the leg but the pain has not gone completely. Generally Ramchandra's medicines are effective, but not in my case. Why it is so?

I have heard that he is a wonderful medium. You have worked through him the case of ordinary people, why not in me? Does that mean that they were more open to Your force than I was? Kindly explain.

R is a remarkable medium, but he is more successful with people outside than with the sadhaks – (not that he has not succeeded with many of them also). For this there are two reasons. People outside are impressed by his apparently miraculous cures and believe

implicitly and follow his treatment – the sadhaks question and dispute it; this mental opposition has a reaction upon the result of the treatment (e.g. R told me there had been a great improvement in X's illness. X denied that there had been any visible or undoubted improvement, yet today Dr. Manilal told the Mother that he was amazed by the improvement, he had not thought such a thing possible, but now he knew because he had seen it.) The other reason is that sadhaks ought not to need an intermediary between themselves and the Mother – their bodies as well as their minds ought by this time to have become sufficiently receptive for that – outside people do need a medium, for they cannot be expected to have the same receptivity.

SRI AUROBINDO

I cannot understand whether I am doing yoga or not. Can it be said that I am doing your integral yoga?

Everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can “do” the Purna Yoga, i.e. carry out and fulfil all the sides of the Yoga by one's own effort. No human being can do that. What one has to do is to put oneself in the Mother's hands and open oneself to her by service, by bhakti, by aspiration; then the Mother by her light and force works in him so that the sadhana is done. It is a mistake also to have the ambition to be a big Purna Yogi or a supramental being and ask oneself how far have I got towards that. The right attitude is to be devoted and given to the Mother and to wish to be whatever she wants you to be. The rest is for the Mother to decide and do in you.

SRI AUROBINDO

At one time it was impossible to think of leaving the Mother or going out of this place. Nowadays thoughts of visiting my father keep recurring. What is the reason?

It is one of the suggestions of the external physical consciousness that are filling the atmosphere just now. I explain that to you in the answers below.

For quite some time now, at nights, I get strange dreams. I forget my way, come across many obstacles, but ultimately I would find my way by the Mother's Grace and also feel Her Protection. Earlier, I did not get such dreams at all. I used to fly straight. Why am I getting such dreams nowadays?

You used to have dreams on the vital plane also long ago in which you passed through dangerous forests and wildernesses amid parts of land and water and wild beasts etc., but you reached safely under the Mother's protection where you were going. I remember you were writing some to me. Also there have been dreams of difficult passages ending in the arrival on the true open way. Only these dreams you are having now indicate the difficulty of the passage through the physical (and no longer through the vital) consciousness – but the common element is that you are under the Mother's protection and reach the way at the end.

This is quite natural because what everybody is passing through now are the difficulties of the physical and subconscious nature; but the Mother's protection is the same here as in the past stages of the sadhana.

Long back, Mother told me, "Give me your promise that you will never express the desire to leave the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo was not pleased with your letter." But what could I tell her except, "You know the reason very well." Then Mother said, "Yes, but you must speak. If you do not say it how can I help you?" I felt that all these things were inside me only. But I cannot express it, because I know my sadhana in life is to serve only the Divine. I pray to Mother, to please explain to me from where all these things came into my mind.

What Mother said she knew about the reasons is simply what I have written, nothing else.

SRI AUROBINDO

..†

I am happy to write to you that I find a change has come over me after writing to you. Is it true or I am imagining it?

It is true. Whenever you are open to the Mother or turn to her with confidence in your difficulties, if there come any, you will feel the

same. It is your true being that comes up – that part which admits these wrong suggestions is something quite external.

SRI AUROBINDO

I heard that today morning R did not come for Pranam and also did not meet Mother after Pranam, as he usually does. In the afternoon, when I was coming upstairs at 3.00 o'clock I saw R in P's room. They were chatting and laughing as usual. After some time he came out and started joking with me. I asked him why he had not come for Pranam in the morning. His face fell; I could not understand why he became so serious on hearing Mother's name. Also, I have often seen that he was quite cheerful just before coming for Pranam, but when he came in front of Mother he looked sorrowful and displeased. What was the reason?

R is doing like many others – they are cheerful outside, but sorrowful or displeased or suffering when they come to the Mother or write to her. There is a sort of idea (which was long current in the Ashram) and there is still a feeling in the vital that the more you do that with the Mother the more you would get out of her. Of course it is absurdly untrue – the truth is the opposite; the more one is cheerfully open to her and lives in the light and gladness, the more one is likely to receive.

SRI AUROBINDO

In our tradition Garuda [eagle] is the vehicle of Lord Krishna. Is it real or only symbolic?

It is symbolic.

What is the significance of Garuda?

The Light.

Day before yesterday a garuda came here and died in the night. Is there any occult meaning in it?

It probably came only to die in peace and enter into the Light to which it was attracted, being itself a symbol of Light.

Will this garuda benefit by dying in the Ashram?

Mother took special care of it and gave it the best death possible.

We hear that Mother saw it from Pavitra's terrace. Was it not fortunate? And will it therefore get the benefit in its next birth?

Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO

In the calm sea, on the horizon, I saw a fire whose flames gradually reached the sky.

The calm sea is the quiet vital, the flames are the aspiration rising to the higher consciousness to bring it down; on the horizon means this is the development before you to which you have to move.

SRI AUROBINDO

Night before last in a dream I quarrelled with Mother and left her; I lost my faith in her. This aggrieved me a lot and I remained depressed. In another dream I was carrying the big key – to the upstairs door of Mother's house – which was given to me by her. Suddenly, it disappeared from my hands. I searched a lot for it to go up there, but in vain. I got panicky and depressed. What does this mean?

It is probably one part of your being that revolted in dream; it was moved by wrong forces.

Both the dreams are warnings to be careful against hostile suggestions (first dream) or interferences (second dream).

SRI AUROBINDO

What is the meaning of this blue lotus?

..†

It can be taken as the (Avatar) incarnation on the mental plane.

SRI AUROBINDO

I keep the book *The Mother* under my pillow at night, and I feel I benefit more than by reading the book. I am helped even during the

night. I have not read this book completely, but by keeping it with me like this, I benefit a lot. Am I benefitted because of my faith or because of the book?

It is something in your mind that gives the effectiveness of which you speak to the book. If it were a manuscript copy, then it might have a power purely of its own because something of the writer would be there; but a printed book can only be a support for the action of your mind which uses it as a means for receiving and fixing there your thought of the Mother and the nearness of her protecting influence.

SRI AUROBINDO

Can we get knowledge without reading? I feel that there is no need of reading for my spiritual progress. Am I right?

There is no need of reading; knowledge can come without it. You may have read the Mother's answer to Motiben in which she speaks of work as sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother, I am really attached to my family a lot and especially to my father. Would you please write down for me whatever you said this morning because it has helped me a lot. Though I am not fit to be your child but by Thy Grace all is possible. Thy Grace is my Mantra. I want to be your faithful child and nothing else. May all the parts of my being be yours.

Take advantage of the circumstances to get rid of all attachment to the members of your family.

You must learn that you have no more brothers, sister, father, mother, except Sri Aurobindo and myself, and you must feel free and unconcerned whatever happens to them. We are your whole family, your protection, your all in all.

I am waiting for the day when I will say very proudly that I am your faithful child and I want nothing but you; all the parts of the being will ask only for you; nothing will remain mine; everything will become yours.

Yes, this will be one day.

THE MOTHER

You have progressed much in many ways – but there are always in everybody some things in the more external being that resist obstinately until that is clear. They are small things and a small part of the nature. You need not be discouraged by their persistence. They will go in the end by observation and vigilance with regard to....*

SRI AUROBINDO

* Incomplete in the manuscript. [M.P.Pandit's note]

Yes, you are becoming more conscious; but don't make jokes like that about these things, for people don't understand them and get wrong notions about you and about the whole matter.

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother gave me the following extract from her Prayers in April 1930:

12 December 1914

O divin Maitre, avec quel ardent amour je suis Ton serviteur!...

avril 1930

THE MOTHER

After writing, she explained to me in English what was written in French.

“O divine Master, with what ardent love I am Thy Serviteur!”

Champaklal,

The offering of your physical being will perfect your skill in works.

Your skill in works will make perfect your physical offering.

2.7.1931

THE MOTHER

Am I open to the Mother or not? I feel at times all my parts are not open to the Mother, I pray for complete openness to her.

No, you are quite open; the Mother is very pleased with your

progress. Of course, there are things that are not perfect, but that will come of itself little by little.

13.1.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother, Nolini informed me that Mother will see me on the 13th. I see that Mother is always so busy. What Mother wants to give, she can give even without seeing. Instead of giving me time on the 13th, Mother may utilise the few minutes for other important work.

I have kept some time to play (music) for you (at 11 a.m.) and I will do it.

11.2.1932

THE MOTHER

To Champaklal For 1932

Peaceful confidence in the mind, cheerful devotion in the heart, firm resolution in the vital, quiet energy in the body.

13.2.1932

THE MOTHER

Today you asked me to place three tumblers in the cupboard but I told you that I would place them in the Stores. Was it not disobedience?

Not disobedience, but perhaps want of knowledge.

If your mind had accepted what the Mother said without question, things would have gone all right. But since there was an apprehension in the mind, it might have fulfilled itself – so it was better to express it.

25.2.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

A part of me wants to be ascetic as I was before coming here. Another part wants to have nice aesthetic things. I am unable to decide. Pray, enlighten me on this.

