

Matrimandir Talks

31 December 1969

That was the first idea: there was the Centre and the town was organised around it. Now they are doing the very opposite! They want to build the town and put the Centre in afterwards.

And the “thing” is ready to come! I have known it for a long time, it is there (*gesture upward*), it is waiting.

(*Silence*)

A's idea is an island at the centre, with water around it, running water, which will provide the whole water supply for the city; and when it has passed through the city, it will be sent to a pump-house, and from there it will go out to irrigate all the surrounding cultivated lands. So this Centre is like a small island and on it is what we called at first the “Matrimandir” — which I always see as a very big room, absolutely bare, receiving a light that comes from above, arranged in such a way that the light from above would be concentrated on one place where there would be... whatever we want to put as the centre of the city. At first, we had thought of Sri Aurobindo's symbol, but we can put whatever we want. Like that, with a ray of light striking it all the time, which turns, turns, turns... with the sun, you understand. If that is properly done, it will be very good. And then underneath, so that people can sit and meditate, or simply rest, *nothing*, nothing, except something comfortable underneath so that they can sit without getting tired, probably with some pillars, which would serve as back-rests at the same time. Something like that. And that is what I always see. And the room should be high, so that the sun can enter as a *ray*, according to the time of day, and strike the centre which will be there. If that is done, it will be very good.

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And then for the rest it is all the same to me, they can do what they want. At first they thought of making a place for me to stay, but I will never go there, so it is not worth the trouble, it is completely useless. And to look after this island it was agreed that there would be a little house for B who would like to be there simply as the guardian. And then A had arranged a whole system of bridges to link it with the other bank. And the other bank would consist entirely of gardens all around. These gardens... we thought of twelve gardens — to divide the distance into twelve, of making twelve gardens, each one centred on something, a state of consciousness, and the flowers which represent it. And then, the twelfth garden would be in the water, around — not around, but beside — the “Mandir”, with the tree, the banyan which is there. That is the centre of the city. And there, the twelve gardens around the outside would be repeated with the flowers arranged in the same way.

(*Silence*)

For the outside of this kind of temple, A had thought of making a big lotus. But then, this interior, this play of light, I don't know if it would be possible with a lotus shape?

If A and C could both collaborate... if they could both come together, and if one of them could always be here, one of them, now one, now the other, if one of them could always be here, with a single plan they would draw up together — it would go much faster, a hundred times faster.

This idea of the ray of sun... when I look, at once that is what I see. And a ray of sun which could come at all times — it would be arranged in such a way that it comes all the time (*gesture following the movement of the sun*). And then, something would be there, a symbol, which would be both upright so that it can be seen all around, and flat to receive the light fully. What?... And let it not become a religion, for heaven's sake!

(*Silence*)

Who could find the way to realise that? Because there is no lack of sun here.... Of course there are days when there isn't any, but after all, there are many days when there is — so that from every side, from any angle, the ray falls. It should be arranged like that. It's a question of geometry. You can speak about it to C, because if he had an idea...

That is what is needed, something, a symbol — we'll find what is needed, we'll see — of course, like an altar, but... What? Which receives the light both directly from above and from all sides.

And then, no other windows, you understand? All the rest in a sort of half-light. And that, like a light... that would be good, it could be very good. I would like someone who can feel that.

And if it were well realised, that would already be very interesting for people. It would be a concrete realisation of something.... They will begin to say that it is a religion of the sun! (*Mother laughs*) Oh, you know, I am used to *every*, every stupidity.

(*Silence*)

Of course, logically, or rather psychologically, it is a mistake to build all around and the Centre afterwards.

The idea of A, of his group, is to have industries which can bring in money for Auroville, then... That is to say that instead of being able to get it done quickly, it will take centuries.

I will speak to A about it tomorrow. I mean I will tell him to see C who has some excellent ideas — well, that he should come to an understanding with him. You see, it's very simple: we'll try to make A understand and to set up a collaboration.

For me now, things are no longer exclusive, not at all. I see very well the possibility of using the most opposite tendencies *at*

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the same time.... It is not exclusive. I do not say: “Ah! No, not that!” No, no, no. All, all together. That is what I want: to be able to create a place where all the opposites can unite.

Unless that can be done... (*gesture of turning round and round*) it goes on and on and on.

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3 January 1970

Sweet Mother, I have told C to come, he is waiting outside.

Yes. There is an interesting thing. For a long time I had been feeling something, then we spoke about it the other day and I *saw* it. I spoke of it to A, I told him to see C and I also told him that I had *seen* what should be done. Of course he did not say No, he said Yes to everything, but I felt that he did not really intend... But, this is what happened. I saw clearly — very, very distinctly.... That is to say it was like that and it *is* still like that, it is there (*gesture indicating an eternal plane*)... the interior of this place....

