

“The Mother” by Sri Aurobindo

Chapter 6, Session 2

As Revealed by Sat Shree

Chapter 6 of *The Mother* begins with the words, "*The four Powers of the Mother are four of her outstanding Personalities, portions and embodiments of her divinity through whom she acts on her creatures, orders and harmonizes her creations in the worlds and directs the working out of her thousand forces.*" Before Sri Aurobindo says anything about the four powers he describes the three ways of being of the Mother. The three ways of being are the transcendent, the universal, and the individual. Then he describes the four powers. All, he says, are expressions of the Mahashakti. Underlying the manifesting force of the Mother's power into the creation there are these four principles, these four great powers or personalities. They are called Mahehwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati: great wisdom, great strength, great perfection and great perfection.

Every spiritual being, woman or man, carries the potential of expressing these four major principles. There are other sub-principles that are mentioned later, but these four main principles are the modalities by which our manifestation takes place. As we look at the characteristics of each one, we may recognize that we have one or two or three or four of these personalities. One or two may be dominant, while the others are dormant. But we all carry the capacity to express these essential principles of the manifestation. This entire chapter is about one who is now a divine worker and is now seeking to serve the world. Sri Aurobindo is describing the cosmology and the structure by which that service can be accomplished and how it might demonstrate in each of us. He starts with Maheshwari:

Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will and sublimates and greatens them into wisdom and largeness or floods with a splendor beyond them. For she is the mighty and wise One who opens us to the supramental infinities and the cosmic vastness, to the grandeur of the supreme Light, to a treasure-house of miraculous knowledge, to the measureless movement of the Mother's eternal forces. Tranquil is she and wonderful, great and calm forever. Nothing can move her because all wisdom is in her; nothing is hidden from her that she chooses to know; she comprehends all things and all beings and their nature and what moves them and the law of the world and its times and how all was and is and must be. A strength is in her that meets everything and masters and none can prevail in the end against her vast intangible wisdom and high tranquil power.

(4:07) The principle of Maheshwari is what I call “holding space.” You are in the space of expanded awareness but at the same time you are in touch with everything that’s going on. You are not disassociated from all the activity about you or that is arising in your space. You

are residing in a transcendent quality of being while all of this goes on. When my awakening happened I was thrown into Maheshwari, into the whole universe. I saw the play of all the forces, the purposefulness and the sacrificing and the infinitude of content that is going on in creation, and I also saw this in the context of the person. I was seeing my place in the infinitude of all of it. Maheshwari has the capacity of referencing the individual person while at the same time being in touch with the Supreme.

This is different than the transcendent way of being of the Mother mentioned previously. The transcendent is beyond that. The transcendent way of being is antecedent to the beginning of creation. She is not at all in touch with this creation. She holds the possibility and potential of the Sat, of the potential to express itself into possibilities. There are huge forces, huge wisdoms, huge qualities and presences that have nothing to do with the manifest universe.

The Maheshwari power is quite specific. It is a modality closer to the creation. The beginning of Chapter 6 talks about different aspects of the Mahashakti, and the vibhuti, emanations, and forces that come from her. Of these powers, Maheshwari is the subtlest, the most expanded, the most transcended, the one who holds the space for all to be just as it is. Nothing can be overtaken when in this quality of consciousness because all that arises is allowed and included. This is that capacity in each of us to be able to be with what arises no matter how reactionary we are, or how repulsive it may seem or how cruel or indifferent or destructive or creative or beautiful. Holding it all, holding space, this is the transcendent presence of the Maheshwari.

She carries within her the inherent wisdom. Wisdom is experiential knowing. You can understand something, but it is only when you experience it that it becomes wisdom. Or you can experience something, but it is only when you understand it that it becomes wisdom. Wisdom is both the awareness and the experience, the ability to hold both. Wisdom isn't anything she has to think. It is what she is. This power, or principle, is wisdom. It knows everything as it arises. It doesn't have to think it. It knows it. It knows it in a felt way, in an experiential way. The transcendent way of being wouldn't attend to any content arising because it is pure context. But the power of Maheshwari is a context that is attending to the content that is arising, but in its vast broadness.

These four principles or powers are archetypal and they exist within each of us and they can be experienced as a glimmer, or at some point, your stable state of being.