You must be prepared to live in either condition, attached neither to luxury nor to asceticism. It is good to be able to live with very few things but you must also be able to live with nice and decent things and make right use of them. Never mind your true need, live with whatever the Mother has given you.

6.4.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother, I require one small plank to keep it under the commode to wash it.

You ask Chandulal or you can take the side of a box.

20.6.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

I pray to Mother if possible to give me a copy of her *Prieres et Meditations*.

A rule has been made that the book is to be given only to those who know French or are studying French. The Mother cannot make an exception for you, for then she would have to make an exception for everybody.

27.6.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

However, the book was given to me later though I did not know French even then. The inscription read:

21-9-32

No. 5 à Champaklal

MIRA

I was surprised to find the number 5 written on it. By this I understood that she had numbered my copy and kept it for me. In those days Mother used to give certain numbers to sadhaks; they had an occult significance. My number was 5. – Champaklal.

At times I lie unintentionally. What I say does not represent the fact completely. I get disturbed. What is the wrong element in me?

It is only a want of habit of control over the centre of expression.

29.7.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

I want to know how far man is responsible for his own death and for the death of the objects he uses or comes into contact with.

It is a law of transformation that works, but it is an inertia in the body that makes it work out in that way – resulting in death or destruction of the form.

12.9.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

G does not come for pranam in the morning. Is this a higher state in his sadhana? If he does not go out of his house one can understand but I see him going about with others as usual.

How to abstain from Pranam can be the sign of a "higher state of sadhana"?

It is simply a fancy of his mental and vital pride.

20.9.1932

THE MOTHER

I pray to Mother for permission to go to market between 3 and 4 p.m. to look for a suitable mat or carpet for Sri Aurobindo's room.

It is your time of sleep. We can use the new roll that is here.

2.10.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

There is a cavity in my left upper molar tooth, which has become bigger than before. There is occasional bleeding from the gums surrounding the tooth cavity. I pray Mother to let me know whether it is necessary for me to consult a dentist.

You can get the tooth filled, but do not let him pull teeth out.

3.11.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Sometimes, while working or preparing juice or while walking I see scenes (visions) with open eyes – beautiful gardens, orchards, rivers, mountains, cities, forests, birds, beautiful sceneries and different types of idols. Some of the visions are clear, some are not. Some are related and meaningful, while some are totally meaningless and irrelevant. Some I remember and some I forget immediately. At times, they go on like a cinema, but most of them become blurred and are forgotten. Are visions helpful in sadhana in anyway? And if yes, then how?

Does my previous dream about travel have any meaning?

The particular things seen may be of no importance, but the power of seeing is of importance and can be of great help in the Yoga. It enables you to see things belonging to other planes (other than the physical) and get knowledge that is useful for sadhana – also to have concrete contact with the Mother in those planes (mental, vital, psychic worlds) etc.

I shall tell you about your long dream afterwards.

5.11.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother, I wrote a letter to Sri Aurobindo [regarding my afternoon rest]. He replied, "She does not insist." I misunderstood its meaning and stopped taking rest and started drawing and painting flowers during resting time. But now that I have understood my mistake I beg your pardon. I do not want to displease you in any way. My only aim in life is to be what you want me to be. "Knowingly or unknowingly may I never do anything against Thy will" is my prayer, my sadhana, and my mantra.

Of course you ought to have rested in the afternoon as the Mother had told, as a matter of obedience. But if you had remained quiet all the time, it would not have mattered so much. What is doing harm is your mixing too much with M and S; it is lowering your atmosphere and harming your progress.

6.11.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

I saw a long and big key, with the word MOTHER in big letters in white colour above it. All around there was light. Is there any meaning in this?

Is it a key you saw? If so the meaning is clear; it is the key to the Divine realisation; the Mother is the key because it is her light (white is her colour) that enables us to open the gate of realisation.

15.11.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Yesterday while resting between 2.30 and 3.30 p.m. I saw a dream. My father came here on a visit. I showed him around and he was quite satisfied. It reminded me of what Sri Aurobindo had once said: "Champaklal's father will have to come to Ashram once." I felt that it had come true.... I took my father to the terrace. From there we started walking... ultimately we came down, where we saw a big lake. It was deep and the water was mossy and dirty. Motiben was swimming in it. I asked her, "Do you come here every day for bathing?" Motiben said, "Yes, I come here every day for bathing and swimming." I told my father, "Since years I am staying here, but I have never bathed in this water." My father was surprised to hear this.

Afterwards we started slowly climbing the steps beside the lake. Suddenly my father's foot hit a stone on the way. He said, "I am not much injured, I have come out of the crisis, but you have to face it." I looked down suddenly and saw a strange looking person at the bottom of the steps staring up at me. He had a huge body and a face of a very strange colour. I felt that he was the biggest hostile force of the vital world but I was not afraid. I felt like killing him and said, "I will kill you." He started laughing at my poor strength and inability to kill him. I did not bother about it and fought with him and tried to throw him out. Our fight went on for a long time. I was on the verge of killing him when Rajangam called me as it was time for me to wake up. I woke up before I could kill him but still felt a joy as if I had actually won. It surprised me how I could fight with such a huge and ferocious being who could frighten anyone.

Does it indicate a future difficulty I have to pass through?

These things are not usually prophecies of the future; it was an attack on the vital plane which you were strong enough to repulse.

22.11.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

During meditations I find that my head and trunk bend down again and again. I am conscious but I cannot help it. Should I stop coming for meditations?

It does not matter.

You must not stop coming to meditation.

SRI AUROBINDO

I have learnt that Mother does not like people coming for Pranam without taking their bath. Is that true?

No. People say all sorts of nonsense.

SRI AUROBINDO

Shall I write Sri Aurobindo's reply to the postcard received by me today as from me or as from Sri Aurobindo?

Write as from yourself – as what you know about the conditions of the Darshan.

5.1.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

I have done this picture without anybody's help. How is it? Will I be able to learn?

To learn means months and months of study before any picture can be done; studies from nature, drawing first for a long time, painting only after.

If you are ready to study hard and regularly, then you can begin, otherwise it is better not to try.

6.1.1933

THE MOTHER

At times I feel that I have lost the devotion which I had when I first came to you. At times I feel that the devotion is not lost but has become more steady and quiet. What is the fact?

No, you have not lost your devotion; it may have lost some effervescence, but not its intensity.

Though I have stopped putting on the sacred thread, I use it whenever my mother is likely to see me. For I do not want her to feel sorry on this account. Naturally this is only a pretence. Does this hinder my true spiritual progress?

It may not hinder your progress but what about the spiritual progress of your mother? However, since she is going it is not worthwhile changing at the last moment.

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother,

Tea was given to N on 24.2.33. This morning he came at 9.10 and asked for more tea. He wants it before noon. He said to me that he has taken permission from Mother. Shall I give it to him or not?

He asked for the tea but I did not send my sanction as I had told him to write a letter to Sri Aurobindo and he has not yet done it. As soon as he sends his letter, he will get his tea.

16.3.1933

THE MOTHER

Today one big calamity has happened. The watch chain which

Mother gave me is lost. But the watch is there. Why did I lose it?
What meaning can it have?

How did you "lose" it if the watch is still there? Is it not possible that it is merely mislaid somewhere?

3.4.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

By the Grace of the Mother I got back the chain which I lost yesterday. It was lying on the footpath.

4.4.1933

After arranging Sri Aurobindo's bed I do pranam to the bed. At that time I imagine making pranam to Mother and Sri Aurobindo and I feel myself at his lotus feet and receive his blessings. Is this entirely imagination?

It is true; because you do it with the inner being and subtle body and the exterior consciousness shares the experience.

12.4.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

For the last few days I have not been able to draw flowers, due to some obstacle or the other. Does it mean that Mother does not wish me to draw them?

No, Mother had no such idea. Obstacles coming in the way do not mean that she does not want. You have to get free from the obstacles.

2.5.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

[Regarding Pranam, in which the Mother blessed the sadhaks through her eyes and by placing her hand upon their heads.]

No, only sometimes she does not press with the whole hand.

It depends on different things with different sadhaks. But most often it depends more on the Mother's own condition; if she is very much absorbed, she may not press the full hand.

The answer is the same as for the hand. Sometimes the Mother is looking at the sadhak inside and very absorbed in her work. Then

she may not smile even though the sadhak is in a very good condition.

14.5.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

One part of me wants to give up the drawing of flowers because it finds it difficult; another part does not want to give up. Which is which?

It is different parts of the mental and vital physical.

What should I do?

Continue, but without worrying. Let it come spontaneously.

How to learn to give shade and light?

Try and Mother will show you on the drawing. At first try not in colours but in pencil or ink (black and white).

?5.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Today I tried these roses but could not succeed.

The shading is good; they are very well done.

25.5.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

What is discipline and how does it apply here in our yoga?

It is not the discipline of yoga but the discipline of an organisation, the exterior material discipline one has to accept if one is to be part of an organisation.

9.7.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

P was making all kinds of gestures and movements and then began to dance wildly. What was this force?

Some material energy, not hostile.

Will material energy manifest in this form or is it that P made it to manifest in this form?

Material energy manifests at present in many ways – motor-accidents, fires, Russian dances etc. What do you mean by “will manifest”?

16.7.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

I noticed D doing certain uncontrolled actions. Is he possessed by some hostile force?

He is possessed occasionally.

If it is a possession by some hostile force, why should it go to him only?

Because he accepts it.

When there is such possession, does it take place by his calling it consciously into himself or there is something in his nature of which he is not conscious that invites this force?

