**Matrimandir**

I

FRIDAY morning, 8:30 a.m. A day towards the end of November 1978. It is still Mother’s centenary year. In 1971 we observed that we would not get Matrimandir ready by Sri Aurobindo's centenary. Then we started working towards Mother’s centenary. It is almost over but the work at Matrimandir is by far not over. The workers are taking their positions. Quite a group is all the way down inside the excavation, at the foot of the pillars, where they have started putting up a new pipe structure. Fifteen metres above their heads the steel structure of the first ramp floats in the air, lightly attached to the ribs, but then flying in large sweeps through nothing, through empty space until its next point of attachment. The first ramp is almost ready — there are two of them, fragile paths which lead from the second slab inside the sphere, slightly above ground level, to the floor of the Inner Chamber twelve metres above ground. Each of the two ramps consists of eleven prefabricated sections which, once in position inside Matrimandir, are then welded together. It was all calculated on the computer and it looks solid and strong, but one never knows... therefore we are now preparing to test its strength. That is why the group of people down below is putting up that tower of scaffolding pipes, to reach once more to the ramp up there. When they have almost touched the ramp we are going to put 450 sandbags on the first half of the ramp to see whether it sags, or breaks or — stays where it is supposed to stay. Then we will know whether it is safe, now and for the next few centuries, to go up to the Inner Chamber, the Chamber of the Soul, the Chamber with the Ray.

Another group of Aurovilians inside the Inner Chamber is grinding pipes and plates where the first ramp reaches the door leading into the Room. While preparations for testing the first half of the ramp are under way, the rest is not even fully ready yet; we are still reinforcing, grinding, fitting and refitting and welding. It is an incredibly complicated and precise job, and very time-consuming. Our people down in the workshop have been working for one and a half years to fabricate all of the sections, and now we have been working on the first ramp inside Matrimandir since April of this year. And it will be well into 1979 before the ramp-phase of Matrimandir is completed.

II

Apparently one doesn’t walk into the Inner Chamber just like that. It has already taken years and it is going to take quite a few more years before the Inner
Chamber will start functioning as the... as what? When will the Inner Chamber start functioning? Or did it start years ago, as soon as Mother had her vision early in 1970? For me, it functions to the extent that I function in the Inner Spaces of the Soul. Matrimandir is me, us, the Matrimandir workers, the Aurovilians, the world; and its process is slow because my process, our process, the world's process of growth is slow. One can't skip steps, one can't leave out ramps, one can't take a short cut; one has to traverse all the intermediate spaces. One has to go fully through the process which is Matrimandir: for Matrimandir is the ladder to the New World, and one has to discover how to climb that ladder. One can already see quite a nice view from the lower steps but if one would manage to climb all the way up one might just break through the floor of the Supramental World. Everything about Matrimandir is secret — it cannot be told, it should not be told; but then — it is an open book, open for anybody to read every single letter of it. As with all the great initiations in the history of the world, it is hidden from the outside and open to the inside but everybody who has eyes can see it. It is as secret as a plant or a flower is secret. It is just a flower but it is the Divine too.

