

N e x U S

Newsletter for the USA Centers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother



INSIDE:

- **Living in California**
- **Salon: "Choice" in yoga**
- **Spiritual implications of the Internet**
- **One-pointed vs. integral realization**

Vol. 2, No. 2 • Fall 1994

If spiritual and supramental were the same thing, as you say my readers imagine, then all the sages and devotees and yogis and sadhaks throughout the ages would have been supramental beings and all I have written about the supermind would be so much superfluous stuff, useless and otiose. Anybody who had spiritual experiences would then be a supramental being; the Ashram would be chock-full of supramental beings and every other Ashram in India also.

Spiritual experiences can fix themselves in the inner consciousness and alter it, transform it, if you like; one can realise the Divine everywhere, the Self in all and all in the Self, the universal Shakti doing all things; one can feel merged in the Cosmic Self or full of ecstatic bhakti or Ananda. But one may and usually does still go on in the outer parts of Nature thinking with the intellect or at best the intuitive mind, willing with a mental will, feeling joy and sorrow on the vital surface, undergoing physical afflictions and suffering from the struggle of life in the body with death and disease. The change then only will be that the inner self will watch all that without getting disturbed or bewildered, with a perfect equality, taking it as an inevitable part of Nature, inevitable at least so long as one does not withdraw to the Self out of Nature.

That is not the transformation I envisage. It is quite another power of knowledge, another kind of will, another luminous nature of emotion and aesthesis, another constitution of the physical consciousness that must come in by the supramental change.

—Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (1971 ed.), p. 19

"All the action of man in life is a nexus of the presence of the soul and the workings of Nature, Purusha and Prakriti."—Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*

CONTENTS

Editorial	3
New letters on yoga	5
Current affairs	6
Center to center	
Merriam Hill Center provides retreat opportunities	8
Savitri House offers School of Sacred Theatre Studies	9
In person	
Reader profiles <i>Auro Arindam, Fidelite Arindam</i>	10
Chronicles and recollections	
• California <i>Sally Walton</i>	11
• Remembering the Lower East Side <i>Joseph Spanier</i>	13
• At the feet of the Master <i>T. Kodanda Rama Rao</i>	13
Salon	
Readers discuss "Choice" in yoga	14
<i>Carolyn Vaughan, Nancy Rudolph, Janis Coker, Hadassah Haskale, Anie Nunnally, Seyril Schochen</i>	
Earth hour	
Speed, cigarettes, and God	<i>Lynda Lester</i> 19
The poetry room	
<i>Savitra, Auro Arindam, Niranjan Guha Roy, Alice Webb</i> 21	
Gallery	
More photos from the All USA Meeting	22
Notes from the field	
Perfecting Spirit in Matter <i>The Reverend Joseph Martinez</i>	24
Special section: Yoga in cyberspace	
All together now: Spiritual implications	
of the Internet <i>David Hutchinson</i>	25
The new electronic commons <i>Robert Lucky</i>	27
Digital yoga: E-mail addresses of the Auro community	28
America Online hosts Sri Aurobindo discussion group	29
Auroconference: A place to keep in touch	29
Essays	
Sri Aurobindo's <i>Savitri</i> :	
Mantra and myths <i>Rod Hemsell</i>	29
The "silent years" of Sri Aurobindo's integral life-sadhana, 1910-1920 (Part II)	<i>Nelson Castro</i> 30

NexUS is published by the Sri Aurobindo Association, Inc. (SAA), a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, 2288 Fulton St., Suite 310, Berkeley, CA 94704, (510) 848-1841. Copyright 1994 by the SAA, Inc.

All passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are copyrighted by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram unless otherwise noted, and are used here with the kind permission of the Ashram. Passages taken from books published by the Ashram are also used with permission. Photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are copyrighted by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

A one-year subscription to *NexUS*, which includes *Collaboration*, is \$20 (\$32 outside the U.S.A.). A patron subscription is \$40 or more for one year. Larger contributions, all tax-deductible, are welcome for the work of the SAA. In addition, contributions for Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram may be made through the SAA. Send subscription payment and contributions to the SAA at the above address.

Printed in the United States of America on recycled paper. The opinions expressed in *NexUS* are not necessarily those of the editor or the SAA.

Submissions

NexUS welcomes submissions. (Please include a line or two of biographical information so our readers may know something about you.) Address editorial material to Editor, *NexUS*, Box 3204, Boulder, CO 80307-3204 (or send e-mail to lester@ncar.ucar.edu). Send only copies of original works or photographs that we may keep, or enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish to have them returned. Pack photos and art in stiff cardboard and write "PHOTOS: DO NOT BEND" on the envelope; otherwise, the Post Office may fold the envelope and damage the submission.

NexUS cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material may be edited for readability or space considerations in conformance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*. If the author has not already given blanket permission for editing, changes that involve more than minor copy editing will be approved with the author. We will assume that letters to the editor may be published, unless you indicate otherwise. Letters may be excerpted for space considerations.

Source material

The Mother on one-pointed vs. integral realization	32
Ongoing activities	34
Apropos	36



EDITORIAL

From the SAA

As I sit in front of my computer writing to our Integral Yoga community, my body is reminded of a child memory: In the summer, I used to stand, exulting, beside the garden my family planted every year in northern New Jersey. In those days we planted for food, for the school my parents ran, so we were committed to that garden. When I looked out over the rows of lush plants, joy filled me up. And joy poured out of that garden. I felt at times indistinguishable from the garden (except when I was picking fat, yellow, fuzzy worms off the bean plants). It fed every part of me and I loved it: I caressed the flowering plants; I inhaled the rich smells of manure, sweet earth, freshly burgeoning plants; my body moved sensuously and appreciatively through the murmurous greens of grow-energy; my very cells shouted with delight at the abundance of that garden. I could not appreciate it enough. At night, during full moon phase, I would lie in the garden surrounded by the (certainly!) conscious plants. I prayed passionately to the moon for as much blessing to come to the plants from the moon's cold roundness as came to us from their explosive generosity during the day.

Thus am I reminded of that heady (wrong word!) "cell-y," time after AUM '94. AUM '94 was a garden-gathering of sumptuously rich people dedicated to sharing, gratitude, fullness, and surrender. We all noted, I am sure, how many elders were present. Our elders took themselves more lightly than anyone could have imagined. And although everyone came with tales of difficult travel, no one hung on to the pain. Even our scheduling with each other, sharing a large number of events/resources offered by our rich family, unfolded and bore fruit. We found places to meet; we connected successfully and we used our corporate creativity for fun as well as facilitation.

It might have been disastrous for us to gather with any hope of organization because Mercury (the planet that reflects communication and connection) was retrograde up until the July 5. But when one surrenders to the Divine and refers primarily to that inner union, all is well. Perhaps Julian Lines has a matching subtle computer within himself: his ability to produce updated schedules, and Liz Inglis's and Vijay Rhagavan's ability to coordinate that complicated scheduling throughout the conference, represented the best reference to Grace, i.e., pray to the Divine for help and accept its sometimes plebeian form when it comes.

I have left it to others to detail and comment on AUM '94. What bears saying here is that our time of AUM sharing in 1994 contained and represented much of the garden's innocent and enthusiastic upward-surfing.

When Will Moss, Wayne Bloomquist, and I met for our annual in-person board meeting in Berkeley (March '94), we experienced what might be called divinely inspired



Ariel Browne in a contemplative moment on Matagiri mountain during the All USA Meeting, July 1994.

"vehicle-ship." Ideas came to us and through us as if we were channels of the larger spiritual family. Support people appeared. Enthusiasm in the group of devotees in the Bay Area was generous. An attorney came forward who "visioned" with us for two-and-a-half hours on the future of the Sri Aurobindo Association and the Integral Yoga community; an idea came to sponsor a conference in California (fall 1995) on "The Divine Body," focusing on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We flowed through old hurt feelings into clear pools of understanding and working harmony not perhaps easily but together, in surrender to that greater Will.

I have been fielding conversations all over the country, and through letters from India. Many of us are enjoying *collaboration* and *manifestation*. There are small celebrations going on: our individual experiences of yoga are yielding a bit more ease. It would be presumptuous to say that things are easy. Rather, connections are being made and needed energy is really coming to us (not "virtual" reality, all you technophiles).

Some concrete results: Luc and Susie Venet and Rod and Kirti Hemsell embarked on an inspired experiment with the



At the *NexUS* news desk: Janis Coker

Janis Coker was born in Evansville, Indiana, grew up in Nashville, and attended Vanderbilt University. She married and moved to the Philippines, where she completed her bachelor's degree in history at the University of the Philippines. Subsequently she received her master's degree in library science from Emory University in Atlanta. In 1966, she moved to Florida; a year later she started work at the Tampa Public Library and discovered Sri Aurobindo through Mala and Arvind Jani. She embraced the Integral Yoga in earnest in the early 1970s.

Janis has experience in journalism and is currently library director at Schiller International University in Dunedin, Florida (near Clearwater on the Gulf Coast). The university, which enrolls students from 39 countries, is the main headquarters of a ten-campus system that emphasizes international education.

Janis has four children, six grandchildren, and is president of the board of a local home for the elderly run totally by volunteers. "Go directly," Janis's thoughts on "Choice" in yoga, appears in the "Salon" section in this issue.

From the editor

In this issue, we welcome Janis Coker on board as the *NexUS* reporter for center news and current affairs. (The accompanying sidebar offers a short biographical sketch of Janis.) If you'd like to see a feature in *Nexus* on what you or your center is doing but don't wish to write it up (perhaps you are not an author or you don't have time), Janis can do it for you. You can contact her by phone: (813) 726-2205; by e-mail: jcoker@cftnet.com; or by regular mail: Janis Coker, 234 3rd Ave. N., Safety Harbor, Florida 34695.

Janis is a joy to work with, and her creativity, productivity, and spark will make *NexUS* stronger and more representative of the Auro-community in the U.S.

Note: If your group already produces its own written material (such as schedules, flyers, or brochures) or if you want to write up your own activities, you are welcome to send this material directly to *NexUS*.

Speaking of submissions, *NexUS* now has its own post office box. Please send all letters, articles, photos, and other material to *NexUS*, P.O. Box 3204, Boulder, CO 80307-3204. One helpful suggestion: shorter articles (under 1,800 words) have a better chance of being published.

* * *

An article in the Oct. 24, 1994 issue of *Newsweek* began, "Unless you've spent the last couple of years trapped in an elevator, chances are good that the Internet needs no introduction. Not only have you probably heard about the myriad ways it can enrich your life. You know that without leaving your desk you can check the weather in Tunis, sell your shares in IBM, visit the impressionist collection at the Louvre or moderate a heated discussion about aviation disasters." Or, one might add, a discussion about Integral Yoga! This issue of *NexUS* features a special section, "Yoga in cyberspace," that delves into the spiritual implications of the Internet, lists e-mail addresses of Auro-people, and reports on two ways to tap into online conversations about Sri Aurobindo.

This issue also debuts a column I will occasionally contribute on consciousness, personal evolution, and mystic experience in the 90s. Wondering what to call it, I briefly considered "Integrated Circuits" (too nerdy), "Speed of Light Squared" (too flashy), "Future Perfect" (nah), "In Transition" (bo-ring), "Journal (zzzz-zzz)", "Questions and Questions" (apropos my lack of answers), and even "Flashlights on Yoga" (apropos the puniness of my wisdom) before finally settling on "Earth Hour." I hope no one is offended by "Speed, cigarettes, and God"—although in comparison with the thrash-rock, streetwise energy that pervades America today, these notes from 20 years ago look pretty tame.

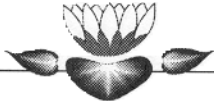
Keep those articles and letters coming.

—Lynda Lester

Agenda and Savitri at the Baca in Crestone, Colorado (Aug. 6–12, 1994). Rev. Joseph Martinez is doing some marvelous healing at his center in San Francisco through opening, surrender, and receiving (when we visited I experienced the healing room filled with gold—warm, vibrating, uplifting). Less specifically but just as important, in the spiritual family of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, many people who are hurting are asking for help and the Grace is coming. Dakshina, Prapanna, and Vishnu of Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham in Pomona and Lodi, California, brought a beautiful book to the AUM called *Nama Japa*. This book suggests using the mantram "Ma," or "Om Ma." When we persistently call to Her, we evoke her realization in our beings. There is, in fact, a dream now forming of an actual place, on the Matagiri land and mountain, which will be a retreat center and home on the East Coast for all devotees to come to rest in the peace/union which is that inner spiritual experience of Them.

It is a time of manifestation, which is another term for Her, whom we adore, being received where It matters.

—Ariel Browne, Vice President



NEW LETTERS ON YOGA

Feedback on *NexUS*

I appreciated the June 1994 issue of *NexUS* very much. . . . this recent issue was quite well done. The passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and Mother were wonderful and I enjoyed the other material as well. I look forward to receiving *NexUS* and *Collaboration* in the coming year.

—Seabury Gould, Ojai, CA

We did enjoy reading through the latest *NexUS*. Continue the wonderful work! We would like to receive *NexUS* for the Ashram Library if it does not already go there.

—Kailas and Richard, Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry, India

I have received the magazine *NexUS—Newsletter for the USA Centers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, and am indeed grateful to you for sending me this nice magazine. . . . I shall be thankful if you could kindly send us such magazines as and when published by you, so that we can circulate those magazines amongst the members of our Society and also our branches in Gujarat, which are 128 in number.

—Ambapremi Shah, Chair, Sri Aurobindo Society
Dandia Bazar, Baroda, India

Congratulations on *NexUS*. At last, a fresh breath of blasphemy . . . At last, people actually talking respectfully and openly about things previously confined to shadow—whether to bibli-cize *The Agenda* as Her or to sift Her out from it, whether to revere or revile Satprem or simply to allow him his humanity as well—questions and issues that consumed us in gossip because we were unable to address them in the light. Yes, good for *NexUS* and for America. Because in the end, we cannot be other than who we are; nor can we move on until we have resolved where we have been. To choose otherwise, it seems to me, is the only real blasphemy.

Thanks for bringing new life into old circuits.

—Savitra, Ashland, OR

Go Internet

I am an Italian devotee who has been in touch with the Ashram since 1976. I was in the Bay Area from August 1993 to March 1994, where I attended the Berkeley Group. Currently I am running a small software house focused on network management and AI [artificial intelligence].

I read in the last issue of *Nexus* that there is a plan to create a group on the Internet. I am very interested in this and would like to know if the project is going on. Suffice it to say that I think e-mail is to play a major role in establishing communication among the Aurobindonians scattered all over the world. I was in Pondy at the beginning of September, and I know that people in the Archives are starting to use the Internet (books by Sri Aurobindo have even been put on Hypercard!). I tried to convince the editor of the Italian magazine *Domani*, which is published in the Ashram, of the importance of e-mail.

My compliments on the magazine. I appreciate very much that open discussion is allowed in it. I often feel that silence is misunderstood.

—Carlo Chiopris, Verona, Italy

For more about what's developing on the Internet, see the special section "Yoga in Cyberspace," in this issue.

Another viewpoint for "Salon"

The June 1994 issue of *NexUS* reached me recently and it was a great treat to read it. . . . The "Salon" section with its wide range of perspectives on "Yoga in America" was particularly stimulating. I joined in on the discussion in a way, from my vantage point of familiarity with life in the States, Israel, and Pondicherry. The following are quotes from the journal I kept while in India, 1977–78.

The ground of being, physical well being, must be established for the spiritual realm to flower. So Gandhi, Krishna-murti, Yogananda, Aurobindo, and Tagore all had the opportunity to develop, to weave dreams and philosophies, to grow strong enough to guide and shelter others. But what of the harijan child begging or hawking wares on the street—what chance has he or she for development of sensibility? Only after the East has digested the West, after the general standard of living has risen, can the people of the East be fertile ground for eastern philosophy. Until then, the external forms, the ritual caricatures endure. Bowing to statues of Buddha rather than sitting beneath the Tree. In the West, surfeited with material wealth, there is a readiness for something more; the ground is ready for spiritual growth.

Then again, in a letter written from Pondy in March '78:

I could have a life in India, in Israel, in America—each different, giving play to diverse aspects of my being and placing different limitations on me. Here in Pondicherry I am influenced by yogis and homeless children. To my yogi-friend I am sister, to my child-friend I am *ma*. It is known that we are all part of one another. In Israel it's also one big family but an over-emotional one. There is something clinging and



CURRENT AFFAIRS

demanding about it, something more blind than all-seeing. At the moment I see America as a place where physical hunger dominates. I don't mean that people starve there but rather that they are insatiable; accustomed to too much material gratification and trained to seek more and more. Everything is advertised, is "for sale," even eastern religion . . .

Having shared the above, I want to add that for me northern New Mexico is a power spot, where sky and spirit dominate regardless.

Looking forward to *NexUS*es up ahead,
OM Salaam Shalom

—Hadassah Haskale, Jerusalem, Israel

Hadassah's contribution on "Choice" appears in this issue's "Salon."

