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There is a silence behind life as well as within it and it is only in this more secret, sustaining silence that we can hear clearly the voice of God.

Sri Aurobindo

Talking

Words of Sri Aurobindo

Speech is usually the expression of the superficial nature; therefore to throw oneself out too much in such speech wastes the energy and prevents the inward listening which brings the word of true knowledge.

*

Talking means a vital interchange, so it is quite possible for one person to get depressed by talking with another.

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Talk—of the usual kind—does very easily disperse or bring down the inner condition because it usually comes out of the lower vital and the physical mind only and expresses that part of the consciousness—it has a tendency to externalise the being. That is of course why so many yogis take refuge in silence.

*

If the peace is very strong within, talking does not cloud it—because this peace is not mental or vital even when it pervades the mind and vital—or else it is a cloud that quickly passes without touching deeply. Usually however such talk disperses the consciousness and one can lose much. The only disadvantage of not talking is that it isolates too much, if it is absolute, but by not talking these things [news etc.] one loses nothing.

*

Harangues and exhortations touch only the surface of the

mind. If the mind is in agreement it is pleased and stimulated, but that is all. If it is not in agreement the mind criticises or becomes impatient and turns aside. If the harangue is very forcible it may touch the vital sometimes and produce a momentary effect.

*

In all things there must be a control over thought and speech also. But while rajasic violence is excluded, a calmly forceful severity of thought and speech where severity is needed is sometimes indispensable.

*

The habit of criticism—mostly ignorant criticism of others—mixed with all sorts of imaginations, inferences, exaggerations, false interpretations, even gross inventions is one of the universal illnesses. It is a disease of the vital aided by the physical mind which makes itself an instrument of the pleasure taken in this barren and harmful pursuit of the vital. Control of the speech, refusal of this disease and the itch of the vital is very necessary, if inner experience has to have any true effect of transformation in the outer life.

*

It is also better to be more strict about not talking of others and criticising them with the ordinary mind. It is necessary in order to develop a deeper consciousness and outlook on things that understands in silence the movements of Nature in oneself and others and is not moved or disturbed or superficially interested and drawn into an external movement.

* * *

Control of the Speech

Words of Sri Aurobindo

Yes, it would be better to get full control of the speech—it is an important step towards going inward and developing a true inner and yogic consciousness.

*

Absolute silence and looseness of talk are two extremes; neither is good. I have seen many people practising *maunavrata*, but afterwards they are just as talkative as before. It is self-mastery you must get.

*

In talking one has the tendency to come down into a lower and more external consciousness because talking comes from the external mind. But it is impossible to avoid it altogether. What you must do is to learn to get back at once to the inner consciousness—this so long as you are not able to speak always from the inner being or at least with the inner being supporting the action.

*

It is something very external that takes pleasure in light talk, and it is only when the quietude and with it a certain spontaneous self-control is established in the lower vital nature that this tendency can be entirely conquered in those who have it—i.e. in most people.

All these things will be worked out in time. What is most important is to get down the quietude into all the being and with it the true force. . .

*

Speech breaks out as the expression of the vital and its habits, without caring to wait for the control of the mind; the tongue has been spoken of as the unruly member . . .

Not to be under the control of the impulse to speech, to be able to do without it as a necessity and to speak only when one sees that it is right to do so and only what one sees to be right to say, is a very necessary part of yogic self-control.

It is only by perseverance and vigilance and a strong resolution that this can be done, but if the resolution is there, it can be done in a short time by the aid of the Force behind.

*

It is obvious that things which are a long habit cannot go at once. Especially, speech is a thing which in most people is largely automatic and not under their control. It is the vigilance that establishes the control, so one must be on guard against the danger of which you speak, the slacking of the vigilance. Only, the more it can be a quiet and unmixed, not an anxious vigilance, the better.

*

The habits of the physical or the vital-physical nature are always the most difficult to change, because their action is automatic and not governed by the mental will and it is therefore difficult for the mental will to control or transform them. You have to persevere and form the habit of control. If you can succeed in controlling the speech often,—it needs a constant vigilance,—you will finally find that the control stamps itself and can in the long run always intervene. This must be done so long as that move-

ment is not fully opened to the Mother's Light and Force, for if that happens the thing can be done more quickly and sometimes with a great rapidity. There is also the intervention of the psychic,—if the psychic being is sufficiently awake and active to intervene each time you are going to speak at random and say "No", then the change becomes more easy.

*

Mostly human speech and thought go on mechanically in certain grooves that always repeat themselves and it is not really the mind that controls or dictates them. That is why this habit can go on for some time even after the conscious mind has withdrawn its support and consent and resolved to do otherwise. But if one perseveres, this subconscious mechanical habit runs down like all machinery that is not kept wound up to go on again. Then one can form the opposite habit in the subconscient of admitting only what the inner being consents to think or speak.

*

It is... difficult to bring the speech under control; for people are accustomed to speak what comes to them and not to supervise and control what they say. There is something mechanical about speech and to bring it to the level of the highest part of the consciousness is never easy. That is one reason why to be sparing in speech is helpful. It helps to a more deliberate control and prevents the tongue from running away with one and doing whatever it likes.

To stand back means to become a witness of one's own mind and speech, to see them as something separate from oneself and not identify oneself with them. Watching them

as a witness, separate from them, one gets to know what they are, how they act and then put a control over them, reject what one does not approve and think and speak only what one feels to be true. This cannot, of course, be done all at once. It takes time to establish this attitude of separateness, still more time to establish the control. But it can be done by practice and persistence.

*

It [speech] can only be controlled if you separate yourself from the part that is speaking and are able to observe it. It is the external mind that speaks—one has to watch it from the inner witnessing mind and put a control.

*

It is really an inner silence that is needed—a something silent within that looks at outer talk and action but feels it as something superficial, not itself and is quite indifferent and untouched by it. It can bring forces to support speech and action or it can stop them by withdrawal or it can let them go on and observe without being involved or moved.

*

It is of course because the consciousness is thrown out in these things [discussions and laughter] and one comes out of the inner poise and has difficulty in going back to it—especially as there is a sort of dispersion of the vital energy. If one attains to a condition in which one can do these things only with the surface of the consciousness, keeping inside and observing what is done on the surface, but not forgetting oneself in it, then the poise is not lost. But it is a little difficult to get at this duplication of oneself—one

comes to it however in time especially if the inner peace and calm become very intense and durable.

*

Hastiness of speech and action—(in excess, because to a certain extent it exists in everybody)—is a matter of temperament. . . . It is the externalising mind that has to be disciplined so that it may not leap too soon to conclusions or rush immediately from thought to speech and action.