It is something in him that invites it and his will does not say No, or does not say it strongly enough. In other cases the person welcomes it through his ignorance or ambition or for some other vital satisfaction.

Does the hostile force enter though Mother has put her protection around him?

Not if the person remains in the protection.

When the protection is around him how does a person get out of it?

By desire, wrong thoughts, wrong actions, wrong feelings, by revolt, pride, ambition, lust or any other vital indulgence.

16.7.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Today I have tried to draw human figures from this book. If I try these figures will it be helpful in learning portrait drawing?

No, except for drawing the line. You could copy things with more variety in them.

23.7.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

About the last picture you said "colour should be less hard", that is to say, colour should be light?

No, it meant that the colours jar a little with each other, don't harmonise. Besides, they are too plain and obvious.

3.8.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

I saw a beautiful lotus and inside it a coconut. The lotus was not quite open but one after another the petals were opening.

It is the Consciousness opening, with the offering to the Divine within it.

5.8.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Why did you not tell X that it is a mistake to interpret the Mother's smiling or not smiling, putting her whole hand or a finger only, a sign of pleasure or displeasure or of this sadhak's good or bad condition? It is quite a mistake. It is when the Mother is very much absorbed or drawn within or in a trance that these things happen; sometimes it has happened that the Mother had not put her hand at all on the head of one of the best sadhaks with whose condition she was most pleased. This is a thing everybody must understand; X should put out the old idea altogether. It has been explained to many sadhaks who made the same complaint and now they are all satisfied. Explain it to X.

7.8.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

I begin to feel sleepy whenever I want to read or write or study. Why?

It is because the body needs sleep; and so when you concentrate on reading or writing it turns the concentration into sleep.

8.8.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Is there any possibility in me of doing something creative or original in drawing or painting? If so what should I do?

Go on studying and it will come of itself at its own time. You are progressing rapidly.

11.9.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

I would like to know what I have to do to develop my drawing.

Try to look at things for a long time till you have an impression which you can keep in your mind. Then come back and reproduce the impression you kept.

23.9.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

I find painting very interesting but also very difficult.

You have the capacity. You have only to be steady in your endeavour.

6.10.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Today I was very much disappointed in drawing and began to get suggestions for giving up the whole thing.

There is no reason for any such disappointment. Most of your work has shown that you have an innate capacity. As for failures, an artist learning his art has no right to be discouraged even by a hundred failures. Everyone has to go through them and it is by the failures that he learns, and ends by finding what not to do and how to get his technique.

10.10.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Today, by Thy Grace, I was able to do something. How do you find the picture?

It is very good. It is not usual for a beginning to be so good. You have a sense of composition; you must develop it.

10.10.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

About 20 days back I saw a flame of fire coming out of a lotus. At that time I thought it was only my imagination. Today I see something like that on the cover of the book *The Mother*. I have tried to draw it. Has it any meaning?

It must be the fire of aspiration rising from the opened consciousness towards the Sun of Truth with all its colours (forces) around it.
18.11.1933 SRI AUROBINDO

I have neither the urge nor the enthusiasm to draw or paint, for some time now. What should I do?

If you stop for some time (not forcing yourself), it will come back.
21.12.1933 SRI AUROBINDO

Today again I got pain. Why do I get pain like this?

You must be careful to lie down enough, stretched out. The body needs that position of rest to keep in full strength and health.
25.12.1933 SRI AUROBINDO

Does pain or illness indicate something wrong?

Not necessarily; it may be merely something wrong in the body.
27.12.1933 SRI AUROBINDO

Day before yesterday I had asked something for copying from Mother. But I did not get any answer. Is it better for me to give up this drawing? Perhaps there is no possibility in me.

I forgot to take Mother's answer in the hurry of the work. Mother is giving you a painting to begin with; you can try with water colours. Or if you want a human face, Mother can give.
11.1.1934 SRI AUROBINDO

Will you say something about my work? What is the defect and what change I must make in my attitude?

Mother says you are doing your work perfectly well; so you need not worry thinking it has defects.

11.1.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

Though I feel I have full faith I think there is some part that still has not got faith.

All the parts do not get enlightened at the same time; the subconscious parts are slow to change, but they change in the end.

12.1.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

I could not draw exactly what I saw in the vision. Does this drawing mean anything?

It seems to be the fire of aspiration towards the Truth (the Sun) supported by the Divine Presence and lifting up the nature towards the just visible Sun of Truth.

7.2.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

There is a feeling of sickness around. I have a heavy headache. What is it all due to? There are so many sadhaks who are sick at present.

It is caught by one person from another or from the atmosphere. It is largely an auto-suggestion.

Is it true that because the 21st [February] is coming near those who are unable to bear the pressure are falling sick?*

No, that is all nonsense.

10.2.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

* This I had asked because there were many sadhaks who said it. But I myself did not believe it. – Champaklal

I prepare the juice for the day as follows:

Morning – 8.15 a.m. – 1 tumbler – 5 1/2 oranges

Afternoon – 1.15 p.m. – 1 tumbler – 5 1/2 oranges

For Sri Aurobindo – 1/4 tumbler – 2 1/2 oranges

Now I would like to know how much juice should I prepare for the night to put in the thermos?

When there is no other fruit like grapes or pomegranates, then put 1 1/2 tumblers. Otherwise 3/4 tumbler.

3.3.1934

THE MOTHER

Mother, I came to know that Sri Aurobindo waits for one hour for the soup to get cooled and then takes it – if that is so, I would like to know from Mother whether it is necessary to boil the soup (which is generally ready by 2.30 p.m.) at 9.30 p.m. and keep it covered under a tea-cosy (as it is being done every day). If it is not necessary, then only Mother's soup can be boiled?

The soup in the evening is very rarely too hot to be taken immediately as you bring it, as now, as I go for my bath and I go one hour afterwards as the bath takes three quarters or more and I do a little work before I go to eat. So no change need be made. If it were not boiled or covered it would be cold soup – I prefer it warm.

8.3.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

I want to know from my All why Mother is not pleased with me, my work and my progress. This feeling that she is displeased makes me very uncomfortable and I get the idea of going away from here. I know how difficult it is for me to stay away from Mother. What should I do?

Mother is not displeased with your work or with you; there was no such thing in her mind. But the progress of no one here is complete; there is, as you know yourself, still much to change and from time to time the Mother puts a pressure that it may be done. You must not take that pressure for displeasure. As for going away, you must yourself realise that the suggestion can only come from a hostile source and you should not allow it to dwell in you for a moment. Mother is quite ready to tell you in what points more progress is necessary, though I think you must for the most part know it yourself. Especially she wants you to be more guarded in

your speech. You are in a special position and one of great trust and whatever you say is taken up and commented on, so you must be careful that nothing should go out from you which ought not to be said or known. To talk less and not be too unguarded in your speech should be a part of your discipline of sadhana.*

Keep yourself open to the Mother and in perfect union with her. Make yourself entirely plastic to her touch and let her mould you swiftly towards perfection.

SRI AUROBINDO

My child, your work is what it has always been, worthy of the trust we have put in you and you need not worry at all about that. But be very careful to let no influence diminish your confidence in me and allow nothing or nobody to separate you from me.

9.3.1934

THE MOTHER

* The problem I had then with speaking is now [1980s] with communicating in writing. And yet this writing continues! - Champaklal.

Mother, my Gracious Mother,

Now I do not feel there is a veil between you and me. Mother, by your special Grace the veil has been removed. Now I feel one with you, as before. Mother do not take away this experience.

It is all right. There is no reason why you should not keep always in union with the Mother. It is your natural relation and much more than an experience.

10.3.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother,

When I came up at 8.30 p.m., S was sitting on the stairs facing the door which opens inside. He asked me whose footsteps were being heard? Who was walking inside? I said to him that I did not know. Mother I would like to know whether my answer was all right.

Yes, certainly, they have no right to ask.

15.3.1934

THE MOTHER

My All,

After receiving the last letter from you I felt my outer consciousness turned within and with this inward turn I felt myself calm and peaceful and more gathered within than before.

Mother, I pray to Thee to make me entirely free from any other influence except Thine. I would like to know how to make myself entirely plastic to Thy touch? I do not quite understand the meaning of "Thy touch".

Touch means the contact of Mother's force and its influence.

If you allow no other influence, you will easily become plastic.

15.3.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

When will my inner eyes open? Kindly tell me what is the chief obstacle in my way.

Do you mean the inner eyes which see the Divine face to face? There must be a complete consecration of everything to the Divine without allowing pride or any kind of attachment to intervene.

14.4.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

This morning at pranam time I saw a very small baby standing in front of me with a very happy cheerful face and carrying on his shoulders a pot of water which looked too heavy for a baby. He offered me water from the pot and said: "Take this water, Mother will again fill it up." I took it and saw to my surprise that the pot was being again filled up; nobody knew how it was filled up; it was like magic. When the baby said that the Mother would fill up the pot again, I was very much impressed by the simple faith of the baby and his being conscious of the Mother, young as he was. I wish to know the meaning of this from Mother.

It was your psychic being.

21.4.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

The three oil paintings done by Mother were getting spoiled by dust; they were removed to my room. If Mother approves I shall be glad to have them hung on the wall of my room.

Mother thinks you should leave them where they are. Mother does not like to have new nails on the wall.

28.4.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

The chit for an orange for Seetha, which Mother left for me on 23rd, was wrongly read by me. I read Sudhir in place of Seetha. As I happened to meet the Doctor I showed him the chit and asked him to read it. He read it and went on insisting and at last convinced me that it was Sudhir and not Seetha. I trusted him thinking that he knew better English and was used to reading Mother's handwriting in his notebook which he sends to her, giving information about sick people. But when I received another chit enquiring about the orange for Seetha I learnt my mistake.