Food for thought

One of the problems with being a 1990 urban mystic (as though being an urban mystic wasn't enough of a problem all by itself) is that new age pap has taken over the discourse on mysticism. But the gooeey sort of wonder that seems to ooze from half the books at The Bodhi Tree—good vibes and transcendence and third eyes and crystals, washed down with some bracing herb tea—hasn't got much to do with the revelations I know about. Maybe I just run with a hard crowd (new age rough trade), but in my experience revelations are wrung from you. Epiphanies are funky. You don't get them unless you need them, i.e., unless you're in trouble. The bigger the trouble, the pithier the epiphany.

—Michael Ventura,
from *Letters at 3 a.m.: Reports on Endarkenment*

Unorthodox

What do you call meditation? Shutting the eyes and concentrating? It is only one method for calling down the true consciousness. To join with the true consciousness or feel its descent is the only thing important and if it comes without the orthodox method, as it always did with me, so much the better. Meditation is only a means or device, the true movement is when even walking, working or speaking one is still in sadhana.

—Sri Aurobindo, *The Integral Yoga: Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Practice*, p. 154

Recent events . . .

Aur-ientation offers continuing activities in Atlanta

Saturday seminars

The following Saturday seminars were scheduled this summer and early fall at the Aur-ientation Integral Healing Center, 1924 Cliff Valley Way, Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30329. For information about upcoming activities, please call (404) 728-9807.

June 25: Creating balance and harmony in our lives—Diane Hawkins, R.N., B.S.N. Holistic healer, earth educator—teaching through storytelling, play, and creative process.

July 16: Bioenergetic synchronization technique and whole health—Dr. Steven Ventola, whole health care provider/chiropractor.

Aug. 6: Revolutionary approach to cancer. "A man with his own AIDS treatment"—video and discussion ("Tony Brown's Journal with Gary Null"). William David Browne and Ariel Browne.

Aug. 27: Introduction to Reiki—William David Browne, Usui Reiki master, N.M.T. Co-director Aur-ientation, bodyworker.

Sept. 17: Cell-talk: Radical self-healing using cellular communication—Ariel Browne, Ph.D., D.D., Reiki practitioner, cellular psychotherapist, pastoral counselor.

Sunday study groups

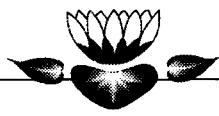
The Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Study Group was scheduled for the second and fourth Sunday of the month from 5–7 p.m. Group readings from *Health and Healing in Yoga: Selections from the Writings and Talks of the Mother* and Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*; group meditation and discussion.

Reiki experience evening

Wednesday evenings from 7–10 p.m., Reiki experience evenings. All welcome to come and receive the universal healing life force of Usui Reiki, practice Reiki, and share in the profound love of Reiki. Several Reiki practitioners.

Seattle Sri Aurobindo study groups invite participation

The Seattle Area Sri Aurobindo study groups invite you to special events and to our regular meetings. Both the Enumclaw and Seattle groups are reading *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Please join



us for any or all of these activities. You are always welcome.

The following events were scheduled this summer and early fall:

July 24—Picnic potluck on Whidbey Island. Primitive camping in beautiful private beach area.

Aug. 14—Picnic potluck at Mt. Rainier. An annual event at the magic mountain. Peak wildflower season.

Aug. 15—Sri Aurobindo's birthday, at Ron Jorgenson's. Meditation, celebration, prasad.

Oct. 7-11—Sri Aurobindo study retreat and meetings with Rand Hicks. Meditation training, group meditation, exercise, and watching videotapes related to the Yoga.

Our regular meetings are held Sunday and Tuesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m. A women's group is held the first Sunday of the month, 6-8:30 p.m. For more information, please call Judy Stoloff, (206) 443-8812, or Ron Jorgenson, (206) 8253413.

Cultural Integration Fellowship holds program on yoga and psychotherapy

On August 15, the Cultural Integration Fellowship in San Francisco featured a morning service conducted by James Plaugher, Ph.D. His talk was titled, "Be free in the search of Aurobindo's Vision."

An afternoon seminar was held in which a panel of therapists shared insights about the application of Sri Aurobindo's yoga within the practice of psychotherapy. The panelists, who came from different theoretical frameworks, shared a practice and orientation to the Integral Yoga. Panelists included Brant Cortright, Ph.D.; Carl Peters, M.D.; Celest Powell, L.C.S.W.; Richard Stein, M.D.; Jan Edl-Stein, M.F.C.C.; and Kathleen Wall, Ph.D.

Greenville center invites speakers

Kailas Jhaveri and Richard Pearson, devotees from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, visited the Sri Aurobindo Center Southeast in Greenville, South Carolina, Aug. 17-21 as part of their tour to different U.S. centers. They spoke on the resurgence of Indian culture and presented an introduction to the Integral Yoga.

The Greenville center is pleased to announce that it has finally achieved tax-exempt status with the IRS and now accept tax-deductible donations. "Now we can move forward energetically," says R.P. Rama. One of the center's goals is to invite speakers to the Greenville area. If anyone knows of visitors coming to the U.S. from India and Auroville, please contact Mr. Rama at (803) 232-9944.

The center schedules two major darshans a year, one in April and one in November. The November 1994 darshan will be held Nov. 18, 19, and 20 at Greenville (speakers to be an-

nounced). The days will be filled with a varied program of exercise, meditation, readings, nature walks, shared silence, and activities for the children. In between organized sessions there will be readings from *Savitri* and the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations*. Those present will also share their experiences of how Mother's grace has helped them.

The Rama family is in the process of constructing a house near the Ashram in Pondicherry to give them a place to stay when they visit.

New program offered for young children in San Francisco

"The Golden Principle," a new program for children ages four to eight, began last January at the Cultural Integration Fellowship in San Francisco. The children meet each Sunday to become acquainted with the world's religions and their most important celebrations. Older children are also invited.

Roop Verma, world-famous sitar player, performed July 15 at a concert that was well attended. Kailas Jhaveri and Richard Pearson, who traveled with their programs to centers around the country this summer, presented slides and music at the center on July 24. On August 6, another sitar concert featured Ustad Habib Khan on the sitar and Aushin Chaudhuri on tabla.

This active center holds lectures every Sunday at 11 a.m. For more information, please call Bina Chaudhuri at (415) 626-2442.

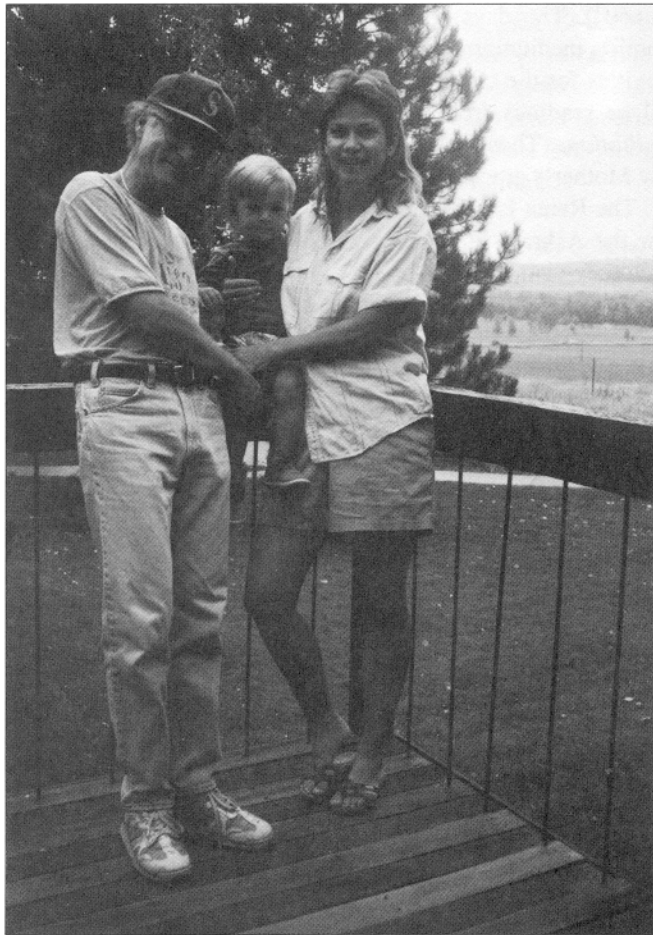
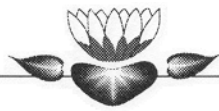
Upcoming events.. .

Conference set for October '95: "Cellular Transformation: The Divine Body"

The Sri Aurobindo Association (SAA) will host a conference Oct. 8-15, 1995, on the theme "Cellular Transformation: The Divine Body." The conference, to be held in San Francisco, will feature formal presentations and be open to the general public. Michael Murphy, author of *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature*, will be among the presenters.

The conference will replace the regular All USA Meeting (AUM) for people in the Auro community, but will include familiar AUM activities such as meditations, workshops, and informal gatherings. Discounted rates for lodging will be available at the Clarion Hotel, convenient to the SF airport. (The hotel is operated by the Rama family, who are devotees of Mother and Sri Aurobindo.) See the next issue of *NexUS* for an update.

For more information, please call Wayne Bloomquist at the Sri Aurobindo Association, (5 10) 848- 1841



Savitra, Sundare ("Sunny"), and Soleil during a visit to Boulder in August 1994.

Briefs . . .

Rod Hemsell and **Luc Venet** conducted "An experiment in the evolutionary work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother" at the Baca in Crestone, Colorado, Aug. 6–12. The gathering featuring readings from *Savitri* and the *Agenda* in an attempt to invoke the supramental force and enter the process of transformation. The event was followed by the **Global Village Conference** at the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center Aug. 13–15.

Savitra and **Soleil** are now living in Ashland, Oregon with their son **Sundare**, born on Thanksgiving Day, 1992. After 21 years in Auroville, Savitra relocated to the States in 1990 and recently completed the manuscript of a book. He has also worked with severely abused teenagers, using creative writing as a therapeutic means of self-expression. Soleil is fully engaged in her motherhood, "enjoying squeezing the Divine in a little body."

Rena Ferneyhough, a disciple in Boone, North Carolina, has experienced some difficult times recently and asks that yoga friends help out with "prayers across the airwaves." She has a

small Reiki/massage practice, has taught art at the elementary and college level, and has done secretarial work and housekeeping. She is looking for an employment opportunity and/or a new place to live. Please contact her at 536 Queen St., Boone, NC 28607, (704) 265-3967, if you can offer help or suggestions.

The Autumn 1994 issue of *Light of Consciousness* magazine features an article called "Sri Aurobindo: A Journey into His Life Divine" by **Vishnu Eschner** of the Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham (Pomona–Lodi, California).

Oops! In case any alert readers were wondering who the "7 people with awakened psychic beings" were at AUM (see "AUM Notebook, 1994" in the Summer 1994 *Collaboration*)—that number was a typographical error. It should have been "70."

CENTER TO CENTER

In this section, centers, organizations, and study groups can share their vision with NexUS readers. What is your group doing? What is your approach to the Yoga? We invite you to send in a short writeup; be sure to include contact information.

Merriam Hill Center provides retreat opportunities

Merriam Hill Education Center (MHC) is a nonprofit organization established for the study of wisdom and community. Its mission is to provide opportunities for adults to increase their sense of wholeness and interconnectedness with others and the environment through education.

Located in Greenville on 54 beautiful acres in the Monadnock region of New Hampshire, MHC offers comfortable accommodations in a renovated eighteenth-century farmhouse and attached barn, surrounded by gardens, open meadows, and woods. Rooms are double occupancy.

The facility is available for use by other educational organizations and individuals. For information, write or call Merriam Hill Education Center, 148 Merriam Hill Road, Greenville, NH 03048-9729. Phone: (603) 878-1818; fax: (603) 878-0788.

About MHC and its programs

As capabilities for rapid travel and communication have increased, opportunities for relaxed, daily personal interaction have decreased. Relatives rarely live in the same neighborhood, city, or state. Friends may scatter to different countries. Family farms and businesses have given way to national and international franchises. The Cold War has been replaced by "hot spots" around the globe. Favorite childhood refuges in nature (woods and fields) have turned into roads and parking lots. As a result, we may be asking ourselves, what principles of wise living are there that transcend differences of race, religion, cul-



ture, and time? Who can tell us about them? What are the ways that we can maintain our sense of personal well-being amidst dramatic life changes? How can we contribute to the overall health of our society and to that of the world community? The answers to these questions are different for every individual. The path to those answers may be the same: education.

Merriam Hill Education Center seeks not to answer these questions definitively, but to provide opportunities to consider some of the important questions of today. MHC sponsors educational programs that focus directly or indirectly on the topics of wisdom and community. The center offers people a chance to step away from their busy lives for a brief period of time in order to revitalize and educate themselves through workshops, courses, and international travel.

Programs include:

- The Wisdom Conservancy (investigating wisdom through the development of educational programs, books, videos, and other media)
- The Merriam Hill Sabbatical Program (providing a pause, a time of rest and nurturance)
- The MHC Community Perspectives Program (exploring community options for the twenty-first century through educational seminars and international travel)
- The Coolidge House Conference and Retreat Facility (sponsoring workshops and supporting other educational programs through the provision of meeting space)

Scheduled activities

The following is a list of upcoming scheduled activities at Merriam Hill.

Ongoing activities

- Midweek Vipassana meditation, first and third Wednesday of the month, 6–8 p.m.
- Midweek renewal, first and third Wednesday 3 p.m.–Thurs. 5 p.m.
- Yoga classes (six weeks), Nov. 1–Dec. 6, 5:30–7 p.m.

November

- *Dead leaf harvest festival*, Nov. 4–6. Eighth annual event to celebrate the falling of the leaves and the completion of the harvest.
- *Deepening our roots: A weekend retreat for women*, Nov. 11–13. A retreat for women to listen to body wisdom and explore their depths through movement and mask-making while warming their souls with storytelling and poetry.
- *A Merriam Hill Thanksgiving*, Nov. 24. A chance for MHC board members, staff, and friends to give thanks for each other's time, energy, and vitality so freely given throughout the year.

December

- *New Year's Vipassana meditation retreat*, Dec. 29–Jan. 1. A retreat designed to be a time of renewal for experienced meditators and beginners alike. Welcome 1995 in mindful awareness practicing Vipassana by sitting together until midnight.

January

- *Living in community—Auroville, South India*, Jan. 25–Feb. 17. Join MHC staff in a three-week experience of community jointly sponsored by Merriam Hill and Auroville. Auroville, an international community of 1,000 inhabitants, has spent the last 26 years restoring barren earth, planting trees, and developing an ecologically based living environment on 2,500 acres. Aurovilians work at occupations as diverse as dry-land farming, computer design, and creative dance. Underlying it all is Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's vision of Auroville as a city for the evolution of the whole of humanity and the earth.

February

- *Exploring winter's interiors*, Feb. 3–5. As a bear goes into the cave in winter, we turn inward to our depths through meditation, symbolism, and dream work.

March

- *Pilgrimage to the pyramids of the Yucatan, Mexico*, Mar. 19–26. Join MHC's Wisdom Conservancy staff on a journey to meet with spiritual elders of many different traditions.

Savitri House offers School of Sacred Theater Studies

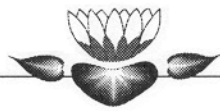
Savitri House in Crestone, Colorado, announces the foundation of the School of Sacred Theater Studies. The school hopes to be a vehicle for discovering the unity of the world's truths through practice of the performing arts for healing and consciousness transformation. Playwright Seyril Schochen, quoting from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, describes the theater as "the spirit's dance with Matter as its mask":

*Investigating the mysterious play / In which the unknown pursues
Himself through forms / And limits His eternity by the hours
/ And the blind Void struggles to live and see . . .*

*Delving through the symbols of the Beyond in the treasury of
superhuman dreams . . .*

Finding sustenance from occult spiritual founts . . .

*Creating in the little plot of our mortality / A playground of the
living Infinite . . .*



Climbing to a peak no feet have ever trod, to seek together that veiled Real half-known, ever missed . . . / until at last is reached the giant Point / Through which His Glory shines for whom we were made / And we break into the infinity of God . . .

Laboring with *The Craftsman of the magic stuff of Self* / At His high and difficult plan / In the wide workshop of the wonderful world / Modelling in inward Time His rhythmic parts, that then may come the abrupt transcendent miracle; and The masked immaculate Grandeur can outline, / At travail in the occult womb of life / His dreamed magnificence of things to be . . .

Aspiring to break the intellect's hard and lustrous lid, that Truth unpartitioned may find immense sky-room / The bounded mind become a boundless light, / the finite self mate with Infinity . . .

Identifying with other selves of the One Self, to feel the beating life in other men invade us with their happiness and their griefs / Their love, their anger, their unspoken hopes entering in currents or inpouring waves / Into the immobile ocean of our calm . . .

Making the body's means the spirit's acolytes to show forth The mysterious tract beyond our waking thoughts . . . A world unseen, unknown by outward mind appearing in the silent spaces of the soul . . . where all that the life longs for is drawn close . . .

Opening the windows of the inner sight, lifting the heavy curtain of the flesh to see / A vision of higher realms than ours, and beings less circumscribed than brief-lived men . . .

Attempting Acts vibrant with a superhuman light / And movements pushed by a superconscient force that draws all Nature into its embrace as we lean out to meet the hidden worlds . . .