*

The psychic self-control that is desirable . . . in the midst of discussion would mean among other things:

1. Not to allow the impulse of speech to assert itself too much or say anything without reflection, but to speak always with a conscious control and only what is necessary and helpful.

2. To avoid all debate, dispute or too animated discussion and simply say what has to be said and leave it there. There should also be no insistence that you are right and the others wrong, but what is said should only be thrown in as a contribution to the consideration of the truth of the matter.

3. To keep the tone of speech and the wording very quiet and calm and uninsistent.

4. Not to mind at all if others are heated and dispute, but remain quiet and undisturbed and yourself speak only what can help things to be smooth again.

5. If there is gossip about others and harsh criticism (especially about sadhaks), not to join—for these things are helpful in no way and only lower the consciousness from its higher level.

6. To avoid all that would hurt or wound others.

* * *

Speaking of One's Spiritual Experinces

Words of Sri Aurobindo

The usual rule given by yogis is that one should not speak of one's experience to others except of course the Guru while the sadhana is going on because it wastes the experience, there is what they call *kṣaya* of the tapasya.

*

The Light left you because you spoke of it to someone who was not an *adhikāri*. It is safest not to speak of these experiences except to a Guru or to one who can help you. The passing away of an experience as soon as it is spoken of is a frequent happening and for that reason many yogis make it a rule never to speak of what happens within them, unless it is a thing of the past or a settled realisation that nothing can take away.

*

General knowledge is another matter, it is intellectual and the intellect gains by the intellectual activity of teaching. Also if in yoga it were only a matter of imparting intellectually one's mental knowledge of the subject, that rule would perhaps hold; but this mental aspect is only a small part of yoga. There is something more complex which forms the bigger part of it. In teaching yoga to another one becomes to some extent a master with disciples. The yogis have always said that one who takes disciples, takes upon himself the difficulties of his disciples as well as one's own. . . . Secondly, there is the danger of egoism. . .

* * *

Truth-Speaking

Words of Sri Aurobindo

Truth in speech and truth in thought are very important. The more you can feel falsehood as being not part of yourself, as coming on you from outside, the easier it will be to reject and refuse it.

*

It is very evident from this inward control which you feel enlightening and guiding you and the resolution of truth-speaking that it made you take, that your psychic being is awake within you.

The fault of character of which you speak is common and almost universal in human nature. The impulse to speak what is untrue or at least to exaggerate or understate or twist the truth so as to flatter one's own vanity, preferences, wishes or to get some advantage or secure something desired is very general. But one must learn to speak the truth alone if one is to succeed truly in changing the nature.

To become conscious of what is to be changed in the nature is the first step towards changing it.

*

Yes, of course, complete truth of speech is very important for the sadhak and a great help for bringing Truth into the consciousness.

*

Useless or not, untruth should be avoided.

*

If you get the English original* [of what is written by the Mother] from X, you will see that what is written is from the highest standpoint. If you want to be an instrument of the Truth, you must always speak the truth and not falsehood. But this does not mean that you must tell everything to everybody. To conceal the truth by silence or refusal to speak is permissible, because the truth may be misunderstood or misused by those who are not prepared for it or who are opposed to it—it may even be made a starting-point for distortion or sheer falsehood. But to speak falsehood is another matter. Even in jest it should be avoided, because it tends to lower the consciousness. As for the last point, it is again from the highest standpoint—the truth as one knows it in the mind is not enough, for the mind's idea may be erroneous or insufficient—it is necessary to have the true knowledge in the true consciousness.

*

Why should it be lying? One is not bound to tell everything to everybody—it might often do more harm than good. One has only to say what is necessary. Of course what is said must be true and not false and there must never be any intention to deceive.

*

In the first place, there is a great difference between uttering as truth what one believes or knows to be false and

* "If we allow a falsehood, however small, to express itself through our mouth or our pen, how can we hope to become perfect messengers of Truth? A perfect servant of Truth should abstain even from the slightest inexactitude, exaggeration or deformation."

The Mother

uttering as truth what one conscientiously believes to be true, but is not in fact true. The first is obviously going against the spirit of truth, the second does homage to it. The first is deliberate falsehood, the second is only error at worst or ignorance.

This is from the practical point of view of truth-speaking. From the point of view of higher Truth, it must not be forgotten that each plane of consciousness has its own standard—what is truth to the mind, may be only partial truth to a higher consciousness, but it is through the partial truth that the mind has to go in order to reach the wider more perfect truth beyond. All that is necessary for it is to be open and plastic, to be ready to recognise the higher when it comes, not to cling to the lower because it is its own, not to allow the desires and passions of the vital to blind it to the Light or to twist and pervert things. When once the higher consciousness begins to act, the difficulty diminishes and there is a clear progress from truth to greater truth.

*

Dissimulation and falsity of speech: This is an exceedingly injurious habit of the lower nature. Those who are not straightforward cannot profit by the Mother's help, for they themselves turn it away. Unless they change, they cannot hope for the descent of the supramental Light and Truth into the lower vital and physical nature; they remain stuck in their own self-created mud and cannot progress. Often it is not mere exaggeration or a false use of the imagination embroidering on the actual truth that is marked in the sadhak, but also a positive denial and distortion as well as a falsifying concealment of facts. This he does sometimes to cover up his disobedience or wrong or doubtful course

of action, sometimes to keep up his position, at others to get his own way or indulge his preferred habits and desires. Very often, when one has this kind of vital habit, he clouds his own consciousness and does not altogether realise the falsity of what he is saying or doing; but in much that he says and does, it is quite impossible to extend to him even this inadequate excuse.

* * *

Two Great Forces: Silence and Speech

Words of Sri Aurobindo

There are two great forces in the universe, silence and speech. Silence prepares, speech creates. Silence acts, speech gives the impulse to action. Silence compels, speech persuades. The immense and inscrutable processes of the world all perfect themselves within, in a deep and august silence, covered by a noisy and misleading surface of sound —the stir of innumerable waves above, the fathomless resistless mass of the ocean's waters below. Men see the waves, they hear the rumour and the thousand voices and by these they judge the course of the future and the heart of God's intention; but in nine cases out of ten they misjudge. Therefore it is said that in history it is always the unexpected that happens. But it would not be the unexpected if men could turn their eyes from superficies and look into substance, if they accustomed themselves to put aside appearances and penetrate beyond them to the secret and disguised reality, if they ceased listening to the noise of life and listened rather to its silence.

* * *

Speak less, act more.

*

Talk little, be true, act sincerely.

*

... the words are not always understood as they are said and then they are not always adapted to the understanding of each one.

*

Control over what one says is more important than complete silence. The best is to learn to say what is useful in the most exact and true way possible.