One should not talk about Matrimandir, words are of no use; one has to live it, to be it. I am now talking about it, so take it as a love letter wherein one is never able to express the beauty of the beloved, one stumbles and stutters but still one wants to express at least something, one wants to open one's heart and does not claim or intend to express the final truth, the last word, the total picture. I am in love with Matrimandir, that's all, and therefore like all true lovers I am blind: I see only Matrimandir and I see everything through the eyes of Matrimandir, and what does not fit into (my idea of) Matrimandir, I reject. One has a right to one's obsession and I exercise my right to the full. I see it as an enormous privilege to be allowed to work at Matrimandir and I fully realise that it is not I who have chosen to be here but Mother who has called me from far-off countries to be here and work and discover. From the series of events at the time of my coming here it is all too clear that more than coincidence was at work. On a certain day I could not make it any more in Holland. I had to, just had to come to Auroville. That day was 21st February 1971, Mother's birthday and that was also the day that the first stone was laid at Matrimandir. But I didn't know that, I had never heard of Matrimandir, had no idea of the Great Work which was going to commence on that very day. But Auroville did not yet own the land on which Matrimandir was going to be built. It took about three weeks to make a deal with the local farmer who owned it before the digging could begin. It took me three weeks to cross twelve countries to reach here and immediately join the thirty or so diggers who were just then starting the work. One week later I asked Mother for permission to become an Aurovillian. Upon reading my application form which stated my work of preference as Matrimandir, She said “Très bien!”, and it has always been très bien for me. Of course, I tried to escape several times and
tried to take up some other work, but very soon I had to come back to Matrimandir as if something in me was suffering and suffocating when I was not there. One day in 1972 I asked Mother’s permission to go to Delhi to attend some international conference. Everything had been arranged and at the last moment I just put it before Her. She asked the secretary who read out the letter, “Is he not useful at Matrimandir?” That has become sort of my mantra whenever something tries to interfere with my work at Matrimandir: “Are you not useful at Matrimandir?” And since Mother left Her body I can ask Matrimandir all my questions. Just sit there quietly for a moment and Matrimandir infallibly answers — and not always what you would want to hear. Of course; because there is very little difference between Mother and Matrimandir. For me, it is Mother’s body we are building and why would concrete and steel be less receptive, less open, less alive in the long run than flesh and bones? But here we are touching upon one of those well-known secrets and it is better not to say anything, just look and see... The real mystery for me is why so very few people are working on the structure. Even among the Aurovilians there are hardly five per cent who put in any regular work. That is a mystery; for if there is anything that makes Auroville it is Matrimandir. All through the years we have been working with no more than thirty or forty people, sometimes less, never more, and you could always count the full-timers on your fingers. Why? I honestly don’t know. Physically the work is heavy and strenuous, vitally it is boring and mentally you can’t do anything with it, true; but we are not made up of just physical, vital and mind! But maybe it doesn’t really matter, maybe it is not even true. Maybe in Auroville everybody is building Matrimandir; for Matrimandir is not only a physical construction site, it is also a process, it is the whole of Auroville and it is quite clear that Auroville in its growth, with its crises and leaps, its manifestations and confusions is always an exact replica of where Matrimandir is at physically in its construction. Things at Matrimandir never happen by chance, there is a definite design, a time schedule, a clock, a calendar and if we had the right psychic eyes, we would see from the state of Matrimandir at each moment where Auroville was.

Recently I made a discovery. It is none too soon after having been around here for eight years, I agree; but I am sometimes very slow to detect the obvious. This discovery consists in realizing that when Sri Aurobindo was writing his high and lofty ideas in his thick tomes, he was writing about something. Not just some thing, but something that concerns our life here; not just our life here, but all life — individual, social, physical, psychic, all the layers down to the last detail. It is all in The Life Divine and his other works, not only the heavenly truths of things ‘up there’ but every nail I hammer and every piece of ramp I grind, even the grinding machine itself, and also every conflict among workers or between workers
and non-workers, every movement, everything that takes place at Matrimandir and outside it. And a following step is that the same applies to Matrimandir. Matrimandir is as much an open book as the Centenary Edition, and it deals with exactly the same subjects in detail, not only the heavenly subjects but all subjects down here as well. Matrimandir is as little divorced from life in all its aspects as are Sri Aurobindo's works. And then Matrimandir opens up and you don't need much else, for it is all there. Things also start working in an opposite direction from the moment of that discovery. Previously, when a critical situation arrived in Auroville one had a tendency — at least I had — to jump down off the structure and toss my little weight into the crisis. But when Matrimandir is seen as the reflection, the perfect image of everything that happens around it, one discovers that it is much more effective to throw one's weight more intensely into the work and make the link that is missing, in Matrimandir and therefore in Auroville; give the construction a push here or there and things around you in Auroville get a push. In that respect the ramps are very critical and important, it seems. They consist, in their present naked state, of an intricate system of pipes, all welded together, and only a computer can say how much tension there is in the structure of the ramp. Each node, each connection (and there are hundreds of them) has its own type of stresses and its own tensions. That is why we now have to test the strength of the entire ramp, for all those various stresses and tensions have to work in unison, in unity. And there's a picture of Auroville again: stresses and tensions all working as one beautiful whole, balancing each other out, keeping each other in place and all together forming a bridge towards the Inner Chamber, the Soul.