Hearing on a stream of magic audience / A channel of universal harmony / The voice of a truth submerged, unknown, / that flows beneath the cosmic surfaces / only mid an omniscient silence heard . . .

Voicing the unfulfilled demand of earth / And the song of promise of unrealised heavens / . . . In the unceasing drama carried by Time . . . that bears the world's pilgrimage on its long way . . . The soul's adventure into space / A traveller through the magic centuries in its search for the mystic meaning of its birth . . .

On October 11, Savitri Theatre performed the play *Our Mother of Rainbows* at the International Women of Vision Conference in Washington, D.C., in collaboration with the Voice of Youth (an international organization that does musical work with teenagers).

For more information, please contact Seyril Schochen, (719) 256-4917, or write to the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, Baca, P.O. Box 88, Crestone, Colorado 81131.

IN PERSON

Reader profiles

Auro Arindam

Name: Auro Arindam (or Auroarindam). *Arindam* meaning "The Conqueror of the Enemy," given by Mother on October 22, 1965; *Auroarindam*, given by Mother on Bengali New Year, April 19, 1970.

Location: Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

E-mail address: auro.arindam@qleap.com

Alternative address: uq366@freenet.victoria.bc.ca

Number of years in the Yoga: 30 (1964–1994)

Visits to the Ashram/Auroville: 1965–1974, 1978–1980. I was a sadhak in the Ashram for approximately three years before Auroville began. After Bob and Debby Lawlor started Forecomers out of the Auroville Liaison Office, of which I was Secretary, Mother sent me to Auroville Center to start things there.

Occupation: Artist, writer (retired)

Family: Wife: Fidelite; children: Russell, 40; Heather, 38; Stacy, 31; Jules, 22

Interests: All aspects of the future, music (jazz), art

Recent reading: *The Last Book You'll Ever Read and Other Lessons from the Future* by Frank Ogden

Recent accomplishment: Have developed a little more patience.

Current projects: Writing a personal journal on yoga. A copy will be sent to the Auroville Archives when it is completed.

Idea of a good time: Those rare moments in life of human unity

Yogic philosophy: Sri Aurobindo said that the first thing those who come to the Ashram want to surrender is their "common sense," and that they should keep that.

Quote: "As the Matrimandir moves toward completion, it feels as though we are entering another phase of Auroville."

Parting thought: I wonder when the Auroville BBS [Bulletin Board System] will be linked to the Internet?

Fidelite Arindam

Name: Fidelite Arindam; "Fidelite" is the French spelling of "Fidelity."

Location: Victoria, British Columbia, Canada (West Coast)

E-mail address: auro.arindam@qleap.com

Alternative address: uq367@freenet.victoria.bc.ca

Number of years in the yoga: 10

Fully bilingual: French, English

Occupation: Fabric artist, working at home

Family: Husband: Auro Arindam



Interests: Readings in the yoga; art, music, documentaries
Education: B.A. in psychology, University of Ottawa, Canada; master's level education in psychology, McGill University, Montreal
Recent reading: *Savitri, Mother's Agenda* in French
Recent accomplishment: Preparing a collection of photocopies of Auro Arindam's 300 written messages to Mother and her answers
Current projects: Assisting (word processing, editing, . . .) in the preparation of my husband's book about his 30 years of experience in the yoga of Mother and Sri Aurobindo
Idea of a good time: Being in communion with others in Mother's Force
Yogic philosophy: Being under Mother's influence in my everyday work
Quote: "Let the new birth become manifest in your heart and radiate in calm and joy and take up all the parts of your being, mind and vision and will and feeling and life and body. Let each date in your life be a date of its growth and greater completeness till all in you is the child of the Mother. Let the Light and Power and Presence envelop you and protect and cherish and foster, till all your inner and outer existence is one movement and an expression of its peace and strength and Ananda."—Sri Aurobindo
Parting thought: Aurevoir!

According to spiritual and occult knowledge, it is consciousness which precedes form, it is consciousness which by concentrating itself produces its form; whilst according to the materialist idea, it is form which precedes consciousness and makes it possible for the consciousness to manifest. For those who have a knowledge of the invisible worlds and a direct perception of the play of forces, there is no possible doubt: it is necessarily consciousness which produces a form to manifest itself. Now, the way things are worked out upon Earth, it is quite certainly a consciousness of a higher order which enters a form and helps to transform it so that this form may become—either immediately or through several generations—capable of manifesting it. For those who have the inner vision and knowledge, this is absolutely beyond any doubt. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. But those who take things by the other end, from below, do not admit it—but all the same it is not for ignorance to dictate knowledge to wisdom!

—The Mother, Dec. 11, 1957
Questions and Answers 1957 & 1958

Chronicles and recollections

This section is for autobiographical musings, first-person accounts of the spiritual journey, and tales of meeting Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

California

by Sally Walton

A friend has just invited me to dinner at the World Trade Center the next time I'm in New York. Last year it was evacuated because of a bomb, but I'm not afraid, or even hesitant. I live daily with the possibility of upheaval. I live in California.

I haven't always lived in California. In fact, I have been a long time coming here from the East Coast. As long ago as the late 60s there was an "inner call" to go to California.

But I have come now, when the price of real estate is outrageous, and the predictions of earthquakes even more insistent, and the wise counsel of friends whispers in my ear of high taxes and insurance rates.

I almost got away from the pull of California. Toward the end of '92, I was preparing to move to Seattle. Then someone spoke to me of California, and I was reminded of how for so many years I had wanted to move here. It was as though someone about to be married was reminded of an old lover. I packed up my covered wagon and drove West.

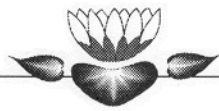
As I drove through Virginia, and Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, I was conscious of enacting, even in 1993, a part of the American Dream. I was moving West—to California.

As I drove across the USA, I felt the history of this country. The French and German names of towns in pockets of Arkansas evoked these early immigrants. The drive through the subtle beauty of Oklahoma traced the Trail of Tears, and the pain of the native people. The poignancy of Oklahoma was also the pain of those settlers who were later forced to leave the promise of that land, and move West—to California.

At a rest stop in New Mexico, surrounded by wild desert landscape, and outnumbered by native Americans and native Spanish speakers, I knew I was as far from our nation's capital where I had lived for the last ten years as I would get without leaving the country.

In Arizona, I visited the Petrified Forest. As I stood among the tangible evidence that the earth changes, dramatically, my friends' warnings hovered around me about the pending changes—in California.

After three days in Sedona, I made my last push westward. Up at 4 a.m., I drove all day, stopping only for gas. Zipping up the seam of the San Andreas Fault, along Route 5, and finally turning west again at the San Luis Reservoir.



As the road climbed into the redwoods kissed by fog, I had to pull over and release tears of gratitude. I was finally here. I had moved to California. After Hecker Pass, the fog opened to wispy clouds lit by late afternoon sun. And there before me was the Pacific. I had driven the breadth of the country, coast to coast, and I was on the edge.

That's symbolic for me of those who chose to live in California at this time. Something about living on the edge—still. As a speaker and consultant, my income lives or dies in the signing or canceling of contracts. I know, as do many, what it's like to live on the edge.

Soon after my arrival, I knew I was involved in a love affair. I walked in the evenings, intoxicated by the abundance of roses which are as prolific as petunias back East. I walked almost daily by the sea, one of the main reasons I had come. The awareness of the land, and the landscape, was so ever-present that I began to wonder about this attraction to the land that was almost physically compelling.

I have been in 38 countries, and as many states of the USA. Yes, some of them I loved, but not like this. No wonder people smile here. On the East Coast, where there is an unspoken taboo of eye contact, I was an oddity. I said hello to the one other person passing on a sidewalk; I chatted with strangers on an elevator. Here people look me in the eye and smile—a beauty in human contact equal to the splendor of the sea.

I'm happy to be here loving California now, when so many others have deserted her or disparage her. There is a powerful magic alive in the land. California is a mentor that is teaching me to savor every moment of life, every detail of each experience.

* * *

Finally moving here to California was a longtime dream come true, though the culture shift was significant. After leaving Washington, DC, I discovered I had a eating-sitting-down deficiency. I had forgotten that elsewhere people forego working the room to sit down at tables to eat. There are so many cocktail parties and receptions in Washington that people learn to eat standing up with a plate in one hand, a drink in the other, and still manage to shake hands and exchange business cards.

Moving to California was not a dream I slept through, but there have been others. In January my new workbook, *Cultural Diversity in the Workplace*, was issued by Irwin Professional Publishing. Just two days after I received my first copy, someone asked who was the publisher. As I explained that Irwin Professional Publishing used to be Business One Irwin, it suddenly hit me. Some years ago when I started devouring business books, it was my dream to be published by Business One Irwin.

Because I had been approached by their Business Express Series, and since then been so busy just getting the book out, it wasn't until I was holding the book in my hand with the name on the cover that I exclaimed right out loud, "I almost slept through my dream come true!"

How many dreams have you slept through?
Are you often so busy that you forget to celebrate your successes?

How many dreams have you slept through?

* * *

I moved to California, in part, to be in an environment where I could talk about things that matter to me. I know that some of you are committed, to, as I am, realizing for ourselves, and assisting others to discover, how we live our spirituality in business. Sri Aurobindo believed that we are in an evolutionary process, that just as the ape could not imagine life with computers, superhighways, and fast-food franchises, so we cannot imagine what our life is evolving into. The difference now, in this state of our evolution, is that we can consciously participate in what we are becoming.

Business is our day-to-day interaction with the material world. How can we be spiritually aware, even consecrated, in our business, and at the same time, use that day-to-day work life as our spiritual practice?

* * *

In order to rejoice in today, and not sleep through our dreams come true, we have to be awake. So, I'll close with the words of another of my teachers, Henry David Thoreau:

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep.

It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful. But it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look.

To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of the arts.

It is a privilege to affect the quality of the day. So let's celebrate our successes and savor each moment, and never sleep through our dreams come true.

A former resident of Auroville, Sally Walton lives in Santa Cruz, CA.

Well-known or unknown has absolutely no importance from the spiritual point of view. It is simply the propagandist spirit. We are not a party or a church or religion seeking adherents or proselytes. One man who earnestly pursues the yoga is of more value than a thousand well-known men.

—Sri Aurobindo, *The Integral Yoga: Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Practice*, p. 354



Remembering the Lower East Side

Thinking back on those fleeting fourscore years of my life, I envision my childhood in the Lower East Side ghetto of New York during the early 1920s, and wonder what forces existed that caused me to ultimately evolve into a socially conscious secular humanist and, contrary as it may appear, also a pragmatic mystic.

Certainly, living in this area of poverty, where most of the people worked in the Seventh Avenue garment district sweatshops and, to survive, took in "homework," had a compelling effect on my social and political views. The existing ardor of religious orthodoxy, which I questioned for myself, opened my mind to a broader spiritual path—one that has for its goal the evolutionary development of consciousness as the solution of mankind's unacceptable behavior patterns.

After World War I, the tidal wave of Irish, Italian, and Jewish migration to this country was at its height. Each of these groups settled in their ethnic or religious self-imposed ghettos. My father, a first-generation American and a physician, chose to return to the Jewish ghetto rather than seek the financial security of a Park Avenue practice.

He was a friend and advisor to his people, and earned his 50 cents or a dollar for house calls at any hour of the day or night. He would send me with food and medicine to the most poverty-stricken.

But the poverty in which the people lived was no bar to their dream that their children should be well-educated and able to attend the universities of their newfound homeland. Literally pennies were saved to help fulfill this dream.

My parents were conscious of the need for a broad education in the humanities. At a very early age, even before I learned to read, I was given a set of the *Book of Knowledge*, which my mother read to me each day—after which I would thumb through the volumes absorbing the pictures. Christmas and birthday gifts were of a nature which aroused my curiosity, such as a chemistry set or an erector set—not toy guns or armored tanks.

The remarkable technology of the radio aroused my imagination when I listened to plays—unlike television, which leaves nothing to one's imagination. Music from an ancient Victrola introduced me to Caruso, Chopin, Mozart, Debussy, Bach, and others.

At the age of 13, I started to attend lectures at the Labor Temple on 14th Street in New York, often not quite understanding the subject matter of the evening discussed by such people as Will Durant, Heywood Brown, Clarence Darrow, H.L. Mencken, and others. I often visited the Hyde Park of New York—Union Square—to listen to political and religious harangues.

As an avid reader, I was influenced by the pantheism of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman; by the realism of Turgenev, Schnitzler, Chekov, and Dostoyevsky; by the romanticism of Heine, Keats, Shelly, and Browning.

It was indeed a time during which I and most of my friends were encouraged to learn from whatever source was within our reach.

The deeply embedded anthropological human need for the clan, the family, was satisfied. My family, as many others, consisted of my parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins—all of whom resided within an area of two city blocks—and it had a positive influence on my development as a human being. Most of all, I felt a sense of security and belonging.

I believe that the virtual disappearance of that kind of family in today's social structure is the cause of much of the social upheaval we now experience.

The home has capitulated to conditions that no longer afford any permanence. The high rate of mobility from one section of the country to another, the accelerating rate of divorce, the loss of a sense of fundamental values, the condition of homelessness, and the unjust and inequitable distribution of wealth are but a few of the conditions that create discontent. Our lack of solutions to these conditions is pregnant with consequences.

Joseph Spanier is a retired attorney. He has worked to support Auroville since the early seventies.

At the feet of the Master

by T. Kodanda Rama Rao

The following selection is taken from At the Feet of the Master (Reminiscences), a booklet published in 1969 by the Sri Aurobindo Society Centre in Anantapur, India. In this work, the author remembers early Ashram life with Sri Aurobindo.

It will not be out of place to state here a few more of my experiences I was having at the time. The Divine Shakthi began to descend with greater force into the head centres and below and an arrangement of molecular structure began to take place in the brain and the neural region. A kind of electric drilling was taking place in the head and there was felt the breaking of cells and loosening of knots in the whole being. Channels for the flow of Light and Force were being hewed out and what seemed to be metaphorical phrases when the Master wrote about the pouring of Light and Force, were becoming concrete experiences.

As I sat before the Master for meditation, the whole being used to become numb as his Force began to work in me and fill my nerves with Light and Force. I felt as if he was transmitting his divine Force and Light into me. In his presence, the Force was felt intensely and it began to work in the body day and night and was omnipresent. A supramental being is one in whose presence we can "feel ourselves in the presence of a light of consciousness, a potency, a sea of energy, can distinguish and



SALON

In "Salon," NexUS readers discuss a variety of issues in relation to Integral Yoga and the spiritual endeavor. Topics are intentionally broad to allow for a range of interpretations. Future topics and deadlines are: "The one thing needed" (Nov. 24), "Music" (Dec. 20), and "Aging" (Feb. 15).

Readers discuss "Choice" in yoga

A choice that held the universe in it

Carolyn wrote this selection at a writer's workshop at AUM in answer to the question, "Why did you choose to come to AUM?"

The choice to come here to AUM was made long ago—perhaps that time when an inner part of my being said yes . . . yes, I'll walk this path of aspiration, rejection, and surrender. But was there really any choice at all? For it seems at times that the path always was and always will be.

When Charlie Joiner asked me if I wanted to study *The Life Divine* via e-mail, I knew it was a choice that held the universe in it, a choice that would open vistas I'd never before imagined. And it has.

Now I've come here to this beautiful place where souls are joined together with a common longing and seeking of the Divine.

—Carolyn Vaughan, Canton, MA

Carolyn Vaughan is enrolled in an independent master's program in leadership development and spiritual transformation at Goddard College.

The vineyard or Dr. V?

Nancy wrote this selection at a writer's workshop at AUM in answer to the question, "Why did you choose to come to AUM?"

It was a difficult choice, very difficult. There was the home on the Vineyard waiting for me on July 1, and my children and grandchildren . . . And Dr. Venkataswamy was coming to New York! I truly wanted to see him. He had introduced me to Sri Aurobindo.

I had chosen to go to India for my seventieth birthday celebration—to travel with nine other pilgrims in the "footsteps of the Buddha." At the end of this amazing meditative journey, Shantam, our guide and teacher, asked us to write a poem about something that had moved us deeply along the way. Was it to be the little polio boy en route to the Mahakala caves? Was it to be the swarms of people? Was it to be where Buddha was born?

describe its free waves of action and quality, but not fix itself; and yet there is an impression of personality, the presence of a powerful being, a strong, high or beautiful recognizable Someone, a Person, not a limited creature of Nature but a Self or Soul, a Purusha," as per the description of a gnostic individual given by the Master in his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*. The Master had become concretely that which he was describing above.

We felt like pigmies in his divine presence. Full of oceanic energy, and not content with the heights he had reached, when questioned whether he had reached Supermind, he would say, "Not the highest level of Supermind." The ordinary mind cannot conceive of the magnitude and nature of supramental status and consciousness, which had become his normal state then, and he said that he had to come down to act on us, who were groping in darkness and half-light in the lower levels of consciousness. In one of his letters he says, "Even the little I have written is not understood by the intellectuals."