*

It is the control over oneself that is the first thing needed, and especially the control over one's tongue! If people could learn to keep silent how many troubles would be avoided!

Be quiet and gather strength and force not only to do work but also, chiefly, to achieve the Transformation.

*

The critising habit is more destructive than many bad habits.

*

Each lie uttered is a step taken towards disintegration.

*

To gossip about what somebody is doing or not doing is wrong.
To listen to such gossip is wrong.
To verify if such gossip is true is wrong.
To retaliate in words against a false gossip is wrong.
The whole affair is a very bad way of wasting one's time and lowering one's consciousness.

*

Anger has never made anyone say anything but stupidities.

*

It is always a sign of strength to be able to say things gently and it is always weakness that bursts out into unpleasantnesses.

*

An atmosphere of spirituality sometimes helps much more than an exchange of words.

*

Q: Sweet Mother, teach me to remain unshakable when someone talks to me, because afterwards my mind wanders.

Do not identify yourself with the conversation.Watch it all from above and from a distance, as if someone else were listening and speaking, and say no more than is absolutely indispensable.

* * *

Why Do People Speak Uselessly

Words of the Mother

Q:Why does one always go in for useless talking? Why do we speak uselessly?

Why do people speak uselessly? Yes, that's probably because man is instinctively very proud of being able to formulate words. He is the first being on earth who can speak, who emits articulate sounds. So it is a kind of... it is like a child who has a new toy it likes to play with very much. Man is the only animal on earth who has articulate sounds at his disposal, so he plays with them, you see... I think it's that....

And then there's all the stupidity.... You know, I also said that some people could begin to think only when they talked.... When they do not speak, they do not even think! They are not able to think in silence, so they get into the habit of speaking. But the more developed one is, the more intelligent one is and the less need one has to express oneself. It is always at a lower level that one needs to talk. And truly, a being who is very conscious, who is mentally, intellectually, very developed, talks only when it is necessary. He does not utter useless words. In the social scale it is like this.... Take people right at the bottom of the scale: they talk the most, they spend their time in talking. They can't stop! Whatever happens to them they express immediately in words. And to the extent that one is developed and on a higher level of evolution, one feels much less need to speak.

It comes from two causes: one, because it is a new faculty which naturally and instinctively has the attraction of new

faculties; the other, because it helps you to become aware of your own thought. Otherwise one doesn't think, one is not able to formulate his thought unless he expresses it in words, aloud.... Except those who are talkers by profession—that is, those who are in the habit of giving lectures or political speeches, or taking classes, giving lessons—except these people who, obviously, can be both intellectual and talkative at the same time, as a general rule, the more talkative people are, the less are they intellectually developed!

Q:What should be done to refrain from talking?

Think! You have only to reflect a little more. If only you make it a habit to think before speaking, that saves you at least half of what you say. To think before speaking and to say only what seems absolutely indispensable to you—then you very quickly become aware that very few words are indispensable, except from the practical point of view, in work, when one is working with somebody and is obliged to use words: "Do this", "Give me that", or "Like this", or "Like that". And even so, this can be reduced to a minimum.

*

Q:How does it happen that there are people who think one thing and say another?

Yes, that often happens. They think one thing and when they begin talking they say just the contrary. If thought controlled the tongue, many stupidities would be avoided. You lose control and speak on impulse any kind of nonsense; it is like a machine which begins talking for the pleasure of talking. That seems like an absurdity, but it is

happening all the time; there are very few people who escape this. They say all kinds of things and they ask, "Why did I say all that?" They do not even know why. I know some who always say what the other wants to hear. The person with whom they are speaking says to himself, "He is going to tell me this or that," or he fears, "I hope he will not tell me that," and the other one, like a little puppet, begins to say it, very calmly without knowing why!

Q: Is it because of a lack of will?

No, it is a mental deformation. There is not much will in this. If the will intervened, it would become less absurd, perhaps.

No, they are mental movements, the formation of the mind, the mental force which moves all the time, which comes and goes, like a squirrel in a cage which runs round and round and does not know why.

Q:Then, is it a universal play?

No, not very universal; it exists in humanity, it is very human. How many human beings have a thought of their own? I am pretty sure there are none in ordinary humanity with its ordinary mental make-up. How many people have a thought as a result of reflection? Very few, and if they have it, they are considered terribly hard or remarkably intelligent or despotic or authoritative—they are covered with all sorts of compliments! And that, simply because they have a precise fashion of thinking.

* * *

Categories of Spoken Words and their Control

Words of the Mother

Apart from a very few exceptions, only absolute silence is set in opposition to loose talk. And yet it is a far greater and far more fruitful austerity to control one's speech than to abolish it altogether.

Man is the first animal on earth to be able to use articulate sounds. Indeed, he is very proud of this capacity and exercises it without moderation or discernment. The world is deafened with the sound of his words and sometimes one almost misses the harmonious silence of the plant kingdom.

Besides, it is a well-known fact that the weaker the mental power, the greater is the need to use speech. Thus there are primitive and uneducated people who cannot think at all unless they speak, and they can be heard muttering sounds more or less loudly to themselves, because this is the only way they can follow a train of thought, which would not be formulated in them but for the spoken word.

There are also a great many people, even among those who are educated but whose mental power is weak, who do not know what they want to say until they say it. This makes their speech interminable and tedious. For as they speak, their thought becomes clearer and more precise, and so they have to repeat the same thing several times in order to say it more and more exactly.

Some need to prepare beforehand what they have to say, and splutter when they are obliged to improvise, because they have not had time to elaborate step by step the exact terms of what they want to say.

Lastly, there are born orators who are masters of the

spoken word; they spontaneously find all the words they need to say, what they want to say and say it well.

None of this, however, from the point of view of mental austerity, goes beyond the category of idle talk. For by idle talk I mean every word that is spoken without being absolutely indispensable. One may ask, how can one judge? For this, one must first make a general classification of the various categories of spoken words.

[1] First, in the physical domain, we have all the words that are spoken for material reasons. They are by far the most numerous and most probably also the most useful in ordinary life.

A constant babble of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment to daily work. And yet as soon as one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence and that this helps to maintain one's inner peace and concentration.

If you are not alone and live with others, cultivate the habit of not externalising yourself constantly by speaking aloud, and you will notice that little by little an inner understanding is established between yourself and others; you will then be able to communicate among yourselves with a minimum of words or even without any words at all. This outer silence is most favourable to inner peace, and with goodwill and a steadfast aspiration, you will be able to create a harmonious atmosphere which is very conducive to progress.

