Our Mother

Shyam Sunder

My association with Auroville has been from the very beginning. In fact there was a time when Auroville was to be started in 1965, and somehow or the other, I happened to be associated with it from the first day that the idea of Auroville was given by Mother to the world. But my association with Mother started still earlier although not so early as aster's. My first darshan of Mother was in 1949. It was in February 1949, and next month—after a few days—it will be 52 years since I saw her first. I was a youth of 22 at that time and I do not remember having seen even Mother's photo before I came here but once I was here a relationship started growing between her and me.

In those days Mother used to come every morning about sunrise to the balcony. That was my first darshan of her and the figure resembled a face I happened to see sometimes at Calcutta. Not many times, just two or three times, nor have I any idea of what it was or what it indicated. But the moment I saw her at the balcony, the magnet started working.

I don't think I missed any balcony darshan of Mother whenever I was in Pondy. It was a good thing to start the day with: after the morning walk on the seashore to come and see a goddess arriving with the dawn, the first rays of the sun falling on her face. Sometimes it would be difficult to say who was more radiant, the sun or the Mother Goddess before me. I was a young boy, a visitor: the sadhaks and inmates would be there under the balcony and I used to stand quite at the back—but it didn't matter, it is not simply my experience, I think it is the experience of everyone that Mother looked into his eyes wherever he stood; everyone felt satisfied that he was attended to by Mother. And then slowly, when the time was up, Mother would retrace her steps back to her chamber, but still the aura would be there on the street and it was not easy to leave the place. Of course each one would leave slowly, I also, and the next morning I would again be there.

Not only that, in those days Mother used to give darshan several times in the Ashram during the day. Once she was coming in the morning between ten and eleven,—it was called vegetable darshan. Some baskets of vegetable which would be used in the Ashram kitchen were brought before Mother and she would bless them with her gaze. And a few persons would be standing there in front of her to receive her gracious look and blessings.

Then one could see her again when she would go to the tennis ground. That was another fine opportunity for her darshan. It was not meant to be a darshan for people; she would just come down, have the band put on her wrist—Pranab would do that—and walk to her car; but sitting in the car she would again cast a glance around and I would have the feeling that she looked at and blessed me.

Then when she would return from the play ground that would be another opportunity to stand outside and have her darshan when she came out.

Finally, at night there would be a meditation. There was no fixed time, it would be anytime after nine, sometimes ten, sometimes eleven. People would get mats from Haradhan and they would be sitting or lying stretched on mats in the courtyard. Although I was an early sleeper from my young days, I used to attend that meditation. Of course once I overslept on the mat—I had missed Haradhan's voice “Mother comes”—and woke up only after the meditation was over.

Now, what is it that made me go for Mother's darshan on all those occasions?

Was it because I was just attracted by her? Or because of my sanskara that the darshan of a divine person is always helpful for one's growth or prosperity? Or because I had nothing else to do in the day? I was just a visitor coming for one or two weeks, a few times a year.

There is one other possibility: something deep within my being was being worked upon by Mother. For Mother's function
in her embodiment on earth was to work on the inner being of each person who came into contact with her and to take that person through the psychic contact to the ultimate aim which
is union with the Divine.

At the balcony darshan in the morning, I would say, Mother was 'a parable of dawn'. That freshness and that urge of dawn for a new churning, for a new chapter, that went on the whole
day and the whole night, I could feel them after all those
meditations.

It is a beautiful memory, a very precious one. For what reason
do I remember it? For that also there can be several alternatives.
But if I remember her for what she gave me, if I am grateful to
her for what she has done for me, if I still look forward to what
she continues to do for me, I think, I did not waste her time by
making her look at me on all those different occasions.

When I would go back to Calcutta,—it was more than fifteen
years after February 1949 that I settled down in the Ashram—
had her guidance was there always, her protection was there always
with me.

Here I wish to make one thing clear. During the course of my
visits these fifteen years the spoken words between Mother
and me were hardly half a dozen sentences. I am speaking of
the total number of the sentences during those years. On my
first visit when I went to Mother for pranam the day I was to go
back—in those times when one went back, one could go to her
for pranam—she just asked me, 'Are you going?' After that for
some years no words were spoken.