The Mother has said thus about the Master: "Sri Aurobindo incarnated in a human body the supramental consciousness and has not only revealed to us the nature of the path to follow and the method of following, so as to arrive at the goal, but also by his personal realisation given us the example; he has provided us with the proof that the thing can be done, and the time is now to do it."

from Savitri, Book Eleven, Canto One

Still was her listening thought.
The form of things had ceased within her soul.
Invisible that perfect godhead now.
Around her some tremendous spirit lived,
Mysterious flame around a melting pearl,
And in the phantom of abolished Space
There was a voice unheard by ears that cried:
"Choose, spirit, thy supreme choice not given
again . . ."

—Sri Aurobindo

We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth,
neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of
choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder
of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape
thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degener-
ate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou
shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be
reborn into the highest forms, which are divine.

—Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, 1463–1494
On the Dignity of Man



More relevant was a rhyme that came to me as we were driving somewhere in Uttar Pradesh:

*Sri Aurobindo
Looked out of his window
And though it was night
He saw the light!*

Where did that come from?

Ten days later, from pilgrimage to New Delhi, to Madurai, to Dr. V's office . . . there are two photographs on the wall behind his desk. Who are they? Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This is where it began for me.

And that's what brought me to my choice, AUM, at Phoenicia Pathworks—I chose to be here to see Dr. V . . . to know more about all of it. And I do know a millimeter more, as of this last minute of writing.

—Nancy Rudolph, New York, NY

Nancy Rudolph was assigned by the Helen Keller Institute to photograph the Aravind Eye Hospital, where Dr. Venkataswamy introduced her to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Go directly

We line up our thoughts in neat rows to see if the pros outnumber the cons or the cons outweigh the pros. We think we can think it out and come to a reasonable choice, yet seldom is it that choices are made by the mind.

When we find ourselves at that fateful crossroads, the mind is the first faculty called upon to make the choice of alternatives. We believe we can mentally arrive at some rational conclusion and act accordingly.

We may go so far as to write down the yes and no and maybe columns of the ledger. But confusion again reigns when we juggle the arguments every which way and begin to see that the mind can make up arguments just as convincingly for or against most any course of action.

So, the mind cannot do it. We are stymied. What then?

Through my own experience, I have found that the best way to make an important decision is not to think at all. Then the answer just comes. You may get a sign—a bird flies across your windshield, a chance remark impresses you, a dream tells you. Perhaps, after a refreshing shower or a walk on the beach, the decision is just there. Or, you may simply wake up one morning just knowing deep down what you have to do.

Then again, it may hit you like a two-by-four. Apparently, in my case, that is just what it took.

Since high school days, I have been interested in psychology. When I went to college, the fledgling science was too technical for my interests. And I talked myself out of it, knowing

I would have to get a Ph.D. in order to do anything in the field.

Through the years, I maintained my interest, and about three years ago found myself in a position in life in which I did not have family responsibilities and in a job that could allow me the time off to go back to school to get an M.A. in counseling psychology.

I was already deep into Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and had the idea that I could weave spirituality into my counseling sessions. After all, mankind is made up of more than mind, life, and body. Why should the spiritual part of the nature be taboo and not a subject of polite discussion?

I successfully passed the G.R.E. and was admitted to the University of South Florida in their counseling program. I took and passed three courses when my degree-seeking came to an abrupt halt.

Coming down the steps of the university where I am library director, I overstepped the last step (which I later discovered is shallower than the others) and broke my right foot. And I had passed through an athletic childhood and adulthood without breaking a bone. I could not drive and I could not find anyone who could drive me across Tampa Bay to the university, so I had to drop out of school. I still kept working at my job, thanks to a neighbor who drove me in the morning and another friend who picked me up after work.

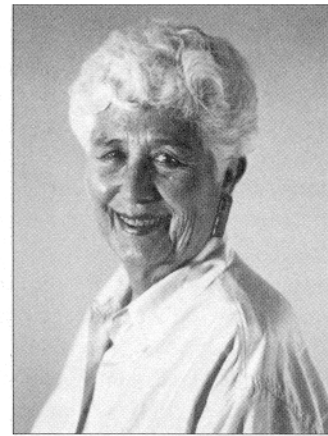
Then, I decided to transfer to another university, more expensive but where classes were held closer to my home. So I got myself accepted and was even approved for financial aid. Classes began in January and I was headed for an M.A. in psychology.

Then, in late November, I was cutting weeds in my yard when all of a sudden an excruciating pain attacked the back of my left hip. I went for a walk (my cure-all) but that didn't help. Like the wounded king, I could neither sit nor stand nor lie. I suffered through the weekend and got someone to drive me to the chiropractor Monday. That didn't help either, and the pain continued. I was forced to go to an M.D. to get a diagnosis and a painkiller prescription.

It was a herniated disc. It took me more than a month to recover to the point at which I could go back to work, but too late to attend university classes.

The message could not have been more blunt.

The Mother does not want me to have a degree in psychology. So, I have to assume she wants something else from me or through me.



Janis Coker: "The mind cannot do it. We are stymied. What then?"



The Dream Boat

Who was it that came to me in a boat made of
dream-fire,
With his flame brow and his sun-gold body?
Melted was the silence into a sweet secret murmur,
“Do you come now? is the heart’s fire ready?”

Hidden in the recesses of the heart something
shuddered,
It recalled all that the life’s joy cherished,
Imaged the felicity it must leave lost for ever,
And the boat passed and the gold god vanished.

Now within the hollowness of the world’s breast
inhabits—
For the love died and the old joy ended—
Void of a felicity that has fled, gone for ever,
And the gold god and the dream boat come not.

—Sri Aurobindo

from The Road Not Taken

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

—Robert Frost

I had gone into psychology on a mental decision. I wanted to get the right credentials and then introduce the spiritual dimension into my counseling. I felt that so many people had been turned off by traditional religion that they shut themselves off from their own highest being.

Even after the two blows, I knew what Mother did not want from me, but I still did not know what she wanted.

Somehow, the realization just grew and one fine day, there it was. Now I know that my path with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother must be straight and direct with no detours or side-tracks. Thus, do we make choices. But more realistically, our choices are made for us.

—Janis Coker, Safety Harbor, FL

Janis Coker is the library director at Schiller International University in Dunedin, Florida, and the NexUS liaison for center news and current affairs.

A time of internal change

(From a letter to Sam Spanier, Nov. 14, 1984)

A time of internal change, digging in the earth of ourselves to see what’s ready to come up. I go from peak experiences to spells of wondering at the meaninglessness of existence . . .

Sometimes we need to make conscious choices and to grit our teeth and follow through and sometimes we need simply to keep our ear to the ground attuning to what is approaching—danger or light or enlightening danger. Sometimes events lead us like a guru and sometimes—like a very harsh guru!

Is it best to be a blissful idiot?

Is enlightenment bliss? What do I learn when, suddenly, while walking on a hill the difference between the mountain and myself falls away? It is enough and everything when it happens but when soon afterward all that I thought was strong in me erodes . . . who is here but a helpless child?

So: Life is paradoxical with a flux of experiences and happenings impinging from within and without. My most dear is also the most endangering. All of us hang precariously from a cliff in space until let off the hook. Living our double or triple lives we try to experience the real, the fabric which contains all and knows no individuation.

Those moments . . . of being one with all, they seem to put a glaring mirror on my existence, to demand so much of me. They wake me up to the very limited existence which I generally lead. And that is a painful thing. To sleepwalk is easy, but then to discover that we’re doing it much of the precious fleeting time?

There is this beautiful picture postcard of David Ben Gurion on my desk. His life looked like one meaningful action. I made a study of it for an article I wrote a year ago. He lived in the light of a particular vision and followed through, making personal sacrifices, doing whatever his mission required of him. Observing the present state of affairs in Israel (circa 1984) one may wonder whether or not his life was pointless after all, one-pointed as it was. Yet it was a work of art. The act of focusing and surrendering all to a vision made it so.

I went into a meditative stream of thoughts after writing the above: thinking of Aurobindo, Buddha, Jesus.

Messages come in on waves of “positive” and “negative” experiences in an alternating current. I grow attuned; a receiving and sending set. Events corner me weirdly, insisting that I decipher their import. Struck with intimations I strive to overhaul the structure of my life.

Wishing you good rowing on the waves, like those fishermen on the Bay of Bengal who were almost indistinguishable from the elements. Did they make a shouting song like the Native Americans do to the Earth, dancing on it for rain? Yes, and they chased the fish to their nets.

—Hadassah Haskale, Jerusalem, Israel

Hadassah Haskale attended the 1988 AUM in Boulder, Colorado.



Breaking with tradition

When asked to write something on the subject of “choice,” as pertains to the spiritual choices one makes in life, my immediate response was to say “no” to yet another responsibility—but instead I made the choice to say “yes.”

Upon reflection, I observed life, and my life, from the point of view of choices and came to see that life is a constant, moment-to-moment flow of choices being made from the most profound beginnings to the most mundane choices of what to eat, where to eat, what to wear, and what to do with one’s spare time. Even before we arrive here on earth to assume our material form, the evolving soul is busy making choices regarding what kind of life it needs to live the next time around, what type of family to be born into, and what the *svadharma* and *svabhava** of that incarnation will be.

Going back in time, I wonder if my parents had been given the choice, would they have chosen me?!! Who was this being that descended on Dec. 18, 1936, upon those traditional, conventional Southern Baptists from Mississippi, and where did she come from—so full of self-will, fiercely independent, defying authority whenever possible; a true rebel, though not in the political sense of the word!

In my unconscious childhood and teenage years, they (the parents) made most of my choices and decisions for me, and in an attempt to harness my excess energy—and the behavior that accompanied it—they packed me off to a boarding school at age 14. Now, if I had been in control then, that would have been my choice as well. It removed me from home for a few years and helped me to develop a certain detachment toward the family and customary family life with its trappings and all its psychodynamics.

Looking back on this life in its unfolding from unconsciousness to semiconsciousness (to hopefully one day a conscious being living in the realm of truth, where one lives always in a state of “right choices” without having to think about it), I see Her hand, Her touch as having been there for every choice that was made for me or by me. She was molding me early on to find Her again in this lifetime and to be reunited with Her as a servant for Her Work.

I never fulfilled the expectations of my family in a conventional way; no marriage to a proper southern gentleman, no children, abandoned my singing career, argued all established rules, moralities, and institutions, didn’t become the church organist!! . . . but when I did decide to get married, the Mother said, “Break with traditional American weddings and be married according to the Hindu ceremony”—and of course I chose to do that!

So many choices are made unconsciously, but most rewarding are the ones we make with absolute clarity—that come like an adesh, as a flood of light enveloping the being and carrying

with it the knowledge that a thing must be done and that there is no doubting its correctness. Such were the circumstances of my choice to go to India to live at the feet of the Mother in 1968. For almost four years I remained there, growing, changing, offering, suffering physical illness, personal pain, but still growing, changing, and aspiring. It was a choice that was to change my life in an unalterable way.

When I returned to America in 1972, I was less certain about my choice at the time; how would I survive in the U.S. after so long a time in India? Should I have left the Mother’s physical presence? I was flung into the vital world of New York City and assailed by its myriad lures. I felt vulnerable in that atmosphere so far away from Her.

I worked for corporations, sang professionally and taught voice as a means to pay for my rent, and tried to work on certain psychological and emotional developments in myself, through all my experiences there, that perhaps might not have been possible for me to accomplish had I remained in India. During all those years in New York City, I stayed very close to Her. She was always there guiding me and protecting me from harm. I knew it and felt Her Force all around me.

When that phase of life was spent, I made a decision to move to Woodstock, New York, to be near Matagiri—with the aspiration to live a more simple life, closer to nature, closer to my soul, and a wish to refine the vital, “far from the madding crowd” of big city life. It was a wonderful choice for decompressing from all those years in NYC. My inner life expanded, my spirit was freer, I gained confidence in creating music programs for children in that area, and even learned to drive!

But after six years there, something within kept pushing for a change and pressing me to move on, to expand and widen . . . A visit to the East West Cultural Center in Los Angeles for Golden Day, Feb. 29, 1991, bathed me in the charged atmosphere of the newly installed Relics of Sri Aurobindo. Touched by the satsang and in-depth study groups on Sri Aurobindo that are a part of their programs, I was inspired to just stay on! But I returned to Woodstock and eventually, after a year’s time, acted upon a persistent inner call to make the move to Los Angeles—to live there, to become a part of the life of the center, and to learn and grow from the study groups, satsang, and Sanskrit chanting.

All my previous choices have led to this current juncture. It is an enriching time for me and I am full of gratitude. I see no wrong choices having been made, no mistakes—only experiences, fully lived, that were necessary to bring my being into closer contact with Them, infusing me with Their living presence that continues to enable me in my sadhana. As life goes on, other choices will be made and time provides the promise of new realizations and awakenings as this “great adventure” progresses.



In closing, I would like to share these lines from the *Bhagavad Gita*, as an ultimate choice, and I aspire to try to live my life as best I can in keeping with these comforting words: "Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone: I will deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve."

OM MA

Svadharna: Self law; essential law; one's own law of action, the line of one's personality. *Svabhava*: The inner nature, essential power of spiritual principle of self-becoming.

—Anie Nunnally, Los Angeles

Anie Nunnally teaches music for the City of Los Angeles public school system. She also serves on the board of the Foundation for World Education.

Remembering the future

THAT MUST BE.

She was face to face with her faceless present. Or rather, with grimacing masks. Of a theatre clown . . . tragic heroine . . . vaudeville queen in *The Tiger Rag* . . . hapless fool in a *King Lear* . . . rock ritualist in a *Cat Orestes* . . . star-doomed idealist in *The Moon Besieged* . . . drunken Irish waitress-visionary in a Nevada truckstop diner in quest of the ark of human unity and the New Jerusalem in *Mother Noah* . . .

Those are the roles you've chosen this life around, she told herself. Her *Self* told her, "Never mind the costumes of Ideal Wife and Mother you've strutted in, across the little stage of your Let's Pretensions, and put away in mothballs. What of your dreams of the Theatre of Spirit's Space? Of the Beyond? Visions of higher realms than yours, and hidden worlds? Of the Spirit's dance with Matter? Of playing with your Divine Beloved and Hero and Playfellow? In *Manhattan*?! On and off *Broadway*?! To the applause of *thousands*?!"

The cosmic Player laughed within His mask.

But the playwright in search of her Author wept within her masks.

Until her search led to the climactic choice of Act III:

It could only be the leaden curtain that falls on *The End*.

Or: The Yoga of Transformation.

So—she chose.

—Seyril Schochen, The Baca, Crestone, CO

A practicing playwright, Seyril lives at the base of Mt. Crestone, a 14,294-foot peak in the Rocky Mountains. For more on her "Choice," see the "Center to Center" section in this issue.

To the dismay of all who were victims

In those days, we used to sit around the Master in chairs during the evening meditation time which lasted for about half an hour from 4:30 p.m. (after initial talks on varied topics and things and events, from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.). The disciples and visitors who were allowed for the talks discussed everything on all kinds of subjects and indulged in frank criticism and Sri Aurobindo freely cracked jokes with a hearty laugh. He was jubilant when he chatted with persons round him, having a delightful cigar smoke which lasted till the commencement of meditation. Smoking was not considered to be offensive nor an obstacle to Yogic practices, as it was a physical habit. I was the only non-smoker in the group of disciples. As some persons contracted this habit after coming there and seeing the Master smoke, he later on gave it up to the dismay of all who were victims to it. It is easy to get into a habit but difficult to give it up and it is impertinent to imitate great souls who could give up anything at will. So, my friends who took to smoking left off the habit after some difficulty.

—T. Kodanda Rama Rao, *At the Feet of the Master*

Why Sri Aurobindo quit smoking

I must tell you that I was born in a family in which nobody smoked: my father had never smoked and neither had his brothers—anyway, no one smoked. So since my early childhood, I hadn't been used to others smoking. Later, when I lived with artists . . . Artists smoke, of course (it seems it gives them "inspiration"!), but I detested the smell. I didn't say anything because I didn't want to be unpleasant, but I detested it. Then I came here—Sri Aurobindo smoked. He smoked deliberately, he smoked in order to say: one can do the yoga while smoking, I say one can smoke and do the yoga, and I smoke. And he smoked. And naturally all the disciples smoked, since Sri Aurobindo smoked. For some time, I even gave them pocket money so they could buy cigars (they smoked cigars—it was ghastly!). Then I came to live in Sri Aurobindo's house, we spoke freely, and one day I told him, "How awful the smell of smoke is! (*laughing*) It's disgusting!" So he said to me, "Oh, you don't like the smell?" "Oh, no!" I said, "Not only that, but I had to make a yogic effort to stop it from making me feel sick!" The next day, he had stopped. It was over, he never smoked again.

—The Mother, June 14, 1965, *Agenda*, Vol. 6



EARTH HOUR

*"This human hour, this earthly hour
is the most beautiful of all the hours."*

—The Mother

Speed, cigarettes, and God

by Lynda Lester

These journal entries were written in November 1973, the month Mother left her body. Along with many others on the path, I had strong inner experiences at the time; I felt the touch of Satchidananda for days on end, and the acute presence of the Divine. Soon afterwards, I discovered the Integral Yoga.