Equal, patient and unalterable in her will she deals with men according to their nature and with things and happenings according to their Force and the truth that is in them. Partiality she has none, but she follows the decrees of the Supreme and some she raises up and some she casts down or puts away from her into the darkness. To the wise she gives a greater and more luminous wisdom; those that have vision she admits to her counsels; on the hostile she imposes the consequence of their hostility; the ignorant and foolish she leads according to their blindness. In each man she answers and handles the different elements of his nature according to their need and their urge and the return they call for,

puts on them the required pressure or leaves them to their cherished liberty to prosper in the ways of the ignorance or to perish.

This isn't the fuzzy, warm, cuddly Mother. This is an event of nature. We can see the force of Maheshwari expressed through Mother Nature, Gaia. She kills a couple hundred thousand with a tsunami; She preserves another hundred thousand from the tsunami. It is all equal. The key with this principle is that she is holding the purpose for the creation. She is the holder of this actualizing potential of the creation and she is the broad strokes, the large vision. She doesn't get caught up in the details. She sees the big picture. And she allows each person to go their way in their ignorance and stubbornness and intolerance. She is tolerance personified. She allows all the ignorance to go. She watches mankind destroy what it has created. For some she sends a grace because they carry the potential of being one of her vibhutis. She will bring the grace, but she will not make it happen for the person. They are simply given the possibility to either succeed or fail. Her other emanations play a role in supporting the possibility of grace manifesting.

When she introduced herself to me, it felt feminine. But at the time of my first awakening it was very hard to tell if there was any principle behind it. To call it the Mother would be just a label anyway, but it is this principle of Maheshwari that holds the purpose of the creation, like the mother holds the household. There is this sense of being held by something so vast and so subtle and so impersonal that it may not bring comfort, or even be experienced tangibly. But if you touch it, she gives you the glimpse of the wisdom of the yugas, of the broad strokes, even the smallness of the solar system and universe in comparison to her. She watches over all the manifesting kingdoms.

(13:56) This capacity for this vastness yet with some degree of attention to what is arising, is impersonal. You would never get a reaction out of this expression. It would always be, "It is all good. Don't worry. Be happy." When someone has the Maheshwari content it allows for the person to discover for themselves what works and what doesn't work. Only once in awhile will there be this affection or love or compassion and she will say, "You might want to consider this." She doesn't give any emphasis to this. If you weren't paying attention you wouldn't know you were given a direction. So subtle. So vast. There is a sense of this huge wisdom, this huge knowingness, this huge spaciousness. She is this quality of beingness that can allow whatever arises and not be shaken, not be disturbed. To be in this unchanging vastness no matter what arises takes time to develop.

You may not ever meet someone who has Maheshwari as their dominant personality. This principle, by itself, has no dynamic aspect other than this quality of presence and recognition. It can see you. You have a sense of being seen, as though the stars are looking at you. You know, you sense that you are uniquely there in her vastness.

For she is above all, bound by nothing, attached to nothing in the universe. Yet has she more than any other the heart of the universal Mother. For her compassion is endless and inexhaustible; all are to her eyes her children and portions of the One, even the Asura and Rakshasa and Pisacha and those that are revolted and hostile. Even her rejections are

only a postponement, even her punishments are a grace. But her compassion does not blind her wisdom or turn her action from the course decreed; for the Truth of things is her one concern, knowledge her center of power and to build our soul and our nature into the divine Truth her mission and her labor.

She rules over the demons, the asuras, the devils, the seducers, those that distort, the treacherous, the manipulative, and the greedy. All of this is hers. These are all expressions of the necessary tools and structures that are needed for the formation of the soul in its evolutionary journey. She does not blink to allow for suffering. She does not blink for periods of peace and happiness. They are equal and all part of the formation of the development of the journey of the soul from ignorance to knowledge, from the depths of despair to the heights of fulfillment. She was there in all the obstacles and tests, the lives when you were raped and pillaged and cheated and wrongly judged. All of these lives she holds in her wisdom.

When we complain to the sky, she is the one who listens for as long as it takes. She has compassion. She sees the struggle and the depth of the obscurity and hears the cry of the soul emerging out of ignorance and attachment. But she has no misplaced compassion, rather a broad recognition of the nature of suffering that is required for the development of the soul from unconsciousness into full consciousness. It all ends up in the same place. She holds the vastness of time, the long cycles of the yugas. She has the broad perspective.