It will be a kind of hall like the inside of a column. No windows. The ventilation will be artificial, with those machines (*gesture indicating an air-conditioner*) and only a roof. And the sun striking the centre. Or when there is no sun — at night and on cloudy days — an electric spotlight.

And the idea is to build right now a sort of example or model to hold about a hundred people. When the town is built and we have had the experience, we will make it into something big. But then it will be very big, to hold a thousand to two thousand people. And the second one will be built around the first: that means, the first one will not go until the second one is finished. That is the idea.

Only, so as to talk about it to C (and if possible, if I see that it is possible, to talk about it to A), I wanted to have a plan. I

will have it made, not myself, because I can't any more; I would have been able to do it at one time, but now I don't see well enough. I will have it done this afternoon, in front of me, a plan, and with this plan I will be able to explain really well. But to you I simply wanted to say what I have seen.

It will be a tower with twelve facets, each facet represents a month of the year; and up above, the roof of the tower will be like this (*gesture indicating a roof which slopes upwards from the sides to the centre*).

And then, inside, there will be twelve columns. The walls and then twelve columns. And right at the centre, on the floor, there is my symbol, and above it four of Sri Aurobindo's symbols, joined to form a square, and above that... a globe. If possible, a globe made of transparent material, and with or without light inside, but the sun should strike the globe; then according to the month, the time, it will be from here, from there, from there (*gesture indicating the movement of the sun*). You understand? There will always be an opening with a ray. Not a diffused light: a ray which strikes, which should strike. It will require some technical knowledge to be able to carry it out, and that is why I want to make a design with an engineer.

And then, there will be no windows or lights inside. It will always be in a kind of clear half-light, day and night — by day with the sun, by night with artificial light. And on the floor, nothing, just a floor like this one (*in Mother's room*). That is to say, first wood (wood or something else), then a sort of rubber foam, thick, very soft, and then a carpet. A carpet everywhere, everywhere except at the centre. And people will be able to sit everywhere. And the twelve columns are for people who need support for their backs!

And then, people will not come for a regular meditation or anything of that kind (but the inner organisation will be made afterwards): it will be a place for concentration. Not everyone will be able to come; there will be a time in the week or a time in the day (I don't know) when visitors will be allowed to come, but

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anyway, no mixture. A fixed time or a fixed day for showing people around, and the rest of time only for those who are... serious — serious, sincere, who want to learn to concentrate.

So I think that is good. It was there (*gesture upward*). I still see it when I speak of it — I *see*. As I see it, it is very beautiful, it is really very beautiful... a sort of half-light: one can see, but it is *very* tranquil. And then, very clear and very bright rays of light (the spotlight, the artificial light, must be rather golden, it must not be cold — that will depend on the spotlight) onto the symbol. A globe made of a plastic material or... I don't know.

Crystal?

If it is possible, yes. For the small temple the globe will not need to be very big; if it were as big as this (*about thirty centimetres*) it would be good. But for the big temple it will have to be big.

But how will the big temple be built? On top of the small one?

No, no, the small one will go. But the big one will be built later, and on a vast scale... the small one will go only after the big one is built. But of course, for the town to be finished, it will take about twenty years (for everything to be really in order, in its place). It is like the gardens: all the gardens which are being made are for now, but in twenty years all that will have to be on another scale; then, it must be something really... really beautiful.

And I wonder what material should be used to make this globe, the big one?... The small one, in crystal perhaps: a globe like that (*thirty centimetres*). I think that will be enough. One must be able to see the globe from every corner of the room.

It shouldn't be raised too high above the floor either?

No, Sri Aurobindo's symbol does not need to be big. It should be so big (*gesture*)...

Twenty-five, thirty centimetres?

At the most, at the very most.

That means that it will be at about eye-level?

Eye-level, yes, that's it.

And a *very* tranquil atmosphere. And *nothing*, you see — great columns... It remains to be seen whether the style of the columns should be... whether they will be round, or if they will also have twelve facets.... And *twelve* columns.

And a roof in two sections?

Yes, a roof in two sections so as to have the sun. It must be arranged in such a way that the rain cannot come in. We cannot think of having to open and close something when it rains, it is not possible. It must be arranged in such a way that the rain cannot get in. But the sun must enter as rays, not diffused. So the opening must be small. It needs an engineer who really knows his job.

And when would they start?

I would like to begin at once, as soon as we have the plans. Only, there are two questions: first the plans (we can get the workers) and then the money.... I think that it is possible with this idea of making a sort of small model (of course "small" is a manner of speaking, because to be able to hold a hundred people easily it still needs to be quite big), a small model to begin with, and then while making the small model they will learn, and the big one will be made only when the town is finished — not right now.