Readers will note (and, I hope, kindly excuse) the fact that the voice of these passages reflects the 60s, which were just winding down. At the time I worked at a newspaper; I'd get off at 1 a.m. and stay up all night. I'd quit cigarettes months before, but was still kicking the psychological habit. Mention of "speed" refers to mild amphetamines, often prescribed in those days for fatigue or overweight; the "cross" is a "white cross," commonly used by students to study for exams. "Concordia Cabbage" was the name my roommate, Judi Bailey, and I gave to Concordia College, a Lutheran school we attended (and rebelled against).

This writing may be of interest because it shows how the Divine influence can be felt—and even be irresistible—in the most worldly situations, and that the Yoga starts from where we are, not where we should be.

Nov. 6, 1973 • 2 a.m. at the Jolly King

And so "here I am," she wrote, halfway through Cup One of coffee. Ah-h . . . *Waugh-gh!* she translated, pulsing about fifty sine waves a parsec.

Cup Two

I wish more speed would come around. Shelley, depressed at Pudim's loss in the city election, laid a cross on me after midnight at work. "Bless your heart," I said. But I wish I had some more. Speed always was one of my favorite drugs.

DO IT EVERY DAY
MORE SPEED MORE SPEED

An' I been drinking as much coffee as I can get, too.

Three

I sure share a lot of space and time with drunk older women . . . middle-aged men with stiff jeans and black shoes, disparate students and freaks, guys with tattoos on their arms . . . Chicanos, prostitutes, and rednecks that laugh too loud and say with belligerence, "Yer fulla ****!" in these all-night cowboy cafes that get crazy.

"Is there an Ellen Perazza in there?"

No, but there's a Lynda Lester. She comes in occasionally, twenty or so times a week, to hang out and get wired.

The waitress must know. She gave me a family coffee pot. My lips are stained.

I wish I had LOTS OF SPEED

Cup Four DRUG CRAZED HIPPIE

I go around in circles: zz-zz . . . whrr . . . I wish it was stronger speed.

What I do not feel: sensitive, loving, in tune with God.

What I feel: electric.

I should have a cigarette . . . "But that's one lesson I've learned," she repeats for the 18th time today.

The first three months were easy.

The fourth was hard.

The fifth was moment-to-moment struggle—the Dragon

Foe:

Cigarettes taste GOOD!

Cigarettes are intellectually satisfying!

Writers smoke cigarettes!

Cigarettes are neat and cool . . .

They show you are no longer the painfully retarded innocent you were for years . . . they show you have transcended the narrow-minded obtuseness of Concordia Cabbage . . .

They show you are a worldly-wise cynic, an adult come into your own . . . that you must be dealt with, must be respected, cannot be negated—that you are strong! and tuf!

Five

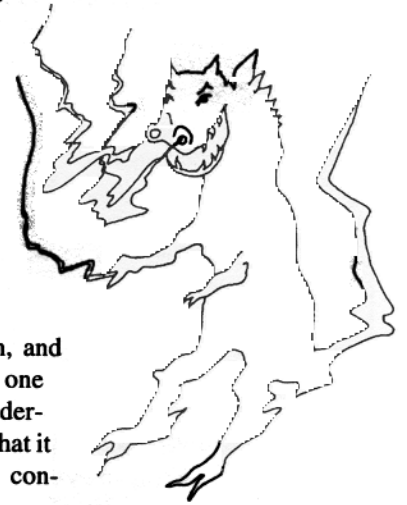
The usual arguments against smoking are useless when the madness comes: sly, slick Dragon cremates them in about a half a minute of inexorable wanting.

But I've learned a lesson, and as yet take refuge behind the one defense that holds: at last I understand the nature of bondage, what it means to be enslaved: not in control: unfree.

When I have a habit that bad, my consciousness is tied to resolution of desire: desire ever recurring, never more than temporarily resolved; desire the complete tyrant, beating the **** out of me—thwarting my awareness, relegating me to lower levels by the fact that I have no choice of action.

Not that I'm always high when I don't smoke; but I have the option.

The insight is deeper than the explanation . . .





Cigarettes and the golden dream: like all material persuasions, they don't deliver. They just con you, till you find the gold is only dimestore glitter, the satisfaction has escaped you again. Where is it? The ultimate satisfaction, the one that will really do it once and for all . . .

Nothing delivers.

And you keep running through all the narrow streets, into all the dark alleys, and ride all the highways, following every single lead with greater or lesser conviction and purposeful reason: This one will do it.

But in the end, none of them ever pull through.

And I guess that's the purpose of life: to make you finally realize, after how many experiences and/or reincarnations, there's only one thing that will deliver, only one thing that will do it: God.

Have you heard the latest from the Blups?

"Have you heard that new record by the Blups? Yeah, but have you heard it when you're in the bathtub—with somebody else? Have you heard it when you're in the bathtub with somebody else by candlelight? On a good stereo set? There's an incredible wine; put it at the side of the tub: musk oil in the bath, the incense, the candlelight, the wine, the other being and the bath water is just right and on the stereo . . . Oh . . . Oh . . ." More is better. The obvious predicament that the intellect has a difficult time with is the sneaking realization that more is never enough. Or, more is maybe enough for a moment but it doesn't last. . .

But what is the condition necessary so that the moment comes when we see through the veil in a way that changes everything from then on, so that . . . our whole journey changes its meaning? The condition necessary for that to happen is that despair, the realization that everything we think we can do to create perfection isn't going to be enough, that who we are and who we think we are is where the problem lies. It leads to a deep despair that seems to be a necessary condition for us to awaken at that moment. Once we have seen and know we have seen, we can never totally go back to sleep again.

—Ram Dass in *Grist for the Mill*, Berkeley: Celestial Arts, 1976, 1987

The ALL THE PILLARS KEEP FALLING DOWN rap Poor metaphor but it sounds good

I keep discovering that the things I thought were reality are not reality; that things I believed to be satisfying, meaningful, and important in themselves, are not.

One by one I see through them, the old absolutes and givens: they have no substance.

Tattered, tawdry trickers.

That one's a hallucination too: of course . . . I hadn't realized.

My whole life, dissolving before my eyes, while it gets more and more obvious: Reality is: God.

Whew

Would you look at . . .

Look at . . . look . . . uh

It's so vast it makes me incoherent.

God comes around me, fills the air with silver floods of stars, gold rivers of fire, cascading magic waterfalls of love and infinite joy . . . I'm knocked starry-bask bank beanwards, cuckoo, she's gone astarie-bashed bonk barnick upstairs . . .

And I just sit around with this simpleton grin that gets bigger and bigger . . . and then I laugh crazy and laugh and laugh:

God, I love you . . .

Forever . . .

To the ends of creation . . .

With every atom consciousness of my body . . .

Help yourself, here it is, I give it all to you . . .

Ah yes . . . me, the one who used to think God was for deluded, fearful fools who couldn't bear the fact that the universe is absurd, existence an accident; me, the one who used to wonder what metaphysicians had to gain from propagating all those lies: flagrant, dissembling nonsense—deciding they must be hopelessly misguided and/or insane . . . me, scorning, hateful of all religion, bitterly cynical of worship: obviously a mere pathetic diminution of human stature.

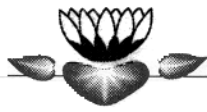
Yes; well: Life is for learning. I kicked and struggled the whole way (well . . . I suppose it is "God"—but what a revolting way to put it!) . . .

But finally, I find myself saying things like: There is a Reality more real than the chair I sit in; a Reality that when experienced, reveals everything in the material world to be, in comparison, only a shadow of Reality . . . only relatively real.

I didn't ask for it like that. I just kept trying to find truths.

And the illusions kept getting mercilessly stripped away, the pillars keep falling down . . . and I realize more and more: there is only one truth: God . . . and the only meaning is God . . . and the only reality is God.

I wonder what Judi Bailey thinks these days. We sure had fun being atheists.



THE POETRY ROOM

(Song of Eli)

Remember me

Child-joy jai

O Delight of being
who exists for no other will
than to be,
come set me free,
come rouse me from this slumber
that hides Thee.

O Joy of life
igniting like a sun within the cells,
opening like a smile in which the Secret dwells,
come open up this bud
so tightly closed
within a thousand shells
that shield the pearl-red rose.

O child-spontaneous Laugh
who fills all space,
come flash thy Victor's curve upon my face;
and turn the murmur of doubt that drones along
into thy rainbow-fluted
lover's Wonder song.

O molten core of pure Delight
whose self-creating cry seeds and sounds
all yearning in this desert heart,
O burning point of light that is my soul,
come heal that darkened speck, thy shadow-part,
and widen it forever to thy Whole.

[This poem was inspired by some lines where Mother was speaking about the sadness of the Falsehood: ". . . And only a vibration of Joy can change that. (. . .) That is to say, austerity, asceticism, even intense and severe aspiration, any severity at all, all that has simply no effect—Falsehood remains there, behind, and does not budge. (But) It cannot resist the sparkle of Joy."]

Savitra, July 14, 1994

Auroville child

I passed a child today,
Who looked at me and smiled.
I did the same,
In Mother's name.
And love passed between us,
From heart to heart.
And now I smile—
To find another child.

—Auro Arindam

Remember, my child, I am always with you, deep in your soul,
At all hours, Remember, I watch over your life and progress,
With love and care and guide your uncertain steps.
Remember me wherever you may be in the world.
Repeat my name whenever you have a little time to spare.
I am present everywhere. To see and feel my Presence
My child, you have only to switch on the inner Light.
I am inside you, outside you, above and below.
You can feel my Love with only a little warmth
On your side. Remember, I never abandon you even
When you go out of the happy sunlit path.
Remember my Love always, I never scold or punish,
That is not my way. I am pouring my love in your heart
Day and night. Remember, I am your Mother, Father,
Counselor and Queen. Remember me always
For I am your closest, faithful and dearest Friend.
Hide nothing from me. Depend on me for all your needs.
Remember you are my child, I can never be ashamed of you,
Whatever you do, Remember me, I shall give you sunshine,
Laughter and joy in life which no one can take away from you.
In spite of your thousand mistakes, hold on to me, Remember,
My child can never fail. Tell me all your plans and dreams.
I am always with you. Remember, I love and protect you.
Remember me when afraid, no one can do any harm to you.
I want you to be really good, always happy, my child.
Remember, I live in the heart of all living beings, human and
animal.
When you are kind to anyone, Remember, you are kind to me.
Be generous as the ocean, fill the world with good thoughts and
feelings.
Be straight and simple, Remember me always without fail.
Enter your heart to know what I like, Remember, never to tell a
lie.
I shall put within your reach all that is noble and beautiful.
Have the utmost goodwill for all, Remember, all are my
children.
Remember me for any help for I am always with you day and
night.
Remember, my child, your life is worth living only in the
service divine.

—Niranjan Guha Roy, France, May 30, 1994

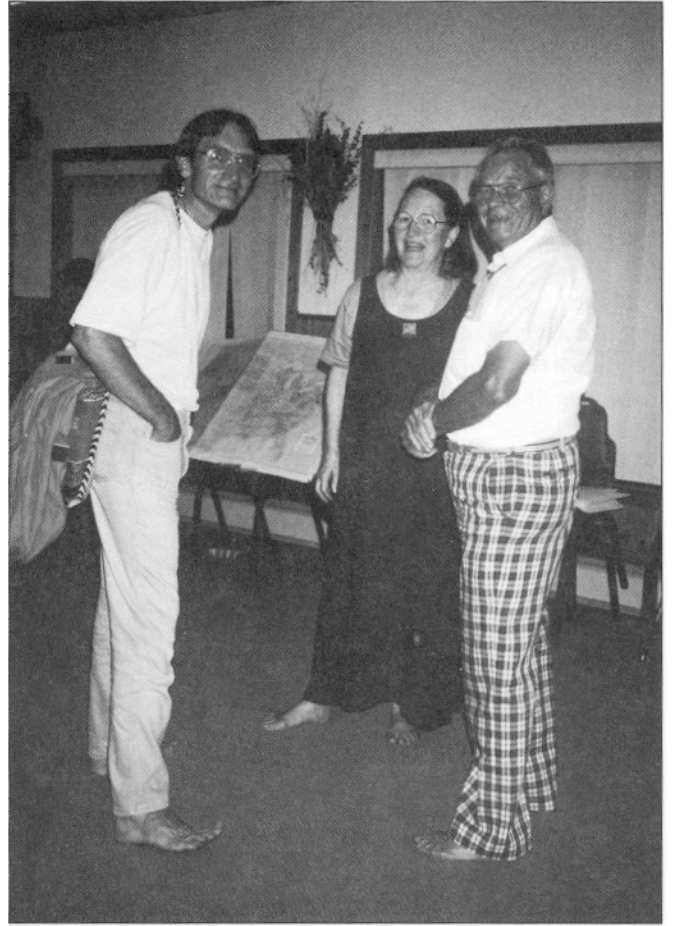
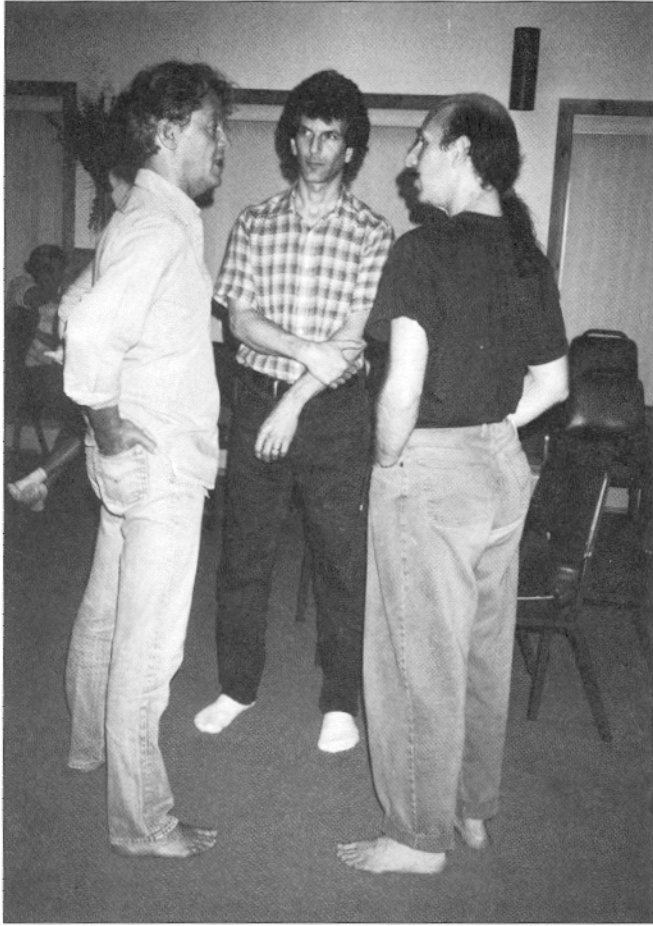
Mountain valley

Wildflowers multicolored, blooming in a meadow;
White butterflies, shimmering, visit violet, blue and yellow;
Raindrops on branches, as I brush through the bush;
Wet ferns keep me cool, as I dash past the pool!

Alice Webb

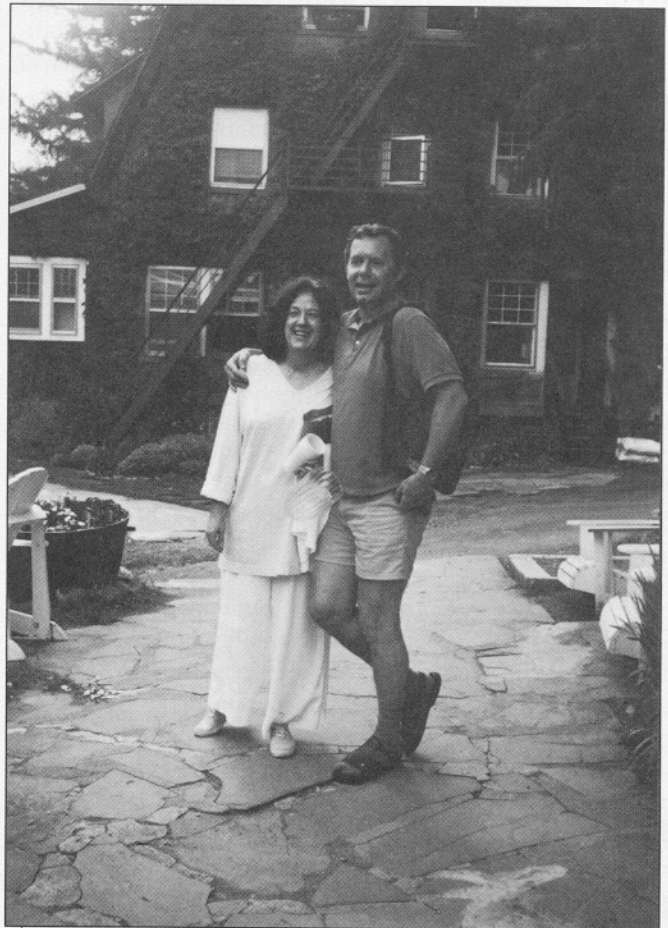
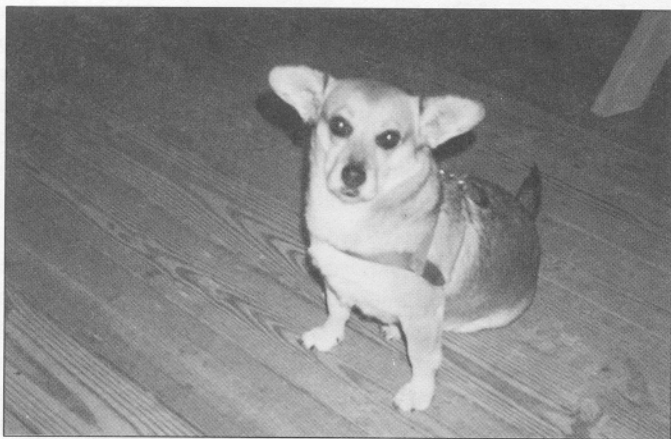


GALLERY: More photos from the All USA Meeting (





June 30–July 4, 1994, Phoenicia, New York



Opposite page, clockwise from upper left:

- *Robert Aarsse, Gary Boxer, and Marvin Rosenberg*
- *Dan Kealey, Bessie Neild, and Bayne Neild*
- *Paula Murphy*
- *Miriam Belov and Tom O'Brien*

This page, clockwise from upper left:

- *Margo MacLeod and Jerry Schwartz*
- *Mickey Finn, Jim Massa, Dakshina, and R.M. Patel*
- *Connie Buckley and Rudy Phillips*
- *AUM Dog*



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Perfecting Spirit in Matter

by the Reverend Joseph Martinez

The following transcript was taken from a talk called "Giving and receiving" offered May 11, 1994, at Rev. Martinez's Spiritual Healing Center in San Francisco. The full transcript is available from the Sri Aurobindo Association, (510) 848-1841.

