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Collaboration

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We have been presenting various aspects of the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, an integral and evolutionary vision of the progressive manifestation of the Spirit. We have not presented the practical means for hastening this manifestation.

But both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked out in a lifetime of discipline a broad, all-encompassing way for man actively and consciously to participate in this great process. This way is the Integral (or Purna) Yoga (called also the Yoga of Transformation and the Supramental Yoga). "All life," Sri Aurobindo says, "is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos." Further, he says, "Yoga is nothing but practical psychology," a process for coming to know all the planes and parts of one's being and consciousness, for becoming master of oneself and one's nature, and for giving oneself, through maintaining a concentrated aspiration, rejection and surrender, to the great transforming Power of the Spirit, its Shakti as it is called in Indian philosophy, the Divine Mother. It is this Divine Mother, this Consciousness-Force, which is the creator of the worlds, the Spirit progressively manifest, and the one who in reality does the Great Yoga and the Yoga in each individual. It is She who progressively works out the evolution of the Spirit and its forms, unveiling more and more of the Spirit through the successive spirals of Time. When one does the Integral Yoga, one in fact surrenders to this Force.

Along with his system of Yoga Sri Aurobindo has elaborated an integral psychology, a far more comprehensive psychology than the West is familiar with. An understanding of this psychology is important for anyone interested in the Integral Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo gives the broad outlines and general principles of the Integral Yoga in *The Synthesis of Yoga*. In preparing this issue on his Yoga, we have not, however, drawn upon this work (except for the 2 quotations above), since, in the face of our space limits, there seemed no way to extract from it to give an intelligible picture of the Yoga, however sketchy, in so brief a space. A careful reading of this important work is necessary for the fullest comprehension of the Integral Yoga.

What follows are extracts from the 3-volume *Letters on Yoga*, perhaps the most helpful "handbooks" on Yoga ever published. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is not a system requiring exotic and time-consuming practices that take one away from the business of living, but a complete method by which one can progressively bring all one's being and all one's activities into the Yoga, making all one's life a sadhana (the practice of Yoga). The passages presented are intended to highlight some of the most important features of the Integral Yoga. These passages are followed by the first part of The Mother's "The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations," a remarkably terse presentation of the Yoga.

We also publish here, for the first time, an article on meditation and Integral Yoga by M.P. Pandit (see General News for a report of the visit of Mr. Pandit to the United States).

We will continue the subject of Integral Yoga (and conclude the Mother's article) in our next issue.

Sri Aurobindo

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRAL YOGA

Sri Aurobindo

Object

¶The object of the yoga is to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine's sake alone, to be tuned in our nature into the nature of the Divine, and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine. [*II:503*]

¶The way of Yoga followed here has a different purpose from others,—for its aim is not only to rise out of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness into the divine consciousness, but to bring the supramental power of that

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divine consciousness down into the ignorance of mind, life and body, to transform them, to manifest the Divine here and create a divine life in Matter. This is an exceedingly difficult aim and difficult yoga; to many or most it will seem impossible. All the established forces of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness are opposed to it and deny it and try to prevent it, and the sadhak will find his own mind, life and body full of the most obstinate impediments to its realisation. If you can accept the ideal wholeheartedly, face all the difficulties, leave the past and its ties behind you and are ready to give up everything and risk everything for this divine possibility, then only can you hope to discover by experience the Truth behind it. [*II:505*]

Aspects of the Divine

¶The Divine has three aspects for us:

1. It is the Cosmic Self and Spirit that is in and behind all things and beings, from which and in which all is manifested in the universe—although it is now a manifestation in the Ignorance.

2. It is the Spirit and Master of our own being within us whom we have to serve and learn to express his will in all our movements so that we may grow out of the Ignorance into the Light.

3. The Divine is transcendent Being and Spirit, all bliss and light and divine knowledge and power, and towards that highest divine existence and its Light we have to rise and bring down the reality of it more and more into our consciousness and life.

In the ordinary Nature we live in the Ignorance and do not know the Divine. The forces of the ordinary Nature are undivine forces because they weave a veil of ego and desire and unconsciousness which conceals the Divine from us. To get into the higher and deeper consciousness which knows and lives luminously in the Divine, we have to get rid of the forces of the lower nature and open to the action of the Divine Shakti which will transform our consciousness into that of the Divine Nature.

This is the conception of the Divine from which we have to start—the realisation of its truth can only come with the opening of the consciousness and its change. [*II:509-10*]

Concept of Transformation and New Elements

¶By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature—I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or yogic siddhis (like the Tantrik's) or a transcendental ... body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and yoga. ...

Light of realisation is not the same thing as Descent. Realisation by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or heightening of the consciousness at the top so as to realise something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakriti. One may have some light of realisation at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. I have seen any number of instances of that. There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical and below before a real transformation can take place. A light in the mind may spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of the Light is not enough, it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda. Moreover, the descent may be enough to liberate but not to perfect, or it may be enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, transformation effected by the sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramentalisation of the being. Psychisication is not enough, it is only a beginning; spiritualisation and the descent of the higher consciousness is not enough, it is only a middle term; the ultimate achievement needs the action of the supramental Consciousness and Force. Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.

I have never said that my yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many of the processes of the old yogas—its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method. In the earlier stages which is all I deal with in books like the *Riddle* [*of This World*] and the *Lights* [*on Yoga*] or in the ... [*Bases of Yoga*] there is nothing in it that distinguishes it from the old yogas except the aim underlying its comprehensiveness, the spirit in its movements and the ultimate significance it keeps before it—also the scheme of its psychology and its works: but as that was not and could not be developed systematically or schematically in these letters, it has not been grasped by those who are not al-

ready acquainted with it by mental familiarity or some amount of practice. The detail or method of the later stages of the yoga which go into little known or untrodden regions, I have not made public and I do not at present intend to do so.

I know very well also that there have been seemingly allied ideals and anticipations—the perfectibility of the race, certain Tantric sadhanas, the effort after a complete physical siddhi by certain schools of yoga, etc., etc. I have alluded to these things myself and have put forth the view that the spiritual past of the race has been a preparation of Nature not merely for attaining the Divine beyond the world, but also for this very step forward which the evolution of the earth-consciousness has still to make. I do not therefore care in the least—even though these ideals were up to some extent parallel, yet not identical with mine—whether this yoga and its aim and method are accepted as new or not.... That it should be recognised as true in itself by those who can accept or practice it and should make itself true by achievement is the one thing important.... I laid emphasis on it as new in a letter to certain sadhaks so as to explain to them that a repetition of the aim and idea of the old yogas was not enough in my eyes, that I was putting forward a thing to be achieved that has not yet been achieved, not yet clearly visualised, even though it is the natural but still secret outcome of all the past spiritual endeavour.

It is new as compared with the old yogas:

1. Because it aims not at a departure out of the world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other yogas, yet it is only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent—the ascent is the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.

2. Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

3. Because a method has been preconized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out a road and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out, laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure. [*I:98-100*]

Sadhana

¶There is one indispensable condition, sincerity. [*II-560*]

¶This yoga implies not only the realisation of God, but an entire consecration and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest a divine consciousness and become part of a divine work. This means an inner discipline far more exacting and difficult than mere ethical and physical austerities. One must not enter on this path, far vaster and more arduous than most ways of yoga, unless one is sure of the psychic call and of one's readiness to go through to the end. [*II:545*]

¶By readiness, I did not mean capacity but willingness. If there is the will within to face all difficulties and go through, no matter how long it takes, then the path can be taken. [*II:545*]

¶A mere restless dissatisfaction with the ordinary life is not a sufficient preparation for this yoga. A positive inner call, a strong will and a great steadiness are necessary for success in the spiritual life. [*II:545*]

¶The sadhana of this yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, Mantras and others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things. It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self-opening can come. [*II:505*]

¶This is not a yoga of bhakti alone; it is or at least it claims to be an integral yoga, that is, a turning of all the being in all its parts to the Divine. It follows that there must be knowledge and works as well as bhakti, and in addition, it includes a total change of the nature, a seeking for perfection, so that the nature also may become one with the nature of the Divine. It is not only the heart that has to turn to the Divine and change, but the mind also—so knowledge is necessary, and the will and power of action and creation also—so works too are necessary. In this yoga the methods of other yogas are taken up—like this of Purusha-Prakriti, but with a difference in the final object. Purusha separates from Prakriti, not in order to abandon her, but in order to know himself and her and to be no longer her plaything, but the knower, lord and upholder of the nature; but having become so or even in becoming so, one offers all that to the Divine. One may begin with knowledge or with works or with bhakti or with Tapasya of self-purification (change of nature) and develop the rest as a subsequent movement or one may combine all in one movement. There is no single rule for all, it depends on the personality and the nature. Surrender is the main power of the yoga, but surrender is bound

to be progressive; a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, but only a will in the being for that completeness,—in fact it takes time; yet it is only when the surrender is complete that the full flood of the sadhana is possible. Till then there must be the personal effort with an increasing reality of surrender. One calls in the power of the Divine Shakti and once that begins to come into the being, it at first supports the personal endeavour, then progressively takes up the whole action, although the consent of the sadhak continues to be always necessary. As the Force works, it brings in the different processes that are necessary for the sadhak, processes of knowledge, of bhakti, of spiritualised action, of transformation of the nature. The idea that they cannot be combined is an error. [*II:525-6*]