Mahakali is of another nature. Not wideness but height, not wisdom but force and strength are her peculiar power. There is in her an overwhelming intensity, a mighty passion of force to achieve, a divine violence rushing to shatter every limit and obstacle. All her divinity leaps out in a splendor of tempestuous action; she is there for swiftness, for the immediately effective process, the rapid and direct stroke, the frontal assault that carries everything before it. Terrible is her face to the Asura, dangerous and ruthless her mood against the haters of the Divine; for she is the Warrior of the Worlds who never shrinks from the battle. Intolerant of imperfection she deals roughly with all in man that is unwilling and she is severe to all that is obstinately ignorant and obscure; her wrath is immediate and dire against treachery and falsehood and malignity, ill-will is smitten at once by her scourge. Indifference, negligence and sloth in the divine work she cannot bear and she smites awake at once with sharp pain, if need be, the untimely slumberer and the loiterer. The impulses that are swift and straight and frank, the movements that are unreserved and absolute, the aspiration that mounts in flame are the motion of Mahakali.

I really like this one. She kicks ass. It isn't a quality that we get along with. Someone who carries the Mahakali force is usually the most difficult person you have ever met. They don't care what you think. They have what they think and see. They are the ones that have the intolerance and judgment and reaction and they are swift in their moodiness and reactions and intensity. This is the rough version of Mahakali. The difference with the Mahakali is that she is absolutely, totally, without reservation here as the warrior for the Supreme. She is here to cut the obstacles, to destroy that which stands in the way, to wake up that which is sleeping.

She is rude, insulting, shocking, disturbing, and distressing. It is no one you would want to have as your roommate. You would never have any peace. They carry this vital force.

The nature of Maheshwari is the higher mental, but the nature of Kali is the vital. She is the warrior that will do whatever it takes to bring forward what she sees is the truth at that moment that needs to be spoken. She doesn't give a dam about the consequences. It is a destructive force if left unmanaged. If it wasn't purposeful, it would not know when to stop. It would destroy everything that wasn't true. If she was allowed free rein there would be nothing left and then she would be happy and fulfilled. She will have served her Lord. All there is, is that without content. She can be scary and threatening and angry. She is totally unreasonable. She can't be talked into anything. She is in charge.

(25:03) The Mother of Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo's partner in the manifestation of the mission, demonstrated these qualities. Those in the ashram would tell Sri Aurobindo that they liked it better when he was running the show. "You put this witch, this western white woman in charge of your mission! She is demanding, we have to do this and that and can't take it easy." Mahakali is intolerant of the lazy, unexamined qualities of the human being. I really like this one.

Her spirit is tameless, her vision and will are high and far-reaching like the flight of an eagle, her feet are rapid on the upward way and her hands are outstretched to strike and to succor. For she too is the Mother and her love is as intense as her wrath and she has a deep and passionate kindness. When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilize or the enemies that assail the seeker. If her anger is dreadful to the hostile and the vehemence of her pressure painful to the weak and timid, she is loved and worshipped by the great, the strong and the noble; for they feel that her blows beat what is rebellious in their material into strength and perfect truth, hammer straight what is wry and perverse and expel what is impure or defective. But for her what is done in a day might have taken centuries; without her Ananda might be wide and grave or soft and sweet and beautiful but would lose the flaming joy of its most absolute intensities. To knowledge she gives a conquering might, brings to beauty and harmony a high and mounting movement and imparts to the slow and difficult labor after perfection an impetus that multiplies the power and shortens the long way. Nothing can satisfy her that falls short of the supreme ecstasies, the highest heights, the noblest aims, the largest vistas. Therefore with her is the victorious force of the Divine and it is by grace of her fire and passion and speed if the great achievement can be done now rather than hereafter.

She is not patient. If she likes you, if she sees the truth in you, then she is going to cut out everything that is not true in you. She will do it no matter how much you moan and groan and complain. She won't care. She won't stop. She is just carving out stone to find the statue. She is the one that will hack away at what it is in you that you cannot see. If she catches you, if she gets the scent of you, then she can be relentless. This is not the wise Maheshwari that gives space for you to take as many lifetimes as you want. Kali is impatient. She demands, she keeps

confronting again and again without mercy those things that need to be met and awakened in you.