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I spoke about it to A, who told me the next day: “Yes, but it will take time to prepare.” I didn’t say anything about all that I’ve just told you, I only spoke of doing something. And afterwards I had the vision of this room — so I no longer need anyone to see what it should be: I know. And it requires an engineer rather than an architect, because an architect... it must be as simple as possible.

I told C what you had seen, this great empty room; it moved him very much. This great empty room was just what he saw. He understands quite well. Well, empty — that means simply a form.

But a form... Like a tower, but... (that’s why I wanted to have a sketch, to show it) twelve regular facets, and then there should be a wall, not an upright wall but something like this (*slightly inclined gesture*). I don’t know if it is possible. And inside, twelve columns. And then an arrangement must be found to catch the sun. Twelve facets in such a way that at any time of the year it can come. It needs someone who knows the job well.

The outside... I did not see the outside, I did not see it at all. I saw only the inside.

I wanted to explain to C when I had the papers. It would be easier, but since you have called him...

D goes and brings C to the room. Mother tells him:

After we decided to build this temple, I saw it, I saw it from the inside. I have just tried to describe it to E. But in a few days I will have some plans and drawings, so I will be able to explain more clearly. Because I don’t know at all how it is outside, but inside I know.

C: The outside grows from the inside.

It is a kind of tower with twelve regular facets, which represent

the twelve months of the year, and it is absolutely empty.... And it must be able to hold from a hundred to two hundred people. And then, to support the roof there will be twelve columns inside (not outside), and right at the centre, well, the object of concentration.... And with the collaboration of the sun, all the year round the sun should enter as rays: no diffusion, an arrangement must be made so that it can enter as rays. Then according to the time of day and the month of the year, the ray will turn (there will be an arrangement up above) and the ray will be directed onto the centre. At the centre there will be the symbol of Sri Aurobindo, supporting a globe. A globe which we shall try to make from something transparent like crystal or... A big globe. And then, people will be allowed in to concentrate — (*Mother laughs*) to learn to concentrate! No fixed meditations, none of all that, but they must stay there in silence, in silence and concentration.

C: It is very beautiful.

But the place is absolutely... as simple as possible. And the floor in such a way that people are comfortable, so that they don't have to think that it hurts them here or it hurts them there!

C: It is very beautiful.

And in the middle, on the floor, my symbol. At the centre of my symbol we will put, in four parts, like a square, four symbols of Sri Aurobindo, upright, supporting a transparent globe. That has been seen.

So I am going to have some small plans prepared by an engineer, simple ones, to show, and then I will show you when it is ready. So. And then we will see. The walls will probably have to be of concrete.

C: The whole structure can be in reinforced concrete.

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The roof should probably be sloping, and then at the centre there will have to be a special arrangement for the sun.

You said that the walls would be slightly sloping.

Either the walls or the roof should be sloping — whichever is the easiest to do. The walls could be made straight and the roof sloping. And the upper part of the roof resting on the twelve columns, and up above, the arrangement for the sun.

And inside, nothing; nothing but the columns. The columns, I don't know, we will have to see whether they should be made with facets (like the roof, with twelve facets) or else simply round.

C: Round.

Or simply square — it remains to be seen.

And then, on the floor, we will put something thick and soft. Here — you are comfortable as you are sitting? Yes? First there is wood, and then this kind of rubber, and on top of it a woollen carpet.

With your symbol?

Not the carpet. For the symbol, I had thought it would be better to make it out of something durable.

C: It should be in stone.

The symbol... everything will be around it, of course. The symbol will not cover it all, it will be only in the middle of the space — (*Mother laughs*) they mustn't sit on the symbol! — that, in the middle. The proportion of the symbol to the whole will have to be considered very carefully in relation to the height.

C: And the room quite large?

Oh yes, it has to be... it should be like a sort of half-light with these rays of sunlight, so that the ray can be *seen*. A ray of sunlight. Then according to the time of day, the sun will turn (with the time of day and the month of the year). And then at night, as soon as the sun disappears, spotlights are lit which will have the same effect and the same colour. And day and night the light remains there. But no windows or lamps or anything like that — nothing. Ventilation with air-conditioners (they are built into the walls, it is very easy). And silence. Inside no one speaks! (*Mother laughs*) That will be good. So, as soon as my papers are ready, I will call you and show them to you.

C: Very good.

C leaves. Mother then continues speaking with E.

I did not ask C if he had seen A because... A is completely in the “practical” atmosphere of today. It is good — it must get started!

You see, this is what I have learned: the failure of the religions. It is because they were divided. They wanted people to be religious to the exclusion of the other religions; and every branch of knowledge has been a failure because they were exclusive; and man has been a failure because he was exclusive. And what the new consciousness wants (it is on this that it insists) is: no more divisions. To be able to understand the spiritual extreme, the material extreme, and to find... to find the meeting-point, the point where... that becomes a real force.