¶To find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life; it is the one thing indispensable and all the rest is nothing without it. The Divine once found, to manifest Him,—that is, first of all to transform one's own limited consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the infinite Peace, Light, Love, Strength, Bliss, to become that in one's essential nature and, as a consequence, to be its vessel, channel, instrument in one's active nature. To bring into activity the principle of oneness on the material plane or to work for humanity is a mental mistranslation of the Truth—these things cannot be the first true object of spiritual seeking. We must find the Self, the Divine, then only can we know what is the work the Self or the Divine demands from us. Until then our life and action can only be a help or means toward finding the Divine and it ought not to have any other purpose. As we grow in the inner consciousness, or as the spiritual Truth of the Divine grows in us, our life and action must indeed more and more flow from that, be one with that. But to decide beforehand by our limited mental conceptions what they must be is to hamper the growth of the spiritual Truth within. As that grows we shall feel the Divine Light and Truth, the Divine Power and Force, the Divine Purity and Peace working within us, dealing with our actions as well as our consciousness, making use of them to reshape us into the Divine Image, removing the dross, substituting the pure gold of the Spirit. Only when the Divine Presence is there in us always and the consciousness transformed, can we have the right to say that we are ready to manifest the Divine on the material plane. To hold up a mental ideal or principle and impose that on the inner working brings the danger of limiting ourselves to a mental realisation or of impeding or even falsifying by a halfway formation the true growth into the full communion and union with the Divine and the free and intimate outflowing of His will in our life. This is a mistake of orientation to which the mind of today is especially prone....

You have asked what is the discipline to be followed in order to convert the mental seeking into a living spiritual experience. The first necessity is the practice of concentration of your consciousness within yourself. The ordinary human mind has an activity on the surface which veils the real Self. But there is another, a hidden consciousness within behind the surface one in which we can become aware of the real Self and of a larger deeper truth of nature, can realise the Self and liberate and transform the nature. To quiet the surface mind and begin to live within is the object of this concentration. Of this true consciousness other than the superficial there are two main centres, one in the heart (not the physical heart, but the cardiac centre in the middle of the chest), one in the head. The concentration in the heart opens within and by following the inward opening and going deep one becomes aware of the soul or psychic being, the divine element in the individual. This being unveiled begins to come forward, to govern the nature, to turn it and all its movements towards the Truth, towards the Divine, and to call down into it all that is above. It brings the consciousness of the Presence, the dedication of the being to the Highest and invites the descent into our nature of a greater Force and Consciousness which is waiting above us. To concentrate in the heart centre with the offering of oneself to the Divine and the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart is the first way and, if it can be done, the natural beginning; for its result once obtained makes the spiritual path far more easy and safe than if one begins the other way.

That other way is the concentration in the head, in the mental centre. This, if it brings about the silence of the surface mind, opens up an inner, larger, deeper mind within which is more capable of receiving spiritual experience and spiritual knowledge. But once concentrated here one must open the silent mental consciousness upward to all that is above mind. After a time one feels the consciousness rising upward and in the end it rises beyond the lid which has so long kept it tied in the body and finds a centre above the head where it is liberated into the Infinite. There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that and become that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature. To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration. It is important, however, to remember that the concentration of the consciousness in the head is only a preparation for its rising to the centre above; otherwise, one may get shut up in one's own mind and its experiences or at best attain only to a reflection of the Truth above instead of rising into the spiritual transcendence to live there. For some the mental concentration is easier, for some the concentration in the heart centre; some are capable of doing both alternately—but to begin with the heart centre, if one can do it, is the more desirable.

The other side of discipline is with regard to the activities of the nature, of the mind, of the life-self or vital, of the physical being. Here the principle is to accord the nature with the inner realisation so that one may not be divided into two discordant parts. There are here several disciplines or processes possible. One is to offer all the activities to the Divine and call for the inner guidance and the taking up of one's nature by a Higher Power. If there is the inward soul-opening, if the psychic being comes for-

ward, then there is no great difficulty—there comes with it a psychic discrimination, a constant intimation, finally a governance which discloses and quietly and patiently removes all imperfections, brings the right mental and vital movements and reshapes the physical consciousness also. Another method is to stand back detached from the movements of the mind, life, physical being, to regard their activities as only a habitual formation of general Nature in the individual imposed on us by past workings, not as any part of our real being; in proportion as one succeeds in this, becomes detached, sees mind and its activities as not oneself, life and its activities as not oneself, the body and its activities as not oneself, one becomes aware of an inner Being within us—inner mental, inner vital, inner physical—silent, calm, unbound, unattached which reflects the true Self above and can be its direct representative; from this inner silent Being proceeds a rejection of all that is to be rejected, an acceptance only of what can be kept and transformed, an inmost Will to perfection or a call to the Divine Power to do at each step what is necessary for the change of the Nature. It can also open mind, life and body to the inmost psychic entity and its guiding influence or its direct guidance. In most cases these two methods emerge and work together and finally fuse into one. But one can begin with either, the one that one feels most natural and easy to follow. [*II:516-9*]

¶Get the psychic being in front and keep it there, putting its power on the mind, vital and physical, so that it shall communicate to them its force of single-minded aspiration, trust, faith, surrender, direct and immediate detection of whatever is wrong in the nature and turned towards ego and error, away from Light and Truth.

Eliminate egoism in all its forms; eliminate it from every movement of your consciousness.

Develop the cosmic consciousness—let the ego-centric outlook disappear in wideness, impersonality, the sense of the Cosmic Divine, the perception of universal forces, the realisation and understanding of the cosmic manifestation, the play.

Find in place of ego the true being—a portion of the Divine, issued from the World-Mother and an instrument of the manifestation. This sense of being a portion of the Divine and an instrument should be free from all pride, sense or claim of ego or assertion of superiority, demand or desire. For if these elements are there, then it is not the true thing.

Most in doing yoga live in the mind, vital, physical, lit up occasionally or to some extent by the higher mind and by the illumined mind; but to prepare for the supramental change it is necessary (as soon as, personally, the time has has come) to open up to the Intuition and the overmind, so that these may make the whole being and the whole nature ready for the supramental change. Allow the consciousness quietly to develop and widen and the knowledge of these things will progressively come.

Calm, discrimination, detachment (but not indifference) are all very important, for their opposites impede very much the transforming action. Intensity of aspiration should be there, but it must go along with these. No hurry, no inertia, neither rajasic overeagerness or tamasic discouragement—a steady and persistent but quiet call and working. No snatching or clutching at realisation, but allowing realisation to come from within and above and observing accurately its field, its nature, its limits.

Let the power of the Mother work in you, but be careful to avoid any mixture or substitution in its place, of either a magnified ego-working or a force of Ignorance presenting itself as Truth. Aspire especially for the elimination of all obscurity and unconsciousness in the nature.

These are the main conditions of preparation for the supramental change; but none of them is easy, and they must be complete before the nature can be said to be ready. If the true attitude (psychic, unegoistic, open only to the Divine Force) can be established, then the process can go on much more quickly. To take and keep the true attitude, to further the change in oneself, is the help that can be given, the one thing asked to assist the general change. [*II:554-5*]

¶Equality is the chief support of the true spiritual consciousness and it is this from which a sadhak deviates when he allows a vital movement to carry him away in feeling or speech or action. Equality is not the same thing as forbearance,—though undoubtedly a settled equality immensely extends, even illimitably, a man's power of endurance and forbearance.

Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital, it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you, but to look at them with a straight look free from the distortions created by personal feeling, and to try to understand what is behind them, why they happen, what is to be learnt from them, what is it in oneself which they are cast against and what inner profit or progress one can make out of them; it means self-mastery over the vital movements,—anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the rest,—not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to act and speak out of a calm inner poise of the spirit. It is not easy to have this equality in any full perfect measure, but one should always try more and more to make it the basis of one's inner state and outer movements.