IV

Matrimandir is the embodiment of the Integral Yoga, of the Supramental Yoga. It manifests in concrete materials for all eyes to see, what Sri Aurobindo has discovered and realised and what Mother has worked for all her life-long. I often compare Matrimandir with Savitri, Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, which is a similar embodiment of the total Yoga — but one can only read as much into it as one is ready for. Both are "sacraments" of the Yoga, a sacrament being a symbol which realises what it announces. But one has to grow into these symbols, to discover and rediscover, go deeper and deeper and higher and higher because one must be touching the very highest worlds to be able to assimilate the symbols to the fullest extent. They keep you moving, reaching out, aspiring, going up and up, and when you have reached a certain point of understanding you have to be ready to reject it right away and go on, knowing that it is not that, not that, but there is more, always more. There is, however, not only an identity between Matrimandir and the Integral Yoga but also between Matrimandir and me and you, each one of us in our highest beings, our highest possibilities, our full realisation. Again one can understand only as much as one has realised, but there is scope for an
almost infinite progression in understanding and realisation before one has exhausted the richness and fullness of the symbol. It was once shown to me while standing at the Samadhi how Matrimandir and my own being coincide, how I fit into Matrimandir, how Matrimandir represents the human being in the process of transformation. The topmost ring of the sphere, where the sun's rays are caught and sent down to the crystal in the Inner Chamber, was the top of my head, the crystal itself was the psychic being located behind the heart, and the ray was that subtle silver link between the centres above the head and the psychic being, that connection which when activated binds the first, the psychic transformation with the second, the spiritual transformation, and which Sri Aurobindo has called the “grappling hook” for the Divine; it forms the solid basis for the third and highest, the supramental transformation. It is relatively easy to further draw the parallel between the human being and the physical shape of Matrimandir. It becomes a living body, a perfect symbol of man in transformation. And that applies equally to the individual and the collective. Matrimandir is Auroville, too, a community in search of its soul. It is all there plainly visible to anybody who looks. All these identities exist simply because they all deal with one and the same entity; consciousness. The Integral Yoga, the individual sadhak, the community and Matrimandir, Auroville, they are all consciousness, embodiments, symbols, attempts towards expression of the multifarious riches of consciousness in all its aspects, dimensions, planes, levels. But then according to my discovery of how these lofty things apply to our daily living, our work, our relationships, we should be able to examine how Matrimandir says it all, expresses it all, and how we could “read” Matrimandir to get an understanding of the human situation. Let us just make an attempt and see where it gets us, knowing full well that every attempt to do such a thing is merely an exercise and can only express a small section of the whole picture.

V

Why do people not understand each other, why is there so much strife and disharmony all around us and inside us? Why do we speak in so many languages, failing to come to unity, to oneness, to love? “Reading” Matrimandir as a symbol of that complex phenomenon called consciousness, we may say that people cannot easily communicate with one another because one person, symbolically speaking, is standing all the way down in the excavation inside the north pillar, and another is sitting on the roof of the Chamber; a third one is half-way down the ramp and a fourth is sitting inside the Chamber concentrating on the crystal and the ray, and so forth. The concrete mixer down on ground-level is churning away making a great deal of noise, and some people are standing down there pretending to have a conversation or some communication with all the other people perched on the roof and up on the ramp and inside the Chamber. It is just not possible, such communication is bound to fail as it does all the time in life. In
order to come to an understanding, in order even to hear each other we have all to get together in one place, — at the foot of one pillar or around the mixer, on the ramp or on the roof or... in the Chamber. Then we can make a beginning of unity. The same applies to individuals: one part of one’s being likes the depth of the excavation, another feels at home on the level of the ramps, again another stands on top of the sphere and yet one more lives continuously in the Inner Chamber. But one can only become total, integrated, unified, sincere if one draws in all one’s various parts from their scattered stations on the symbol Matrimandir and unites them around a single point — and then why not around the crystal, in the spaces of the Psychic!

These are images but more than images as well because Matrimandir really does embody many aspects of consciousness. The more we can make these explicit, the more will Matrimandir become a living symbol to us, applicable at every moment of our days.

VI

The four pillars are like ships coming in from the four quarters of the globe to meet together and carry the globe of the New World. The four ribs on top of the pillars are like four arms reaching out towards one another and together forming the support of the psychic crystal. These four quarters have been named by the Mother: Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati and Maheshwari. They are the names of the pillars of Matrimandir and they are also the names of the four Personalities of the Mother, and here they become the basis of a psychology and a sociology of consciousness. Everything in the world, in society, politics, art, and daily life, individual and collective, is shaped by one of these aspects or by a combination of them. The beauty of this approach to social and individual life in general is that each and every thing is determined by a Personality, one particular aspect of the Mother. In this sense everything becomes positive and constructive, all belongs to the Mother, a part of Her rich being and nothing in the world is excluded or of minor importance. All becomes part of the play of the Divine Mother. But...Matrimandir has four pillars and all four of them are equally needed to carry the sphere. Don’t try to leave one out or do away with one of them, for the whole globe will come toppling down. The basis of consciousness is the balance, the harmony between the four pillars. The real person, the harmonious person and the harmonious society, must know all four faces of the Mother. The unreal, unharmonious, one-dimensional society or individual lets itself be carried away by one of the Powers. Even at this fundamental level there is quite a lot of misunderstanding; for many people are happy to settle for just one power, just Mahakali or just Mahalakshmi, thus forgetting or even opposing the other aspects. We see everywhere the four tendencies or personality-types at war with each other and each of them becomes one-dimensional in the process, weak in
consciousness, a caricature of one or other power of the Mother, a power which actually turns against itself; for strength when it is out of balance becomes weakness, knowledge becomes stupidity, beauty out of balance becomes ugliness and perfection unbalanced by the others becomes sloppiness. It is as if the pillars are forever fighting each other while only in perfect harmony can they carry the Golden Child of the New Creation.