That is how people (the doctor in this instance) make mistakes by having preconceived ideas in the mind. He jumped at once at the idea of Sudhir having an orange – so he saw all the reasons possible for reading Sudhir – and also all the impossible reasons.

?.4.1934

THE MOTHER

Mother, I get pain in my knee, ankle and back regularly. Sometimes I am unable to stand, even for five minutes. In the winter it becomes acute. I do not understand how and why this pain comes to me so persistently.

It is rheumatism, probably hereditary – it will go with the transformation of the body.

Mother, I suffer from constipation. So I am taking lime juice regularly. But nowadays I get only one instead of the usual two limes daily. That too is a very small one. Can I have one more?

Mother can give you one from hers.

12.5.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

If one went to the Himalayas, the likelihood is that one would make oneself fit for inactive meditation and quite unfit for life and the Mother's service – so in the next life the character would be like

that. This is simply the influence of old ideas that have no application in this yoga. It is here in the life near the Mother, in the work itself that one must become fit to become a perfect instrument of the Mother.

15.5.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother,

During my resting time unexpected work sometimes comes up such as the untimely arrival of a parcel, distribution of fruits, etc. Under these circumstances which of these things can be dropped in order to rest between 3 to 4 in obedience to your orders?

Certainly, you do your work in the true spirit.

But if you don't think of yourself and Mother is not thinking of you, who will think? That is why she was insisting on your rest. What you should do is to remember Mother's wish about your resting in the afternoon and do it as much as possible. Mother does not insist strictly on your sleeping all the time from 3 to 4, if that is not possible.

3.6.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

My All, Mother Gracious,

Early morning I saw a vision and I tried to represent it in this painting. Does it have a significance?

The sun is of course the Truth and the building is the material consciousness that has become capable of receiving the light. The flowers indicate our presence in the material consciousness.

25.8.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

Some people are permitted to stay and encouraged but they are unable to stay and go away. Some even if they want to go are unable to go. Why is it so?

Impossible to answer generally, for each case is different and needs its own special answer.

8.9.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

I do not understand why I am becoming more lazy day by day. I pray Mother may kindly let me know.

Why do you say you are lazy? We don't see any sign of it.

25.9.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

I say lazy because I was feeling like that. Formerly I was daily bringing to you my drawings but nowadays I am unable to do it. Is that not laziness?

Does not this go by periods very often – sometimes doing, sometimes not doing? That is hardly laziness.

26.9.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

I do not know what is the meaning of the phrase “Advanced sadhaks”. I suppose this simply meant that he had been here a long time and had long practised sadhana.

5.10.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

In winter I get pain all over my body and in some places it is unbearable. In my fingers swelling appears periodically. I wish to know whether there is an end to this pain and suffering or I have to go through it indefinitely?

You must keep a constant faith that these things must go and call in the Force to cure them.

Does it carry any meaning?

It is simply that the material consciousness must become more receptive.

18.10.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother,

Today though I saw you near the table I did not stay there thinking that I should not take Mother's time, as even a minute is very precious to you. I went away. Did I do right or wrong?

Champaklal, the intention was good but the movement was a mistaken one. These few seconds do not take away the Mother's time and they are the two moments when she has also a contact with you. So you must change nothing with regard to these, but go on as before.

3.12.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

D keeps the door of the staircase wide open while talking to L. Even when D goes inside to fetch something for L she leaves the door open. This morning I happened to open the door when L knocked. In spite of L's request to leave it open, I closed it, saying that I shall send D.

I would like to know whether I have done anything wrong in closing the door.

It is safer to keep the door closed, but you can explain to L that it is not for her, but the Mother wants it shut so that others who are indiscreet may not arrive and rush in.

12.12.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

P was telling me that if Mother's portrait of me is left as it is, it may fade away and that it would be better to have it fixed with fixing solution. I like to know from Mother what she would like me to do.

No, it will not fade; it is pencil, not charcoal and there is no need of fixing it.

4.2.1935

THE MOTHER

When I look into the portrait more and more, my figure disappears gradually, and finally I see instead of my portrait Sri Aurobindo's portrait before me. Mother, what is the meaning of this?

You see Sri Aurobindo behind your being – supporting it.

4.2.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

Ma chère Mère,

What did you see in me this morning? After Pranam, when I looked at you, you did not smile at all. Why?

Mon cher enfant,

What I saw in you was as usual very good and it seems to me

that I smiled as usual also – at least that was my intention. But if I was not smiling, it must be that I was still deep inside as during meditation.

With my blessings.

14.2.1935

THE MOTHER

Champaklal,

Les cartes sont très jolies. [The cards are very pretty.]

I am sending one back. I would like you to draw a rose in the corner.

With love and blessings always.

18.2.1935

THE MOTHER

Last night I had this dream: There was a huge workshop where many people were working. The road leading to my destination was very long, but there was a short-cut through the workshop. Hence, I requested the owner to allow me to go through it. He said there was absolutely no room inside, as people were working and the passage was full of gunny bags etc. It seemed a mere excuse, so I persisted and finally, despite much reluctance, he agreed. He sent a man to show me the way. After a long walk we came to a secret exit at the end of the workshop but something like two or three walls blocked the way though, to my utter surprise, a road could be seen going through them. Suddenly, I saw a woman approaching us from the other side. I was surprised how she got inside while our way was blocked. My escort, hid himself as soon as he saw her. I felt that he wanted to arrest her, so I warned her through signs which he could not see. So she climbed up a tree and started breaking something; my escort did not like this and asked me to go back. But I requested him to permit me to go ahead and finally he asked me to go with him. He led me along a secret passage through a couple of walls and asked me to sit down in one place. I felt that it was his last secret passage and he did not want to show me. I thought it was the last barrier as I could hear the noise and movement of people on the road on the other side. I sat for a while and when I looked up, I saw a man turning a key. The yellow ceiling, which was gigantic, got separated into two parts. Slowly, the ceiling began to shake. The ground under me felt hollow. I thought all this was due to some mechanical system. What would be my fate if the ceiling were to crash? This thought scared me somewhat. Right

then, the whole ceiling came down trapping me in a magic dome, leaving no way out for me. I was terribly frightened but only for a moment. For immediately, an attitude grew in me which may be described in the following words. I prayed to Mother and Sri Aurobindo: "If I am sincere and if I have faith in you, may this dome collapse." Immediately with a big sound, a path opened for me. When I got out, I found myself surrounded by many people who exclaimed, "Wonderful change! Wonderful change!" My whole body had undergone a transformation and become god-like. I experienced enormous peace and Ananda. Though I remained very calm and steady, I was overjoyed. What does all this mean?

The workshop is probably a symbol of the activity of the ordinary nature which is so full of formations and activities of the ordinary kind that it is difficult to pass through it to the inner or the inmost being.

The walls with the spaces between indicate the different parts of the being to which the outer mind has no access, – possibly, the inner vital (the woman may be the occult vital nature), emotional etc. The ceiling (yellow) may be the intellect or thinking mind which walls one in and prevents [one] from getting into the open spaces of the higher consciousness. But through all a way lies to the open way of the higher Consciousness full of peace, light and Ananda.

16.3.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

In a dream some time back, the path that I was to follow was very long and arduous. I came across a number of intricate by-lanes which confused me. I could not find my path despite many attempts. Finally, I looked up. I saw the Mother very high up. From there, she sent a rope down for me. After a while, I found that it was not a rope, but white light – a luminous, straight road going up. I then realized that instead of struggling here and there, I should have looked up, as there is a road going straight up. I wrote this dream yesterday, but it came earlier. What does it mean?

It is a symbol of the difficult seeking in the mind, vital and physical which one goes through until one looks up to the higher conscious-

ness and follows the way of the Mother's white light – then the road becomes straight and luminous.

19.3.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

I would like to know whether Sri Aurobindo and Mother liked the badges distributed today and the figure-heads of Sri Aurobindo and Mother on them.

No. Mother is not distributing; they are given by P.A. Subramanya Ayer¹; only he asked that they should be given by Nolini as he could not distribute them himself.

4.4.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

1. Ayer, principal of a school in Madras, special badges had made for distribution on the 25th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry.

Since a few days I am getting severe pain in my legs so I informed Mother. I wrote to her because it had become unbearable and also because Mother had told me to keep her always informed. Yesterday she enquired about it and I think she said, "It depends on something."

No, Mother did not say that. But you were quite right in informing us.

Mother only asked if there was some reason for the pain; she meant a physical reason, catching chill or some strain of extra work etc.

4.4.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

To Champaklal with our blessings.

Your flowers are *very pretty*. Surely I hope you will do some more.

25.4.1935

THE MOTHER

D asked me yesterday, "Wouldn't it be better if Motibai continued washing Sri Aurobindo's dhoti?" She said that she has also spoken about it to Mother, and Mother had said "Yes, it's better." Mother, is this true? Have you said so?

Motibai feels badly the stopping of the washing and they also like badly to have the washing there as well as the ironing. As for your washing, Mother thinks you have an immense amount of work already and why should you take more especially as it is a work that keeps your hands in water which is very bad for your rheumatism.

7.5.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

I do not understand my present condition. I am puzzled as to where I am going, what am I doing? Please guide me.