This is the wild wisdom of some of the spiritual teachers. They are threatening and intimidating. They will say things like, "I am here to kill that in you that can die. I am here to destroy you. Everything that you have held dear and made precious I will destroy so there is nothing left but that which cannot be destroyed, or insulted, or overtaken." She is the drill sergeant, "Stand up, straighten your shirt." She calls you up, preparing you for the battle, for the work that is required. She is the boot camp sergeant personified. She breaks you in. The other component is that she works in conjunction with the other three personalities, the Maheshwari, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati. She becomes the protector, the aid, the partner to bring forward those qualities you carry in yourself of these other personalities. She shortens the amount of time needed for these qualities to come forward. She makes it clear that this is the demand.

With me it is a pressure. When I do my work I come forward with an intent or an intensity that has a purpose. And the purpose creates a pressure. And the pressure moves that which is hidden, that which would otherwise lay dormant, to wake up and make real. My brother, George, carries this force more than I do. But he is an old warrior. He has been beaten up and he has lost use of his legs. He staggers around, but he has the same capacity in him as the Mahakali has. He brings more of the Mahalakshmi than he ever used to, more compassion than he used to. He would get so sick with my mentalization when I was in India. He came for the first three months and I would explain what was going on. He would whack me on the head and say, "You are so stupid, you don't know anything." Sometimes he would shove me into the traffic because he was disgusted with that part of me. I had bruises. I had to tell my teacher. That was George when the Kali was strong in him.

He is true to his word when it comes to God and Truth. He will demand nothing but the highest truth. But now he has come to the place where he will tolerate your ignorance, tolerate your opinion and your view. He won't say anything. He has become wise. But the Kali is still there. That is the male expression. The female can be quite seductive, quite alluring, attractive, powerful, interesting, forceful, immediate, direct, passionate, full of mood and reaction. One day she can love you and the next day she can throw you out the window. She has no guilt or shame or hesitation. She is always right in her mind, no matter what the topic. She can be the hardest person you have ever met to be with. These are archetypal principles that exist in all mankind and therefore all of us have a piece of these.

Wisdom and Force are not the only manifestations of the supreme Mother; there is a subtler mystery of her nature and without it Wisdom and Force would be incomplete things and without it perfection would not be perfect. Above them is the miracle of eternal beauty, an unseizable secret of divine harmonies, the compelling magic of an irresistible universal charm and attraction that draws and holds things and forces and beings together and obliges them to meet and unite that a hidden Ananda may play from behind the veil and make of them its rhythms and its figures. This is the power of

Mahalakshmi and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings. Maheshwari can appear too calm and great and distant for the littleness of earthly nature to approach or contain her, Mahakali too swift and formidable for its weakness to bear; but all turn with joy and longing to Mahalakshmi. For she throws the spell of the intoxicating sweetness of the Divine: to be close to her is a profound happiness and to feel her within the heart is to make existence a rapture and a marvel; grace and charm and tenderness flow out from her like light from the sun and wherever she fixes her wonderful gaze or lets fall the loveliness of her smile the soul is seized and made captive and plunged into the depths of an unfathomable bliss. Magnetic is the touch of her hands and their occult and delicate influence refines mind and life and body and where she presses her feet course miraculous streams of an entrancing Ananda.

(37:40) Sounds good. I'll take that one; you can have the last one. The characteristic is one of elves and dwarves and fairy dust and Peter Pan and Disneyland. They all have something of this charming quality of Mahalakshmi. She is beauty and abundance and grace and she indulges her children with her charms and creations. She is that which leaves us in this state of wonder and delight and inspiration. It is this high vital. Kali is the low vital, the gut and energy. The Mahalakshmi is the heart and she brings to life all that otherwise would be mundane and ordinary. It is a quality of consciousness I remember when I was in samadhi and was coming out and I was in this wondrous force that was glorious and magnificent. I was lying on the ground but I didn't come up into waking consciousness. I came up into the subtle physical plane. I was in a ditch on the side of the road looking at weeds and garbage. But from the state of consciousness I was in of Mahalakshmi it was this wonderful enchanting play land.