From the practical point of view I will try to make A understand; but I have seen, it seemed to me that what is needed... A, when he is here, looks after Auromodèle, the practical side, all that. It is very necessary, it is very good; and for the building of the Centre, I would like C to do it, and so I would like C to stay

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when A is away; C should be here when A is gone, and we shall do it with C. Only I don't want either of them to feel that it is one of them against the other. They must understand that it is to complement one another. I think C will understand.

But A might take that as an encroachment on his responsibilities?

Perhaps not. I will try, I will try.

No, when I told him that it was necessary to build the Centre, that I had seen it and that it should be done, he did not object. He only told me, "But it will take time." I told him, "No, it must be done at once." And that is why I am having these sketches made by an engineer to show to him, because it is not an architect's job, it is an engineer's job, with very precise calculations for the light of the sun, very precise. It needs someone who really knows. The architect has to see that the columns are beautiful, that the walls are beautiful, that the proportions are correct — all that is very good — and then the symbol at the centre. The aspect of beauty, of course the architect should see to that, but the whole calculation aspect... And the important thing is this, the play of the sun onto the centre. Because that becomes the symbol — the symbol of the future realisation.

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10 January 1970

I have a letter from C...

I am going to see him this afternoon.

I told you that I had seen the central building of Auroville... I have a plan, would you be interested to see it? There are some rolls there.

(Mother unrolls the plan as she explains) There will be twelve facets. And, at an equal distance from the centre, twelve

columns. At the centre, on the ground, is my symbol, and at the centre of my symbol there are four of Sri Aurobindo's symbols, upright, forming a square, and on the square a translucent globe (we don't know yet in what material). And then, from the top of the roof, when the sun is shining, the sunlight will fall onto it as a ray (nowhere else, only there). When there is no sun, there will be electric spotlights which will send a ray (also a ray, not a diffused light) exactly onto it, onto this globe.

And then, there are no doors, but... going deep down, one comes up again into the temple. One goes under the wall and comes up again inside. Again it is a symbol. Everything is symbolic.

And then there is no furniture, but on the floor, like here, there is first wood, probably, then over the wood a thick "dunlop" and over it a carpet, like here. The colour is yet to be chosen. The whole place will be white. I am not sure if the symbols of Sri Aurobindo will be white... I don't think so. I did not see them white, I saw them in an indefinable colour between gold and orange, a kind of colour like that. They will be upright. They will be carved in stone. And a globe which is not transparent but translucent. And then, right at the bottom (*below the globe*), there will be a light which will be directed upwards, shining diffusely into the globe. And then, from outside, there will be rays of light falling onto the centre. And no other lights, no windows, electric ventilation. And not a single piece of furniture, nothing. A place... for trying to find one's consciousness.

Outside, it will be something like that (*Mother unrolls another plan*). We don't know if the roof will be completely pointed or... very simple, very simple. It will be able to hold about two hundred people.

So, C's letter?

"Very Sweet Mother,

"I saw A on Sunday. He came to my room, we had lunch together. With love, I arranged for You and for

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A some very beautiful flowers. You were with us. We talked a lot. I felt A as a brother.

“I told him that Auroville cannot start like any other town — city-planning problems, social, economic problems, all that later. The beginning ought to be ‘something else’. That is why we should begin with the Centre. This Centre must be our lever, our fixed point, the thing on which we can support ourselves to try to leap to the other side — because it is only from the other side that we can begin to understand what Auroville ought to be. And this Centre should be the form which manifests in Matter the content which You can transmit to us on all the planes (occult also). As for us, we should be only the open and sincere medium through which you can materialise that.

“And I told him that I have felt the need to approach all that by living the experience within — and all united, people of the East and West, in a wide movement of love. Because that is the only possible concrete for building ‘something else’.”

What he says is good.

“And the Centre can give us this love at once because it is love for You! I told him that practically we could begin with a moment of silence, all together, and try to make a total blank, and with everyone’s aspiration bring down the indications for the beginning into that blank. But all united and all together, especially those who are spiritually most advanced (the Indians).

“A agreed perfectly. He said really this should be done.”

(Mother nods approvingly.)

I will see C this afternoon to give him this plan. Because that is what I saw, you know. We will make it in white marble. F has said that he will fetch the marble, he knows the place.

The whole structure in white marble?

Yes, yes.

But C told me something which I feel is quite right. He said: We are going to build this Centre, we are going to put all our heart and aspiration into it, into this Centre...

Yes, yes.

And with the years it will become more and more "charged"....

Yes.

So this Centre must be the real thing. This temple should not be removed to build another, bigger one later.