Equality means another thing—to have an equal view of men and their nature and acts and the forces that move them; it helps one to see the truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and judgment and even all the mental bias. Personal feeling always distorts and makes one see in men's actions, not only the actions themselves, but things behind them which, more often than not, are not there. Misunderstanding, misjudgment which could have been avoided are the result; things of small consequence assume larger proportions. I have seen that more than half of the untoward happenings of this kind in life are due to this cause. But in ordinary life personal feeling and sensitiveness are a constant part of human nature and may be needed there for self-defence, although, I think, even there, a strong, large and equal attitude towards men and things would be a

much better line of defence. But for a sadhak, to surmount them and live rather in the calm strength of the spirit is an essential part of his progress. [*II:661-2*]

¶If one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the purifying of the heart and develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences; it can and does happen in that way if one has trust and confidence in the Divine and the will to surrender. For such a taking up involves one's putting one's trust and confidence in the Divine and a progressive self-giving. It is in fact the principle of sadhana I myself followed and it is the central process of yoga as I envisage it.... But all cannot follow that at once; it takes time for them to arrive at it—it grows most when the mind and vital fall quiet.

What I mean by surrender is this inner surrender of the mind and vital. There is, of course, the outer surrender also: the giving up of all that is found to conflict with the spirit or need of the sadhana, the offering, the obedience to the guidance of the Divine, whether directly, if one has reached that stage, or through the psychic or to the guidance of the Guru....

The core of the inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine. One takes the attitude: "I want the Divine, and nothing else. I want to give myself entirely to him and and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action open or secret, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way; I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and trust him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens, I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done."...

It is not my intention to say that this way is the only way and sadhana cannot be done otherwise—there are so many others by which one can approach the Divine. But this is the only way I know by which the taking up of the sadhana by the Divine becomes a sensible fact before the preparation of the nature is done....

All can be done by the Divine,—the heart and nature purified, the inner consciousness awakened, the veils removed,—if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and confidence and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance come and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humility and the will to surrender grow, this ought to be perfectly possible. No other strength and tapasya are then needed, but this alone. [*II:586-8*]

¶Mental theories are of no fundamental importance, for the mind forms or accepts the theories that support the turn of the being. What is important is that turn and the call within you.

The knowledge that there is a Supreme Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which is not merely a negative Nirvana or a static and featureless Absolute, but dynamic, the perception that this Divine Consciousness can be realised not only beyond but here, and the consequent acceptance of a divine life as the aim of yoga, do not belong to the mind. It is not a question of mental theory—even though mentally this outlook can be as well supported as any other, if not better,—but of experience and, before the experience comes, of the soul's faith bringing with it the mind's and the life's adhesion. One who is in contact with the higher Light and has the experience can follow this way, however difficult it may be for the lower members to follow; one who is touched by it, without having the experience, but having the call, the conviction, the compulsion of the soul's adherence can also follow it. [*II:545-6*]

Work and Service

¶The only work that spiritually purifies is that which is done without personal motives, without desire for fame or public recognition or worldly greatness, without insistence on one's own mental motives or vital lusts and demands or physical preferences, without vanity or crude self-assertion or claim for position or prestige, done for the sake of the Divine alone and at the command of the Divine. All work done in an egoistic spirit, however good for people in the world of the Ignorance, is of no avail to the seeker of the yoga. [*II:677*]

¶To be free from all egoistic motive, careful of truth in speech and action, void of self-will and self-assertion, watchful in all things, is the condition for being a flawless servant. [*II:678*]

¶It is the spirit and the consciousness from which it is done that makes an action yogic—it is not the action itself. [*II:678*]

¶Meditation is one means of approach to the Divine and a great way, but it cannot be called a short cut—for most it is a long and most difficult though a very high ascent. It can by no means be short unless it brings a descent, and even then it is only a foundation that is quickly laid; afterwards meditation has to build laboriously a big superstructure on that foundation. It is very indispensable but there is nothing of the short about it.

Karma is a much simpler road provided one's mind is not fixed on the Karma to the exclusion of the Divine. The aim must be the Divine and the work can only be a means. The use of poetry etc. is to keep one in contact with one's inner being and that helps to prepare for the direct contact with the inmost, but one must not stop with that, one must go on to the real thing. If one thinks of being a literary man or a poet or a painter as things worthwhile for their own sake, then it is no longer the yogic spirit. That is why I have sometimes to say that our business is to be yogis, not merely poets, painters, etc. [*II:535-6*]

¶I do not mean by work action done in the ego and the ignorance, for the satisfaction of the ego and in the drive of rajasic desire. There can be no Karmayoga without the will to get rid of ego, rajas and desire, which are the seals of ignorance.

I do not mean philanthropy or the service of humanity or all the rest of the things—moral or idealistic—which the mind of man substitutes for the deeper truth of works.

I mean by work action done for the Divine and more and more in union with the Divine—for the Divine alone and nothing else. Naturally that is not easy at the beginning any more than deep meditation and luminous knowledge are easy or even true love and bhakti are easy. But like the others it has to be begun in the right spirit and attitude, with the right will in you, then all the rest will come.

Works done in this spirit are quite as effective as bhakti or contemplation. One gets by the rejection of desire, rajas and ego a quietude and purity into which the Peace ineffable can descend; one gets by the dedication of one's will to the Divine, by the merging of one's will in the Divine Will the death of ego and the enlarging into the cosmic consciousness or else the uplifting into what is above the cosmic; one experiences the separation of Purusha from Prakriti and is liberated from the shackles of the outer nature; one becomes aware of one's inner being and sees the outer as an instrument; one feels the universal Force doing one's works and the Self or Purusha watching or witness but free; one feels all one's works taken from one and done by the universal or supreme Mother or by the Divine Power controlling and acting from behind the heart. By constant referring of all one's will and works to the Divine, love and adoration grow, the psychic being comes forward. By the reference to the Power above, we can come to feel it above and its descent and the opening to an increasing consciousness and knowledge. Finally, works, bhakti and knowledge go together and self-perfection becomes possible—what we call transformation of the nature.

These results certainly do not come all at once; they come more or less slowly, more or less completely according to the condition and growth of the being. There is no royal road to the divine realisation. [*II:528-9*]

Meditation

¶1. *What meditation exactly means.* There are two words used in English to express the Indian idea of *dhyana*, "meditation" and "contemplation." Meditation means properly the concentration of the mind on a single train of ideas which work out a single subject. Contemplation means regarding mentally a single object, image, idea so that the knowledge about the object, image or idea may arise naturally in the mind by force of contemplation. Both these things are forms of *dhyana*, for the principle of *dhyana* is mental concentration whether in thought, vision or knowledge.

There are other forms of *dhyana*. There is a passage in which Vivekananda advises you to stand back from your thoughts, let them occur in your mind as they will and simply observe them and see what they are. This may be called concentration in self-observation.

This form leads to another, the emptying of all thought out of the mind so as to leave it a sort of pure vigilant blank on which the divine knowledge may come and imprint itself, undisturbed by the inferior thoughts of the ordinary human mind and with the clearness of a writing in white chalk on a blackboard.... This may be called the *dhyana* of liberation, as it frees the mind from slavery to the mechanical process of thinking and allows it to think or not to think, as it pleases and when it pleases, or to choose its own thoughts or else to go beyond thought to the pure perception of Truth called in our philosophy *Vijnana.*

Meditation is the easiest process for the human mind, but the narrowest in its results; contemplation more difficult, but greater; self-observation and liberation from the chains of Thought the most difficult of all, but the widest and greatest in its fruits. One can choose any of them according to one's bent and capacity. The perfect method is to use all, each in its own place and for its own object; but this would need a fixed faith and firm patience and a great energy of Will in the self-application to the yoga.

2. *What should be the object or ideas for meditation?* Whatever is most consonant with your nature and highest aspirations. But if you ask me for an absolute answer, then I must say that Brahman is always the best object for meditation or contemplation and the idea on which the mind should fix is that of God in all, all in God and all as God. It does not matter essentially whether it is the Impersonal or the Personal God, or subjectively, the One Self. But this is the idea I have found the best, because it is the highest and embraces all other truths, whether truths of this world or of the other worlds or beyond all phenomenal existence,—"All this is the Brahman."

In...[my] Analysis of the Isha Upanishad [published as *Isha Upanishad*], you will find a description of this vision of the All which may be of help to you in understanding the idea.

3. *Conditions internal and external that are most essential for meditation.* There are no *essential* external conditions, but solitude and seclusion at the time of meditation as well as stillness of the body are helpful, sometimes almost necessary to the beginner. But one should not be bound by external conditions. Once the habit of meditation is formed, it should be possible to do it in all circumstances, lying, sitting, walking, alone, in company, in silence or in the midst of noise etc.