I remember as a baby in diapers walking into my parents back yard which was a concrete wasteland with a little patch of dirt and for me it was a wonderland, so interesting and complicated and enchanting. That sense of enchantment was there when I was maybe two years old. That quality of being that is enchanted by nature, by beauty, all that is alluring and attractive, comes from the Mahalakshmi. She carries, if not the Ananda directly, then something of the expression of which Ananda is the basis, that experiential awareness, that sparkling hint of realities and love that are beyond ordinary beauty and harmony—music, movement or grace that lifts you. She has this captivating quality that enchants the human and makes it divine-like. That is Mahalakshmi. Even a touch of her grace, a hint of her wondrousness, relieves one of great anguish and pain and despair. This is the New Age spirituality, the fantasy, "it's all good," let us be light workers for the upliftment of mankind. It is this hopeful, expanded, delightful possibility that life is. It is sattwa-rajaa.

I am sure that Mahakali has no patience for Mahalakshmi. She is probably irritated at how Lakshmi indulges them. But this intoxicating sweetness is a delicate quality. It is not something that you can access on the battlefield or in a rough and tumble life. There has to be a certain quality in your life so that this can be revealed to you. There has to be something in you that is still looking for that touch, that charm, that bliss, that quality of gratitude and abundance that she brings.

And yet it is not easy to meet the demand of this enchanting power or to keep her presence. Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi. Where there is affinity to the rhythms of the secret world-bliss and response to the call of the All-Beautiful and concord and unity and the glad flow of many lives turned towards the Divine, in that atmosphere she consents to abide. But all that is ugly and mean and base, all that is poor and sordid and squalid, all that is brutal and coarse repels her advent. Where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come; where they are mixed and disfigured with baser things, she turns soon to depart or cares little to pour her riches. If she finds herself in men's hearts surrounded with selfishness and hatred and jealousy and malignance and envy and strife, if treachery and greed and ingratitude are mixed with the sacred chalice, if grossness of passion and unrefined desire degrade devotion, in such hearts the gracious and beautiful Goddess will not linger. A divine disgust seizes upon her and she withdraws, for she is not one who insists or strives; or, veiling her face, she waits for this bitter and poisonous devil's stuff to be rejected and disappear before she will found anew her happy influence.

Sounds like your fairy Godmother. A little sprinkling of pixie dust and you feel light and alive and full of charm and beauty. This is a higher vital quality that I met in India when I began to come out of my human structure of the struggle and the effort and the desires and addictions of my personalities. My system became purer and simpler and I was beginning to be shown the planes of consciousness of Mahalakshmi. Those ideas of gremlins and pixies and elves and dwarves—these are actually domains that exist in the subtle world. I am sure that those who write fairy tales write from meeting those planes in their dreams or in their awareness. That quality of the beauty and harmony continues to expand and becomes the heavens where human beings rest between lifetimes. If they are sattwa they end up in these transcendent glorious places. In the lower heavens there are tangible villages with buildings and gardens and oceans and skies.

One time my teacher carried me into the upper atmosphere and I left my body fully. I was fully conscious in my energy body. He took me to the moon. I was seeing the physical moon and the dimension of the beings of the moon. It was concurrent. There were beautiful people and gardens. It was a glorious domain where people have lived for long periods of time in complete happiness and harmony with the pleasures of human life but without the densities. Mohammed said when you go to heaven you will have sixteen concubines. These things exist in the subtle dimensions. They are actually there. This is Mahalakshmi's domain.

It is not absolute truth. It is not true ananda. It is not transformation, but it is a delightful [paradise\[1\]](#). We have Disneyland, an imaginary place that is full of fun and fairytales. This is a reflection of this principle that exists in the subtle plane. Before we became so mental people were experiencing these things readily. They would see the elves and dwarves because they were seeing into the energy of the subtle fields. The difference between dimensions wasn't as clearly separated as it is now.

Ascetic bareness and harshness are not pleasing to her nor the suppression of the heart's deeper emotions and the rigid repression of the soul's and the life's parts of beauty. For it is through love and beauty that she lays on men the yoke of the Divine. Life is turned in her supreme creations into a rich work of celestial art and all existence into a poem of sacred delight; the world's riches are brought together and concerted for a supreme order and even the simplest and commonest things are made wonderful by her intuition of unity and the breath of her spirit. Admitted to the heart she lifts wisdom to pinnacles of wonder and reveals to it the mystic secrets of the ecstasy that surpasses all knowledge, meets devotion with the passionate attraction of the Divine, teaches to strength and force the rhythm that keeps the might of their acts harmonious and in measure and casts on perfection the charm that makes it endure for ever.