I said that to reassure the people who think that something huge is needed. I said, "We will begin with this, and then we will see." You understand? I said, "This Centre should be there until the town is completely built, and afterwards we will see." Afterwards no one will want to remove it!

But he says that from the architectural point of view it is quite possible to extend the thing from the outside, without touching what has already been built.

Yes, oh, it is quite possible! You see, A told me, "And then what will we do afterwards?" I said, "Well, we will think about that later!" That's it! They don't know... they don't know that one

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must *not think!* I didn't think about it at all, at all, at all. One day, I saw it like that, as I see you. And even now, it is so living that I only have to look and I see it. And what I saw was the Centre and the light which falls on it and then, *quite naturally*, while looking at it I noticed, I said, "There, it is like that." But it was not thought, I did not think "twelve columns and then twelve facets and then..."; I did not think all that. I saw.

It is like these symbols of Sri Aurobindo.... When I am speaking of the Centre I still see these four symbols of Sri Aurobindo, which support each other at the corners, like that, and this colour... a strange colour... I don't know where we could find that. It is an orange-gold, very warm. And it is the only colour in the place; all the rest is white, and the translucent globe.

C said that he would go at once to enquire in Italy, at Murano, the place where they make the big crystals, to find out if it is possible to make a globe of thirty centimetres, for example, in crystal.

The exact measurement is on the plan, it must be marked.

There is a big glass-works there.

Oh! They make marvellous things there.... Isn't it marked, the size of the globe?

Seventy centimetres.

It can be hollow. It need not be solid, so that it is not too heavy.

(Silence)

This underground entrance... one will enter a dozen metres or so away from the wall, at the foot of the urn. The urn will mark the descent. I must choose from which side exactly.... And then,

it is possible that later the urn, instead of being outside, will be *within* the enclosure. So perhaps we could simply put a great wall all around, and then the gardens. Between the enclosure wall and the building we are going to make now, we could have the gardens and the urn. And that wall will have one entrance... one or several, ordinary doors. People will be able to walk in the garden. And then one should fulfil certain conditions to have the right to go down into the underground passage and come out into the temple.... That must be something like an initiation, not just “like that”, no matter how...

(Silence)

I said to A, “We will see in twenty years” — so that calmed him down. But the first idea was to surround it with water, to make an island so that one would have to cross the water to be able to reach the temple. It is quite possible to make an island....

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17 January 1970

What did you want to tell me?

I had a visit from C and G. There are two things. But first there is the plan of the Centre — more precisely, of the outside of the Centre.

The outside — I have seen nothing. There is a sketch, it is a sketch by F... I did not see anything at all and I am open to all suggestions. And then?

C explained something to me which I found very beautiful, which I would like to submit to you.... When you spoke about this Centre, as a matter of fact, for the outside you said, “I don’t know if the walls will be sloping

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or if it is the roof which will slope.” You seemed to have some hesitation. So C says that he received a kind of inspiration, and that he has seen something very simple, like a great shell, one part of which would come out of the surface and another part would be buried in the ground. And he has drawn a sort of diagram which I would like to show you.

Have they seen A too? Because A had two ideas; he came to see me with two ideas, and I told him which of the two I preferred, but nothing is decided yet. And A is to make a sketch of his ideas. So I will see what C says and then I will tell you A's ideas.

(E unrolls the plan) So you see, here is the outside, which would be simply like a shell. The inside is exactly as you have seen it: this great bare carpet, and then the ball at the centre. And what led C to his inspiration was that you had said one should go underground and come up again. So he had the idea of going deep down, to make a spiral staircase here, which would come up again, and here there would be a kind of series of stairs branching out in all directions (in the lower part of the shell) which would lead into the temple itself. So, all the lower part would be in black marble and all the upper part in plain white marble. And the whole thing is like a great bud, you see, as if it were growing out of the earth.

Are you sure that he hasn't seen A? Because A told me, "I want to make a great circle; the interior is an exact semi-circle and the other semi-circle would be underground." He used almost the same words.

Because C told him his idea.

Ah! C had told him! Ah, that's it.

It is like a bud coming out of the earth.

Yes, yes, that was the first idea A told me, almost identically the same words. And then, his second idea was a pyramid. To leave the temple as we had said, and then make a pyramid. But I had also thought of a pyramid, and I told him, "I thought of a pyramid." But he said that he would make both plans and that then we would see. But if that agrees with C's idea it is very good.

But A's idea is C's idea, in fact.

Yes, that's it.

So, when one arrives at the top of the "stalk", there is a whole series of stairs in all directions, so that one can come up into the temple from any side.... And then the centre is absolutely bare, and all around there is a kind of gallery onto which one comes up from the bottom; that is where all these stairways will be. And everything will be bare. There will simply be this huge carpet held from corner to corner by these galleries. It will look as if it is suspended. All white, all plain.