Then how did her guidance and her protection work? That, I
think, every child of Mother knows.

Is it a miracle? I don't believe in miracles like that. For her
miracles were normal. It is only when we open to her that the
miracle happens and once we call it a miracle, I would say, we
underestimate her for miracles are her normal action.

After settling in the Ashram I was doing miscellaneous work
coming to me through others from Mother, and my
 correpondence with Mother started in 1968 or so. Before that I
used to go to Mother on my birthday. Then a time came when I
was received by her daily. All that was also in silence. The total
number of spoken sentences during those visits would not be,

I would say, more than a dozen.

Although I was associated with Auroville work from the
beginning, as I have already said, it was all through
intermediaries. It was only in 1970 end that a direct contact
regarding Auroville grew between Mother and me on the physical
level when I asked questions and she answered.

In February 1971 Mother sent me a word to see her the next
morning. From then on I was charged with the Auroville work.
From February 1971 until May 1973 all the different problems
of Auroville, the different matters Aurovilians wanted to
communicate to Mother, also their personal questions, and
things that I had to ask Mother regarding Auroville were put up
by me before Mother daily. It was an interesting experience
that reminded me of the Mahasaraswati aspect of Mother, her
patience, of her endurance, of her love for her children.

No imperfection of ours escaped her notice, and still she would
point it out with so much love that we sometimes over estimated
ourselves. At least for myself I can say that sometimes I felt
that she loved me for something special in me. That may be the
experience of most of us, her children. For Auroville she had
the utmost love and great hopes for it. Auroville was getting
most of her attention, so much so that sometimes some people
would be jealous of me for while they were being pushed out—
'Mother is in a hurry... please don't take time'—I was never
brushed aside. Well, the thing went on, and as I have said, her
Mahasaraswati aspect was a lesson that I should never forget.

Before parting today I would say that Mother laid great
emphasis on the construction of Matrimandir. This was the very
first thing I was expected to report to Mother daily; what was
the work done at Matrimandir the previous day and what was
the next step. Similarly there were other things, and in a way
all things were important, nothing small, nothing big, but
Matrimandir had her special attention and was first thing spoken
of, Matrimandir being the soul, the centre of Auroville for which
we all should collaborate. In those days everyone from the
community was expected to work there at least once a week.
Well, it was a labour of love, of joy; it had an atmosphere in
which, I remember, we all from Auroville joined.

Similarly for other activities also at Auroville. And whenever
Darshan

Mother was told of an instance of collaboration, she was particularly happy.

And now when so many problems arise, as they are bound to arise, I still feel Mother is there, Mother is in Auroville, and we have great hope. When she entrusted me with the work of Auroville she said that it was a very difficult task with many problems, but I should put each matter before her, and in all her humility she said she would try to help me.

Well, when she was in her physical body, she guided, protected and carried us through. And now when she is no more physically with us, those who carry her emanation with dreams, and all who are open to her, do get her protection.

That is all for today.

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“She Always Brought Us Back to Unity”

Bhagawandas (Jean Pierre)

It is a great privilege to meet the Mother at personal level. Three of us from Aspiration—Alain, myself and Cristof—used to meet Mother every week and ask her guidance on many questions at individual, social and spiritual levels. To meet her as a member of our collective life is something exhilarating. That experience is very difficult to put into words, but I will try.

It was so incredible to observe how Mother tackled many things in a simple way. She keenly understood the problems we were explaining to her, and was teaching us how to face and overcome the difficulties—the difficulties were complex, both at material and spiritual levels.

She made us feel completely relaxed and good and comfortable. She always brought us back to unity by telling us how to face the problems and live and work together. She influenced us with her deep knowledge and love! Our conversation touched many things including animals like dogs and cats. She spent more than 15 minutes to explain to us, on how we should relate ourselves with these creatures, how we should be conscious and good in such a way that the animal too feels good to be with us. This still holds relevance to me even though so many years have passed since. When we asked her questions—we were putting so many questions to her—in her reply, She was going from one level of consciousness to another with such a facility that the whole communication was integral (at all levels: emotional, psychic and other levels).

One day after some conversation, she said that we should take up, “What is it to be a true Aurovilian?” For us it was a big topic, it was a great mystery—how to be a true Aurovilian and