(50:00) The kids had it right, "I'll never grow up." We had access to this when we were children. Not all of us, most of us were too traumatized to have had much of that. But you can have it when you are hiking through the woods and you walk into a grotto with a pond and you are by yourself. There are the dragonflies and the wind blowing through the trees, and there are the scents and the smells. In that moment, something is touched in your heart. Something is touched in your awareness. You are touched by a quality of harmony and beauty and order and this recognition of the delight of being becomes available to you. All of these powers can be felt in our body. Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati can all be felt in our bodies. They are like personal attributes, personality types that we can move into relationship within ourselves.

I have been in the battlefield too long. When I was young I had much more access to Mahalakshmi. But I was raised in a concrete jungle in a fast growing ghetto in the San Francisco Bay Area of California and it was hard and rough and noisy and demanding. There was very little nature, a large lawn with some playground equipment. We played on the train tracks, seeing who could stay on the tracks the longest before the train came. There wasn't much room for Mahalakshmi. There also wasn't much interest for her either. I had too many lives as a warrior, too many tests and demands. So that when Truth came for me I became even less interested in these things. When there was something that I wanted to create, something I wanted to figure out, I didn't spend much time in Mahalakshmi.

But I knew her when I would fall in love. When I was a young man I could fall in love. I loved falling in love. And more times than not the person I was falling in love with never knew. There was something in me that would rather be loving someone than actually knowing them. It was better in the fantasy than the reality. I had a good instinct until my sexual drive got me in trouble. But prior to that, infatuation was my play land. So I knew Mahalakshmi in that ability to love and the charm that comes when you find someone to love. I truly have that side of my nature. We can have these parts in ourselves and they are not contradictory. They are co-creators. They show different vibrational frequencies of existence. It is like having a flute with all the holes open rather than a flute with only one hole that can only play one note. Each augments the other. Each adds quality and character to the other. Mahalakshmi brings this grace, this beauty, this love, and this delight to the wisdom of Maheshwari, to the strength of

Kali, and to the perfection of Mahasaraswati. They all assist and play and interact with each other to create a full expression of the divine manifestation.

Mahasaraswati is the Mother's Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skillful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature. Mahashwari lays down the large lines of the world-forces, Mahakali drives their energy and impetus, Mahalakshmi discovers their rhythms and measures, but Mahasaraswati presides over their detail of organization and execution, relation of parts and effective combination of forces and unfailing exactitude of result and fulfillment. The science and craft and technique of things are Mahasaraswati's province. Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker.

Mahasaraswati is perfection. This is that quality in us that can become very attentive to detail, to the parts of life, and get value out of them. This is the ability to be interested in learning, to solve problems, to build something and become skillful. When I was young I played with blocks and tinker toys and toy logs and would build houses. I loved that stuff. I had little soldiers and built castles and created battles. There was creating of worlds. Later I learned to make cars and airplanes out of toothpicks because we were very poor. I was so engaged in how to bring the pieces together and create the object that I had in mind to create. I developed this quality of persistence and patience and attention to detail needed to discover what it took to build these models and have them stay together. The Saraswati was very strong with me in this way. I built many model airplanes, some that flew, and entire replicas of real airplanes. I would detail the cockpit with dials and instruments and even pedals that moved with the rudders.

This involved attention to detail. The quality of consciousness that I would be in was like a rapture, an enthrallment. Time would just fly by. Making art was another activity in which I was constantly struggling to bring perfection in a watercolor and oil painting or in sketches and various different modalities. There was this process of losing myself and bringing forward some kind of perfection out of the struggle, out of not being able to do it. The Mahasaraswati is where the tire meets the road. The potential of the Sat, through the Maheshwari, becomes a possibility and as it goes into Mahakali and Mahalakshmi that possibility starts actualizing, but it is the Mahasaraswati that makes it real and gives it a structure by which it can sustain itself. The other three powers are dependent upon this capacity to bring it down into the nuts and bolts. God lies in the details. Manifestation lies in the details.

If we don't have the Mahasaraswati we can still work in the large dimensions, the big vistas, but we can't bring it into the creation. If we work with Mahakali we are just as likely to cause destruction as creation. With Mahalakshmi we create a play land that goes nowhere. But with Mahasarawati we make it real, we make it happen, we bring it into existence. This is where we take our realizations and make them lived. We actualize the potential of the Sat into the Tat through our whole personality.