[2] In social life, in addition to the words that concern material life and occupations, there will be those that express sensations, feelings and emotions. Here the habit of outer silence proves of valuable help. For when one is

assailed by a wave of sensations or feelings, this habitual silence gives you time to reflect and, if necessary, to regain possession of yourself before projecting the sensation or feeling in words. How many quarrels can be avoided in this way; how many times one will be saved from one of those psychological catastrophes which are only too often the result of uncontrolled speech.

Without going to this extreme, one should always control the words one speaks and never allow one's tongue to be prompted by a movement of anger, violence or temper. It is not only the quarrel that is bad in its results, but the fact of allowing one's tongue to be used to project bad vibrations into the atmosphere; for nothing is more contagious than the vibrations of sound, and by giving these movements a chance to express themselves, one perpetuates them in oneself and in others.

[3] Among the most undesirable kinds of idle talk must also be included everything that is said about others.

Unless you are responsible for certain people, as a guardian, a teacher or a departmental head, what others do or do not do is no concern of yours and you must refrain from talking about them, from giving your opinion about them and what they do, and from repeating what others may think or say about them.

It may happen that the very nature of your occupation makes it your duty to report what is taking place in a particular department, undertaking or communal work. But then the report should be confined to the work alone and not touch upon private matters. And as an absolute rule, it must be wholly objective. You should not allow any personal reaction, any preference, any like or dislike to creep in. And above all, never introduce your own petty personal

grudges into the work that is assigned to you.

In all cases and as a general rule, the less one speaks of others, even to praise them, the better. It is already so difficult to know exactly what is happening in oneself—how can one know with certainty what is happening in others? So you must totally abstain from pronouncing upon anybody one of those final judgments which cannot but be foolish if not spiteful.

When a thought is expressed in speech, the vibration of the sound has a considerable power to bring the most material substance into contact with the thought, thus giving it a concrete and effective reality. That is why one must never speak ill of people or things or say things which go against the progress of the divine realisation in the world. This is an absolute general rule. And yet it has one exception. You should not criticise anything unless at the same time you have the conscious power and active will to dissolve or transform the movements or things you criticise. For this conscious power and active will have the capacity of infusing Matter with the possibility to react and refuse the bad vibration and ultimately to correct it so that it becomes impossible for it to go on expressing itself on the physical plane.

This can be done without risk or danger only by one who moves in the gnostic realms and possesses in his mental faculties the light of the spirit and the power of the truth. He, the divine worker, is free from all preference and all attachment; he has broken down the limits of his ego and is now only a perfectly pure and impersonal instrument of the supramental action upon earth.

[4] There are also all the words that are uttered to express ideas, opinions, the results of reflection or study. Here we

are in an intellectual domain and we might think that in this domain men are more reasonable, more self-controlled, and that the practice of rigorous austerity is less indispensable. It is nothing of the kind, however, for even here, into this abode of ideas and knowledge, man has brought the violence of his convictions, the intolerance of his sectarianism, the passion of his preferences. Thus, here too, one must resort to mental austerity and carefully avoid any exchange of ideas that leads to controversies which are all too often bitter and nearly always unnecessary, or any clash of opinion which ends in heated discussions and even quarrels, which are always the result of some mental narrowness that can easily be cured when one rises high enough in the mental domain.

For sectarianism becomes impossible when one knows that any formulated thought is only one way of saying something which eludes all expression. Every idea contains a little of the truth or one aspect of the truth. But no idea is absolutely true in itself.

This sense of the relativity of things is a powerful help in keeping one's balance and preserving a serene moderation in one's speech. I once heard an old occultist of some wisdom say, "Nothing is essentially bad; there are only things which are not in their place. Put each thing in its true place and you will have a harmonious world."

And yet, from the point of view of action, the value of an idea is in proportion to its pragmatic power. It is true that this power varies a great deal according to the individual on whom it acts. An idea that has great impelling force in one individual may have none whatsoever in another. But the power itself is contagious. Certain ideas are capable of transforming the world. They are the ones

that ought to be expressed; they are the ruling stars in the firmament of the spirit that will guide the earth towards its supreme realisation.

[5] Lastly, we have all the words that are spoken for the purpose of teaching. This category ranges from the kindergarten to the university course, not forgetting all the artistic and literary creations of mankind that seek to entertain or instruct. In this domain, everything depends on the worth of the creation, and the subject is too vast to be dealt with here. It is a fact that concern about education is very much in vogue at present and praiseworthy attempts are being made to make use of new scientific discoveries in the service of education. But even in this matter, austerity is demanded from the aspirant towards truth.

It is generally admitted that in the process of education a certain kind of lighter, more frivolous, more entertaining productions are necessary to reduce the strain of effort and give some relaxation to the children and even to adults. From a certain point of view, this is true; but unfortunately this concession has served as an excuse to justify a whole category of things which are nothing but the efflorescence of all that is vulgar, crude and base in human nature. Its coarsest instincts, its most depraved taste find in this concession a good excuse to display and impose themselves as an inevitable necessity. They are nothing of the kind, however; one can relax without being dissolute, take rest without being vulgar, enjoy oneself without allowing the grosser elements in the nature to rise to the surface. But from the point of view of austerity, these needs themselves change their nature; relaxation is transformed into inner silence, rest into contemplation and enjoyment into bliss.

This generally recognised need for entertainment,

slackening of effort and more or less long and total forgetfulness of the aim of life and the purpose of existence should not be considered as something altogether natural and indispensable, but as a weakness to which one yields because of lack of intensity in the aspiration, because of instability in the will, because of ignorance, unconsciousness and sloth. Do not justify these movements and you will soon realise that they are unnecessary; there will even come a time when they become repugnant and unacceptable to you. Then the greater part of human creation, which is ostensibly entertaining but in reality debasing, will lose its support and cease to be encouraged.

[6] However, one should not think that the value of spoken words depends on the nature of the subject of conversation. One can talk idly on spiritual matters just as much as on any other, and this kind of idle talk may well be one of the most dangerous. For example, the neophyte is always very eager to share with others the little he has learnt. But as he advances on the path, he becomes more and more aware that he does not know very much and that before trying to instruct others, he must be very sure of the value of what he knows, until he finally becomes wise and realises that many hours of silent concentration are needed to be able to speak usefully for a few minutes. Moreover, where inner life and spiritual effort are concerned, the use of speech should be subjected to a still more stringent rule and nothing should be said unless it is absolutely indispensable.

It is a well-known fact that one must never speak of one's spiritual experiences if one does not want to see vanishing in a flash the energy accumulated in the experience, which was meant to hasten one's progress. The only

exception which can be made to the rule is with regard to one's guru, when one wants to receive some explanation or teaching from him concerning the content and meaning of one's experience. Indeed, one can speak about these things without danger only to one's guru, for only the guru is able by his knowledge to use the elements of the experience for your own good, as steps towards new ascents.