The first internal condition necessary is concentration of the will against the obstacles to meditation, i.e. wandering of the mind, forgetfulness, sleep, physical and nervous impatience and restlessness etc.

The second is an increasing purity and calm of the inner consciousness...out of which thought and emotion arise, i.e. a freedom from all disturbing reactions, such as anger, grief, depression, anxiety about worldly happenings etc. Mental perfection and moral are always closely allied to each other. [*II:721-3*]

Bhakti

¶To bring the Divine Love and Beauty and Ananda

into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our yoga. But is has always seemed to be impossible unless there comes as its support and foundation and guard the Divine Truth—what I call the supramental—and its Divine Power. Otherwise Love itself blinded by the confusions of this present consciousness may stumble in its human receptacles and, even otherwise, may find itself unrecognised, rejected or rapidly degenerating and lost in the frailty of man's inferior nature. But when it comes in the divine truth and power, Divine Love descends first as something transcendent and universal and out of that transcendence and universality it applies itself to persons according to the Divine Truth and Will, creating a vaster, greater, purer personal love than any the human mind or heart can now imagine. It is when one has felt this descent that one can be really an instrument for the birth and action of the Divine Love in the World. [*II:753*]

¶The Mother did not tell you that love is not an emotion, but that Divine Love is not an emotion,—a very different thing to say. Human love is made up of emotion, passion and desire,—all of them vital movements, therefore bound to the disabilities of the human vital nature. Emotion is an excellent and indispensable thing in human nature, in spite of all its shortcomings and dangers,—just as mental ideas are excellent and indispensable things in their own field in the human stage. But our aim is to go beyond mental ideas into the light of the supramental Truth, which exists not by ideative thought but by direct vision and identity. In the same way our aim is to go beyond emotion to the height and depth and intensity of the Divine Love and there feel through the inner psychic heart an inexhaustible oneness with the Divine which the spasmodic leapings of the vital emotions cannot reach or experience.

As supramental Truth is not merely a sublimation of our mental ideas, so Divine Love is not merely a sublimation of human emotions; it is a different consciousness, with a different quality, movement and substance. [*II:753-4*]

Preparing for Yoga

¶The best way to prepare for the spiritual life when one has to live in the ordinary occupations and surroundings is to cultivate an entire equality and detachment and the *samata* [equality] of the Gita with the faith that the Divine is there and the Divine Will at work in all things even though at present under conditions of a world of Ignorance. Beyond this are the Light and Ananda towards which life is working, but the best way for their advent and foundation in the individual being and nature is to grow in this spiritual equality. [*II:869*]

THE FOUR AUSTERITIES AND THE FOUR LIBERATIONS

The Mother

To pursue an integral education that leads to the supramental realisation a fourfold austerity is necessary and also a fourfold liberation.

Austerity is usually confused with mortification. When austerity is spoken of, one thinks of the discipline of the ascetic who seeks to avoid the arduous task of spiritualising the physical, the vital and the mental life and therefore declares it incapable of transformation and casts it away without pity as a useless burden, a bondage, fettering all spiritual progress; in any case, it is considered as a thing that cannot be mended, a load that has to be borne more or less cheerfully until the time when Nature or the Divine Grace relieves you of it by death. At best life on earth is a field for progress and one should try to get the utmost profit out of it, all the sooner to reach that degree of perfection which will put an end to the trial by making it unnecessary.

For us, however, the problem is quite different. Life on earth, we consider, is not a passage or a means merely; it must become, through transformation, a goal, a realisation. When we speak of austerity, it is not out of contempt for the body, with a view to dissociating ourselves from it, but because of the need of self-control and self-mastery. For, there is an austerity which is far greater, more complete, and more difficult than all the austerities of the ascetic: the austerity necessary for the integral transformation, the fourfold austerity which prepares the individual for the manifestation of the supramental truth. Thus one can say, for example, that few austerities are so severe as those which physical culture demands for the perfection of the body. But of that we shall speak in due time.

The Mother

Before I begin describing the four kinds of austerity required. I must clear up one question which is a source of much misunderstanding and confusion in the minds of most people: it is about ascetic practices which they take for spiritual discipline. Now, these practices consist in ill-treating the body so that one may, as it is said, free the spirit from it; they are, in fact, a sensual deformation of the spiritual discipline. It is a kind of perverse need for suffering that drives the ascetic to self-mortification. The Sadhu's "bed of nails" and the Christian anchorite's whip and sackcloth are the results of a sadism, more or less veiled, unavowed and unavowable. It is an unhealthy seeking or a subconscient need for violent sensations. In

reality, these things are very far from the spiritual life; they are ugly and low, dark and diseased. Spiritual life, on the contrary, is a life of light and balance, beauty and joy. They have been invented and extolled by a sort of mental and vital cruelty inflicted on the body. But cruelty, even with regard to one's own body, is none the less cruelty, and all cruelty is a sign of great unconsciousness. Inconscient natures need strong sensations; for without that they feel nothing; and cruelty, being a form of sadism, brings very strong sensations. The avowed purpose of such practices is to abolish all sensation so that the body may no longer be an obstacle to one's flight towards the Spirit. The efficacy of the means is open to doubt. It is a well-known fact that if one wants quick progress one must not be afraid of difficulties; on the contrary, it is precisely by choosing to do the difficult thing each time the occasion presents itself that one increases the will and strengthens the nerves. Indeed, it is much more difficult to lead a life of measure and balance, equanimity and serenity than to fight the abuses of pleasure and the obscuration they cause by the abuses of asceticism and the disintegration they bring about. It is much more difficult to secure a harmonious and progressive growth in calmness and simplicity in one's physical being than to ill-treat it to the point of reducing it to nothing. It is much more difficult to live soberly and without desire than to deprive the body of nourishment and clean habits so indispensable to it, just to show off proudly one's abstinence. It is much more difficult again to avoid, surmount or conquer illness by an inner and outer harmony, purity and balance than to disregard and ignore it, letting it do its work of ruin. And the most difficult thing of all is to maintain the consciousness always on the peak of its capacity and never allow the body to act under the influence of a lower impulse.

It is with this end in view that we should adopt the four austerities which will result in the four liberations. Their practice will constitute the fourfold discipline or tapasya which can be thus defined: (1) Tapasya of Love; (2) Tapasya of Knowledge; (3) Tapasya of Power; (4) Tapasya of Beauty.

The gradation is, so to say, from above downwards; but the steps, as they stand, should not be taken to mean anything superior or inferior, nor more or less difficult nor the order in which these disciplines can be and should be followed. The order, importance and difficulty varies according to the individual and no absolute rule can be framed. Each one should find and work out his own system, as demanded by his capacity and personal need.

Only an overall view will be given here presenting an ideal procedure that is as complete as possible. Everyone will then have to make his own application to the extent and in the manner he can do best.

The Tapasya or discipline of beauty will take us, through the austerity of physical life, to freedom in action. The basic programme will be to build a body beautiful in form, harmonious in posture, supple and agile in its movements, powerful in its activities and resistant in its health and organic function.

To get these results it would be good, in a general way, to form habits and utilise them, as a help, in organising the material life. For the body works more easily in a frame of regular routine. Yet one must be able not to become a slave to one's habits, however good they may be. The greatest suppleness must be maintained so that one may change one's habits each time it is necessary to do so.

One must build up nerves of steel in a system of elastic and strong muscles, so that one is capable of enduring anything whenever it is indispensable. But at the same time care must be taken not to ask of the body more than the strictly necessary amount of effort, the energy required for growth and progress, shutting out most strictly all that produces exhausting fatigue and leads in the end to degeneration and decomposition of the material elements.