VII

The attribute of the north pillar, Mahakali, is Strength and it is balanced out on the south side by Maheshwari, Wisdom. Together these two form one axis where, in collective and in individuals, consciousness has to come to terms with the two diverse attributes and where experience clearly shows that they need each other; for otherwise each turns into its own opposite: wisdom without strength or strength without wisdom culminate in weakness and stupidity. We can recognise everywhere around us — and within us — the one-dimensional beings who run away with a single aspect to their own detriment. In the east pillar we have Mahalakshmi who stands for Harmony and her balancing power in the west is Mahasaraswati, Perfection. Here again Beauty without Perfection is unthinkable and vice versa, but this axis too is altered into a caricature unless it is balanced by the power of the north-south axis.

In the Mother all aspects find their balance: She is totally Mahakali, totally Maheshwari, etc. In man and in society they fall away from each other and go their own separate ways. Matrimandir is there to bind them all together again and in the resultant harmony, to create the stable basis for a new creation. Sri Aurobindo writes in The Mother: "For when her Personalities are all gathered in her and manifested and their separate working has been turned into a harmonious unity and they rise in her to their supramental godheads...Then can human nature change into dynamic divine nature because all the elemental lines of the supramental Truth-consciousness and Truth-force are strung together and the harp of life is fitted for the rhythms of the Eternal."

But in the meantime how many of us don't take shelter inside one or other of the pillars, forgetting or excluding the rest. So much so that in every aspect of life dialogue becomes difficult; for one concentrates on strength, another on wisdom, a third on perfection, a fourth on beauty and harmony, each one locked up in his own compartment, his one dimension, most often fighting the others. There are the power blocs, the warring factions, the parties, the convictions, sects, sub-groups; this is the world cut into four parts, each personality struggling with the different dimensions of consciousness. And there are the rivalries along the north-south axis and those along the east-west axis, and then there are the rival-

1 The Mother (Cent. Ed., Vol. 25), p. 36.
ties between the two axes themselves. It doesn't take much imagination to read
the play of the four personalities in history books or newspapers, in the events of
our immediate surroundings. Matrimandir is a silent symbol pointing the way out.
Four pillars support the sphere, four powers in unison can create a new world,
not one, not two, but all four. There are four approaches to Matrimandir, one
can choose; but one can only contain the total consciousness when one has
transcended one's one-dimensionality and aspires towards the higher dimensions
beyond.

VIII

But is there a meeting point of the various powers and personalities? Is
peace, is unity possible? Where then do they meet?

Matrimandir gives a clear answer, an answer on many levels. The four powers,
the four types and all they represent — parties, groups, sects, philosophies, ap-
proaches, individuals, — meet on all the levels of consciousness. Let us look
again at Matrimandir. Before we cast the footings of the pillars, we laid an enor-
mous net of thick steel rods to tie the feet of the pillars together. Thus directly
beneath the sphere of Matrimandir the four pillar-powers meet and are strongly
interlinked, otherwise one or other of them might slowly slide away. Now there
is no chance of that, for in the deepest layers is the strongest link. On top of the
pillars which by the way are slightly inclined towards the centre, towards each
other, there is the bottom-layer of the sphere binding the four powers together
and forming the basic ring of the globe. Two metres higher we find the second slab
of Matrimandir, the point from which the ramps start, again joining the four ribs
to a central ring. It is going to be a fascinating journey when one climbs the
staircase in between the pillars towards the first slab, and one lands up in front of
a blind wall. There is a door in it and one ascends a spiral staircase. Once one
enters the space of the second slab, the sphere opens up: one sees the two
ramps spiralling up, one sees the Inner Chamber as if suspended in mid-air, far
away above one's head. This point of entry on the second slab is going to be one
of the most dramatic points in the adventure of the climb towards the Inner
Chamber. Then, on the level of the Chamber floor once again the ribs reach out
their arms towards each other in the form of long cantilevered brackets, which
also support the floor of the Chamber. On top of that meeting point will rest the
Crystal. Yet one last time the four powers meet, right on top of Matrimandir, in
the point where the sunlight will be focussed on the Crystal, some fifteen metres
below it. The top ring provides the final balance, structurally as well as psycho-
logically or spiritually, for the four movements which started deep underground.