I do not quite know what is the drift of your questions. It sounds as if you had been allowing yourself to be influenced by a vague and confused atmosphere of discouragement and barren questioning which has caught many in the Ashram. Otherwise there is no ground for any such feelings. Where you are? In the Mother's presence here and close to me. Where you are going? Towards union with the Divine through dedication and service. What you are doing here? Service and self-giving to the Divine. The rest depends, as the Mother writes to you, in the simplicity and fullness with which you give yourself and serve. If there is anything more special in your thoughts that has disturbed you, it is better to say clearly what it is. But do not listen to the thoughts spoken or silently suggested that are moving about the Ashram, and of which I have spoken, for these are a poison that will only bring discontent and depression.

25.5.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

Champaklal,

I am very much astonished by your questions. Are you not here to serve the Divine and are you not actually doing it? It is when you are doing it in all simplicity and full-heartedly that you are nearer to the goal.

Beware of hostile suggestions or dangerous talks which make your mind restless and blind your consciousness.

Our love is always with you.

26.5.1935

THE MOTHER

Even though I know that I am very near to you and Mother by Thy Grace, why do I still doubt whether I am progressing or not?

It is the doubt that most or many are raising now in the Ashram. "Where am I? Where am I going? Am I really doing the Yoga? it seems to me I am getting nothing. There is no progress anywhere. All is dry and mechanical. What is the use of being here?" These are the thoughts that have been moving about in the atmosphere of the Ashram and when you get such thoughts, it means that they are coming to you as suggestions from the atmosphere. If they are in the minds of those you move with, it is natural they should try to enter you, but even otherwise they can come to you, just as people catch cold because the germs are in the atmosphere.

At times I feel I am working mechanically without faith and devotion, so why stay here? At times it seems such thoughts are false.

Your attitude is all right, but evidently you have allowed your mind to be clouded by the suggestions of which I have spoken above. The feeling of having lost all one had is one of them; the feeling that all is mechanical and uninteresting and it is no use being here is another. Of course they are all false. When one listens to the suggestions, then things begin to *appear* like that. These suggestions are natural to the ignorant physical or body consciousness in human nature, just as suggestions of vital passion and disturbance are natural to the ignorant vital consciousness in human nature. You had vital reactions but you did not allow them to overcome you or make you think yourself unfit for the Yoga, because you relied upon the Mother and did not yield to the contrary vital Force. Here also you will have to have constant reliance on the Mother and reject the suggestions of the physical consciousness in the atmosphere when they come.

30.5.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

I talk as little as possible; I avoid going out. This is why I feel these things arise from within myself.

Quite wrong. I have explained how they come.

Why do I rejoice only when Mother smiles at me or gives a special opportunity? I ought to rejoice in all situations. If after living so many years near you and her I still feel this – I am not worthy of being here.

It is a very strange logic. Even among those who have made the most progress or been always the closest to the Mother, this or similar feelings still recur. It is not that they have not to be overcome, but to argue from their persistence that one is unfit to stay here is to make a large conclusion on a very small basis. This is again the kind of suggestion that comes in from the surrounding physical Ignorance. Things like these last so obstinately because they have become habits or recurrent feelings in the external physical being; they will disappear when the external being becomes filled with the Mother's light.

SRI AUROBINDO

A vital reaction means a response of the vital to the touch or pressure of an idea, action, event, person or thing, e.g. if someone speaks something you do not like and you get angry, that is a vital reaction. Or if a woman passes and you feel sexual desire, that is a vital reaction. Or if something unpleasant happens and you get a depression, that is a vital reaction. Most disturbances of the consciousness are due to vital reactions, though the mind may assist by wrong thoughts and judgments and misinterpretations. There can be good vital reactions as well as bad, but the term is usually applied to those that are undesirable and have to be surmounted by the sadhak.

The ideal condition is that of a calm, clear, strong vital free from the reactions of the vital ego and responding with true and high feelings only that are acceptable to the spiritual will and the psychic being.

6.6.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

Is it possible for an advanced sadhak like H, not to feel^y need to meet the Mother physically? Is it necessary for him to stay in Pondicherry to do Yoga?

At present H is outside the Ashram, not in it. That has been arranged by him for reasons of his own, but with the consent of the

Mother. As he is outside the Ashram he is no longer under the Ashram rules and Mother does not control his actions, nor is it necessary for him to take her sanction for what he does, unless it concerns the Ashram in any way. He comes to see her every Wednesday. It was in order to be near her that he remained in Pondicherry and also so that he might be under her immediate protection as far as possible in the new conditions. Also if and when he overcomes the difficulties he feels, he wishes and hopes to come back to the Ashram. This is the situation for the present.

21.6.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

In the dream I had, on the first-floor of a building, Mother was sitting with some sadhaks she had selected and were close to her. I too was there. Everyone was in a jovial mood and Mother was distributing nice things. Suddenly P came there even though he was not invited. He looked very sad, angry and disappointed. He held both my shoulders and started ridiculing me. Mother did not like this. After a while, I saw that she was no longer there. Then P too left. At once I got up and went into a nearby room where I saw Mother was standing on a kind of platform. P too was there and was about to attack her. As soon as I saw this, I rushed forward, caught hold of him and brought him down. When I went to catch him, he tried to frighten me by showing something like a knife. Undaunted, I held him tightly and took him away. He wounded me, I started bleeding but did not bother about it. I was happy because I had overpowered him. Even after the dream was over, the effect of the fight remained on my body. Does all this mean anything?

It was not P himself, but a force which took his figure, a force of discontent and dissatisfaction and externalisation from the inner consciousness. This tried to touch you and hold you after coming in though unwanted into your (and others') intimate relation within with the Mother. As the Mother disapproved it tried to attack her but your inner being (psychic, inner mind, inner vital) threw itself upon it and pushed it out and continued fighting with it so as to drive it away. The effect on the body means only some difficulty in the external being caused by the adverse force during the fight.

22.6.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

What is the difference between happiness, joy and delight?

Happiness is a condition of gladness, sense of inner ease and welfare, contentment, sunlit life – it is more quiet in its nature than joy and delight.

Joy (*harsha*) is more intense. It is a strong movement of great gladness with an exultation; a leaping up of the vital to take some happiness, good-fortune or other thing pleasant to the being.

Delight is an intense joy or an intense pleasure in something or an intensely joyful condition. At its most intense it becomes what is called rapture or ecstasy when one is “carried away” or “lifted out of” oneself by the intensity of the delight.

24.6.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

An inner (soul) relation means that one feels the Mother’s presence, is turned to her at all times, is aware of her force moving, guiding, helping, is full of love for her and always feels a great nearness whether one is physically near her or not – this relation takes up the mind, vital and inner physical till one feels one’s mind close to the Mother’s mind, one’s vital in harmony with hers, one’s very physical consciousness full of her. These are all the elements of the inner union, not only in the spirit and self but in the nature.

... This is the close inner relation as opposed to an outer relation which consists only in how one meets her in the external physical plane. It is quite possible and actual to have this close inner relation even if physically one sees her only at pranam and meditation and once a year perhaps on the birthday.

29.6.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

What is the difference between quietness and calmness?

Quietness is when the mind or vital is not troubled, restless, drawn about by or crowded with thoughts and feelings. Especially when either is detached and looks at these as a surface movement, we say that the mind or vital is quiet.

Calmness is a more positive condition, not merely an absence of restlessness, over-activity or trouble. When there is a sense of great

or strong tranquillity which nothing troubles or can trouble, then we say that calm is established.

29.6.1935

RI AUROBINDO

What is confidence in the Divine, faith in the Divine and trust in the Divine?

Faith is a general word – *sraddha* – the soul's belief in the Divine's existence, wisdom, power, love and grace; confidence and trust are aspects of faith and results of it.

Confidence is a feeling of sureness that the Divine will hear when sincerely called and help and, that all the Divine does is for the best.

Trust is the mind's and heart's complete reliance on the Divine and its guidance and protection.

1.7.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

About my getting pain, Mother, you said, "It depends on something". It depends on what?

I think it was not recently that Mother said that but a long time ago. She meant that it was the bondage to the physical consciousness movements (physical mind, physical vital) which prevented the response in the body and only the rule of the psychic that could remove them.

4.7.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

Since so many years, I am living in close contact with Mother, feeling constantly her abundant Grace, having deep intimacy and closeness with her, yet I have not control over my irritability which keeps coming up even in her presence. Is this ungratefulness or unfaithfulness on my part?

No. But these things need a very constant and prolonged effort to get rid of them if they are to disappear, as they have strong roots in the nature. You must especially be careful not to let the mind support them by any justification, e.g., that the other person behaved badly or was in the wrong, so your reaction was right or

natural. The reaction must not come, whatever others may say or do.

26.7.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

I have learnt that H has left this place. He had very great love for Mother and Sri Aurobindo and had very beautiful experiences. Then why is it that he could not face his difficulty?

How did he show this great love? By his poetry? A man must be judged as a man and a sadhak not by what poetry he writes but by what he is and does.

If such an advanced sadhak had to go what about myself?

Are you a person like him? Have you his difficulties and do you know what they were? Then why reason from his case to yours?

I have heard that Mother had said that only a person like him who has had every kind of experience in life can alone do real surrender – and not a child like R.

Absolutely false.

I have heard that a handful of persons will remain at the end. This also seems to me to be true; is it so?

Heard from whom? And why should it be true?

SRI AUROBINDO

If you wish you can try R's treatment but it is only if you keep the faith in the Divine power to cure that any treatment can be successful. So you must keep that as the main thing and use the treatment only as a secondary means and a subordinate help.

22.9.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother, this picture I have done without any help.

It is a good attempt (the sky is rather heavy).

Love and blessings to my dear child.