And there was the question of the twelve columns.... C said that he felt that the columns were still an ancient symbol which would not go well with the shell, and he said, "instead of the twelve columns, symbolically one could put twelve supports, twelve bases of columns, which would serve as back-rests."

Oh! But the columns have a use, because at the top of the columns we will put the spotlights which will direct the light onto the centre. There will be light night and day; for the day, openings will be arranged, but as soon as the sun is gone the spotlights will be lit and the spotlights are fixed on top of the

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twelve columns and converge onto the centre.

But, Sweet Mother, if the columns are only useful for the spotlights, the spotlights could also be fixed to the walls?

The columns are not near to the wall. The columns are here, exactly half-way between the centre and the wall.

Because C saw this space at the centre all bare, with just the symbol in the middle and this big carpet all level, not broken up by columns. But instead to put something like big blocks, twelve big blocks which would indicate the positions of the columns and would serve at the same time as supports.

That has no meaning.

A symbolic meaning? Because you spoke much of the pillars also as a support for the people who would like to sit down.

Oh, for their backs.

So he said that these twelve blocks could be, for example, each one in a different material, like a symbol: twelve different materials.

I saw columns, myself.

On the outer walls the general ventilation will be arranged, which will be electric (no windows), and then on the columns there was the light... I saw columns, I clearly saw the columns.

Oh well, I will tell him that.

As for the gallery all around, I don't know if I like that much... I did not see it, I saw the walls completely bare, without windows,

and then the columns, and then the centre. That I am sure of, because I saw it, and I saw it for a long time.

How do you like the shell shape?

That means that it makes a perfect circle: half above, half below... It will do. Only an arrangement must be made for the sun.

Yes, G knows about the problem of lighting with prisms very well — because if one wants to catch a ray of the sun, one must use prisms. He says he will solve the problem very easily, he is taking care of it. They simply put prisms at a certain number of places to capture just one ray of the sun.

It must be *one* ray. In what I have seen, one *saw* the ray.

That's it. With a prism one sees the ray. So there will be a certain number of geometrical openings according to the movement of the sun.... But inside, on the inner walls, the twelve facets will be reproduced.

Yes, yes.

And this, in theory (E points to the circular gallery) these were the entrances by which one came out from the underground passage.

I don't know if it is good to make many entrances like that.... There will be a practical problem to solve; if there is only one entrance and a very strict watch at that entrance, it is all right, but if there are several entrances and if there is not enough light, there will be disasters.

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No, no, Sweet Mother, there will only be one entrance from the outside, but when one comes out at the base of the shell there would be these many entrances. No, outside, there is only one descent, which comes down to here, at the foot of this spiral staircase.

(Silence)

C had thought of this gallery all around because he said that would make this central carpet stand out more, all white; it would look as if it were floating, detached, instead of being stuck against the wall.

I did not think of it as “stuck against the wall” — there was always a passage around the wall.

So it is this passage, with a certain number of galleries. And it was also this idea of bareness which made him take away the columns.

What I don't like is the idea of these galleries, because the walls were quite straight, from top to bottom, in white marble.

Ah! But the galleries are not high. They are about thirty centimetres above the floor.

Yes, that is all right.

And besides, he said that on this gallery, or rather on this border which restricts the passage all around, the carpet could come right up to the angle, cover the angle.

That's all right.

(Silence)

Good, that's all right. So they must come to an understanding. But that must be half done already since A spoke to me about the idea. If I had known that it was C's idea, I would have said Yes right away. But it will work out. It's all right.

So then I will tell him to work on this basis.... The only question to be decided is the outside: should a space be left around the shell so that the lower curve of the shell can be clearly seen? Otherwise if everything is filled up, it will simply look like a hemisphere resting on the ground. So that one understands clearly that this shell goes down underground, he thought of making an opening all around.

I don't know. I tell you, I have seen nothing for the outside, so I don't know. But it would be dangerous, one could fall.

Or perhaps one could make a sort of moat with water all around, clear water which would show the lower curve of the shell, for example?

Yes, yes, that might be good.

There is also a question of measurements. According to the plan, you have given twenty-four metres — twelve metres on each side of the globe. But can we keep a little extra space on each side for the passage? The plan shows twenty-four metres in diameter and fifteen metres twenty centimetres in height.

Ah?

C is asking if the proportions can change? To keep twenty-four metres for the base of the carpet, but with

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the possibility, for example, of keeping two or three metres on each side for clearance.

Then where would the wall come?

It would be there (E points to the outside of the circular gallery).

It is the wall which must be twenty-four metres away.

C says that if these passages are to be there, twenty-four metres would be a little short.

(Silence)

And the height is also in question.

The question exactly was that it should make a perfect circle.

If it makes a perfect circle, then the height will be the radius of the distance between the two walls.