In the teachings of Integral Yoga, the human being is none other than the Spirit-in secret reality, the Supreme Being. The Spirit itself is able to project itself in itself. The infinite consciousness can create infinite centers in itself. In fact, in the teachings we have, it can create one dot in its heart and in that dot create infinite creations and project itself into that dot because all things are possible.

But the truth is that the human being is, in secret reality, the Spirit, and the Spirit enters into the flesh in order to perfect its manifestation. Its being is perfect, the possibilities are infinite, but the possibilities of the being have to unfold in terms of becoming in creation. This is where a play or consciousness takes place, in creation. This is where becoming occurs, manifestation occurs in creation. This is where the infinite possibilities manifest as events, as a play. And this is an integral part of Spirit becoming-not just being, but becoming. And we represent that part of Spirit that is in the becoming, in the manifestation, unfolding the qualities. We are all meant to unfold Spirit, the kingdom of heaven within, the total perfection within. We are meant to unfold that with each lifetime, whether it is in this life form, this planet, or other spaces in the universe.

We are basically evolutionary creatures, unlike some of the beings on the cosmic plane, the gods, the goddesses. They do not really unfold, they do not really evolve. They are born with a certain state and they're fixed. According to the legends, if they want to evolve they have to come down, take on a human form, go through what we go through, and then the law allows some kind of unfolding. But there in that plane, the cosmic plane, these beings that are born there and stationed there, they do not unfold.

So we enjoy something even the gods and goddesses do not enjoy: an evolutionary nature that allows us to go beyond cosmic into the Supramental, and beyond the Supramental to the Supreme. We are such. We have that possibility because in secret reality, to quote the words of Sri Aurobindo, we are the Supreme itself. We are Spirit having experiences in the body for the purposes of perfecting the manifestation of Spirit in Matter.

Each individual, obviously, will unfold this perfection individually. There is a unique individual process with each unique individual. This you have to recognize in yourself and in others-the unique individuality and the unique process. We are not all alike. We may have some similars, many dissimilars, but we

are all unique. Many of us will take different paths, will unfold differently, will learn different lessons with each lifetime. Some of us will come here to learn how to be patient. Some of us will learn how to trust, some how to have faith, some to have hope. Some will learn how to manifest unconditional love and acceptance. Some will use this lifetime to learn compassion; some to learn understanding, some to learn silence. There is going to be a different, unique evolution with each soul.

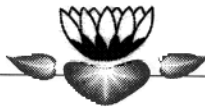
And it may be very well to your advantage if you try to recognize what some of your chief lessons are that are unfolding the qualities you have to unfold. All you have to do is look back at your life and look at your conflicts. And you will see that from your conflicts you grow, those are learning lessons. But what did you learn? You will find that there is a pattern, that there are some major qualities of Spirit you are trying to unfold. Therefore, you are going to create your life circumstances that precisely will bring these qualities out.

I say *precisely* because everything is according to the law, no more, no less. Everything is exact, there is nothing outside of the law. So your process is perfect-relatively perfect-in terms of what you want to achieve. Your experiences have been created already, before you came here. In the Spirit world you created in your consciousness a scenario from birth to death. And then you jumped into the movie and now you should be flowing with the movie.

The word is flowing, not freezing anything. All experiences that we have we should allow them to come and to go. Do not store anything in your body, because that just amounts to excess baggage-past lives, past histories. Many, many people are living in the past. They are not living in the present because the energy of the life experiences and events are frozen. You can do that; you can freeze time. There's even a power to annihilate time. We have that possibility in our consciousness. We can freeze the time frame of events, and all the energy in those time frames, in our body; but somehow the energy will still attempt to come out. It can come out in neuroses, in nightmares, in your dreams-worse, in psychosis.

So we're working out some lessons, each one of us in our own unique way. And again, if you just took some time to look at your past history, you would see what lessons you are trying to teach yourself. It is obvious because there are going to be certain patterns.

There are negatives also included in the learning lessons—accidents, illness, misfortunes. These present a big problem to humans. Why bring in negatives in the growth in evolution? Why bring in pain and suffering? Well, we receive a hint in Integral Yoga. Each planet, each star, each system, has its own unique possibilities for evolution. On this planet, the possibilities included a play of opposites, meaning both positives and negatives in life events, experiences, and forces were established so you can come in and use both in order to learn and to grow. We took a look at that and said, yeah, we'll go for it. We will



subject ourselves to positive life events and to negatives. We'll use both in order to grow and to learn some lessons. Therefore, our evolution here took into consideration—long before we came here, when we were in the Spirit world—the possibility of pain and suffering, not for the sake of pain and suffering, but as a stimulus to change.

As a healer for more than twenty years, working full-time with problems of consciousness in the body, I find it clear that individuals are creating, one, their reality, and two, the reality of negatives, in order to stimulate changes. I have seen so much growth, healing, transformation out of sickness: deep changes in the personality that came out of accidents, that came out of misfortunes. The zeros turning into pluses. I've seen it over and over again. And sometimes there is a problem in trying to clear all of this up for an individual, if they have not yet worked out the therapeutic benefits of the negative.

But then I'm always aware that the law of love and forgiveness supersedes any other type of planning and justice and karma. So a good healer always works with the higher law. At any point in time anybody can receive the transmutation of karma, as it were, and any kind of negative that is used to grow can be replaced by positive to achieve the same growth—if not greater growth—because using negatives to grow, that's not the ultimate. It's just one way of doing it. And actually, a higher way could be to introduce love and forgiveness and other positive events. However, that means some kind of expanded awareness. You're aware of a higher law. But if you're not aware of that, you just have to work out the normal reality. It's called the law of karma.

So individuals, for one thing, have created their reality, are always creating their realities, and in that case are also creating the learning lessons. And again, everything happens through the law. Everything is exact. We are learning. We are growing.

Rev. Martinez is a spiritual healer in San Francisco.

Special Section

YOGA IN CYBERSPACE

All together now: Spiritual implications of the Internet

by David Hutchinson

The Aurobindo community has the opportunity to link together as never before via the Internet.

What is the Internet? It is an electronic network that spans the globe, that can be used for people of every kind to find others, remove barriers, share ideas.

The Net is bringing people together from every continent and walk of life. Hundreds of local, regional, and international subnetworks within the Internet exist, and more emerge daily. A

present estimate is that millions of computers and some 25 million people are using the Internet—and its use is growing exponentially. The World Wide Web—a hypertext program which uses the associative qualities of the human mind in a way only possible on a computer—is growing at a rate of 25% every month.

But numbers are not the point. The crucial fact is that the Net has become a forum for the worldwide exchange of news, information, and ideas. You can explore areas of human experience and knowledge you never imagined before. Even seasoned travelers of the Net can barely grasp its dimensions or potential.

Communicating with others

Every day on the Net, communities of like-minded people are gathering to share, learn, and grow. The Net allows for many ways of getting together: electronic mail (e-mail), bulletin boards, discussion groups, electronic magazines, even direct online conversation. Most of these tools (programs) are available to anyone on the Net. You can correspond electronically with anyone on the globe and get an answer back in half an hour. You can set up a typed "conversation" to talk with one or several people, anywhere in the world. Artists, writers, visionaries—anyone—can reach a widespread audience immediately. For the first time in history, the many can talk to the many—globally, directly, and without censorship.

Access to unlimited information

The Net has opened the resources of the planet to anyone with a computer; it has created the largest library in history—one that is free, open 24 hours a day, and accessible from any point on earth.

With a computer terminal and a telephone line, you can log on to any one of thousands of computers, look through files, select specific information, and have it sent back to your computer at home to study at your leisure.

The Net can automatically search for information related to a specific topic. Some programs search large databases such as the Library of Congress; some will bring you pictures and sound as well as written text; and some work so independently that they come close to being "intelligent" agents.

If you find something that sparks your imagination, one press of a button will send it instantly to a person or group. This is happening millions of times a day, right now. Humanity is entering the age of a global mind, and the effect on the direction of society is impossible to predict. Where will the transformative ideas come from? Where will they go? What revolution will be triggered by a single message?

The dharma of personal computers

The dharma of personal computers has emerged. They did not come into existence to teach us how to write computer code, improve our typing, or increase the eye-hand coordination of teenagers. Computers were made to bring us together so that we



Fledgling cyberworker David Hutchinson (and friend Athena) at the computer

can shed our isolation, help ourselves evolve and learn, move forward as a species. The barriers are falling already.

The Internet is remarkably benign, because it has so far been a cooperative creation among thousands of people whose main interest has been universal access and the open exchange of information. Sending or receiving messages or logging onto distant computers does not involve paying long-distance telephone charges (unless you are using a commercial carrier, such as America Online). This trend towards openness continues: more and more universities are giving people free access to the Net, and even the commercial outlets are becoming less expensive.

The Net is developing into a structure that exemplifies the virtues of the higher mind: tolerance, flexibility, universality, inclusion of the individual within the whole.

Via the Internet, we connect in mind to one another. That is nothing new; people have been communicating since the beginning of the species, with gestures, speech, and later the written word. But communication has always been limited by space and time. In the past, a letter took six months to cross the ocean and return; even now it may take weeks.

The Net, on the other hand, has given everyone the capacity for nearly instantaneous communication. The mind-to-mind understanding that language offers has suddenly burst into a new realm.

Tools

The tools you need to link up with the Net are a personal computer (any type or vintage) and a modem. (Software is virtually free and extremely user-friendly.) There are many kinds of electronic hookups. The most expensive route is to become a "host" on the Internet itself—in other words, a computer that others can communicate with directly. The least expensive is to join a local Bulletin Board System (BBS), which, for a few

dollars a month, allows you to send and receive e-mail. In between there are many other options that give different levels of use.

Commercial outlets, such as America Online, are actually smaller networks within the overall Internet. For a monthly fee, these networks provide e-mail and a few services (like online shopping) but not the full resources of the Net itself.

The Internet is not universal: computers are still expensive, and in certain countries the telephone system isn't sophisticated enough to maintain a connection. But the technology is becoming cheaper and more accessible every day.

The Web of Being

The Internet is a metaphor for the Oneness of all humankind, and even as a metaphor, it is immensely powerful. But it is so much more.

What does it mean that we are all connected? What will it mean in the future? As individuals we wake to this truth gradually, through years or lifetimes. No person, no community, no nation is alone. To the extent that this truth becomes apparent, we begin to experience universal compassion, and the higher mind can act more openly. Interconnectedness has always been a spiritual truth; now that fact of the inner life is reflected in the Net.

Until recently, only those with occult abilities could concretely realize the truth of interconnectedness. Most of us don't feel the forces and thoughts and beings that are constantly populating our inner world; we act as if we were individuals, as if there were sharp boundaries between our little selves and everything else. By the nature of the surface mind we are limited to the here-and-now, to the senses, to our personal experiences and knowledge. But that is a thing of the past. The Internet is the first glimpse into the age of the global mind. We are all connected spiritually . . . soon we will be linked electronically as well.

At present the dominant type of communication on the Net is the (electronic) word. People exchange information in the form of words and documents. The written word is itself an instrument of the mind, and so the Net is biased towards the intellect. But the written word can do much. Witness the power of Sri Aurobindo's or the Mother's writings.

Communication via the Net—in its present form—is like correspondence. When you write, you put your thoughts in order. Thoughts link up to form structures: a sentence, a paragraph, an entire composition. The finished work, whether thrown out in a few minutes of rapid-fire typing or fine-tuned over months of revision, is a work of the mind. The written word is mind made manifest and sent out for others to share. I am sitting at home as I write this, watching the roses outside my window rustle in the morning breeze; you may be thousands of miles away in space or years in time, but through the written word we share the same thoughts. Writing and reading are a means for the higher part of the mind to put itself in order, make sense of things, and reach out to others.



Integral Yoga on the Net?

What happens if one tries to find information about Sri Aurobindo or the Mother on the Net? Do we have an online magazine (such as *NexUS/Collaboration*) that people in the community can browse? Is there a way for people searching for local groups to find the names and addresses of the centers around the country and the world?

Can one use the powerful search functions of the Net to call up references, articles, abstracts regarding Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—for instance, by searching under the term *yoga*? Are there online books by or about them for an interested person to download into a personal computer and read?

Is there a discussion group where one can follow the ongoing debates, the ideas and experiments of our international community of sadhaks? Do we have regular gatherings on the Net where we can meet and talk in real-time, create a global *satsang*, unite our aspiration globally?

Some of these have happened, but as a community we have only begun to use the tools of the Internet. These powerful tools are in place, waiting; we simply have to use them to connect with one another and to make the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother available. Millions of people are using the Net every day to talk

about seashells or taxes or baseball. We have a responsibility to put the transformative power of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to work on this global network. We have a responsibility to open ourselves to that higher force, to give it a voice, to allow it work through this (technological) channel that has been created.

If one person can open to and become a channel for the higher mind or spirit, if one person can begin a transformation, why not the whole of humanity? We have the opportunity to do a kind of work that has never been done before—that has never been imaginable before: the linking of the entire globe in a spirit of cooperation and unity.

We are all connected. Perhaps the full realization of this truth by a majority of people lies in the future. But the truth itself is eternal, and we have here and now the opportunity to give it form, participate in it, make it a living process—to manifest Unity. For all the exchange of information and material benefits that we are gaining through the Net, the spiritual benefits can be much greater.

David Hutchinson believes in openness, free knowledge, and above all the Integral Yoga. This summer he created a hypertext system of documents for the computer network of a university hospital, where he nurses bullet-ridden teenagers for a living.

The new electronic commons

Outside of these walls ... there's an electronic space out there where the information is floating around. It's in the computer banks of the world. And it's forming sort of a distributed intelligence. All the libraries of the world, all the databanks of the world—they're all getting connected electronically.

I'd like to think of it as sort of an electronic commons out there. This is my dream, anyway. In old New England you had town commons, where you went when you wanted to find something. You could exchange information with people and talk to them. But now the towns have grown in size and the world's a busy complicated place and there's no simple little town commons. But now there's this virtual space out there, an electronic space where you can go and engage people all over the world. It's an electronic meeting place. We can go out and barter information on those networks. They exist today.

In fact, I'm really a devotee of what we call electronic bulletin boards. That's very much like a fence where people can pin up notes. Imagine you live in a small town and you want some little bit of information. You don't know who to ask. So you put up a note on the fence where everyone's passing by and people see it and someone knows the answer and they write the answer to you and then you find it there. The fence is a meeting place. Now we have that electronically.

I'll give you a simple example. Somebody wanted to buy a humidifier for his house. But he said, "Isn't it going to rust my heating ducts?" Now this is the typical kind of information that

you need in everyday life. You can't get this in an encyclopedia. You can't get this in a library. There's no place you can get this. You have to get it from other people. But who do you ask? So you send a message out there into virtual space: "Hey, does anybody know about heating ducts and humidifiers?" You just punch in this message. ...

It goes into the consumer network. And people sitting throughout the world at universities and in companies like mine, or sitting in their basements at home, on their computers read the news on the Consumer Net, and they see this message about humidifiers. Actually, this particular question drew dozens of responses. Some **from** plumbers who knew about this, or claimed to know about it. Some from scientists who knew about the theory of corrosion, and some from just plain homeowners who had one experience or the other. And at the end of the day this person had scores of responses from the wisdom of the people out there on this particular subject. It's a way of going into virtual space to get information ... A whole new way of sharing human information. And this isn't some mystical database out there. These are real people putting in real messages. Real human information.