8.10.1935

THE MOTHER

Mother, I tried to draw light without obscurity, but could not succeed; the flower is spoiled.

It is not so bad. If you give a little shade of crimson lake it will be quite all right.

THE MOTHER

Mother,

Yesterday it was written about my lotus drawing as "full of light". May I know what it means?

There is a luminosity in it, in the colouring.

SRI AUROBINDO

I heard that Sri Aurobindo has written that X may start and attempt to do something in music or art. But if it be not the Divine's will to manifest something through it, that person will not be able to produce anything of worth or merit. He may produce either something which is better than nothing or give up the attempt after some time. I pray my gracious Mother to kindly let me know precisely what is her will with regard to me and whether I have any capacity to express something of her through the art. Should I continue my attempts in it?

Yes, you must continue.

7.11.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

I am not able to do drawing or painting steadily every day. I get the feeling that I am not competent to do it; it is not in my line. I see X has progressed much and is able to produce fine pictures even though he has not learnt or studied much about art from others. He has a special capacity for it. Probably that is lacking in me and so I am not making any progress nor am I able to work at it steadily. I would like to know from Mother whether what I feel is true.

No. It is true that X has an instinctive artistic sense but also he has

spent much time on painting and given much attention to it, so he has progressed fast. He has also great self-confidence.

The artistic sense can be had by training – the capacity you have, but it has to be brought out more and more and disciplined by study and practice. By development you will get self-confidence.

7.11.1935

SRI AUROBINDO

The dream was very long. I am writing below only a small part as I do not remember the whole. I travelled a lot by a carriage drawn by a tiger. Suddenly, the tiger became uncontrollable. I was alone in the carriage. In spite of all his efforts the driver could not control the tiger. The carriage halted abruptly in a vast garden. I saw a branch of a tree hanging just above the carriage and I climbed on it immediately. The driver failed to control the tiger so he cut the reins and set it free. Then it started climbing up the tree on which I was seated. As soon as it came up, I grabbed its head and with both hands firmly pushed it down with all my strength. It went down and my eyes opened. Even after waking up, the effect was still there on my body. Does this have any meaning?

The tiger indicates violent impulses. The carriage probably indicates some part of the vital which is subject to such impulses – getting into the tree means probably getting into a higher level of consciousness from which it is easier to repulse the tiger.

1.4.1936

SRI AUROBINDO

I wanted to go to my room at 10 p.m. There were still eight minutes to go, so I rested on the terrace. During that time I saw this dream.

D was running towards a pond. He deliberately jumped into it but wanted to show that he had drowned accidentally. So he dropped a handkerchief and a letter on the bank to give the impression that they had fallen there by chance.

Mother, I would like to know why I saw this? I had absolutely no idea about him.

It is evidently one of the formations made by a hostile Force which goes round trying to touch people with thoughts of suicide. Why it should have shown itself to you at that moment in connection with

D, is not clear – possibly it just crossed by chance. Anyhow, it has no importance.

20.4.1936

SRI AUROBINDO

After living here for so many years I have still no control over my anger. I hear that there is a medicine for it in homeopathy. Should I try it?

If the irritability were the result of an illness (nervous or other), it might be treated by homeopathy, but this is not that. It is one of the folds taken from the beginning by the vital-physical nature; these are extremely difficult to eradicate and usually the last things to go. But they can be cured only from within and not by any medical treatment.

7.7.1936

SRI AUROBINDO

X wants to learn music. Can she learn from a violinist from the town?

Surely not violin; the way in which violin is played here is simply offensive. And to learn true violin, one must begin to learn when 8 years old. But if she finds somebody to teach her the Veena it is all right.

29.8.1936

THE MOTHER

Since a few days, at dawn, just before the sun's rays could reach and awaken me, some Rakshasas would come and carry me away to a pitch dark place. One day, suddenly, the light from the sun reached me in that place and I awoke. The demons could no longer enter there. My entire body was filled with Ananda.

It is the fight of the two consciousnesses – the wrong forces pulling to the dark levels, but the touch of the Sun of Truth intervenes with its light and rises where they cannot enter.

The dream of last night. There was water everywhere – difficult to say whether it was a river or lake or sea. A man had fallen in it in a place where it was not possible to swim. He was not in a position to come out. I had to follow the same route. On seeing his plight I was not

sure how I could proceed. Somehow I managed to pull him out and thought I had saved a life. I asked him, "Why did you not call for any help? Would you not have drowned if I had not pulled you out?" He replied, "I have full faith in God – if He wants to save me, He would surely help." He said it with such an ardent faith that even an atheist would have believed it.

Then I found another route and followed it. I had to climb a very high mountain. I do not know what happened to the people who were with me. I kept climbing up. Finally, I reached a place beyond which I could not go as there was no road. There were precipices in front and on the sides. I felt as if I had reached the sky. There was somebody behind me who resembled my elder brother Sunderlal. He held me in his grip and hung one of his legs over the precipice. I found it very difficult to balance myself as there was nothing in front of me which I could hold as a support. I told him that this way both of us would fall. He remained stubborn. I pleaded with him to leave me. When I woke up, I actually felt that I was saved from death.

The first part of the dream is an experience of the mental-vital plane and indicates the saving power of an absolute faith. The other shows the ascent to the highest levels of the earth consciousness, but there is still something of the old self and nature clinging and trying to pull downwards; it refuses to let go, but finally it has to fall off and the being can ascend without downward pull or fear of fall, into the skies of the higher consciousness above.

12.10.1936

SRI AUROBINDO

	Rs. - Annas - Paise
Received from the Mother	2 - 13 - 0

I have purchased the following
for the Mother:

2 teacups with saucers	0 - 8 - 0
2 boxes (cups & saucers) fullset	2 - 0 - 0
1 box without tea-pot	0 - 6 - 0

=====

2 - 14 - 0

Your child Champak
with pranam at your Lotus Feet

How nice all these things are!...
Love & blessings to my dear child.

16.12.1936

THE MOTHER

A few years ago I started painting relying only on Mother's help. Later, in order to learn the technique I went to A and K on a few occasions. Somehow I stopped. Now there is an urge to continue painting. I pray for Mother's guidance as to how I should start.

The best thing is to take something that appeals to you and try to paint it – not copying but from Nature, drawing of some subject that you fancy.

30.3.1937

SRI AUROBINDO

Champaklal,

Nowadays I am always late and in a hurry and I am not giving you time as I used to. That is why I want to see you for a few minutes tomorrow. But instead of seeing you at 1.30 as Nolini said, I will call you in when I have finished with Arjava at about 2.15.

It is just to increase your receptivity that I want to see you all alone and quietly.

With love and blessings.

1.2.1938

THE MOTHER

On the 1st of this month Madame Raymond came to see the fishes in my room. Later she insisted on seeing some of my paintings of lotuses, flowers etc. Seeing some pictures on the wall she expressed happiness that I seemed to be fond of Japanese pictures. Today she has sent me these pictures. I find it delicate to receive them; delicate also to return them. What is the best thing to do?

You must accept – there is no objection, as it is the custom in Japan to make presents like that; to return them would not be at all proper.

21.4.1938

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother,

For the past few months I get the idea of going from here. Is it from you? If it is Mother's wish I can go.

Your ignorant child, Champak, with Pranam.

No, it is a hostile suggestion trying to send you away because your presence is most helpful and necessary.

I hope you will dismiss this wrong suggestion altogether and think no more of it. Your place is near us and you must stay here.

With our love and blessings.

19.4.1940

THE MOTHER

The generosity of your absolute self-giving will bring to you the revelation of the generosity of the Divine's Love.

30.3.1948

THE MOTHER

(I once received a telegram from someone who was in great difficulty. I sent it to Mother for reply. Sri Aurobindo wrote):

Keep faith quietude openness to divine power. Ashirvada.

SRI AUROBINDO

Today it was the day of changing the pillow-cover on Sri Aurobindo's bed. I have come to know that Mother has said that Sri Aurobindo uses only one pillow. So I change the cover of the pillow every day. I would like to know about the dhoti on Sri Aurobindo's bed, when should I change it?

3 days or so.

THE MOTHER

Mother, I wish to fold all the mats of the big room on 15th August as usual. Can I do it Mother?

Yes, you can.

Bansidhar is asking for work on the 15th. Do you want him to help you in this work?

THE MOTHER

It is better not to put milk in the soup. Prolamine must not be cooked in milk according to prescription. If you want to make the soup better add some more vegetables in it.

THE MOTHER

ON CHAMPAKLAL

These extracts are from Sri Aurobindo's letters to sadhaks who later provided me with copies. - Champaklal.

Chinmayi – Usual work wiping in Sri Aurobindo's room.

Champaklal – Sweeping the corner room and the toilet room.

Rajangam – Sweeping Sri Aurobindo's room.

Bansidhar – Sweeping central hall. Cleaning toilet room window and Sri Aurobindo's windows.

21.2.1932

THE MOTHER

The dream about Chandulal and the bandits was a happening in the vital world or else a symbolic scene witnessed there. In the first case, the bandits are vital beings attacking the work, – in the second, hostile forces, suggestions etc. The one thing clear in it is that Champaklal is a prompt and effective fighter on the vital plane.

2.7.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Mridu is quite mistaken in thinking Champaklal is greedy; he eats much too little and works enormously hard. If he wanted the prasad, it must have been because it was prasad and not as food for the stomach and palate.

12.11.1932

SRI AUROBINDO

Champaklal is very busy and has no time, that is why he must have done it. One case is not a habit and need not raise the bile.