The one-dimensional man has to become two-dimensional by moving across
the axis towards his opposite pole and then coming to terms with the polarity
on the other axis. But then a third dimension must be added, a third dimension
which is provided by the central vertical axis of Matrimandir. On this axis which
connects Earth with Heaven and along which fall the several junctures of contact between the four ribs, we find symbolised the various levels of consciousness on which an integration is possible. It is again an image of real life: unity can be realised on lower levels, on intermediate levels, on higher levels; it can be mental harmonisation, vital balance, purely physical integration but it can also be psychic in character or even spiritual and ultimately supramental.

To understand these junctures more clearly I was again helped by that insight I received at the Samadhi which showed me how the top ring of Matrimandir coincides with the crown of the head, and how the Crystal represents the psychic being, and how the Matrimandir in general is a representation among other things of the human body, the human personality in its many dimensions. But I was also aided by the insights received by several persons at Matrimandir of the power-points they could see and experience at some stage. The closest analogy of what people saw is represented by the chain of Chakras, the centres of consciousness in the subtle body. We may then discover at each of the meeting points of the pillars and the ribs, one of these chakras, indicating how the integration process climbs the ladder of consciousness and how Matrimandir once more points the way towards the right modus of unity.

The bottom of the sphere is the Muladhara, which commands the physical consciousness. As we have seen the pillars are also connected underground, below their feet, but as Sri Aurobindo says, “The subconscient is too vague to have a centre. It has a level — below the feet as the superconscient is above, but from there it can surge up anywhere.” One could envisage a person or society finding the point of harmony between the various parts of its being on the subconscient or physical level. Such a unity would be of an objective type, as Sri Aurobindo describes it in The Human Cycle, concerned mainly with purely external factors such as land, property and so forth rather than with the more subtle processes of interrelationship and culture.

Then there is a transitional point formed by the spiral staircase between levels one and two of Matrimandir; a narrow winding half-lit ascent, it reminds us of the abdominal centre which commands the small vital movements, the petty greed, lusts and desires, the small sense-movements. It is easy to find any number of examples of societies, groups and individuals seeking to emulate a caricature of unity at this ego-centric level. The same applies to the navel centre, which we can place on the second slab where the ramps start and from which one looks upwards to the underside of the Chamber floor. It is a wide point, majestic, larger than the Chamber and one sees the total sphere widening upwards and out. It is an initial resting point before one sets foot on the ramp. The ramps have something of the intestines, they have something of the Kundalini, too, and one might see them as the “Ida” and “Pingala” of Indian psychology. They are the

central nerves, the prime movers, yin and yang. The navel centre has a strange duality surrounding it: it has an incredible force, a creativity, a finality, but of a type that gets carried away with itself. Inside Matrimandir one sees the major part of the sphere from the standpoint of the lower half of it, and the space here is even wider than the space commanded by the Inner Chamber, by the Psychic. Groups and societies striving for unity on the basis of the navel centre make an impact, for it seems this type of unity is far-reaching, forceful, somewhat regal and truly it has all the advantages of the vital; but all the disadvantages as well. Any attempt to impose such a unity on, say Auroville, is bound to fail for it aims far too low. It may appear to be beautiful, intimate, warm, and even at times seem to be of a psychic order, but it far too easily deceives. Beneath the surface there is a hardness, something exclusive, coercive, limiting. Somewhat more promising but even more deceptive is the type of unity based on the heart chakra which, localised in Matrimandir, would be found where the four brackets meet just below the floor of the Inner Chamber inside the central ring. It is very warm, it can be inspired, it may even be paradisical; but it remains within the domain of the vital with all its drawbacks. Many of the recent communes and communities, and a not insignificant number of the older and more established groups such as the catholic religious orders of which I myself was a member, seem to thrive on these energies; and when the original psychic impulse has been watered down they continue to exist by drawing their energies from mental and especially higher vital movements. These groups have something decent, friendly, humanitarian about them, they have ideals too; but once one has set even one foot inside the Inner Chamber all these things fall through. They are close together, the heart centre and the psychic centre, just as they are in Matrimandir, for the psychic centre, the crystal rests on top of the central ring; but their similarity ends there, for that which they value is totally different, and that which they command is vastly different.

The throat centre is not clearly represented inside Matrimandir unless one places it somewhere high up in the Chamber. But the Ajna chakra, which commands thought, will, vision, can be clearly seen in the optical device which catches the sun’s rays and sends them down to the Crystal. And finally the crown, the topmost ring: “The crown is the place of passage between the body-consciousness with all it contains of mind and life and the higher being above the body. It is there that the two consciousnesses begin to meet.” And then we move into the higher spaces above and around Matrimandir but, as Sri Aurobindo says, “The Supramental is not organised in the body, so there is no separate centre for it; but all that comes from above the Mind uses the sahasrāra for its transit and so opens something there.”