—Robert Lucky, executive director of research at AT&T Bell Laboratories, in an interview with Bill Moyers.

From *Bill Moyers: A World of Ideas II*.
New York: Doubleday, 1990.



Digital yoga: E-mail addresses of the Auro-community

Here is a list of online Auro-people in the U.S. community, including geographical locations (when known), affiliations, and e-mail addresses.

Alexander, Jack—AVI—USA (Sacramento, CA)	jackAVIUSA@aol.com
Arindam, Auro and Fidelite (Vancouver, BC, Canada)	auro.arindam@qleap.com
Aurovilian, Alok	alok@math.clemson.edu
AVI-USA office (Sacramento, CA)	officeAVI@aol.com
Burget, Greg (Denver, CO)	gburget@nyx.cs.du.edu
Chiopris, Carlo (Verona, Italy)	duomo!carlo_chiopris@relay.iunet.it
Coker, Janis—NexUS (Safety Harbor, FL)	jcoker@cftnet.com
Constance—AVI—USA (Santa Cruz, CA)	cnstnce@cats.ucsc.edu
Cornell, John Robert and Karen—Sunseeds (Carmichael, CA)	johnrobc79@aol.com
Harrell, Rebecca (Oak Harbor, WA)	clodhopp@whidbey.net
Hutchinson, David (Sacramento, CA)	dbhutchinson@ucdavis.edu
Joiner, Charlie	CJoiner@aol.com
Korstange, Jean and Gordon—Collaboration (Saxtons River, VT)	VenuGo@aol.com
Leon, Bill—AVI—USA (Colorado Springs, CO)	bleon@uccs.edu
Lester, Lynda—Nexus (Boulder, CO)	lester@ncar.ucar.edu
Lines, Julian—AV Information Office (Woodstock, NY)	jhl@aol.com
MacDonald, Suzanne—Merriam Hill Education Center (Durham, NH)	sgmac@aol.com
Molinari, Paul (Berkeley, CA)	p_molinari@lbl.gov
Moss, William (Watertown, MA)	willmoss@aol.com
Prapanna—Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham (Pomona-Lodi, CA)	prapanna@aol.com
Raghavan, Vijay (Nashville, TN)	raghavan@vuse.vanderbilt.edu
Schachat, Kenny	kennys@netcom.com
Sobel, Prem (Bay Area)	Psobel@aol.com
Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham—Auromere (Pomona-Lodi, CA)	SASP@aol.com
Tepper, Larry—AVI—USA (Boulder, CO)	ltepper@compatible.com
Thomas, Megan (California Institute of Integral Studies, AVI—USA (San Francisco)	mjthomas@aol.com
Vaughan, Carolyn (Canton, MA)	CarolynV@aol.com
Vishnu—Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham (Pomona-Lodi, CA)	vishnubhai@aol.com
Wilkinson, Robert (Accord, NY)	aeon963@cerfnet.com

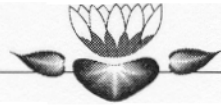
May the links of the network shine

Be aware of the network. We live by a network of connections and links. Your connection to yourself, to your intimates, to your place, to the collective, to the planet, to the Infinite. (Each is a distinct connection.) Equally powerful are the collective's connections to you (not at all the same as yours to it), to groups of intimates, to itself, to the planet, to the Infinite. Finally, the connections of groups of intimates to one another, to the collective, to the planet, to the Infinite. All these levels and connections interweave. *All are equally important.*

All the links or connective points of this network (call them the acupuncture points of our universe) both take and generate energy. Any link out of sync weakens the others. (The West, for instance, has concentrated too much on the individual; the East, too much on the collective; both approaches have been catastrophic on every level of the network.) This network, from you all the way to the Infinite, is a living whole, ceaselessly changing. Some of these changes take millions of years. Some happen instantaneously.

May the links of the network shine.

—Michael Ventura, from *Letters at 3 a.m.*



America Online hosts Sri Aurobindo discussion group

Since September, an active discussion on Sri Aurobindo and the Integral Yoga has been available on America Online (AOL). AOL is a self-contained computer network, one of the largest in the country. It has limited access to the Internet (primarily with e-mail and newsgroups). For a monthly fee of \$9.95 (extra time is charged at \$2.95 per hour), members can spend up to five hours in activities such as:

- Browsing through news articles, online magazines, and encyclopedias
- Participating in Internet newsgroups (discussions on various subjects)
- Taking part in a variety of discussions within AOL

Many of the Auro-people online who do not have Internet access through business or university connections are AOL members.

So far, there have been over 30 posted messages on the Sri Aurobindo discussion file, with about six participants to date. To find the file, enter the keyword *ethics* or *religion*, click on the *Hinduism* topic, and look for the *Sri Aurobindo/Integral Yoga* file. (Unfortunately, only AOL members can access this file.)

If you would like to hook up to AOL, all you need is a computer and a modem (minimum speed 2,400 baud). Call (800) 827-6364 to order the software you need (specify either Macintosh, IBM-style DOS, or Windows), and they'll mail it out to you.

Auroconference: A place to keep in touch

You can broadcast an e-mail message to others in the Integral Yoga community via "Auroconference," a service that has been set up by Larry Tepper at a host computer in Boulder, Colorado. Auroconference—or "auroconf," as it is abbreviated—is an e-mail alias of a group of Auro-people on the Internet. If you send e-mail to auroconf@compatible.com, your message will be automatically sent to everyone in the group, which now consists of about 30 people.

Auroconference is a way to exchange news about visitors from the Ashram and Auroville, activities, and events. It is a place to send Darshan greetings, ask questions, and get to know each other.

To access auroconf, you need an e-mail account that's reachable from the Internet (AOL, CompuServe, and Delphi are all Internet-accessible). In general, if your account name is of the form *username@site.com*, *username@site.edu*, or *username@site.org*, you have Internet access. To get on the auroconf list, send e-mail to Larry Tepper (ltepper@compatible.com) or call him evenings at (303) 447-2755.

ESSAYS

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*: Mantra and mythos

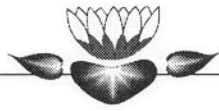
by Rod Hemsell

From Sri Aurobindo's formulation of the theory of mantric poetry and its role in the transformation of consciousness (*The Future Poetry*, 1920) to Raimundo Pannikar's synthesis of Vedic and Christian spiritual traditions through his theory of *mythos* (1979), we see signs of the dissolution of barriers and the co-emergence of a global culture and spirituality which characterize modern civilization at its best. This was the theme of Sri Aurobindo's early work on the history of civilization (*The Human Cycle*, 1918) and of his prophecy that Indian spirituality would play an important role in such an emergence. For the past 100 years the tide of Eastern spirituality has duly ebbed on Western shores, in myriad forms, to do its part for the envisioned change.

The establishment of the international educational township of Auroville in India in 1968, based on the hope and promise of the emergence of such a global consciousness, of human unity, and a further evolution of humanity and the earth, as formulated by Sri Aurobindo, is a signal tribute to the power of that vision which enlivened so much of Indian thought, social and political, artistic and spiritual, during the early part of this century, and which is still so essential to the successful future of ourselves and our planet, perhaps today more than ever before.

Sri Aurobindo has been the most prolific yogi-philosopher and seer-poet of the vision of human unity and spiritual evolution in this century, and perhaps his most significant legacy is the poem *Savitri*. It is the mantric embodiment of his Supramental Yoga, through which he sought the means of an eventual transformation of humanity and the world. To fully appreciate this accomplishment, we should remember that Sri Aurobindo translated anew and commented at length upon the Vedic literature, and also wrote a sequel to Homer's *Iliad* in quantitative meter, in English, as steps in a serious poetic preparation for *Savitri*. Its poetry, its cadences and images and symbols are therefore classically rich and powerful. But its structure is spiritual: it is the mythos of the inner journey, the mystic struggle for light against darkness, the divine hero's conquest of death. And it is the revelatory vision of the Divine Mother, the *mahashakti*, by whose force and grace the work of spiritual transformation is done in us.

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is more than masterful poetic composition, more than an epic rendering of the classical Indian mythos, however. It is the realization in English of that luminous quality of inspired vision and speech, called *mantra*, which can bring about in the hearer the processes of which it speaks. *Savitri* is the mantra, and the mythos, of the mystic hero's journey.



O Sun-Word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to Light
And bring down God into the lives of men . . .

—Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, 1950

Rod Hemsell spent many years in Auroville and at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He has taught Indian philosophy and history, classical languages, and Third World studies at various schools in the U.S.

The “silent years” of Sri Aurobindo’s integral life-sadhana, 1910–1920

by Nelson Castro

Part I of this article, published in the last issue of NexUS, described Sri Aurobindo’s arrival in Pondicherry in 1910. Part II continues with the arrival of Paul and Mirra Richard.

Part II

1910 was the year that Monsieur Paul Richard of France first visited Pondicherry on a canvassing election campaign for his friend. He met with Aurobindo for several days. His first impression was that Aurobindo was as near to him as an elder brother and was a man of vast intelligence. Later in 1918 in a book he hailed Aurobindo as the coming leader of Asia.

Richard returned in 1914 for the approaching election for the French Chamber (he was a candidate), accompanied by his wife, Mirra Richard (the future Mother of the Ashram), who met and spoke with Aurobindo for the first time on March 29, 1914. Aurobindo’s involvement in the vortex of this political election was under a veritable spiritual impulsion.

In Letter No. 10 (1914), Aurobindo wrote to his disciple Sri Motilal Roy on the impending election and the Richards as follows:

I send you today the electoral declaration of M. Paul Richard, one of the candidates at the approaching election for the French Chamber. This election is of some importance to us for there are two of the candidates who represent our views to a great extent, Laporte and Richard. Richard is not only a personal friend of mine and a brother in Yoga; but he wishes, like myself, and in his own way works for a general renovation of the world by which the present European civilization will be replaced by a spiritual civilization. In that change the resurrection of the Asiatic races and especially of India is an essential point. He and Madame Richard are rare examples of European Yogins who have not been lead away by Theosophical and other aberrations. I have been in material and spiritual correspondence with them for the last four years. Of course, they know nothing of Tantric Yoga. It is only in the Vedantic that we meet.

As foreseen by Aurobindo, the two candidates were not elected, but it laid a foundation for a greater chance of success in future elections.

A most positive accomplishment of this visit was that Paul and Mirra Richard proposed to Aurobindo that they start a monthly philosophical review to be brought out in both French and English. A decision was taken on June 1, and *Arya* was a result. The Richards agreed to bear all initial expenses. The monthly started with a subscribers’ list of 200 and later became self-supporting.

R.R. Diwakar sees the *Arya* as Aurobindo’s “most important work during 1914–20.” He writes in *Mahayogi*: “The journal certainly contained contributions from Paul and Mirra Richard as well as others, but the whole soul and spirit of the magazine was contained in the weighty contributions from the pen of Aurobindo.”

In Letter No. 13 (1914), Aurobindo writing to Roy on his new venture into journalism says:

In this review my new theory of the Veda will appear as also translation and explanation of the Upanishads, a series of essays giving my system of Yoga and a book of Vedanta philosophy (not Shankar’s but Vedic-Vedanta) giving the Upanishadic foundation of my theory of ideal life towards which humanity must move.

Elsewhere he states that his editorship of the *Arya* represents “the intellectual side of my work for the world.” A good deal of the material from the *Arya* articles appeared later in book form as *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Secret of the Veda*, etc.

A deep and luminous spiritual discourse on the first principles of yoga is delivered by Aurobindo in Letter No. 21 (circa 1914–?). It is a masterpiece sermon in which the guru of gurus has begun to reveal himself in all his true and self-completing guruhood. It begins with the topic of “discipline.” The occasion was a “hunger strike” of a disciple of Motilal Roy. Roy had reported to Aurobindo as to what should be done to deal with such a disturbing internal situation.

If you want discipline,

declares the Master in a calm and confident tone,

The first thing of that kind I would impose on you or ask you to impose on yourselves is self-discipline and the first element in that is obedience to the law of the Yoga I have given to you. If you bring in things that do not belong to it at all and are quite foreign to it, such as “hunger strikes” and vehement emotional revolt against the Divine Will, it is idle to expect any rapid progress. That means that you insist on going your own bypath and yet demand of me that I shall bring you to my goal. All difficulties can be conquered, but only on



condition of fidelity to the way you have taken.

Remember what is the whole basis of the Yoga. It is not founded upon the vehement emotionalism of the bhakti-marga to which the temperament of Bengal is most prone. Obedience to the Divine Will, not assertion of self-will, is the very first mantra. But what can be a more violent assertion of self-will than to demand the result you desire, whether external or internal, at once. It will not do in this Way.

The revolt and impatience may come and will come in the heart or the prana when these are still subject to imperfection and impurity; but it is then for the will and the faith in your buddhi to reject them, not act upon them. If the will consents, approves and supports them, it means that you are siding with the inner enemy. You should not do this, for every time you do it, the enemy is strengthened and the shuddi postponed. This is a difficult lesson to learn, but you must learn it. But you have the advantage of my experience and my help; you will be able to do it more rapidly if you consciously and fully assist me, but not associating with the enemy "Desire."

Shuddi is necessary in sadhana. Aurobindo significantly writes:

Shuddi is the most difficult part of the whole Yoga, it is the condition of all the rest, and if that is at once conquered, the real conquest is accomplished. To prevent the shuddhi, the lower nature in you and around you will exhaust all its efforts, and even when it cannot prevent, it will try to retard. And its strongest weapon then is, when you think you have got it, that it is far away, and so arouse disappointment, grief, loss of faith, discouragement, depression and revolt, the whole army of troubles that wait upon impure desire.

When you have once found calm, peace of mind, firm faith, equality and been able to live in it for some time, then and only then, you may be sure that shuddi is founded; but you must not think it will not be disturbed. It will be so long as your heart and prana are still capable of responding to the old movements, have still any memory and habit vibrating to the old chords. The one thing necessary when the renewed trouble comes, is to stand back in your mind and will from it, refuse it the sanction of your higher being, even when it is raging in the lower nature. As that habit of refusal fixes itself, you will find that the ashuddhi, even though it still returns, becomes less violent, more and more external, until it ceases to be anything more than a faint and short-lived touch from the outside and finally comes no more.

With great feeling, he continues:

Those who join me at the present stage must share in my burden, especially those who are themselves chosen in any degree to lead, help and guide. It may be that when I have the

complete siddhi—which I have not yet—those who come after may have the way made very easy for them. But we are the pioneers hewing our way through the jungle of the lower prakriti. It will not do for us to be cowards and shirkers and refuse the burden, to clamour for everything to be made quick and easy for us. I want strong men. I do not want emotional children. Manhood first, (Devatwa) can only be built upon that. If I do not get it in those who accept my Yoga, then I shall have to understand that it is not God's will that I should succeed. But meanwhile I go on bearing whatever burden He lays on me, meeting whatever difficulties He puts in the way of my siddhi. The work can only succeed if I find noble and worthy helpers, fitted for it by the same struggles and the same endurance. I expect them in you.

Again, you must not expect the shuddi or any part of the siddhi to be simultaneous and complete at once in all whom you associate with. You must not expect a sudden collective miracle. I have not come here to accomplish miracles, but to show, lead the way, in the road to a great inner change of our human nature,—the other change in the world is only possible if and when that inner transformation is effected and extends itself.

Aurobindo spent the first four years in Pondicherry living an ascetic life. Starting in 1914 the seminally productive years of the *Arya* journal established his name and reputation worldwide. Yet despite all activities, Aurobindo carried on his sadhana without interruption.

Mirra Richard returned to Pondicherry in 1920 to stay. As the Mother she undertook the task of placing the Ashram in order, inducing discipline and efficiency in its operation, laying the foundation for an institution attractive to all spiritual aspirants of "Yoga for Life."

From then on began one of the most wonderful collaborative spiritual relationships between two highly evolved ardent souls. Soon Aurobindo turned over the running of the Ashram to the Mother and receded into even further seclusion. For many years, contact, even with his closest disciples, was through the Mother. She became the bridge between Sri Aurobindo and the world of sadhaks and seekers. Thus Mother's coming and living presence presaged the arrival of a new chapter in the life of Sri Aurobindo.

Sources

Diwakar, R.R. *Mahayogi: Life, Sadhana, and Teachings of Sri Aurobindo*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1976.

Light to Superlight (unpublished letters of Sri Aurobindo), explanatory notes by Shree Arun Chandra Dutt. Calcutta: Prabartak Publishers, 1972.

Nelson Castro lives in Valley Stream, New York.



SOURCE MATERIAL

The Mother on one-pointed vs. integral realization

Feb. 1, 1956 (from Questions *and* Answers 1956)

Mother, when one is identified with the Divine in the higher part of the being whilst neglecting the lower parts—neglecting life—does not the Divine, in the part where one is identified with Him, advise one to attend to the lower parts?

And if even before beginning, one has decided that it should not be thus, perhaps one makes it impossible for oneself to receive the advice of the Divine!

For, truly speaking, ever one finds only that of the Divine which he wishes to find of Him. Sri Aurobindo has said this by turning it the other way round; he has said (I am not quoting the exact words, only the idea): what you expect of the Divine is what you find in the Divine; what you want of the Divine is what you meet in the Divine. He will have for you the aspect you expect or desire.