SRI AUROBINDO

All have their defects – but Champaklal has great qualities to atone for it. One has to look upon all with calm and charity and not get disturbed by other people's disturbance.

5.10.1933

SRI AUROBINDO

Mother! I was seeing in a dream that Champaklal is wearing a soldier's uniform, and one gun also is in his hand. What is the meaning of it, Mother?

Champaklal as a soldier means that he is a warrior in the vital field against the hostile forces.

12.1.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

I was wondering what would be the effect on me of a rebuke for some mistake of mine. I think Champaklal, Chandulal and Amrita do sometimes get rebukes from you, but I am sure their trust is not shaken because of that.

Of course not. They get it frequently, especially Amrita and Chandulal. Formerly they would sometimes get upset (especially Chandulal), but that was long ago. Now they have learnt to take it in the right way.

3.6.1934

SRI AUROBINDO

My Sweet Mother,

Champaklal and Kamala are painting so well but I am not making progress. What should I do?

Champaklal has a natural talent already developed to an unusual degree. As for K she did very poor things at first and took a long time to develop – now she does well. So you need not be discouraged – painting is not learnt as Rome was not built in a day. Only you are a little irregular – sometimes doing very well, sometimes falling back into what is less good. You must try to do always your best.

SRI AUROBINDO

This is what Mother said to André. As Amrita too was present at that time, I asked him to write it down and later showed to Mother. - Champaklal.

In introducing André to Champaklal, the Mother said with a great warmth:

He came here when very young. I taught him many works. He has taken up the works personally concerning Sri Aurobindo. Practically he looks to everything with regard to Sri Aurobindo. He is very particular about details. He is extremely careful, meticulous.

He has no regular time for food – he eats it when he can. So it is with his sleep also. This is why he is not able to join the sports activities.

He works with devotion and joy.

He collects all our little things and keeps them with great care – our clothes, nails, hair, etc.

November 22, 1949,

AMRITA

About 9 a.m.

The above is a correct transcription.

With my blessings.

THE MOTHER

In a case like Champaklal's the psychological factor is at least as important as the physical one. I doubt whether to be taken away from the house would be good for him.

As for the food, he can have here all that is needed and of the best quality. What is necessary is only somebody who takes the trouble to know what is needed for him and what he must take.

And from what is called Mother's kitchen, it will be got.

27.11.1966

THE MOTHER

Champaklal is much better this morning and the food properly arranged.

30.11.1966

THE MOTHER

Part V

NOTES AND MEMOS OF THE MOTHER

NOTES AND MEMOS OF THE MOTHER

My Lord, make the consciousness clear and precise, the speech thoroughly true, the surrender complete, the calm absolute and transform the whole being in an ocean of light and love.

*

A resplendent sun rises above the horizon. It is your Lord that comes to you.

The whole world awakes and stretches in delight at the contact of His glory.

As the earth that heaves and opens, as the tree that grows, as the flower that blossoms, as the bird that sings, as the man that loves, let His light permeate you and radiate it in an ever-increasing and widening happiness, a happiness steadily moving onward as the stars move in heaven.

And if difficulties come across your way do not allow them to stop you. Simply push them aside with the power of your breath. If they persist, trample them under foot. If they yield, change them into new light and go, go, go....

*

I have a sweet little mother sitting close in my heart.
We are so happy together; never will we part.

*

28.6.1931

Mon visage est devenu comme un miroir dans lequel chacun peut voir se refléter l'image de sa condition interne.

From many instances I have come to know that my face is like a mirror showing to each one the image of his own internal condition.

*

4.2.1932

Three things indispensable to begin with:

Absolute sincerity in the whole being and all its activities.

Complete self-surrender without any reservation.

Patient work on oneself and at the same time a steady conquering of perfect unshakable peace and equanimity.

*

7.3.1932

My Lord, I will not try to escape from the work Thou hast given me. Wherever Thou placest my consciousness, it will remain without any attempt to rise to the blissful heights. Even if Thou willest it to be in the mud of the most material nature, it will stay there peaceful and at rest. But wherever it is, it cannot be without aspiring towards Thee, opening to Thy influence and calling Thee down into itself as the sole reality of its existence.

*

Every thought of my mind, each emotion of my heart, every movement of my being, every feeling and every sensation, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood, all, all is yours, yours absolutely, yours without reserve. You can decide my life or my death, my happiness or my sorrow, my pleasure or my pain; whatever you do with me, whatever comes to me from you will lead me to the Divine Rapture.

*

9.3.1932

Greed, greed, always greed... is the response of material nature. In whatever way the Divine manifests there, it becomes at once an object of covetousness. A rush to appropriate, an endeavour to rob, exploit, squeeze, swallow and in the end crush down the Divine, this is the receptivity of matter to the divine touch.

O My Lord, Thou comest as the Redeemer and these would make of Thee a dupe! Thou comest for union, for transformation, for realisation, and they think only of absorption and selfish increase.

*

14.12.1932

If it is the Will of the Supreme that those who depend on me should have no faith in me, I have nothing to say. I am responsible only for the absoluteness of my own sincerity.

*

I wanted to make him understand and experience that the thought, the feeling and the force that is in a gift is much more important and valuable than the thing given itself.

* *

O mon coeur, sois assez grand pour la Victoire.

Let my heart be big enough for Thy Victory.

*

I suggest the same remedy as the one I was using in my childhood when disagreeing with my young playmates. I was at that time, as you are, very sensitive and I felt hurt when abused by them, especially by those to whom I had always shown only sympathy and kindness. I used to tell myself, "Why be sorry and feel miserable? If they are right in what they say, I have only to be glad for the lesson and correct myself; if they are wrong, why should I worry about it, it is for them to be sorry for their mistake. In both cases the best and the most dignified thing I can do is to remain strong, quiet and unmoved."

This lesson which I was giving to myself and trying to follow when I was eight years old, still holds good in all similar cases.

*

[Regarding J's accident]

Here is a sad but striking illustration of what I said.

This case is clear. For some egoistic reason he attempted to do more than he could.

If the year had been good he might have succeeded.

With an ordinary or *neutral* year he would not have succeeded

but without bad results for himself or for the others.

This year because it is dangerously bad, the consequences came in full. Now all I can do is to make the best out of the situation; but it has become a big fight.

This is what I meant when I spoke; but very few people understood what I meant by the "careful". I meant "Do always the best you can and make as far as possible no spiritual mistake." On the contrary, most of them started fearing and that in itself is already a big spiritual mistake. Instead of being more vigilant and more faithful, most of them at once opened the door to the hostile suggestions and aggravated the situation. Some went even so far as to blame me for having spoken, not understanding that if I cannot warn the people here and advise them to keep firm in the right attitude, it means that they are not true sadhaks and have no sincerity in their attitude.

In order to make myself more clear, I repeat what I wanted to say: In a year like this one when the adverse forces have decided to attack at the utmost of their capacity, it is required from all those who have decided to fight for the Divine Realisation, to avoid carefully all fear.

When I spoke at the beginning of the year I insisted on the necessity of being especially vigilant because when times are bad whatever mistake one makes it brings immediately its full consequences, the action of the Grace being hampered by the intensity of the adverse attack; the faith must be more total, the vigilance more constant, the trust in the Divine more absolute.

*

23.1.1952

Je sais que je ne peux pas grand chose – je ne puis satisfaire le besoin humain de merveilles et de miracles. Il fut un temps où je le pouvais et je le faisais. Mais pour cela il faut vivre dans la conscience vitale et utiliser les forces vitales, ce qui n'est pas très recommandable.

I know that I cannot do much. I cannot satisfy the human desire for wonders and miracles. There was a time when I could and did do

it. But for that one must live in the vital consciousness and use vital forces. Which is not very recommendable.¹

*

I wish

1) personally to be eternally the perfect expression of the Supreme Divine.

2) that the supramental victory, manifestation and transformation should take place at once.

3) that all suffering should disappear for ever from the worlds present and future.

*

20.9.1953

It is never work that makes me tired; it is when I am compelled to work in an atmosphere of dissatisfaction, despondency, doubt, misunderstanding and bad will, then each step forward represents an enormous effort and tells on the body more than ten years of normal work.

*

14.1.1954

For the last few days when I wake up in the morning I have the strange sensation of entering a body that is not mine – my body is strong and healthy, full of energy and life, supple and harmonious, and this one fulfills none of these qualities; the contact with it becomes painful; there is a great difficulty in adapting myself to it and it takes a long time before I can overcome this uneasiness.

*

It is a way of saying, a crude description of something that actually happens but is much more subtle than that.

If I were busy with one single person I could keep perhaps in my memory such precisions, but as I am consciously dealing with more than a thousand people such precise details are not usually

1. The first two sentences of this translation were made by the Mother. – Editor

noted – and it is not necessary also,– because the Consciousness always does the work in the way it has to be done.

*

16.5.1954

I do not give positions to the sadhaks – I give them work – and to all I give an equal opportunity. It is those who prove to be most capable and most sincere, honest and faithful who will have a bigger amount of work and the greatest responsibility.

*

I am glad that through experience you have become conscious of the fact that I am with you.

This is the true relation between us, much more than a superficial contact.

1) Here, at the Ashram, our aim is to express a higher Truth, not to follow the ordinary human conventionalities.

I do not give to these official documents any undue importance. They are mere necessities in the present condition of the world, but do not correspond to any deep reality.

2) In the actualities of life the power of a man does not depend on an official title, but on the force and the light of his inner consciousness.