The four powers, the four personalities which often get carried away with

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1 Ibid., p. 371.
2 Ibid., pp. 370-71.
themselves in ordinary life, have to be joined together, integrated, harmonised, made into the full person again. Matrimandir shows how it is to be done but also how complicated the work is. Each group, each person functions on many levels at once and while one part of his personality is high up somewhere, another part is lagging behind. We can even graphically describe movements, tendencies, idiosyncracies, behaviour patterns, etc. on our three-dimensional paradigm which is Matrimandir. Someone may be very concentrated on the strength line but that strength, the Kali aspect, can be high up on the rib or on the level of mind or the higher vital, or somewhere down below in the north pillar, while that same person may be weak but very pure in the Wisdom aspect and manifest it on the level of Vision. One who has his Harmony aspect written high on the east rib may have his perfection element somewhere low down on the opposite rib. We are all made up of such variations, none of which is perfect, and for each person and group, community, party, nation one could draw a graph using Matrimandir as the three-dimensional psychological or sociological model; it’s all there. But still, something is missing...

IX

Instead of simplifying, Matrimandir has a tendency to multiply the aspects, tendencies, characteristics; one might well get lost in between ribs and pillars, chakras and dimensions. Though it may be a very interesting game, where does it lead us? It seems to lead to confusion, to the same confusion in which we live all the time, for that is in fact how we are made. Then, where is the integrating factor, where is the way out?

It is not in the first or second dimensions, with which we have been playing, but is it there in the third dimension which we discovered in Matrimandir? That points a way but taken by itself it is just as confusing as the rest unless some integrating factor is added. So we must conclude that this factor is not in the third dimension but in the fourth, and here is where we jump right into the heart and soul of Matrimandir, or rather, we walk right into the Inner Chamber. There is the answer, where else? The Inner Chamber is not just a room, it is a space in the fourth dimension and to enter it requires a leap, an inversion-conversion such as Mother speaks about in relation to the psychic being. In a talk on 8 February 1973 She said, “To be conscious of your psychic being, you must once be capable of feeling the fourth dimension, otherwise you cannot know what it is....My God!... Indispensable, indispensable! Life begins with that. Otherwise one is in falsehood...and in confusion and in darkness. The mind, mind, mind! Otherwise, to be conscious of your own consciousness, you have to mentalise it. It is dreadful, dreadful!” And in another talk She said, “You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension. If you open up your body you will

1 Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, August 78, p. 45.
find only the viscera of the body which are in the third dimension. The inner beings are in another dimension..." To enter the real Matrimandir we have to make a jump. That also means that to bring all the various threads of our being together we have to make a jump, a conversion. It also implies that in order to bring all the various threads of Auroville together in the psychic centre we have to collectively make a jump into the next dimension. It is the only point — a huge point or an infinitesimal one, in that dimension it is the same — where Strength can be one with Wisdom, and together they can be harmonised with Beauty and Perfection; and the Inner Chamber is the only point and, symbolically speaking, the only place where all the other parts and planes of the being can begin to reflect a variegated unity and in which all the other centres of consciousness can be integrated.

But it is a space which is different. One behaves differently, feels differently, is different. That is the main problem of entering into the new space: one has to leave behind, to forget, to change, and that is a painful thing for individuals as well as collectives. But the alternative is letting the world and oneself go on eternally as they are now, and that is also not a nice proposition either. What has to change most is the consciousness. In the same talk we quoted earlier (8 February 1973) Mother said, “It is the mind which prevents you from feeling it. You must be... you mentalise everything, everything... What you call consciousness is the thinking of things... but it is not that at all, that is not consciousness. The consciousness must be capable of being totally lucid and without words... There, everything becomes luminous and warm... strong! And peace, the true peace, which is not inertia and which is not immobility.” One can understand why the Inner Chamber is also called the Hall of Silence. One can begin to grasp the magnitude of the change required to move into a consciousness of wordlessness, which especially for collectives is a major leap from the noise of our common consciousness. In the symbol one also sees clearly how a collective should be run: the members yield their positions on the various platforms and knots of consciousness at all the different levels, and stations stuck in between the pillars and ribs and collectively they move, each by shifting into his own psychic space, into the Inner Chamber. Only from there can a place like Auroville be “run” or any other place for that matter. One is together around the Crystal, the Spark, the Soul in silence, listening, integrating, receiving and then manifesting what has been received. Any other form of government or self-government does not hit the mark, does not bring the New World an inch closer.

X

The direction is always the same: towards the inside; the reversal the same:

from the out to the in. Mother was asked, “How can people having different values live and work together in harmony?” She replied, “The solution is to go deep within oneself and find the place where all the differences combine to constitute the essential and eternal Unity.”