It is true that the guru himself is subject to the same rule of silence with regard to what concerns him personally. In Nature everything is in movement; thus, whatever does not move forward is bound to fall back. The guru must progress even as his disciples do, although his progress may not be on the same plane. And for him too, to speak about his experiences is not favourable: the greater part of the dynamic force for progress contained in the experience evaporates if it is put into words. But on the other hand, by explaining his experiences to his disciples, he greatly helps their understanding and consequently their progress. It is for him in his wisdom to know to what extent he can and ought to sacrifice the one to the other. It goes without saying that no boasting or vainglory should enter into his account, for the slightest vanity would make him no longer a guru but an imposter.

As for the disciple, I would tell him: "In all cases, be faithful to your guru whoever he is; he will lead you as far as you can go. But if you have the good fortune to have the Divine as your guru, there will be no limit to your realisation."

Nevertheless, even the Divine, when incarnate on earth, is subject to the same law of progress. His instrument of manifestation, the physical being he has assumed, should be in a constant state of progress, and the law of his personal

self-expression is in a way linked to the general law of earthly progress. Thus, even the embodied god cannot be perfect on earth until men are ready to understand and accept perfection. **That day will come when everything that is now done out of a sense of duty towards the Divine will be done out of love for Him. Progress will be a joy instead of being an effort and often even a struggle. Or, more exactly, progress will be made in joy, with the full adherence of the whole being, instead of by coercing the resistance of the ego, which entails great effort and sometimes even great suffering.**[1]

In conclusion, I would say this: if you want your speech to express the truth and thus acquire the power of the Word, never think out beforehand what you want to say, do not decide what is a good or bad thing to say, do not calculate the effect of what you are going to say. Be silent in mind and remain unwavering in the true attitude of constant aspiration towards the All-Wisdom, the All-Knowledge, the All-Consciousness. Then, if your aspiration is sincere, if it is not a veil for your ambition to do well and to succeed, if it is pure, spontaneous and integral, you will then be able to speak very simply, to say the words that ought to be said, neither more nor less, and they will have a creative power. [2]

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1. Emphasis added by the editor.

2. In the next two articles we give the Mother's explanation to two passages from above text. -ed.

True Aspiration Free from Words

Words of the Mother

Q: What does the Word mean?

That's something else. The Word— it is pronounced speech and words. . . .

It must come from above, the source of this word must be up there, not in any intermediary domain. That then is the Word. And one must do what I have said—it is not an easy thing.

What I have said there [*in the last paragraph on the previous page*] is that one must keep the right attitude and be mentally silent: an attitude not expressed through words or through formulated thoughts, but through a living state of consciousness. An attitude of aspiration, you understand. I am obliged to put it in words because it must be printed on paper (this is why all this loses three-fourths of its force), but still otherwise it would not be acceptable at all; if I gave you a blank sheet, you would not know exactly what I have put there! I am obliged to put it into words.

An aspiration for all that is essentially true, real, perfect. And this aspiration must be free from words, simply a silent attitude, but extremely intense and unvacillating. Not a word must be allowed the right to enter there and disturb it. It must be like a column of vibrations of aspiration which nothing can touch—and in total silence—and therein, if something comes down, what descends (and will be clothed in words in your mind and in sounds in your mouth) will be the Word. But nothing less than this will do.

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Communication Without Words

Words of the Mother

" If you are not alone and live with others, cultivate the habit of not externalising yourself constantly by speaking aloud, and you will notice that little by little an inner understanding is established between yourself and others; you will then be able to communicate among yourselves with a minimum of words or even without any words at all."

—The Mother

Q:Can an inner understanding be established in every instance between two people, even in material things?

Yes, words serve merely as a means of communication between one mind and another. That is their only justification. But if the mind is clear and powerful enough to communicate without using words, it communicates much better, much more clearly and precisely and much more exactly. And then words are not needed.

Q: Even in altogether material things?

Yes, one may try an experiment. For instance, when two people have attuned their minds, if one thinks, "Why, that object ought to be here instead of being there", the other goes quite naturally looking for the object and puts it in its place. He understands quite clearly, he doesn't need to be told. Or else one thinks,"It is time to go out", or else, "I need such and such a thing", the other will understand perfectly well and does not need to be told. Before reaching so far, something happens very frequently—I am speaking of those

who exercise a control over themselves and are conscious, people living together—one answers a question that the other has not spoken. He had it in his mind, and the other answers: "Why, yes, that's how it is; no, that was not done." The other person has not asked but he has heard, has understood, received the message. That happens often, doesn't it? And then, even in things where it is necessary to say something, well, instead of saying ten words you may say one, and it is sufficient, the rest is understood, known. And this direct communication is an experience which one may have very easily. If you speak with another person and don't have a sufficient mental contact with him, he will use words which you are accustomed to use in a particular sense and you won't understand him at all, it is as though you did not speak the same language. After a while, if you meet several times and are attuned mentally, you begin to understand each other.

Indeed, words serve only as a vehicle for something that is beyond words and can be expressed without words for those who have a sufficiently developed and precise instrument.When one is truly in the realm of thought, words diminish the meaning. They reduce it, make it narrow, limited, they take away its power. Thought which is projected directly is much more powerful than that expressed through words. Words reduce, limit, harden, take away the suppleness and true strength—the life. It is simply because men's apparatus is ill-adjusted that we can't have telegraphy without words. If the sets were very well tuned in, one would not have to say even ten words in the whole day, and yet be understood all the while.

* * *

When One Does Not Understand Something

Words of the Mother

From the point of view of individual development and for those who are still at the beginning of the path, to know how to remain silent before what one does not understand is one of the things which would help most in the progress—to know how to remain silent, not only externally, without uttering a word, but also to know how to be silent within, so that the mind does not assert its ignorance with its usual presumptuousness, does not try to understand with an instrument that is incapable of understanding, that it may know its own weakness and open simply, quietly, waiting until the time has come for it to receive the light, because only the Light, the true Light, can give it understanding. It is not all that it has learnt nor all that it has observed nor all its so-called experience of life, it is something else which is completely beyond it. And until this something else —which is the expression of the Grace—manifests within it, if, very quietly, very modestly the mind remains silent and does not try to understand and, above all, to judge, things would go *much* faster.

The noise made by all the words, all the ideas in your head is so deafening that it prevents you from hearing the truth when it wants to manifest.

To learn to be quiet and silent... When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration for goodwill, if possible a need for goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And as you are silent you are able to hear it.

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there inside your head—I don't mean externally, for externally you probably have enough common sense not to do that! but inside, in your head—*remain quiet.* And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the Light and wait for it to come.