*

The Lord and his Shakti
 God and his devotee
 The father and his child
 The master and his disciple
 The Beloved and Lover
 The Friend and co-worker
 The child and his mother.

*

A being free from all bondages, flying from height to height in a happy seeking for Divine transformation.

*

[Regarding *Savitri*]

- 1) The daily record of the spiritual experiences of the individual who has written.
- 2) A complete system of yoga which can serve as a guide for those who want to follow the integral sadhana.
- 3) The yoga of the Earth in its ascension towards the Divine.
- 4) The experiences of the Divine Mother in her effort to adapt herself to the body she has taken and the ignorance and the falsity of the earth upon which she has incarnated.

*

[While looking at the Samadhi:]

I do not want to be worshipped. I have come to work, not to be worshipped; let them worship Thee to their heart's content and leave me, silent and hidden, to do my work undisturbed – and of all veils the body is the best.

Part VI

REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE MOTHER

REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE MOTHER

Keep faith and confidence and remain cheerful.

*

Be sincere and I am ready to correct your mistakes a thousand times if necessary.

*

The best way of helping is to let the consciousness that has come down upon earth work in you for transformation.

*

If in the work you meet with some difficulties, look sincerely into yourself and there you will discover their origin.

*

The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

*

The idea that woman should cook for males is against my principles. Are they slaves?

*

To medical knowledge and experience, add full faith in the Divine's Grace and your healing capacity will have no limits.

*

The Mother is always ready to welcome the child, whatever fault the child may have committed.

*

॥१

In the integral yoga there is no distinction between the sadhana and the outward life; it is in each and every movement of the daily life that the Truth must be found and practised.

*

Mind is so lazy that it wants convenient answers. But it is not like that. Each one is different.

*

Tiredness shows lack of will for progress. When you feel tired or fatigued that is lack of will for progress.

Fire is always burning in you.

*

How can I give wise advice to foolish people?

*

Throw this apparent chaos. A new and better order is being formed. But to see it one must have faith in the Divine Grace. Cheer up.

*

Give yourself entirely to the Divine and you will see the end of all your troubles.

*

Things are not so bad as you think.

*

Joy comes when you take the right attitude.

*

We invoke the solar light, symbol of the Supreme Lord to give us the Light of Truth.

*

One drop of truth is worth more than an ocean of false information.

*

Let this house be a symbol of the psychic, the temple of the eternal divine Presence.

*

Say – “I have received his Grace: I must be worthy of it” and then all will be well.

*

I do not like that the word love should be polluted to speak of sexual desire, the human inheritance of the animal.

*

In nice there is pleasantness, but good is good and can be without pleasantness.

*

We are expected to give to the world an example of better life but surely not of misbehaviour.

*

Each sadhak must remember that he is not alone. As far as possible I am trying to give satisfaction to everybody and to give answers to reasonable questions whenever it is necessary.

*

Ugly thoughts bring ugly feelings – ugly feelings take you away from the Divine and throw you defenceless in the arms of the devil who wants only to swallow you – and that is the source of endless sorrow and suffering.

*

In the human beings along with the growth of the mental activities grows the subtlety of self-deception. The more they are intellectual the more they are, in their self-deception, completely candid and insincere at the same time.

*

On the path of Truth in order to know more you must put in practice what you already know. A little bit of sincere practice is worth much more than a lot of written or spoken words.

*

Talk as little as possible.
Work as much as you can.

*

Get out of your mind to have the true intelligence.
Get out of your sensations to have the true feelings.
Get out of your sensitiveness to have the true dynamism.

*

Timidity is a form of vanity. When you are timid it means that you attach more importance to the opinion others have of you than to the sincerity of your action.

*

It is jealousy, selfish unsatisfaction and hurt vanity that open the doors of the consciousness to the hostile attacks by pulling out of the Divine's protection.

It is only by refusing to allow these wrong movements to take place in oneself that one can hope of getting rid of the adverse influence and its disastrous effects.

*

Never keep company with those who follow muddy tracks for it is your own companions who will smirch you.

*

Do not let yourself be deceived. Stand firm in your resolution.

*

For the mind – knowledge
For the heart – love and joy
For the life – power
For the matter – beauty.

*

She will fight until there are no more anti-divine forces upon earth.

*

Teach us to be really sincere in our effort towards the Truth.

*

Let your life be a sincere search for the Truth and it will be worth living.

*

Be ever one-pointed in your surrender and sincere in your aspiration and you will constantly feel the presence of the Divine's help and guidance.

*

Among human beings, the most widely spread disease is mental narrowness. They can understand only what they think or feel and cannot tolerate the rest.

*

To realise a progressive truth theories must be remoulded according to practice and not practice made to suit the theories.

*

To be truly a good wife is almost as difficult as to be a true disciple.

*

Sincere devotion is much more effective than the Ganges water.

*

Whatever circumstance is given to you, make the best use of it in line with the Truth; to take advantage of it is quite different. All success depends upon the measure of your truth.

*

A hero fears nothing, complains of nothing and never gives way.

*

Absolute sincerity is required. No self-indulgence and no desire.

*

One must be without preferences and without desire to know the Divine's will.

*

Psychic perfection means to smile at everything.

*

Superficial reactions are not desirable.

*

Encourage only what leads quickly to the Lord and serves His divine purpose.

*

Sri Aurobindo is always present. Be sincere and faithful, this is the first condition.

*

The ideal attitude is to belong only to the Divine, to work only for the Divine, and above all to expect only from the Divine strength, peace and satisfaction. The Divine is all-merciful and gives us all that we need to lead us as quickly as possible to the goal.

*

Those who are ready for the transformation can do it anywhere and those who are not ready cannot do it wherever they are.

*

Be sincere in your consecration.

*

Our best help is faith – The Divine is all merciful.

With love and blessings.

*

Have faith and unshaken confidence. The Divine Grace will do the rest.

*

Let his life be a strong, successful happy and powerful life at the service of the Divine.

*

Indeed he is happy who loves the Divine, because the Divine is always with him.

*

Do not confuse calm with inertia. Calm is self-possessed strength, quiet and conscious energy, mastery of the impulses, control over the unconscious reflexes. In work calm is the source of efficiency and an indispensable condition for perfection.

*

If you do not wish to say something which is true, instead of lying just keep silent.

*

There is a great strength in the power to keep silent.

*

Do not attach undue importance to unimportant things.

*

Collaboration does not mean that everybody should do the will of the man who asks for it. True collaboration is a non-egoistic union of all personal efforts to express and realise the *Divine's Will*.

*

Things must be asked for only when truly needed.

*

The Ashram is meant for those who want to consecrate their lives to the Divine.

*

There is a supreme Consciousness. We want to manifest this Divine Consciousness in the physical life.

*

The habit of always furnishing in presence of a mistake a *favourable explanation* – this favourable explanation seems to jump out from the mind spontaneously and automatically – trying to obviate any sincere recognition of the error.

*

It is amusement to deceive others.

*

The Centre has been conceived
The Centre is ready to be born
The Centre will grow into a powerful and efficient entity.
Bienvenue et succès

*

- 1) The Divine alone is true – all the rest is falsehood.
- 2) The Divine alone is real – all the rest is illusion.
- 3) The Divine alone is life – all the rest belongs to the kingdom of death.
- 4) The Divine alone is light – all the rest is semi-obscurity.
- 5) The Divine alone is love – all the rest is selfish sentimentality.

*

Man must understand that in spite of all his intellectual achievements he is as incapable of perceiving the supramental vibrations as the animal was incapable of perceiving the mental vibrations when they pervaded the earth before the appearance of the human species.

*

The Ideal Attitude

A benevolent good will towards all worshippers.
An enlightened indifference towards all religions.

*

You cannot expect anybody to be perfect unless you are perfect yourself. And to be perfect means to be exactly as the Lord wants you to be.

*

Pray to the Divine Grace to make you do always the right thing in the right way.

*

The mind, the life and the body must become and live what the Soul knows and is.

*

Leave all care to the Divine's Grace, including your progress, and you will be in peace.

*

Wherever is our body, if we concentrate in our heart on the Lord, there He is with us.

*

What you seek is always there ready for you. Let the psychic turn grow complete and it will of itself bring you to that for which you aspire.

*

Whenever, in your life, you meet with a hardship take it as a boon from the Divine's Grace and it will become so.

*

Learn how to part with what was in order to receive what has come.

Some people are truly greedy... they are never satisfied. The more you give them, the more they ask. And they would find it quite natural if the Divine were exclusively busy with them and nothing else.

*

Do not be greedy... be satisfied with what is given to you and grateful also for what is given without grumbling because you are not given still more.

*

My love is always with you. Have faith in it and you will cure.

*

With simple sincerity offer your vital being to the Divine and the realisation will begin.

Two sadhaks of recent time stand apart from all others, whose image will always remain untarnished in our memory. One is Nolini-da and the other is Maharaj Champaklal, two true yogis — one predominantly a *homo intellectualis*, the other essentially a *homo psychicus*. Both of them attained rare heights of consciousness, each following his own path indicated by his swadharma.

Nirodbaran

For what “Champaklal Speaks” is, is nothing but *Mother Sri Aurobindo, Mother Sri Aurobindo*.

M.P. Pandit

Champaklal Speaks inspires us to ponder over his extraordinary life and fills our hearts with reverence for his Lord and the Mother. We can see that his observations are the expressions of profound truths revealed to him through experiences in his daily life...

These reminiscences recreate the atmosphere of the days when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked together on this earth to transfigure the consciousness of their disciples and all mankind, as well as to reveal a new future for the entire earth.

from the *Preface*