We have entered the Inner Chamber where everything is white — the floor, the columns, the ceiling, the walls. An artist described it like this:

“Picture a room which goes beyond human dreams... a room beyond colour, all white, with walls of purest white marble... with twelve free-standing columns, also pure white, rising out of the expanse of soft white carpet covering the floor... and in the centre perched on four six-pointed stars resting on the Divine mandala, a white translucent sphere... and from the pinnacles of the ceiling one single ray of golden light striking the sphere, bringing it to life... bringing the whole room to life, ‘in a sort of penumbra, and that like a light... a sort of shadow one can see’. As the earth receives a ray of the sun with conscious respect and inner awakening, there will be in this room a new light... a light which will come to its own life and show itself to mankind waiting, in a kind of soft shadowy embrace... in a new atmosphere so simple that man has never thought of it before. And it will be ‘very tranquil... and silence... there one does not speak... it will be good... it will be a place for trying to find one’s consciousness...’”

There one floats in a space without boundaries because all is white, all is pure and there is hardly anything to give one support. When the people to whom Mother explained her vision of the Inner Chamber asked Her why there would be columns, She gave several answers and then casually indicated (perhaps to satisfy the minds of the interrogators): “maybe as back-rests, to sit against...” Maybe they are back-rests, for our consciousness. Often I see them as check-points for evaluating how one is doing on the various aspects of that special consciousness which is the Psychic. One may see them as the monuments or embodiments of twelve aspects of the Psychic before which, in the light of the Ray and the Crystal, one holds up one’s questions, one’s actions, one’s mental, vital, physical movements to see whether they stand the test. They are like twelve facets of the Crystal, each one reflecting a certain hue of the golden-white light. One column, one facet is surely Sincerity and that alone makes several things clear; firstly, that one does not have to be a spiritual giant to enter the Chamber or to be in contact with the Psychic, one simply needs a special frame of consciousness and the beginning of subtlety. Mother says, “It is not difficult to distinguish the voice of the Divine; one cannot make a mistake. You need not be very far on the path to be able to recognise it; you must listen to the small, still, peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart. I forgot one thing: to hear it you must be absolutely sincere, for if you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and you will hear nothing at all except the voice of your ego and then you will commit with assurance (thinking that it is the real small voice) the most awful stupidities. But if you are sincere, the way is sure. It is not even a voice, not even a sensation, it is
something extremely subtle — a slight indication..."1 Psychic columns for sure include Humility and that uncommon virtue, Gratitude. Then come Perseverance and Aspiration, Receptivity and Progress, Courage, Goodness and Generosity. Equality is also there, about which Mother says, "As long as you are for some and against others, you are necessarily outside the Truth. You should constantly keep good will and love in your heart and let them pour out on all with tranquillity and equality."2 And then there is Peace: "Peace! the foremost thing must be Peace. Whatever you do must be by peaceful means."3 And "You must all agree. That is the only way to do good work."4

XI

We have travelled with Matrimandir through the first and second dimensions searching for ways out of our confusion, and we have even abandoned the third dimension and jumped straight into the fourth where a new light shines and a new warmth permeates our being. The Crystal stands out as the focussing point of this new dimension, pure, translucent, solemn, immobile, inviting, smiling. We have found a point of rest, we can sit in awe and be at peace and concentrate.

But then we know that that's not the whole story of Matrimandir or of the Yoga. It is only a first little step, a first small ascent up to the Chamber. It symbolises only the first transformation of the Integral Yoga. Actually it only starts now. The psychic transformation is the basis of the Great Work, the first step on the ladder. After having gone inside, deep inside to the core of our being, we have to climb up out of the mind into the above-mind, into the spiritual consciousness and we have to create an opening for the Force to descend into our being. The first part of our journey symbolised the ascent; now we have to open ourselves, to surrender to the Force and Peace and Knowledge which is to come pouring down like a Ray of sunlight into our obscurity. The Ray! It is right there in front of our eyes, shooting down through the crown of Matrimandir onto the Crystal. Here is our means of ascent, here is the Ray of the descent, the link between the being in our becoming and the undying being above us. Sri Aurobindo says, "That is the fundamental rationale of the sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi."5 The Ray is the nexus, a symbol of pure-light making of the Chamber not