Physical culture which aims at building a body capable of serving as a fit instrument for the higher consciousness demands very severe habits: a great regularity in sleep, food, physical exercises and in all activities. One should study scrupulously the needs of one's body—for these very according to the individuals—and then fix a general programme. Once the programme is fixed, one must stick to it rigorously with no fancifulness or slackness to shake it: none of those exceptions to the rule indulged in just "for once," but which are repeated often—for, when you yield to temptation even "just for once," you lessen the resistance of your will and open the door to each and every defeat. You must put a bar to all weakness; none of the nightly escapades from which you come back totally broken, no feasting and glutting which disturb the normal working of the stomach, no distraction, dissipation or merrymaking that only waste energy and leave you too listless to do the daily practice. One must go through the austerity of a wise and well-regulated life, concentrating the whole physical attention upon building a body as perfect as it is possible for it to become. To reach this ideal goal one must strictly shun all excess, all vice, small or big, one must deny oneself the use of such slow poisons as tobacco, alcohol etc. which men have the habit of developing into indispensable needs that gradually demolish their will and memory. The all-absorbing interest that men, without exception, even the most intellectual, take in food, in its preparation and consumption, should be replaced by an almost chemical knowledge of the needs of the body and a wholly scientific system of austerity in the way of satisfying them. One must add to this austerity regarding food, another austerity, that of sleep. It does not mean that one should go without sleep, but that one must know how to sleep. Sleep must not be a fall into unconsciousness that makes the body heavy instead of refreshing it. Moderate food, abstention from all excess, by itself minimises considerably the necessity of passing many hours in sleep. However, it is the quality of sleep more than its quantity that is important. If sleep is to bring you truly effective rest and repose, it would be good to take something before going to bed, a cup of milk or soup or fruitjuice, for instance. Light food gives a quiet sleep. In any case, one must abstain from too much food; for that makes sleep troubled and agitated with nightmares or otherwise makes it dense, heavy and dull. But the most

important thing is to keep the mind clear, to quiet the feelings, calm the effervescence of desires and the preoccupations accompanying them. If before retiring to bed one had talked much, held animated discussions or read something intensely interesting and exciting, then one had better take some time to rest before sleeping so that the mind's activities may be quieted and the brain not yield to disorderly movements while the physical limbs alone sleep. On the other hand, if you are given to meditation, you would do well to concentrate for a few minutes upon a high and restful idea, in an aspiration towards a greater and vaster consciousness. Your sleep will profit greatly by it and you will escape in a large measure the risk of falling into unconsciousness while asleep.

After the austerity of a night passed wholly in rest in a calm and peaceful sleep comes the austerity of a day organised with wisdom, its activities divided between wisely graded progressive exercises, required for the culture of the body and the kind of work you do. For both can and should form part of the physical tapasya. With regard to exercises each one should choose what suits best his body and, if possible, under the guidance of an expert on the subject who knows how to combine and grade the exercises for their maximum effect. No fancifulness should rule their choice or execution. You should not do this or that simply because it appears more easy or pleasant; you will make a change in your programme only when your trainer considers the change necessary. The body of each one, with regard to its perfection or simply improvement, is a problem to be solved and the solution demands much patience, perseverance and regularity. In spite of what men may think, the athlete's life is not a life of pleasure and distraction; it is a life, on the contrary, made up of well-regulated endeavour and austerehhabits for getting the desired result and leaves no room for useless and harmful fancies.

In work too there is an austerity. It consists in not having any preference and in doing with interest whatever one does. For the man who wishes to perfect himself, there is nothing like small or big work, important work and others not important. All are equally useful to him who aspires for self-mastery and progress. It is said that you can do only that work best in which you find interest. True, but what is more true is that one can find interest in whatever one does, even the work that appears most insignificant. The secret of this attainment lies in the urge towards perfection. Whatever be the occupation or task that falls to your lot, do it with a will towards progress. Whatever you do must be done not only as well as you can but with an earnestness to do it better and better in a constant drive towards perfection. In this way all things without exception become interesting, from the most material labour to the most artistic and intellectual work. The scope for progress is infinite and one can be earnest in the smallest thing.

This takes us naturally to liberation in action; for in one's action one must be free from all social conventions, all moral prejudices. This is not to say that one should lead a life of license and unrule. On the contrary you submit here to a rule which is much more severe than all social rules, for it does not tolerate any hypocrisy, it demands perfect sincerity. All physical activities should be organised entirely in such a way as to make the body grow in balance and force and beauty. With this end in view one must abstain from all pleasure-seeking, including the sexual pleasure. For each sexual act is a step towards death. That is why from the very ancient times among all most sacred and most secret schools, this was a prohibited act for every aspirant to immortality. It is always followed by a more or less long spell of inconscience that opens the door to all kinds of influences and brings about a fall in the consciousness. Indeed one who wants to prepare for the supramental life should never allow his consciousness to slip down to dissipation and inconscience under the pretext of enjoyment or even rest and relaxation. The relaxation should be into force and light, not into obscurity and weakness. Continence therefore is the rule for all who aspire for progress. But especially for those who want to prepare themselves for the supramental manifestation, this continence must be replaced by total abstinence, gained not by coercion and suppression but by a kind of inner alchemy through which the energies usually used in the act of procreation are transmuted into energies for progress and integral transformation. It goes without saying that to get a full and truly beneficial result, all sex impulse and desire must be eliminated from the mental and vital consciousness as well as from the physical will. All transformation that is radical and durable proceeds from within outwards, the outward transformation being the normal and, so to say, the inevitable result of the inner.

A decisive choice has to be made between lending the body to Nature's ends in obedience to her demand to perpetuate the race as it is, and preparing this very body to become a step towards the creation of the new race. The two cannot go together; at every minute you have to decide whether you wish to remain within the humanity of yesterday or belong to the supermanhood of tomorrow. You must refuse to be moulded according to the life as it is and be successful in it, if you want to prepare for the life as it will be and become an active and efficient member. You must deny yourself pleasures, if you wish to be open to the joy of living in integral beauty and harmony.

This brings us quite naturally to vital austerity, the austerity of the sensations, the Tapasya of power. The vital being is indeed the seat of power, of enthusiasms that realise. It is in the vital that thought changes into will and becomes a dynamism of action. It is also true that the vital is the seat of desires and passions, of violent impulses and equally violent reactions, of revolt and depression. The usual remedy is to strangle it, to starve it by depriving it of sensations: indeed it is nourished chiefly by sensations and without them it goes to sleep, becomes dull and insensitive and, in the end, wholly empty.

The vital, in fact, draws its subsistence from three sources. The one most easily accessible to it is from below, the physical energies coming through the sensations. The second is on its own plane, provided it is sufficiently wide and receptive, in contact with the universal vital forces. And the third, to which generally it opens only under a

great aspiration for progress, comes from above, through the infusion and absorption of spiritual forces and inspirations.

To these men try more or less always to add another source; it is, at the same time, for them the source of most of their torments and misfortunes. It is the interchange of vital forces with their fellow creatures, generally grouped by twos, which they mistake for love, but which is only an attraction between two forces that take pleasure in mutual interchange.

So, if we do not wish to starve our vital, the sensations should not be rejected, nor deduced in number or blunted in intensity; neither should they be avoided, but they must be utilised with discrimination and discernment. Sensations are an excellent instrument for knowledge and education. To make them serve this purpose, they should not be used with an egoistic purpose, as a means of enjoyment, in a blind and ignorant seeking for pleasure and self-satisfaction.

The senses should be able to bear everything without disgust or displeasure; at the same time they must acquire and develop more and more the power of discrimination with regard to the quality, origin and result of various vital vibrations and so know whether they are favourable to the harmony, the beauty and the good health or are harmful to the poise and progress of the physical and vital being. Moreover, the senses should be utilised as instruments to approach and study the physical and vital worlds in all their complexities. Thus they will take their true place in the great endeavour towards transformation.

It is by enlightening, strengthening and purifying the vital and not by weakening it that one can help towards the true progress of the being. To deprive oneself of sensations is therefore as harmful as depriving oneself of food. But in the same way as the choice of food must be made with wisdom and only with a view to the growth and proper functioning of the body, the choice of sensations also should be made and control over them gained with a view only to the growth and perfection of this great dynamic instrument which is essential for the progress as all other parts of the being.

It is by educating the vital, by making it more refined, more sensitive, more subtle, one should almost say, more elegant, in the best sense of the word, that one can overcome its violences and brutalities which are, in general, movements of crudity and ignorance, of a lack of taste.

In reality, the vital, when educated and illumined, can be as noble and heroic and unselfish, as it is now spontaneously vulgar, egoistic, perverted when left to itself without education. It is sufficient if each one knows how to transform in oneself this seeking for pleasure into an aspiration towards supramental plenitude. For that, if the education of the vital is pursued far enough, with perseverance and sincerity there comes a moment when it is convinced of the greatness and beauty of the goal and gives up petty illusory satisfactions of the senses in order to conquer the divine Delight.

II

When we speak of mental austerity, the thing immediately suggested is long meditations leading to control of thought and finally to inner silence as the crown. This aspect of Yogic discipline is too well known to need dwelling upon it at length. But there is another aspect with which people are generally less concerned: it is the control of speech. Apart from a very few exceptions, it is absolute silence that is put against unbridled talkativeness. Yet it is a much greater and more fruitful austerity to control one's speech than to abolish it altogether.

Man is the first animal upon earth to be able to use the articulate sound. He is indeed proud of it and exercises the capacity without measure or discrimination. The world is deafened with the noise of his speech and at times you almost seem to miss the harmonious silence of the vegetable kingdom.