This Power is the strong, the tireless, the careful and efficient builder, organizer, administrator, technician, artisan and classifier of the worlds. When she takes up the transformation and new-building of the nature, her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless. For the will in her works is scrupulous, unsleeping, indefatigable; leaning over us she notes and touches every little detail, finds out every minute defect, gap, twist or incompleteness, considers and weighs accurately all that has been done and all that remains still to be done hereafter. Nothing is too small or apparently trivial for her attention; nothing however impalpable or disguised or latent can escape her. Molding and remolding she labors each part till it has attained its true form, is put into its exact place in the whole and fulfills its precise purpose.

(1:01:48) Because of the existing order at any one time in any one era in the sphere of one's world, in order to bring a higher possibility into that existing order one has to know the current order. Like a scientist who wants to build a rocket ship, he has to understand the principles of gravity and thermodynamics. He has to know the existing rules of the game before he can build something that takes it further. He has to familiarize himself with what has happened, he has to understand the readiness, the capacity, and the level of listening and then expand on that. It takes this attention to detail. It takes this patience and perseverance and the discipline of looking for what is not working, which will allow whatever is brought forward to be more true.

And what is true? True is that which lasts. True is that which has a role to play in the purpose of that time and place and era. The Mahasaraswati is the actualizer, the one who brings it down so it can become a stable base for a new possibility, be it in art, in science, in architecture, in education, or in creating a spiritual movement, or a new way of perceiving and understanding reality so that there is a greater possibility of that truth to remain. She is the one who creates a stable system by which the potential, which is inherent in every circumstance, can be brought into a possibility and be actualized.

So rather than just a descent from above it is also an evolving from below. Working with that which doesn't work, finding what is still resistant and stuck, and with that, building a higher order—this is the real creator. This is the one that brings something into existence that can play a role in the overall purpose. Mahasaraswati by herself would be too focused; she would be the obsessive compulsive neurotic. Her house is impeccably clean. She would not be able to fulfill her mission alone. But give her the other three personalities then the Mahasaraswati can have a larger vision and a sense of the greater opportunity to be able to create and expand outside of that. I could say that all obsessive compulsives are Mahasaraswatis that haven't found their purpose. They haven't found the thing to fix so they end up fixing something that doesn't need to be fixed. And they keep trying to make something that is perfect even more perfect so it goes nowhere.

In her constant and diligent arrangement and rearrangement of things her eye is on all needs at once and the way to meet them and her intuition knows what is to be chosen and

what rejected and successfully determines the right instrument, the right time, the right conditions and the right process.

This recognition of time and resources and available capacities is also Mahasaraswati. But it is not just her, because she has to be working with many different expressions of the Divine. She has to watch over all the pieces to see that everyone is playing their part, that they are clear about their part, and they know how to make their part more and more effective. This is the Mahasaraswati that Sri Aurobindo is describing here because this is how the Mother of Pondicherry ran the ashram. She created a principle, an idea. She designed the structure so that every person who came had to meet certain criteria, like we have with the residential program. They had to give up all their wealth, their family, as if forever, even if they were married and had children; they had to commit fully to the guidance of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; and they were given a job. Their room and board and medical care were taken care of. She used the common cafeteria as the battlefield for training people how to be in action. It became the organizing principle for the ashram.

As they grew larger they had a printing business, and a weaving and laundry and construction business, all spread throughout the town. All of this was the Mother holding the vision of Sri Aurobindo and being able to see how each piece played a part and when it was needed, what the sequence was, what people and what methods and procedures needed to be set in place so this opportunity could manifest. The Mahasaraswati is not just the perfection in this minutiae. It is perfection in administration, in all activities that we may be able to take upon ourselves. It could be like here in Washoe Valley, with Sahaj, building the retainer wall at the Chipmunk house, learning what worked and didn't work, discovering the methods and techniques that would create a more perfect and lasting structure. Any one of these things can become an expression of the Mahasaraswati in ourselves. When we complete it, there is a sense of deep fulfillment in having done what needs to be done.