In this way the path would be considerably shortened.

* * *

I believe it is a practice to be recommended to everyone: to keep a certain time every day for trying to make the mind quiet, even, still.

... to cease thinking is a much higher achievement than to be able to spin out thoughts endlessly and it demands a much greater development.

... from every point of view, and not only from the spiritual point of view, it is always very good to practise silence for a few minutes, at least twice a day, but it must be a true silence, not merely abstention from talking.

Now let us try to be completely silent for a few minutes.

—The Mother

To Know What Is Behind the Words

Words of the Mother

... in speaking of these things [spiritual things] one must be careful not to be imprisoned by the words we use. When I speak of the psychic or the spiritual, I mean things that are very deep and real behind the flat surface of the words and intimately connected even in their difference. Intellectual definitions and distinctions are too external and rigid to seize the true truth of things. And yet, unless you are very much in the habit of speaking to one another, there is almost a necessity of defining the sense of your words, if you are to understand each other. The ideal condition for a conversation is when the minds are so well attuned that the words are only a support for a spontaneous mutual understanding and you need not explain at each step what you utter. This is the advantage when you talk always with the same persons; an attuned harmony is established between their minds and the significance of the things spoken penetrates them at once. There is a world of ideas without form and it is there that you must enter if you want to seize what is behind the words. So long as you have to draw your understanding from the forms of words, you are likely to fall into much confusion about the true sense; but if in a silence of your mind you can rise into the world from which ideas descend to take form, at once the real understanding comes. If you are to be sure of understanding one another, you must be able to understand in silence. There is a condition in which your minds are so well attuned and harmonised together that one perceives the thought of the other without any necessity of words. But if there is not this attunement, there will always be

some deformation of your meaning, because to what you speak the other mind supplies its own significance. I use a word in a certain sense or shade of its sense; you are accustomed to put into it another sense or shade. Then, evidently, you will understand, not my exact meaning in it, but what the word means to you. This is true not of speech only, but of reading also. If you want to understand a book with a deep teaching in it, you must be able to read it in the mind's silence; you must wait and let the expression go deep inside you into the region where words are no more and from there come slowly back to your exterior consciousness and its surface understanding. But if you let the words jump at your external mind and try to adapt and adjust the two, you will have entirely missed their real sense and power. There can be no perfect understanding unless you are in union with the unexpressed mind that is behind the centre of expression.

We spoke once of individual minds as worlds that are distinct and separate from one another; each is shut up in itself and has almost no direct point of contact with any other. But that is in the region of the inferior mind; there your own formations close you in; you cannot get out of them or out of yourself; you can understand only yourself and your own reflection in things. But here in this higher region of the unexpressed mind and its purer altitudes you are free; when you enter there, you go out of yourself and penetrate into a universal mental plane in which each individual mental world is dipping as if into a huge sea. There you can understand entirely what is going on in another and read his mind as if it were your own, because there no separation divides mind from mind. It is only when you unite in that region with others that you can

understand them; otherwise you are not attuned, you do not touch, you have no means of knowing precisely what is happening in another mind than yours. Most often when you are in the presence of another you are quite ignorant of what he thinks or feels; but if you are able to go beyond and above this external plane of expression, if you can enter into a plane where a silent communion is possible, then you can read in that other as you would in yourself. Then the words you use for your expression are of very little importance, because the full comprehension lies beyond them in something else and a minimum of words is sufficient for your purpose. Long explanations are not necessary there; you do not need that a thought should be brought out into full expression, for the direct vision of what is meant is with you.

*

The experience of misrepresentation of something we have said is a very common one. . . . We say something that is quite clear, but the way in which it is understood is stupefying! Each sees in it something else than what was intended or even puts into it something that is quite the contrary of its sense. If you want to understand truly and avoid this kind of error, you must go behind the sound and movement of the words and learn to listen in silence. If you listen in silence, you will hear rightly and understand rightly; but so long as there is something moving about and making a noise in your head, you will understand only what is moving in your head and not what is told you.

* * *

The Power of Words

Mother's Words of Long Ago(18 June 1912)

It seems unnecessary to draw your attention to the quantity of useless words that are uttered each day; this evil is well known to all, although very few people think of remedying it.

But there are many other words which are spoken needlessly. That is to say, in the course of the day, we often have the opportunity of expressing a helpful wish by pronouncing one word or another, provided that we know how to put the appropriate thought behind the words.

But too often we lose this opportunity of drawing a beneficial mental atmosphere around the people we know and thus of truly helping them. It would be very useful to remedy this neglect.

To do this, we must refuse to allow our minds to remain in that state of vague and passive imprecision which is almost constant in most people.

To cure ourselves progressively of this somnolence, we can, when pronouncing a word, force ourselves to reflect upon its exact meaning, its true import, in order to make it fully effective.

In this regard, we can say that the active power of words comes from three different causes.

The first two lie in the word itself, which has become a battery of forces. The third lies in the fact of living integrally the deep thought expressed by the word when we pronounce it.

Naturally, if these three causes of effectiveness are combined, the power of the word is considerably enhanced.

1) There are certain words whose resonance in the

physical world is the perfect vibratory materialisation of the more subtle vibration produced by the thought in its own domain.

If we examine closely this similarity between the vibrations of thought and sound, we can discover the limited number of root syllables which express the most general ideas, and which are to be found in most spoken languages with an almost identical meaning. (This origin of language should not be confused with the origin of written languages, which are of an altogether different nature and correspond to different needs.)

2) There are other words which have been repeated in certain circumstances for hundreds of years and which are instinct with the mental forces of all those who have pronounced them. They are true batteries of energy.

3) Finally, there are words which assume an immediate value when they are pronounced, as a result of the living thought of the one who pronounces them.

To illustrate what I have just said with an example, here is a very powerful word, for it can combine the qualities of all three categories: it is the Sanskrit word "AUM".

It is used in India to express the divine Immanence. There, it is associated with every meditation, every contemplation, every yogic practice.

More than any other sound, this sound "AUM" gives rise to a feeling of peace, of serenity, of eternity.

Moreover, this word is instinct with the mental forces which for centuries all those who have used it have accumulated around the idea that it expresses; and, for Hindus especially, it has the true power of bringing one into contact with the divine Essence it evokes.

And as Orientals have a religious mind and the habit of

concentration, few pronounce this word without putting into it the conviction that is needed to make it fully effective.

In China, a similar effect is obtained with a word of identical meaning and somewhat similar sound, the word "TAO".

Our western languages are less expressive; in their present form, they are too far removed from the root language which gave birth to them. But we can always animate a word by the power of our living and active thought. Besides, there are formulas which we could profitably add to all those in common use.