It is besides a well-known fact that the less the mental power the greater is the need for speech. There are, for example, primitive people, people with no education, who cannot think at all unless they talk. You can hear them muttering words in a more or less low voice. For it is the only means they have to follow the train of their thought which would not be formulated in them without the spoken word.

There are also a large number of people and even among the educated those with weak mental power who do not know what they have to say except in the course of saying it. That makes their talk interminable and tedious. But while they speak, their thoughts get more and more clear and precise: and this impels them to repeat the same thing over and over again in order to be able to say it more and more exactly. There are some who need preparing beforehand what they have to say; they falter if they are to speak on the spur of the moment, since they had not the time to work out step by step the exact terms of what they meant to say.

Lastly, there are the born orators who are masters of elocution; they spontaneously find the words needed to say what they mean and they say it well.

All that, however, from the point of view of mental austerity, does not fall outside the category of talkativeness. For by talkativeness I mean uttering any word that is not absolutely indispensable. How to judge, one may ask? For that, we have to classify in a general way all the categories of the spoken word.

First, we have in the physical domain all words uttered for a material reason. They are by far the most numerous and in ordinary life very probably the most useful.

The constant buzz of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment of the daily routine work. Yet if you just endeavour to reduce the noise to a minimum, you begin to see that many things are done better and quicker in silence and this helps also to maintain the inner peace and concentration.

If you are not alone and you live with others, cultivate the habit not to throw yourself out constantly into spoken words, you will see little by little that an inner understanding has been established between you and the others; you will then be able to communicate with each other with the minimum speech or no speech at all. This outer silence is very favourable to inner peace and if you

have good will and constant aspiration you will be able to create an atmosphere conducive to progress.

In a common life with others, to words concerning livelihood and material preoccupations are to be added also those that express sensations, feelings and emotions. It is here that the habit of external silence comes as a precious help. For when you are assailed by a wave of sensation or feeling, it is this habit of silence that would give you time to reflect and, if necessary, hold back before you throw out your sensations and your feelings into words. How many quarrels can be avoided in this way! How many times would you be saved from one of those psychological catastrophes which are but too often the result of incontinence in speech.

Even if you do not go to this extreme, you should always control the words you utter and must not let your tongue be moved by an outburst of anger, violence or temper. It is not merely that you lend your tongue for the projection of bad vibrations into the atmosphere, for nothing is more contagious than the vibration of sound. By giving those movements the opportunity to express themselves, you perpetuate them in you and in others.

Among the most undesirable kinds of talkativeness should be included all that one says about others.

Unless you are responsible for certain persons as guardian, teacher or departmental head, you have no concern at all with what others do or do not do.

You must refrain from talking about them, to give your opinion upon them or upon what they do or to repeat what others may think or say of them.

It may be that the very nature of your occupation makes it your duty to report what is happening in a particular department or business undertaking or a common work. In that case, the report should be confined to the work alone and not to touch personal matters. It should be in every way wholly objective. You must not allow any personal reaction, preference, sympathy or antipathy to enter there. Particularly, never mix up your petty personal grudge into the work assigned to you.

In any case and in a general way, the less one speaks of others,—even if it be in praise of them—the better it is. Already it is so difficult to know exactly what happens in oneself, how to know then with certainty what is happening in others? Refrain then from pronouncing upon any person one of those irrevocable judgments which can only be stupidity, if not malice.

When thought is expressed in speech, the vibration of the sound has a considerable power to put the most material substance into contact with the thought and thus give it a concrete and effective reality. That is why you must not speak ill of things or persons or speak out in words things that contradict in the world the progress of the divine realisation. It is an absolute general rule. And yet it has an exception. You must criticise nothing unless you have at the same time a conscious power and an active will in you to dissolve or transform the movements or things you criticise. In fact this conscious power and this active will possess the capacity to infuse into matter the possibility to react and refuse the bad vibration and ultimately to correct the vibration so far as to prevent it from expressing itself on the physical plane.

This can be done without danger or risk only by him who moves in the gnostic domain and possesses in his mental faculties the light of the spirit and the force of the truth. He, the divine worker, is free from all preference and attachment; he has broken down in himself the limits of the ego and he is nothing else than a perfectly pure and impersonal instrument for the supramental action upon earth.

There are also all the words that are uttered to express ideas, opinions, results of reflection and study. Here we are in an intellectual domain and we might think that in this region men are more reasonable, balanced and the practice of strict austerity is less indispensable. It is nothing of the kind, however; for even here, into this abode of ideas and knowledge, men have introduced violence of conviction, sectarian intolerance, passion of preference. Here also there will be the same need to have recourse to mental austerity and to carefully avoid all exchange of ideas that leads very often to bitter and almost inane controversy, avoid too all opposition of opinions which end in hot discussion and even dispute, arising from mind's narrowness, a thing that can be cured easily when one ascends high enough in the mental domain.

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

This sense of the relativity of things is a powerful help to maintain one's poise and preserve a serene balance in one's talk. I heard once an old occultist who had some knowledge saying, "There is nothing which is essentially bad: there are only things that are not in their place. Put each thing in its proper place, you will get a harmonious world."

Yet, from the point of view of action, the value of an idea is in proportion to its pragmatic power. This power, it is true, varies differently according to the individual in whom it acts. A particular idea that has a great driving force in one individual fails totally in another. But the power itself is contagious. Certain ideas have the power to transform the world. It is these that ought to be expressed; they are the guiding stars in the firmament of the spirit, it is they that lead the earth towards her supreme realisation.

Lastly, we have all the words that are spoken for the purpose of teaching. This class extends from the kindergarten right up to the university course, not omitting all the artistic and literary creations of mankind that mean to be either entertaining or instructive. In this region all depends upon the value of the work; and the subject is too vast to be treated here. It is a fact, however, that care for education is very much in vogue nowadays and praiseworthy attempts have been made to make use of the latest scientific discoveries and place them at the service of education. But even in this matter there is need of austerity for the aspirant of the truth.

It is generally taken for granted that in the procedure of education a certain kind of light, entertaining, even

frivolous creations should be admitted in order to reduce the strain of the effort, to give ease to the children, even to adults. From a certain point of view this is true; but unfortunately this recognition has served as an excuse for importing a whole class of things which are nothing else than the flowering of all that is vulgar, crude and low in human nature. The most ignoble instincts, the most depraved taste find in this recognition a good excuse to display and establish themselves as inevitable necessities. It is not so. One can relax oneself and yet be not dissolute, one can be at ease and yet not vulgar, one can slacken oneself and yet not allow any of the grosser elements in one's nature to come up. But from the point of view of austerity, these needs themselves change their nature: relaxation is transformed into an inner silence, ease into contemplation and slackening into felicity.

This need, so generally recognised, of entertainment, relaxation of effort, a more or less total forgetfulness of life's goal, forgetfulness of the very reason of existence must not be considered quite natural and indispensable, but as a weakness to which one yields because of the lack of intensity in aspiration, the instability of will, because of ignorance, unconsciousness and listlessness. Do not justify these movements and soon you will perceive that they are not necessary and at some time they will even become to you repugnant and inadmissible. Then quite a large part of human creations, ostensibly recreative, but truly degrading will lose their support and encouragement.

However, one must not believe that the value of the spoken word depends upon the nature of the subject of conversation. One can talk away on spiritual subjects as much as on any other: but this kind of talkativeness may be among the most dangerous. The new sadhak, for example, is always eager to share with others the little he has learnt. But as he advances on the path, he finds more and more that he does not know much and that before trying to instruct others, he must be sure of the value of his knowledge, until finally he becomes wise and realises that a good many hours of silent concentration are needed to be able to speak usefully for a few minutes. Besides, in the matter of inner life and spiritual effort, the use of speech should be put under a still more stringent rule: nothing should be spoken unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. [*To be continued in the next issue.*]

MEDITATION IN THE INTEGRAL YOGA

M. P. Pandit

Many of those who have visited the [Sri Aurobindo] Ashram have asked why we do not have here daily functions of common meditations, common prayers and the like. They find it difficult to understand how an Ashram devoted to Yoga doesn't have specific programs where all the sadhaks join together, listen to discourses every day, meditate at fixed hours, and so on.

It has been explained a number of times, and I repeat it here, that the object here is not one of specific yogic liberation or awakening of a power called Kundalini or anything of that type, but a total conversion of human life into an ultimately divine life. No doubt this cannot be achieved in one step. There are gradations, but each gradation marks a step forward, and no step is complete unless it covers the totality of the being, the totality of life as it moves. In other words, it is the culturing of consciousness, the shifting of the center of consciousness, the suffusion of consciousness with the idea of a divine life, that is aimed at. Whether one does meditation for that purpose, or studies books, or listens to discourses, or works in a spirit of disinterested service and thins one's ego in the process, and whether one does it individually or in groups is immaterial.