Carelessness and negligence and indolence she abhors; all scamped and hasty and shuffling work, all clumsiness and a' peu pres and misfire, all false adaptation and misuse of instruments and faculties and leaving of things undone or half done is offensive and foreign to her temper. When her work is finished nothing has been forgotten, no part has been misplaced or omitted or left in a faulty condition; all is solid, accurate, complete, admirable. Nothing short of a perfect perfection satisfies her and she is ready to face an eternity of toil if that is needed for the fullness of her creation.

This is like the final walk-through for the architect. You have gone through all the processes, did all the drawings and plans, coordinated with all the contractors who constructed the project. You have been through all the problems, the delays, lack of material, the owners changing their minds, all the change orders and you are down to the final walk-through. How come this door doesn't close completely or it is uneven over here? There is the need to walk through every piece and every part, from the heating system to the appliances to the floor finishings, and check everything off. The project is not done until every detail has been

attended to. Then the fullness comes, but it is tedious and meticulous in its exactitude and its demand to bring forward something that lasts.

Therefore of all the Mother's powers she is the most long-suffering with man and his thousand imperfections. Kind, smiling, close and helpful, not easily turned away or discouraged, insistent even after repeated failure, her hand sustains our every step on condition that we are single in our will and straightforward and sincere; for a double mind she will not tolerate and her revealing irony is merciless to drama and histrionics and self-deceit and pretense. A mother to our wants, a friend in our difficulties, a persistent and tranquil counselor and mentor, chasing away with her radiant smile the clouds of gloom and fretfulness and depression, reminding always of the ever-present help, pointing to the eternal sunshine, she is firm, quiet and persevering in the deep and continuous urge that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature. All the work of the other Powers leans on her for its completeness; for she assures the material foundation, elaborates the stuff of detail and erects and rivets the armor of the structure.

(1:12:46) The qualities of perfection that I note here don't necessarily include all these sunny qualities. For me it was pretty much irritation. I think because in my nature when I was an architect I still had desire and a sense of what I would rather be doing. I probably didn't have Mahasaraswati to the full extent necessary for the work I was doing as an architect. I was initially a designer, but when I owned my own business I had to learn how to do the Mahasaraswati. I had to learn how to produce drawings and bring the vision into reality and work with the numbers and the contractors. There was a whole training that architects go through when they come out of the dream and go into the reality. I wouldn't say I was patient with others, but I was supportive. The quality of patience came as time went on and I became more experienced. I learned to be more tolerant with people and their imperfections. I learned to let go of doing it the way I expected or was used to doing, so it was a process of the universe making me a more perfect manifestation of Mahasaraswati.

When I left behind the world of fear and desire the greater possibility of Mahasaraswati came to me. That is what I am with all of you, patient and meticulous. I consider all the details; I look at what is left: I look at what can be built upon and I work with that for as long as it takes, for the rest of my life and your life. It doesn't have anything it would rather be doing. It doesn't have any expectation that it will happen sooner than it will happen. There is this patient, enduring, supportive, resolve. I became resolved and in that the impatience and judgment disappeared. So the quality of Mahasaraswati being described here is one that has come to the state of almost perfection in the manifestation. In the Bhagavad Gita, this is the perfection of one who has transcended the three gunas and is no longer identified with the sattwa, rajas, or tamas, not preferring one over the other, being gunatic. When one is gunatic then one can undertake any task no matter how difficult or how unworkable or how long it may take because it doesn't have anything else it needs to do but that.

I want to stress the interrelationship of these four personalities. For example, the Mahakali with the Mahasaraswati would create dissatisfaction, demand and impatience in the

manifestation of the perfection. It would accelerate and push and demand. The Mahalakshmi with the Mahasaraswati would bring the charm and acceptance and love and support. And the Maheshwari probably wouldn't have anything to do with Mahasaraswati. But Maheshwari would give the long view and the perspective and the ability to step back from the content and problems and issues.

The nature of these four principles or personalities are pointing to archetypal structures that the gunas represent in all of humanity. Maheshwari is pure sattwa. Mahakali is pure rajas. Mahalakshmi is the sattwa-tamas. And Mahasaraswati is the sattwa-tamas but with rajas for perfection. They all represent expressions of the possible combinations of the gunatic types. Love and blessings.

With deep appreciation to The Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust for making Sri Aurobindo's beloved work, The Mother, so freely available and accessible to all sincere truth seekers for their personal upliftment and use. For more information about the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother go to www.sriurobindoashram.org.