These formulas were used in certain ancient schools of initiation. They served as greetings, and in the mouth of one who knew how to think them, they had a very special power of action.

The disciples, the neophytes who were taking their first steps on the path, were greeted: "May the peace of equilibrium be with you."

All those who by their constant and progressive inner and outer attitude had shown their deep and lasting goodwill, were greeted: "May the highest good be yours."

And in certain instructors manifesting especially high forces, this word was endowed with the power of transmitting true gifts, for example, the gift of healing.

* * *

Flower on the Cover:
SHARP TONGUE
(Unfortunately too frequent)
Botanical Name: Aphelandra tetragona

Precise Thinking Without Words

Words of the Mother

Words are not good and useful unless through a special grace they put you into contact with the Thing, but in themselves they have no value.

In fact, the ideal condition—which has already been partially realised by some people—is to transmit the essential idea and even something that is higher than the idea: the state—the state of consciousness, of knowledge, of perception—directly through the vibration. When you think, the mental substance vibrates in a certain way in accordance with the form your consciousness gives to your thought, and it is this vibration which should be perceived by the other mind if it is well attuned.

Indeed, words serve only to draw the attention of the other consciousness or the other centre of consciousness, so that it may be attentive to the vibration and receive it; but if it is not attentive and doesn't have the capacity to receive in comparative silence, you may pour out miles of words without making yourself understood in the least. And there comes a time when the brain, which is very active in emanating certain vibrations, can only receive vibrations which are clear and precise, otherwise it is a kind of vague mixture of something confused, imprecise, which gives the impression of a cloudy, woolly mass and doesn't evoke any idea. So one speaks, the sound is clearly heard, but it conveys nothing—it is not a question of sound, it is a matter of precision in the vibrations.

If you can emanate your thought in a very precise way, if it is something living and *conscious* emanating from your consciousness and going to meet the other consciousness,

if, so to speak, you know what you want to say, then it arrives with the same precision, it awakens the corresponding vibration and with the corresponding vibration comes the corresponding thought or idea or state of consciousness, and you understand each other; but if what is emanated is woolly, imprecise, if you do not know very well what you want to say, if you yourself are trying to understand what you want to say, and if, on the other hand, the attention of the hearer is not alert enough or he is busy and active somewhere else, well then, you may talk to each other for hours, you will not understand each other at all!

And in fact this is what happens most often. When you are able to see in the consciousness of others the result of what you have tried to communicate, it always gives you the feeling of... you know what distorting mirrors are? Have you never seen distorting mirrors? Mirrors which make you look taller or fatter, which enlarge one part and reduce another, you are faced with a grotesque caricature of yourself—well, this is exactly what happens: in the other person's consciousness you have an altogether grotesque caricature of what you have said. And people imagine that they have understood each other because they have heard the sound of words, but they haven't communicated.

So, if you want to exercise the least effect on the mental substance, the first thing is to learn how to think clearly, and not a verbal thought which depends on words but a thought which can dispense with words, which can be understood in itself without words, which corresponds to a *fact*, the fact of a state of consciousness or a fact of knowledge. Just try to think without words, you will see where you stand.

Have you never tried it? Well then, try.

You have an absolutely clear and precise understanding of what you want to communicate to others—it vibrates in a special way, it has the power to give a form to the mental substance; and then, *afterwards*, as a concession to human habits you organise a certain number of words around it to try—there, much lower down—to give a verbal form to the vibration of consciousness. But the verbal form is entirely secondary. It is a kind of covering, a rather crude one, for the power of thought.

*

Words are words. After all, they mean nothing, unless there is something behind. Have you never noticed that when you speak to certain people, you may express yourself quite clearly and yet they understand nothing; and to others you say just two words and they understand immediately? You have not had this experience? No? I have had it often. Therefore, it does not depend upon the external form, the words one speaks, but on the force of the thought one puts into them; and the greater, stronger, more precise and clear the thought-force, the more the chance of what you say being understood by people who are able to receive that force.

*

What is important is to keep the consciousness of the Presence, that is, the Presence must be concrete, and then all that one does and all that one says—whatever one may do and whatever one may say—it is this Presence that expresses itself.

* * *

Creative Word

Words of the Mother

Q:Sweet Mother, there's a flower you have named "The Creative Word". What does that mean?

It is the word which creates. There are all kinds of old traditions, old Hindu traditions, old Chaldean traditions in which the Divine, in the form of the Creator, that is, in His aspect as Creator, pronounces a word which has the power to create. So it is this... And it is the origin of the mantra. The mantra is the spoken word which has a creative power. An invocation is made and there is an answer to the invocation; or one makes a prayer and the prayer is granted. This is the Word, the Word which, in its sound... it is not only the idea, it is in the sound that there's a power of creation. It is the origin, you see, of the mantra.

In Indian mythology the creator God is Brahma, and I think that it was precisely his power which has been symbolised by this flower, "The Creative Word". And when one is in contact with it, the words spoken have a power of evocation or creation or formation or transformation; the words... sound always has a power; it has much more power than men think. It may be a good power and it may be a bad power. It creates vibrations which have an undeniable effect. It is not so much the idea as the sound; the idea too has its own power, but in its own domain—whereas the sound has a power in the material world.

I think I have explained this to you once; I told you, for example, that words spoken casually, usually without any reflection and without attaching any importance to them, can be used to do something very good. I think I spoke to

you about "Bonjour", "Good Day", didn't I? When people meet and say "Bonjour", they do so mechanically and without thinking. But if you put a will into it, an aspiration to indeed wish someone a good day, well, there is a way of saying "Good Day" which is very effective, much more effective than if simply meeting someone you thought: "Ah! I hope he has a good day", without saying anything. If with this hope in your thought you say to him in a certain way, "Good Day", you make it more concrete and more effective.

It's the same thing, by the way, with curses, or when one gets angry and says bad things to people. This can do them as much harm—more harm sometimes—than if you were to give them a slap. With very sensitive people it can put their stomach out of order or give them palpitation, because you put into it an evil force which has a power of destruction.

It is not at all ineffective to speak. Naturally it depends a great deal on each one's inner power. People who have no strength and no consciousness can't do very much—unless they employ material means. But to the extent that you are strong, especially when you have a powerful vital, you must have a great control on what you say, otherwise you can do much harm. Without wanting to, without knowing it; through ignorance.

* * *

Flower on the Back Cover:
CREATIVE WORD
(Belongs only to the Divine)
Botanical Name: Leucanthemum xsuperbum

Harm Done by Incontinence of Speech

Words of the Mother

. . . the subject of our meditation this evening will be this: "On the harm done by incontinence of speech."