Each one is given here the freedom to choose his way, to do what is most natural to his own temperament and nature. It is left to each sadhak to experiment and decide how best his consciousness can respond to the call. There are those who are naturally contemplative; theirs is the way of meditation. There are those who are dynamic, who are used to pouring out their energies in some form or another; theirs is the way of work. But here again, it is not that the way of meditation alone or the way of works alone is sufficient. This Yoga aims at the transfiguration of all the levels of the being, of the different aspects of the human personality—not that of mind alone, not that of the heart alone, not that of the will alone. So wherever one may start, the different ways of progress converge somewhere along the line and arrive at a natural synthesis.

It is in this context that one has to examine what is the place of meditation, what is the place of the way of works. It is not the process of meditation that is important, but what results it achieves in effecting a change in consciousness. If that change in consciousness is effected in me more easily by working in a spirit of concentration all the time, rather than by meditation at certain fixed hours, nobody should have any quarrel with me if I say that mine is the way of works. That is why you will find some people meditating, some not meditating at all. But it is not that those who are not meditating are not progressing or have not touched the depths of spiritual life. Whether they have done so or not you have to see from their actions and reactions to men and things—what atmosphere they breathe, what vibrations they emanate, what peace they carry with them.

Still, Sri Aurobindo was once asked by Champaklal, who was his attendant, whether it is necessary in Yoga to sit for meditation, or is it enough to be doing work in the manner expected of a sadhak. Sri Aurobindo replied: No, it is necessary to sit for meditation at fixed times, so that the habit is created and, when a state of receptivity is required for the higher consciousness to descend into you and work in you, you are not taken by surprise. You can immediately put yourself into a poise where, undistracted by anything else, you are in a position to receive what comes and let it work in you.

It is good to have regular times for meditation. Meditation is not relaxation, to be done when one is tired or at the end of a day's routine. One has to have fixed periods during the day when one automatically sits for meditation. By doing so, a habit is created in the atmosphere around oneself, a magnetic field is created, as it were,

drawing the higher forces, the spiritual vibrations just at that hour, whether one sits physically or not. That is why you may have experienced, those of you who meditate, that as the usual hour of meditation draws near, things within tend to fall silent and one feels a call in the atmosphere to gather one's consciousness and sit....

This much said, let me also add that the hours spent in meditation are not an index of the progress an individual has made. The Mother used to say, and she was fond of repeating it, that three minutes of intense, flaming aspiration are worth much more spiritually than hours of stagnant meditation. But the fact is that to prolong the period of meditation just to fill up the time that one has willed for it is no way of meditation at all. Meditation should be done as long as the movement of meditation continues and does not come to a stop, with the mind wandering away.

Knowing all this, and understanding the Mother's attitude in these matters, perhaps due to old samskaras of reading old spiritual literature in my student days before I came here, I still had a sneaking admiration for people who could sit for hours together for meditation. And each time that I saw a particular person in our meditation hall sitting like that for two or three hours, I could not help deprecating myself for my inability to sit for that period, although I did spend that much time for studies and work. And I used to have a sense of regret, until suddenly one morning I found that the man I admired had just disappeared with a woman from the Ashram. Since then I have lost all my admiration for the length of time that a person devotes to meditation.

In the long run, the criterion to determine whether the meditation has been useful or productive is to see what change of consciousness has been effected in the individual. You all must have seen people meditating who get terribly upset at the slightest disturbance in the environment. A child cries or someone knocks at the door, and the man comes out furious from his meditation, in an inferior state of consciousness to that of before meditation. There is a certain self-righteous feeling that one is doing something high and superior, but if at the first knock one flares up, showing the same old crudities [in one's consciousness], one knows the meditation has not been successful. What one gains in meditation has to flow spontaneously out in waves of composure, quiet joy, elevation, to those around—at any rate, to oneself, waves of purification. There is a dynamic element of having traversed certain areas in one's own consciousness.

Mother observes humorously that meditation is not a debt that one pays to God; meditation is not either a discipline, but it should be a movement of happy joy to gather into oneself, to assemble the consciousness and pour it on the object of one's meditation—in a word, to attend upon one's Maker. [*Adapted from a talk given in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and reproduced here with the kind permission of the author.*]

EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE

[With this issue we inaugurate Expressions of Auroville, a regular column to feature news, letters, reports, poetry, etc. from Auroville.]

Matrimandir

At the very center of Auroville, geographically and on all levels of its being, is the Matrimandir. The Mother, designating it "the soul of Auroville," advised that the "sooner the soul is there, the better for everybody, especially for Aurovilians," and as we experience the growing pains of the young City of Dawn rising in South India, we recognize ever more clearly the necessity for its discovery and manifestation in our collective life. And the Mother Wisdom and Power is leading it towards just that.

The chief architect of Auroville, designer of the Matrimandir exterior in collaboration with the Mother, has understood from her that "the Matrimandir is a receptacle for spiritual energy, Force. It is the instrument of the evolving Supramental consciousness...that the city may be guided by Truth in all its aspects—economy, social structure, education, arts, agriculture, industries, all developing according to Truth."...

As the small core of Matrimandir workers encounters daily the hazards, ordeals, impossibilities of building a reinforced-concrete structure, in appearance a spaceship or astronomy observatory rather than a temple of the Universal Mother, in reality a beyond-space ship and transforming station, they encounter as well and as daily the

Matrimandir — Cross Section

impossibilities of changing their too human nature and consciousness. But stubbornly, doggedly, sometimes even joyously and almost always soaking in sweat under a burning sun, they keep at their self-chosen labor of love, remembering that "the impossible is God's sign of things to be."

In 1971 the Aurovilians began as a group of amateurs in construction work, most of them, under the supervision of an Auroville architect from Italy who had to learn the exacting engineering skills needed on site the hard way. Augmented from time to time by others as unskilled, from a variety of nations that could have turned the "golden tower" into one of Babel, except that, called, they came to build "a living embodiment of an actual human unity," the amateurs as *amatores* of the Divine have become more or less skilled steel-bar benders, shuttering-fitters, welders, scaffold-builders, cement and sand

mixers—concreters.

For they are learning that the spaceship is a training ship, a transformation workplace in earnest, in motion, Mahashakti's, taking them on the journey to their own as much as to their city's soul. The learning intensifies as they work now on the inmost heart of Matrimandir, its inner chamber, the Sanctuary of Truth. Because it was this, the interior of Matrimandir, which The Mother saw in precise detail, "clearly, very, very distinctly," as already existing on an eternal plane, and described in a series of conversations from 31 December 1969 to 17 January 1970. "It is a kind of tower with 12 regular facets [dodeca wall] representing the 12 months of the year. There will be inside, ...12 columns. In the centre the symbol of Sri Aurobindo [4-sided, resting on The Mother's symbol] supporting a globe." A sun ray will enter in a beam directed onto the centre. "The play of the sun on the centre...becomes the symbol—symbol of the future Realisation." A place of silence and concentration, "a place for trying to find one's consciousness."...

Four sides of the dodeca wall of the inner chamber, its subfloor, and roof-peak summit ring-beam—called the "ring of union" because it unites the four leading aspects and powers of the Mother in her guidance of the universe, as they are represented in the four pillars supporting the sphere, have been cast in concrete. Preparatory work on the floor is now in progress. To do it *doing the Yoga* is our continuing aspiration, recalling that "all Yoga is in its nature a new birth; it is a birth out of the ordinary, the mentalised material life of man into a higher spiritual consciousness and a greater and diviner being" (*Synthesis of Yoga*).

It is our Auroville soul that calls and is called to this deep and vast change.—*Seyril, Matrimandir Workers Camp.*

Tax-deductible contributions for the Matrimandir or for Auroville in general may be sent to the Sri Aurobindo Society, 3124 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408, or to the Auroville Association, 212 Farley Dr., Aptos, CA 95003; if you wish to contribute directly to Auroville, write to Matagiri for further information.

Matrimandir Gardens Workers to Visit U.S.

"It must be a thing of great beauty, of such a beauty that when men enter [the Matrimandir Gardens] they will say, 'Ah, this is it,' and experience physically, concretely, the significance of each garden [the Matrimandir is surrounded by 12 gardens]. In the garden of Youth they will know youth, in the garden of Felicity they will know felicity, in the garden of Perfection they will know perfection, and so on. One must know how to move from consciousness to consciousness."

The Mother said this to Narad, an American in charge of the Matrimandir Gardens, in 1970. Since then, a great deal of work has been done to create the gardens and gather seeds and plants from all over the world.