Yes.

(Silence)

The thing that would really please me would be if they could both come to an agreement and present me with a project from both of them at once. Like that, it would be easy to carry it out.... Hasn't A adopted C's idea? Why don't the two of them see together how to carry it out?

Yes, that would simplify things.

Oh, very much.

(Silence)

What will happen under there? (*Mother points to the underground part of the shell*). All that is mental, but when you are going to have a big basement, all dark, what is going to happen in there? What is going to happen? Lots of unmentionable things. Humanity is not transformed, one should not forget it. And all kinds of people will come.... Even if there is a control at the entrance you can't prevent people from going to see, so then what is going to happen under there? That was my first objection when A told me, "We could make wonderful underground passages!" I told him, "That's all very well, but who will control what happens under there?"

I had thought it was your idea, the descent?

My idea was quite a short descent, which came out there (*Mother points to the single opening of the original plan*). Quite a short descent, not a great tunnel like that. But it is possible, it is a question of control, that's all. Only there is a big difference between a passage with room for two lines of people (one going up and one going down) and coming out there, and an enormous tunnel like this one — there is a big difference! And now, in addition, it will be all dark!

In black marble, yes.

Yes, then? That means that one will not see very clearly in there. Then what is going to happen in there?

These underground areas are not in the form of tunnels; it is a central spiral stairway, and when you arrive at the top of the stairway it branches into a series of open stairways, suspended like bridges. It is not enclosed, it is all floating.

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There won't be any accidents? Ah! There are people with their heads in the clouds who are all ready to break their heads on the floor. You see, it's a bit too mental for my taste — I mean that from the mental point of view it is very attractive, but in vision...

The main idea was to build the lower part collectively, like a symbol.

(Long silence)

We'll see! *(Mother laughs.)*

(Silence)

In any case they must get together. And then I will see. I would like to be able to have them both together with their paper. Then that would be very good.

(Mother enters into a long concentration.)

We will let it settle.

And for the top, shall we drop this idea of the shell, or should we study it further?

A shell... the idea was a sphere. Why a shell?

A shell... well, a round form, a spherical form.

An egg-shell is elongated, it is not spherical. A real egg is rather like a spinning-top — so the upper part would be wider and the base narrower with only the stairs.... That is quite possible.

Give me a piece of paper. *(Mother draws an egg as she explains)* And then, there, down below, there would only be the stairs, like that, yes.

His idea was to reproduce the egg of Brahman, you know, the original egg. That the temple should represent the original egg.

But then, what is it like, the egg of Brahman?

I don't know.... Like an egg, I think!

The bottom of an egg is always narrower than the top. So if we take an egg like that (*Mother draws*), and at the base this is the staircase, and the spiral staircase comes up to the temple. For example, seven stairway openings.

Seven instead of twelve.

And here (*Mother draws the central part of the egg*), it is twenty-four metres and only fifteen and a half metres in height. Then like that it is correct.

Twenty-four metres for the total width or for the carpet?

No, it must have straight walls, the walls cannot be curved, I saw them straight.

Straight, and then curving up.

According to what I had seen, the columns were higher than the walls, and that is why the roof sloped. And the electric light was on the columns. And the widest point of the egg would be here (*Mother draws a line at the level of the carpet*).

At floor level.

Yes.

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And you said seven openings?

Seven stairways. And then an underground passage which leads to the base of the egg where the seven stairways start from. That is possible.

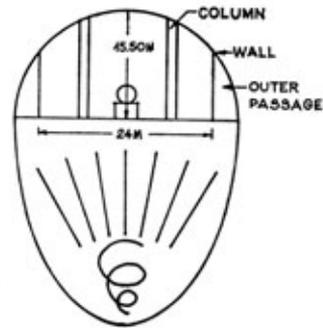
So in fact the inner walls of the temple ought to be straight.

That is to say that one can, for the outside, for the appearance, make them rounded. But inside, the wall must be straight.

The wall straight, and a dome over the straight wall.

Yes, a dome over the straight wall. But the dome can be the dome of the egg, and I had thought that the place where the dome comes to join the walls would be on the columns. Twelve columns. And here, for the outside, they can round off their wall like that (*Mother draws*).

It would even be possible to have a space between the outermost wall and the inner wall. To make a space. That is to be seen.



That means in addition to the twenty-four metres?

Yes, that's understood. The twenty-four metres end at the walls.

And the openings for the seven stairways?

I would prefer to have them outside the wall.

Yes, that would be better, because it would give more space in the centre.

Oh! Yes, and the interior would be much clearer. I didn't like the sight of all these stairways. I did not like to see even one stairway, but to see seven... But outside, it is all right.

So a passage outside...

The passage outside.

Yes, as in India when one goes around the temple.

Yes. That is all right.