Very often I have told you that every word spoken uselessly is dangerous chatter. But here, the situation has reached the very limit—there are things which have been said, said over and over again, repeated by all those who have tried to perfect humanity, unfortunately without much result—it is a question of malicious gossip... of slander, of that pleasure taken in speaking ill of others. Anyone who indulges in this kind of incontinence debases his consciousness, and when to this incontinence is added the habit of vulgar quarrelling, expressed in coarse language, then that amounts to suicide, spiritual suicide within oneself.

I stress this point and insist that you take it *very* seriously.

*

To cure a critical sense that manifests by incontinence of speech:

1) When you are in this state, absolutely refuse to speak— if need be, make it physically impossible for yourself to speak.

2) Study yourself without pity and realise that you carry in yourself precisely all the things that you find so ridiculous in others.

3) Discover in your nature the opposite way of being (benevolence, humility, goodwill) and insist that it develop to the detriment of the contrary element.

* * *

Just try for an Hour

Words of the Mother

I suggest that every one of you should try—oh! not for long, just for one hour a day—to say nothing but the absolutely indispensable words. Not one more, not one less.

Take one hour of your life, the one which is most convenient for you, and during that time observe yourself closely and say only the absolutely indispensable words.

At the outset, the first difficulty will be to know what is absolutely indispensable and what is not. It is already a study in itself and every day you will do better.

Next, you will see that so long as one says nothing, it is not difficult to remain absolutely silent, but as soon as you begin to speak, always or almost always you say two or three or ten or twenty useless words which it was not at all necessary to say.

I give you this as an exercise till next Friday. We shall see how you succeed. You may, at the end of the week, on Friday, give me a brief note telling me how far you have succeeded—those who have tried. *

* * *

* *In the next Friday class the Mother stated:*

I have read your notes on the control of speech. Some have tried very seriously. I am happy with the result. I believe it will be good for everyone if you continue.

Someone has written me something which is very true: that when one begins, one has no reason to stop, one begins with one hour a day, but this becomes a kind of necessity, a habit and one continues quite naturally.

If your exercise truly has this result, then it will be an excellent thing.

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Passages in this compilation have been extracted from the seventeen volumes of the Collected Works of the Mother(CWM), **second edition of 2004**, and from thirty volumes of Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library edition (SABCL). The initial number in the reference specifies the volume number, and is followed by the page number(s) where the passage in that volume occurs.

Page No. Source

1: SABCL 17: 174
3-4: SABCL 23: 653, 835; 24: 1550-58
5-9: SABCL 23: 639; 24: 1550-56
10: SABCL 23: 925-97
11-13: SABCL 23: 652; 24: 1558, 1553, 1559, 1308-09
14: SABCL 3: 366
15-16: CWM 14: 208, 208; 9: 114; 14: 202, 203, 205, 202, 207, 205, 205, 204; 17: 49-50
17-19: CWM 6: 222-23, 201-02
20-28: CWM 12: 57-64
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30-31: CWM 6: 93-95
32-33: CWM 9: 422-23; 3: 195-96
34-36: CWM 3: 64-66; 3: 52
37-39: CWM 2: 66-68
40-42: CWM 9: 287-89; 5: 73, 74(fn)
43-44: CWM 7: 342-44
45: CWM 9: 144; 14: 206
46: CWM 3: 259-60, 263
48: CWM 15: 232

Supreme Lord, teach us to be silent so that in silence we may receive Thy force and understand Thy will.

11 February 1972 The Mother

Information Letter

During the months of March and April anniversaries of three significant days were celebrated. On **4th April 1910** Sri Aurobindo arrived in Pondicherry. On **29th March 1914** the Mother came from France and met Sri Aurobindo for the first time. On **24th April 1920** the Mother came back to Pondicherry from Japan. This day was also later on observed as one of the four Darshan Days.

Jharkhand State Conference: The annual conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society centres and branches of Jharkhand was held at the Society's branch at Doranda, Ranchi, on 22nd and 23rd January 2005. Shri Gopal Bhattacharjee delivered the keynote address. He spoke on the aims and objectives of Sri Aurobindo Society and explained how one can elevate one's consciouness by offering his services to the Divine at one of the centres or branches of the Society. He appealed to all to become divine workers. Shri G.S. Rath released the souvenir brought out on the occasion.

At Vadodara (Gujarat) a five-day Satra was organised by the branch at the Sri Aurobindo Nivas from 21st to 25th January 2005. Dr. Ananda Reddy from Pondicherry delivered talks on the following three topics: (i) Sadhana through work, (ii) Sadhana through love and (iii) Sadhana through meditation. Dr. Jagdish Vyas from New Jersey, USA, gave two talks on "The Present day Crisis and Sri Aurobindo".

At Siliguri (West Bengal) the branch celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the enshrinement of the Relics of Sri Aurobindo on 9th January 2005.

At Chittoor (Andhra Pradesh), the centre organised a meeting at Camford English Medium School where lectures were delivered to the students and teachers, introducing Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and their Yoga, on 21st February 2005.

At Nairobi (Kenya) the office bearers of the Nairobi centre visited the Gertrude's Garden Children Hospital on 10th February and presented 2200 mini booklets to the hospital.

West Bengal State Conference: The sixth annual conference of Sri Aurobindo Society centres and branches in West Bengal was held at the Canning Sunderban centre on 5th and 6th February 2005. 230 members from different branches and centres and some guests attended the conference. Shri Gopal Bhattacharjee presided over the meetings on both the days. Shri B.N. De presented the annual report of the West Bengal State Committee. Secretaries/representatives of branches and centres presented their reports. Shri Bhattacharjee, in his keynote address, dwelt upon the purpose of holding the annual conferences.

At Pondicherry the annual All India Youth Camp for National Integration was organised by the Society from 3rd to 11th January 2005. The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), New Delhi, sponsored the Camp. In spite of the Tsunami that lashed the eastern coast of Southern India, 59 youths (22 girls and 37 boys) in the age group of 16-25 years from 15 States of India participated in the Camp with enthusiasm and joy. Shri Vijay, Shri Kaivalya Smart, Shri Shivakumar & a team of youth guided the Camp.

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Capturing the stately elegance of a contemporary English townscape and the comfort and convenience of an international township comes Vatika City. The largest Group Housing Development in Gurgaon. Set amidst 53 acres of total area, Vatika City is complete with beautiful, lush greens and landscaped gardens. A congenial combination of low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise apartments with 2,3,4 and 5 bedroom options, the township will be the address where 1500 select families will relish the joy of world-class community living. Designed by studio u +a, London in association with Spazzio, Vatika City will be the last name in style and facility. It'll be the place you'll proudly call home.

vatika™
GROUP

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