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2 The Mother on Auroville (1977), p. 43.
3 Ibid., p. 76.
4 Ibid., p. 43.
a final resting place but rather a launching pad towards the Sun. The Sun is the goal, the Sun of the Supermind, and one has only to follow the Ray to its Source. The way is clear, crystal-clear, sun-clear and now one has only to become a receptacle of the Light and the Warmth. The Ray pours down things unheard of, undreamt: "If the development of a higher consciousness did not bring things that were not before heard of by the mind, it would not be good for much. The unification of the psychic and the higher consciousness forces and activities is indispensable for the sadhana at one time or another." The Ray is the link with higher and higher dimensions, higher and higher degrees of being, the link with the cosmic being first of all, and points its luminous finger to the second, the spiritual transformation for which the psychic transformation is the basis. "A highest spiritual transformation must intervene on the psychic or psycho-spiritual change; the psychic movement inward to the inner being, the Self or Divinity within us, must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence. This can be done by our opening into what is above us, by an ascent of consciousness into the ranges of overmind and supramental nature in which the sense of Self and Spirit is ever unveiled and permanent and in which the self-luminous instrumentation of the Self and Spirit is not restricted or divided as in our mind-nature, life-nature, body-nature. This also the psychic change makes possible; for as it opens us to the cosmic consciousness now hidden from us by many walls of limiting individuality, so also it opens us to what is now superconscious to our normality because it is hidden from us by the strong, hard and bright lid of mind,—mind constricting, dividing and separative."

The Sun shines over Matrimandir; one Ray especially is caught and directed down onto the Crystal in its very heart. The Sun is the Supermind, the symbol of that link-world in heaven. Where is the symbol of the Supermind on earth? It must be Matrimandir itself, the golden sphere which is as if coming down from on high in order to carry mankind over the threshold of a new age, providing all the indications and mechanisms to operate consciously the great Mutation.

XII

We started at the bottom of the pillars and climbed Matrimandir towards the Sun. The three transformations have been manifested on earth in a building made of concrete, gold and consciousness, but the passage can only be complete when there is a coming and going, back and forth, an ascent and a descent. Now we take A Ray of the Sun in one hand and a beautiful text of Sri Aurobindo in the other and we make a rapid descent. The text is simple, just like that, no embellishments, just pure force pouring down:

1 Ibid., p. 1094.
"THE SEVEN SUNS OF THE SUPERMIND"

1. The Sun of Supramental Truth, — Knowledge-Power originating the supramental creation.
   Descent into the Sahasradala.
2. The Sun of Supramental Light and Will-Power, transmitting the Knowledge-Power as dynamic vision and command to create, found and organise the supramental creation.
   Descent into the Ajna Chakra, the centre between the eyes.
3. The Sun of Supramental Word, embodying the Knowledge-Power, empowered to express and arrange the supramental creation.
   Descent into the Throat Centre.
4. The Sun of Supramental Love, Beauty and Bliss, releasing the Soul of the Knowledge-Power to vivify and harmonise the supramental creation.
   Descent into the Heart-Lotus.
5. The Sun of Supramental Force dynamised as a power and source of life to support the supramental creation.
   Descent into the Navel Centre.
6. The Sun of Life-Radiances (Power-Rays) distributing the dynamis and pouring it into concrete formations.
   Descent into the Penultimate Centre.
7. The Sun of Supramental Substance-Energy and Form-Energy empowered to embody the supramental life and stabilise the creation.
   Descent into the Muladhara."

There is a discussion in progress at Matrimandir as to whether the Ray should fall on the crystal globe only or also penetrate from there down. The structure of Matrimandir, with its central rings at various levels, provides openings which, in this construction phase, allow the unfocussed light from above to fall all the way through. In the symbolism as indicated here, it has to be that way; the descent does not stop at the Heart-Lotus, with the Psychic. It is a basic fact that the highest touches the lowest, from the Sun to the mud of the Inconscient. In fact, this touch-down might well seem to be the most important, for without the mud beneath glowing up, the world will never change. Cells with a new life have to be created in the earth, the Supramental Light has to penetrate the very soil and a seed has to be sown. Therefore I so much admire the beauty of the symbolism which has been added as an after-thought to the planning phase of Matrimandir; I refer to the twelve underground chambers which surround Matrimandir as the so-called “meditation chambers”. The construction of these spaces has not even started, and there isn’t even agreement that they will be built at all. Nobody seems

1 The Hour of God (Cent. Ed., Vol. 17), p. 27.
to know what to do with them, how to handle them. Following the Ray all the way down into the earth, I can see very well how the earth breaks open and forms a cell which is called Sincerity, and another called Humility, etc., each of which has the colour, taste, vibration of that particular quality, all the twelve psychic or supramental qualities which form the petals of Mother's symbol and which we have already studied in relation to the columns of the Inner Chamber. Now when Receptivity, Equality, Peace, and all the other qualities manage to enter the earth as first-created cells, the earth will respond and start vibrating with a new intensity and a real new world can begin, not a new world in the mind or in the vital only but a new world in the very physical. Matrimandir is the symbol, the witness and the prime mover of this Mystery of Mutation of the coming age.

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