And the seven stairways start directly from the base of the shell without this "stalk" coming up from the bottom?

That is how they want it. For below I don't mind. If they want it to be a stairway like that or a stairway... so long as it is not too steep.

(Silence)

What else have you?

There is the second part of the problem.

Ah? What is it?

G and C have realised that if Auroville, or the building of this Centre, is left to the people of Auroville, as distinct from the Ashram, it will never work. There will never be the true force; the people who are there are not receptive

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enough to do the work. If there is this division between the Ashram and Auroville, it will never work, they will make yet another “fabrication” but not something true. According to them, the only hope is that really this Centre should be built not by the Aurovilians, but by all the people of the Ashram, with no distinction between Aurovilians and non-Aurovilians: that the whole force should unite in constructing this Centre — not to abandon the Aurovilians to an external separation.... Just as all the disciples built Golconde¹, in the same way all the disciples should build the Centre of Auroville, without any outside labour.

At Golconde, there was outside labour.

Anyway, limiting the outside element as much as possible, so that it is a work of consecration. Otherwise, G says, the people of Auroville are all full of arrogance, of incomprehension, they see the outside of things. The force of the people from here must mingle with that. And if the people of the Ashram do not come to infuse the force, nothing will be achieved.... At the present moment, C told me, externally, Auroville looks like a necropolis (Mother laughs). It is the living fruit of egoism. The only thing which can save it is for the people of the Ashram to go in there and do the work and for the others to be assimilated into that — otherwise...

(Long silence)

But at the Ashram, we have three centres which do construction. There is H, who looks after the maintenance of the houses, I and F.

¹ An Ashram guest house in Pondicherry.

But that was not what G meant. He was not speaking at all of a problem of construction. He was speaking of the question that the disciples should work with the Aurovilians. G, as an engineer, and with the money collected, will do the construction, but all the labour should be provided by the people of the Ashram as a whole, who should mix with the Aurovilians. That is the idea.

It is not possible. All the people of the Ashram who are of working age are all working, they have all got their work.

G saw a kind of rota, each one giving, for example, an hour a day, or one day a week. Because otherwise...

They would simply love that! For them it would be extraordinary fun. I have more trouble to prevent them from dispersing themselves than I would ever have to get them to do something. It would be an amusement for them.

Because he says that without the inner force of the people of the Ashram mingling with the Aurovilians, the people from Auroville will remain what they are.... He says otherwise there is no hope.

Oh no! He does not know. It is all in the mind, it is all mental. They do not know. Who knows? It is only when one sees. Not one of them sees. All thoughts, thoughts, thoughts.... Thoughts do not build.

The elements in Auroville can do the work?

I am working, working (*kneading gesture*) to bring together the energies that can do it. And there must be a sifting out there.

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(Silence)

But, you understand, they are talking about physical work, and for physical work there are only the young people who are at the school — all the Ashramites have grown old, my child, they are all old. There are only the young people at the school. And the young ones who are at the school are not here to be Ashramites, they are here to be educated — it is up to them to choose. Many, many of them want to go to Auroville. So it would be the educational side of the Ashram which would go to Auroville.... There are many of them. But give me the names — who can go and work with his hands?

But, Sweet Mother, the only possibility is that you should speak, and then I, tomorrow I will go and spend two hours in Auroville and collect “baskets”.

(Mother laughs) My child, you are one of the youngest.... Do you see me telling J: “Go and work”?

Ah, but that would attract all the others.

(Mother laughs) Poor J!

(Long silence)

If you knew how many letters I receive from so-called Aurovilians who say, “Oh, I want to be quiet at last, I want to come to the Ashram, I do not want to be an Aurovilian any more.” There, it is just the opposite, “I want to be quiet.” There.

(Silence)

You know, I do not believe in external decisions. I simply believe in one thing only: the force of the Consciousness which is making

a *pressure* like that (*crushing gesture*). And the pressure goes on increasing... which means that it will sift out the people. I believe only in that — the pressure of the Consciousness. All the rest are things that men do. They do them more or less well, and then it lives, and then it dies, and then it changes, and then it gets distorted, and then... everything they have done. It is not worth the trouble. The power of execution must come from above, like that, imperative (*gesture of descent*)! And for that, this (*Mother points to her forehead*), this must keep quiet. Not to say, “Oh, that must not be, oh! this must be, oh! we ought to do...” Peace, peace, peace. He knows better than you do what is needed. There.

So since there are not many people who can understand, I say nothing. I watch and I wait.

(*Silence*)

If they can come to an agreement, the work will go faster. There. Objections about details have no importance, because one sets out with one idea and one arrives with another... one makes a lot of progress in between. So that does not need to be discussed, it is only... Only try to unite your energies to get started more quickly, that's all.

(*Mother laughs.*)