And His manifestation is always adapted to each one's receptivity and capacity. They may have a real, essential contact, but this contact is limited by their own capacity of reception and approach. . . . It is only if you are able to go out of all limits that you can meet the total Divine as He totally is.

And this capacity of contact is perhaps what constitutes the true hierarchy of beings. For everyone carries in himself the Divine, and consequently everyone has the possibility of uniting with the Divine—that possibility is the same in all. But according to each one's capacity (fundamentally, according to his position in the divine hierarchy), his approach will be more or less partial or total.

It could be said—although these words deform things a lot—that the quality of the approach is the same in every being, but the quantity, the totality is very different. . . . It is very difficult to explain with words, but if one may say so, **the point** at which you are identified with the Divine is perfect in itself, that is to say, your identification is an identification perfect in itself, at this point, but the number of points at which you are identified differs immensely.

And this is very marked in the difference of the paths followed to approach the Divine. Generally people set limits; they limit themselves by excluding all that is not exactly the path they have chosen, for this is much easier and one goes much faster—relatively. But instead of following **one** road, you go forward in a sort of movement which could be called spherical, where everything is included, which takes in all the possibilities of approach to the Divine, naturally the result is much more complete—and it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls the integral

yoga—but the progress is much more difficult and much slower.

He who chooses the path of knowledge (and also in the path of knowledge a special method, for everyone has his own method) and follows it, eliminating from his consciousness and life all that is not it, that person advances much more rapidly, for his seeking pursues only one aspect and this is much more direct, immediate. And so he rejects, rejects, rejects all that is not that, and reduces his being just to the road he travels. And the more you want your approach to be integral, the more naturally will it become difficult, complicated, long, laborious.

But he who follows only one road, when he reaches his goal, that is, when he is identified with the Divine, his identification in itself is perfect; that is to say, it is truly an identification with the Divine—but it is partial. It is perfect; it is perfect and partial at the same time.

It is very difficult to explain, but this is a fact. He is truly identified with the Divine and has found the Divine; he is identified with the Divine—but at one point. And so he who is able to identify himself with the Divine in his totality is necessarily, from the point of view of the universal realisation, on a much higher hierarchical plane than the one who could realise Him only at a single point.

And that is the true meaning of the spiritual hierarchy, it is for this reason that there is a whole spiritual hierarchical **organization**, otherwise this would have no ground, for from the minute you touch, you touch the Divine perfectly: the point at which you touch Him is a point perfect in itself. And, from this point of view, all who have united with the Divine are as perfect in their union—but not as complete, if I may say so.

Do you catch a little what I mean?

What I wanted to ask, Mother, was whether in the part where they are identified, after their identification, they do not find that this identification is not complete, that is, that they have left behind other parts of their being, and that they must begin once again?

This may happen.

This may happen, but generally they have so well eliminated from themselves all that was not that, that nothing remains for them to find out that the identification is not perfect. They have the experience of identification, they are lost in the Divine. From the personal, individual point of view, that is the maximum they can hope for.

It is not that what you say is impossible, I think that indeed it is possible—but it is rare. It is not frequent. That would mean that in spite of their work of elimination they have preserved in their consciousness something which would be able to feel that they are not entirely satisfied.

After the identification, it is no longer the position, for example, of Master and disciple, the Lord and the aspirant. At the moment of identification that relationship disappears; there is no longer any master or disciple, any Lord or aspirant: all is



the Divine. Consequently, who receives the lesson? That could only be if there were an element of consciousness which did not participate in this identification, because it needed another **ap-
proach** than the one it had. And all would depend on the **perfection** with which the aspirant has eliminated from his being all that is not the single road he follows. If one keeps latent in one's consciousness elements of devotion or love, for instance, then if one has followed the path of knowledge, well, at the time of identification these will miss something.

And then one will be in a condition to understand that one's experience is not complete. But if they have been so well eliminated that they no longer exist, then who will notice that the union is not perfect? The union is perfect in itself at this given point. It is purely a phenomenon of consciousness.

(Turning to the child) In your consciousness there is still the idea that you unite with "Something" which knows more about it than you and will make you **recognise** the error you are in. But that no longer exists after the identification! That is just the first contact, but not the identification.

In identification there is no longer any difference between that which is identified and that with which one is identified: it is the same thing. So long as there is a difference it is not identification.

I say that by any road whatever and by eliminating all that is not this road, it is possible for everyone to be perfectly identified with the Divine, that is to say, to become the Divine-but at one point, the point each one has chosen. But this point is perfect in itself. I do not say it contains everything, I say it is perfect in itself, that is, the identification is perfect-but it is not total.

They have the full bliss?

Perfect bliss-perfect bliss, eternity, infinity, and everything.

Then what's the difference?

The difference exists only in the manifestation. By this identification, of whatever kind, one goes automatically out of the manifestation, except at the point where one is identified. And if, in the path one has followed, the goal is a going out, as for instance with those who seek Nirvana, if it is a going out of the manifestation, well, one goes out of the manifestation, it is finished. And once one goes out of the manifestation, there is no

longer any difference or any hierarchy, it is finished, one has gone out of the manifestation. That is it, you understand, **every-**thing depends on the aim one pursues. If one goes out of the manifestation, one goes out of the manifestation, then there is no longer any possibility of any hierarchy whatsoever. But as soon as one enters the manifestation, there is a hierarchy. That is to say-if we take the realisation of the supramental world--everybody will not be on the same level and made in the same pattern,

and with the same capacity and the same possibility. It is always that illusion, isn't it, of a sort of indefinite repetition of something which always resembles itself-it is not that. In the realisation, the manifestation, there is a hierarchy of capacity and action, and of manifestation. But if the aim is to go out of the manifestation, then quite naturally, through whatever point you go out you go out.

All depends on the ideal one puts before oneself. And whilst you go out because you have chosen to go out, to enter into "Pralaya," there is all the rest of the universe which continues. . . . But that's totally immaterial to you. As your aim was to get out of it, you get out of it. But that does not mean that the rest also get out! You are the only one to get out, or those who have followed the same aim and the same path as you.

(Long silence)

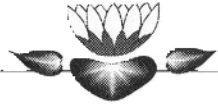
That is precisely the problem which faced both Sri Aurobindo here and me in France: is it necessary to

limit one's road and reach the goal first, and later take all the rest in hand and begin the work of integral transformation; or is it necessary to go step by step, not leaving anything aside, not eliminating anything on the path, taking in all the possibilities at the same time and progressing at all points at the same time? That is to say, should one retreat outside life and action until one reaches one's goal, becoming conscious of the Supermind and realising it in oneself; or should one embrace the whole creation and with this whole creation go gradually forward towards the Supermind? *(Silence)*

One can understand that things get done by stages: one goes forward, travels a certain distance, and so, as a consequence, takes all the rest forward; and then at the same time, with a simultaneous movement, one travels another stage and again takes others forward-and so on.

That gives the impression that one doesn't advance. But everything is on the move in this way.





ONGOING ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA

Auroville International USA

P.O. Box 162489, Sacramento, CA 95816

A nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation founded to support the Auroville project in India. Auroville is the first attempt anywhere to be a universal town where people of all countries can live together in progressive harmony, above creeds and nationalities. Contact Jack Alexander, (916) 452-4013.

California Institute of Integral Studies

765 Ashbury St., San Francisco, CA 94117

An accredited graduate school offering M.A. and Ph.D. programs in philosophy, religion, psychology, counseling; also offering lectures, library, book sales, educational facilities. Call (415) 753-6100 for information.

An Integral Yoga study group meets alternate Thursdays in the president's office. Contact Brenda Dobia, (915) 661-5619; Megan Thomas, (415) 753-6100 x297; Christina Zubelli, (510) 215-6761.

Cultural Integration Fellowship

360 Cumberland St., San Francisco, CA 94114

2650 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94118

Draws inspiration from the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as well as other great prophets of modern India. Offering lectures, residence facility, musical events, book sales. Contact Bina Chaudhuri, (415) 626-2442.

Sri Aurobindo East Bay Center and

Sri Aurobindo Association

2288 Fulton St., Suite 310, Berkeley, CA 94704

Study group Sunday, 9:30–10:30 a.m.
Meditation Sunday, 10:45–11:15 a.m.

Devoted to the realization of the spiritual vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Facilitates visitors to the Ashram and Auroville; publishes *Collaboration* and *NexUS* newsletters. Offering Darshan services, meditation, lectures, library, bookstore, meditation hall. Contact Wayne and Surama Bloomquist, (510) 848-1841.

East-West Cultural Center

12329 Marshall St., Culver City, CA 90230

Human Cycle study group Monday, 8–10 p.m.
Beginning Sanskrit Thursday, 7–8 p.m.
Synthesis of Yoga study group Thursday, 8–10:00 p.m.
Advanced Sanskrit Saturday, 2–3:30 p.m.
Chanting Saturday, 3:30–4:30 p.m.
Savitri study group Saturday, 4:30–6:00 p.m.
Karma yoga Sunday, 3–5:30 p.m.
Inquiry into collective yoga Sunday, 5:30–7 p.m.

A 30–40 minute meditation is held after each study group. The first Sunday of the month a special ongoing presentation on the foundations of Indian culture is held from 4:30–6 p.m. Call (310) 390-9083 for information.

San Francisco Study Group

Meetings alternate Thursdays, 12:15–1:15 p.m., reading *Synthesis of Yoga*. Contact Jan Stein, (415) 751-1307.

Savitri Reading and Meditation Group

A *Savitri* reading for 30 minutes and meditation following to complete the hour. No discussion held, but attempt to make the reading a sadhana as much as possible. Meets weekly, sometimes more. Contact Dave Hutchinson for schedule, (916) 452-4380.

Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham

1291 Weber St., Pomona, CA 91768

Collective residential facilities provided for concentrated sadhana in an ashram atmosphere. Community is self-supporting through sales of books, incense, and Ayurvedic products. Karma yoga work-exchange programs offered, visitors welcome. Offering Darshan gatherings, daily meditation, chanting of Vedic hymns and Indian devotional music, weekly study group, library. Currently organizing a sustainable farm, residence, and devotional center in Lodi, California. Contact Dakshina, (909) 629-0108; e-mail: SASP@aol.com.

COLORADO

Informal meetings in Boulder

A few people meet alternate Thursdays at 6 p.m. for brief meditation and tea. Contact Joe Spanier, (303) 444-4578, or Larry Tepper, (303) 447-2755.

Sri Aurobindo Learning Center at the Baca

Savitri House, P.O. Box 88, Crestone, CO 81131

Hosts conferences and events towards its purpose of becoming a collaborative center of research for a "living embodiment of an actual human unity." *Savitri House* and the *Savitri Solar Meditation Dome* are the first structures in a proposed campus for a new education for a new world. Weekly meditation and readings from *Savitri* and *The Mind of the Cells*, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Contact Seyril Schochen, (719) 256-4917.

FLORIDA

Integral Knowledge Study Center

221 Clematis St., Pensacola, FL 32503

Dedicated to the elevation of human consciousness in the light of Sri Aurobindo. Offering Darshan gatherings, meditation, lectures, study groups, karma yoga, library, book sales, residence facilities, meditation hall. Publishes books and a quarterly newsletter. Contact Rand Hicks, (904) 433-3435.

GEORGIA

Aur-ientation Integral Healing Center

1924 Cliff Valley Way, Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30329

Hosts a Mother and Sri Aurobindo study group the second and fourth Sundays of the month, 5–7 p.m. Call (404) 728-9807 for information.



MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Study Group

91 Kilmarnock St., Boston, MA 02215

Study group meeting..... Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Reading from *Savitri*, group meditation, unstructured discussion about yoga. Group on yoga in the local prison at their invitation. Contact Eugene Finn, (617) 262-6390.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Merriam Hill Education Center (MHC)

148 Merriam Hill Road, Greenville, NH 03048-9729

A nonprofit organization established for the study of wisdom and community, providing opportunities for adults to increase their sense of interconnectedness with others and the environment through education. Located on 54 acres in the Monadnock region of New Hampshire, MHC offers comfortable accommodations in a renovated farmhouse and barn surrounded by woods.

Facility available for use by other educational organizations and individuals. Call (603) 878-1818 for information.

NEW JERSEY

Sri Aurobindo Center

25 Hill Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Works closely with groups in New York; provides an opportunity for the local community to gather for discussion, fellowship, and devotion in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Often hosts guests from Pondicherry Ashram. Offering meditation group, meditation hall, Darshan gatherings, library, special events. Contact Dushyant Desai, (201) 748-0639.

NEW YORK

Auroville Information Office

23 Mill Hill Road, Woodstock, NY 12498

An East Coast branch of AVI-USA located at "Pondicherry," a gift shop specializing in Auroville handicrafts. Sponsors talks and fundraising events and is focused on completion of the Tibetan Culture Pavilion in Auroville's International Zone. Contact Julian Lines, (914) 679-2926; e-mail: jhl@aol.com.

Matagiri

1218 Wittenberg Rd., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457

Maintains a library of the complete works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, with audio and video tapes, photographs, and other materials. Offering Darshan observances, book shop, special programs. Regular Thursday evening meditation at 7:00 p.m. Call (914) 679-8322 for information.

New York Study Circle of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

124 W. 60th St., New York, NY 10023

Monthly gatherings in Manhattan include a reading, study of a selected work, and meditation. All are welcome. Contact Miriam Belov, (212) 965-5683.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Sri Aurobindo Center Southeast

c/o JHM Enterprises

880 S. Pleasantburg Dr., Greenville, SC 29607

Founded to provide an opportunity to learn about and experience Sri Aurobindo and Mother's grace and power. Offering meditation, Darshan gatherings, study group, residence facilities, book sales, newsletter. Contact R.P. Rama, (803) 232-9944.

WASHINGTON

Pacific Northwest/Puget Sound Center

2020 Roosevelt Ave., Enumclaw, WA 98022

Psychic being study group (Enumclaw) Sunday, 7-8:30 p.m.

Savitri study group (Seattle) Tuesday, 7-8:30 p.m.

Vedas study group (Seattle) 1st Tuesday, 7-8:30 p.m.

Purpose is to further the development of yoga in all members and nourish the spiritual aspiration of visitors. Offering Darshan services, meditation, lectures, library, book sales, workshops, retreats, musical and cultural events, meditation hall. Contact Ron Jorgenson, (206) 825-3413.

WISCONSIN

Wilmot Center

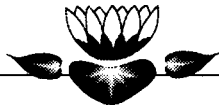
Institute for Wholistic Education

33719 116th St., Twin Lakes, WI 53181

Purpose of center is study and implementation of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. The nonprofit Institute focuses on Vedic knowledge of all types, including Ayurveda. Offering Darshan services, meditation, extensive library, book and other sales, educational programs, meditation hall. Contact Santosh Krinsky, (414) 877-9396.

As for experiences, they are all right but the trouble is that they do not seem to change the nature, they only enrich the consciousness—even the realisation, on the mind level, of the Brahman seems to leave the nature almost where it was, except for a few. That is why we insist on the psychic transformation as the first necessity—for that does change the nature—and its chief instrument is bhakti, surrender, etc.

—Sri Aurobindo, *The Integral Yoga: Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Practice*, p. 204



APROPOS

Toldees, Mondath, Arizim, these are the Inner Lands, the lands whose sentinels upon their borders do not behold the sea. Beyond them to the east there lies a desert, for ever untroubled by man: all yellow it is, and spotted with shadows of stones, and Death is in it, like a leopard lying in the sun. To the south they are bounded by magic, to the west by a mountain.

—Lord Dunsany, *A Dreamer's Tales*

The universe was not made in jest, but in solemn incomprehensible earnest. By a power that is unfathomably secret, and holy and fleet. There is nothing to be done about it, but ignore it or see.

-Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

We know too much, and are convinced of too little. Our literature is a substitute for religion, and so is our religion.

—T.S. Eliot, 1888-1965

Give me a fruitful error any time, full of seeds, bursting with its own corrections. You can keep your sterile truth for yourself.

-Vilfredo Pareto, 1848-1923

I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm.

-Elizabeth I, speech to the troops at Tilbury on the approach of the Armada (1588)

... the word *evolution* implied a preexisting plan or structure that progressively unrolled in time. This is probably the reason why Darwin did not choose to use this word when he first put forward his theory. For the "evolution" of life would imply the existence of a preexisting structure or plan-presumably a divine plan-and this is just what Darwin wanted to rule out.

—Rupert Sheldrake, *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature*

String theories ... seem to be consistent only if space-time has either ten or twenty-six dimensions, instead of the usual four!

-Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*

When an American says that he loves his country, he ... means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect.

-Adlai Stevenson, 1900-1965

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work, I want to achieve it through not dying.

-Woody Allen

What if the man could see Beauty Itself, pure, unalloyed, stripped of mortality and all its pollution, stains, and vanities, unchanging, divine, ... the man becoming, in that communion, the friend of God, himself immortal; ... would that be a life to disregard?

-Plato

By your stumbling, the world is perfected.

-Sri Aurobindo

SRI AUROBINDO ASSOCIATION

2288 Fulton Street, Suite 310
Berkeley, CA 94704

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit no. 133