Narad and Mary Helen, who also works in the gardens, will be visiting the United States this year from April to July to acquire equipment for the next phase of the gardens. The success of this effort is entirely dependent upon contributions from friends of Auroville.

Among the equipment being sought are a compost shredder, garden tractor with attachments, irrigation equipment, pond sealer, and such tools as fine-quality pruners, scythes, grading rakes, etc.

Narad and Mary Helen will bring slides of the recent work at the nursery and gardens and will give showings to interested groups (primarily in the Northeast, Florida and California). A special program on flowers and their significance as given by the Mother can also be arranged.

Donations and inquiries may be sent to Matagiri.

Planting Trees

Soft rain has been blessing the land for the last three days, monsoon has arrived—everywhere a green carpet of peanuts and millet. The ponds are full, the frogs sing night long. We work hard planting young trees raised in Matrimandir Gardens, together with cuttings and seeds we have collected from the few natural forests of the region. Much energy goes into protecting fields with natural borders of cactus and thorn, for protection is the crux of the problem in Auroville, where the landscape now so lush turns dramatically into a desert after the crops are out in January. Then the barren soil dries to the fine sand which blows in the dust storms of April and May. We have watched during the few years we have been here, the gullies becoming deeper and wider as with every heavy rain the soil washes into the Bay of Bengal, colouring it red for miles out from the shore. Work on erosion control goes on, gully plugs, planting of the beginning of runoffs with drought-resistant shrubs and grasses, but it is inadequate with the enormity of the problem.

This golden circle which Mother has offered to humanity to concentrate on, to transform into a garden of subtle energies has been devastated by man, the villager and the goats and cows he has brought with him. As the district government forest officer stated in a recent meeting with young organization leaders and local government officials here at Pitchandikulam, this particular plateau where we aspire to realize Her dream, could well become uninhabitable within a short time if a consciousness does not develop to arrest the continuing destruction of the plant life.

The 20 acres we have protected here at Pitchandikulam have shown us in three years the miracle of regeneration. The presence of the forest consciousness is there, it is profound, dormant, waiting merely for a little help from man. The native flora and fauna now has a sanctuary. The grasses, especially that which Mother called Humility—the trees growing from seeds dropped by the birds, wild quail, rabbits, monitor lizards four feet long, mongoose and chameleons. Villagers tell me that there were wild deer in this area only 20 years ago.

Much knowledge has been assimilated, we know which trees are drought-resistant, what plants are not eaten by the cattle and goats, how to protect fields effectively and harmoniously, what are the relationships between vegetable life. The Tamils begin to see and respect the work although many problems arise for we are still very much crazy people who plant flowering trees instead of peanuts.

But in our young forest now that the fruits are manifesting—custard apples, guavas, mangoes, sapotas, mulberries, phalsa carambolas, blackberries, nelli, almonds, cardamon, lemons, star apples, and wild dates, and the leaves and barks are providing their incredible varieties of practical energies; the villager is showing more interest in our strange activities. Quite often is heard now the rain is good because we have planted trees, that trees call the clouds.

The knowledge is there, the direction is there, so clear, so clear, yet this year more than any other as the community struggles somewhat with its so-called new freedoms and responsibilities, the means to implement the work of the Green Belt, of setting the area firmly on the path of ecological balance, has been lacking or nonexistent.

What is needed more than anything is an assured protection of what lands we have planted. Planting is one thing but caring for the young growth during the first year is the big challenge. Watchmen of the trees are needed and for this we must be assured of 200 rupees per month per man or family to protect a 3- to 4-acre plot. The involvement of the villager realistically in the work is tantamount to bringing about a change in the ecomind of the Tamil now bent on destruction. Cooperatively, harmoniously we will together eventually walk in this garden. In everyone's garden. But for the present we must be alert and vigilant to the forces that would prevent the vision from materializing.

Five thousand seedlings have been planted this year at Pitchandikulam, mostly in a new area, which has as yet no source of water. We must haul water from the local pond or from our windmill, half a mile in a tank pulled by bullocks....

Several of us had hoped to begin this year the work of planting the roads of Auroville with avenue trees not merely in lines but in groves extending back where we have a road frontage. We have a clear idea of what to plant so that as well as the much-needed shade there would always be colour—Imagination with showers of yellow energy, Realization with its scarlet blossoms, pink cassias —Refinement of Sensations, the great ficus varieties, Unity. This still could be done but it must be assured of strong protection, for the local consciousness as it is and the goats as they are very little would survive if the work was done halfheartedly.

We could concentrate this year on the road from Kuilapalyam-Aspiration to Auroson's home running past the entrance to Pitchandikulam. Watering of the trees would be no problem if we have the water tank operating. A watchman is needed and if we do the work of planting a proposed 100 trees, 20 rupees is needed per tree, to dig deep pits, bring compost to mix with the sand and protect it sturdily with a bamboo thorn fence....

Friends of Auroville in your America have helped us in the Green Belt before and to them we are grateful. Perhaps if these words can move amongst you, someone can further help us to realize this garden in which we will all learn to become lighter, able to perceive the sunlit path clearer and the next steps will be taken more gracefully.

—Joss

Committee To Go into Auroville's Problems

New Delhi, Dec. 23. The Union Government [of India] has set up a high-level committee to study the problems of Auroville.

The three-man committee consists of Pondicherry Lt. Governor B.T. Kulkarni, Mr. V. Kartikeyan, Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu, and Mr. S.S. Sidhu, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs. Mr. Kulkarni will be its chairman.

The Committee's brief is to look into the township's problems in depth and suggest solutions to promote the objectives set by The Mother in the Auroville Charter.

The Committee will also evolve an appropriate procedure regarding foreigners' entry into and stay in Auroville.

The Auroville Township was founded on the basis of a charter announced by the Mother on Feb. 28, 1968. The Union Government and a number of State Governments have contributed substantially to the Auroville project.

The Union Government, an official resolution said, has special responsibility in regard to the functioning and development of Auroville as a township of international importance.

During the past one year, the government resolution says, a number of problems of varied nature have arisen affecting the smooth running of the township and these call for urgent solutions. These problems cannot be tackled piecemeal and on ad hoc basis. This has led to the Government's decision to set up the three-man committee. [From *The Indian Express*, 23 December 1976.]

¶A letter from an Aurovilian regarding this step by the Government of India reports that the committee visited Auroville and met with Aurovilians under the Banyan Tree (in the center of the city). They affirmed their commitment to Auroville. This is expected to help a great deal in terms of land, finances, industry, etc. Questions of internal government are expected to be left to the Aurovilians themselves. A new office, called Service, has been established in Aspiration to handle communications Aurovilians wish to make with the outside, the government committee etc. Internal self-government has been evolving through the weekly meetings at Pour Tous (For All).

The Free Store

More than six months ago the Free Store was opened in Aspiration. This service of Pour Tous makes available toilet articles, bedding, clothing, etc. free to Aurovilians. They hope eventually to make available everything needed in daily living: furniture, bicycles, etc. If you wish to donate used (or new) clothing for the Free Store, these are the items most in demand: underwear (almost unavailable in India), all sizes, men's, women's; footwear, rubber boots; plastic raincoats (not too heavy); jeans, light trousers; socks; baby clothing, diapers, shorts, pajamas; bedding, light blankets; light wool sweaters.

Also needed: children's books of all kinds, including English texts and workbooks, story books, picture books

(especially of nature); games in all areas—language, math, geography, science; art materials; colorful posters (especially of nature scenes).

These materials may be sent to Matagiri, to Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, to Auroville Association, or to the East-West Cultural Center (addresses given at the end of this issue), for forwarding to Auroville.

¶We have been asked to convey gratitude from Auroville to all those who contributed toward the purchase of the film projector unit. Matagiri made an appeal to a small number of people last October, and $522.00 was received and forwarded to Roger Toll, who reports that a film projector was donated to Auroville by Michel Klostermann of Aurora-Zentrale in Munich, Germany. The funds collected by Matagiri are being used for film rentals, etc. The film shows have begun at Auroson's, with Michel Klostermann's film on *Savitri*, Book I, which is described as a very beautiful film. Other films shown so far include one on the climbing of Annapurna, one on Elsa the lioness, and a short film, mostly in time-lapse photography, on climbing plants. The area where the films are shown is in the center of Auroville, and as many as 150 Aurovilians attended. Work is expected to begin soon on the construction of a projection cabin and wall on which the films will be projected.

In December Matagiri sent out a general appeal for funds for Auroville with the winter issue of *Collaboration*. As of January 15, $707.50 had been received and forwarded through the Sri Aurobindo Society of Minneapolis.

GENERAL NEWS

M.P. Pandit on American Tour

M.P. Pandit, a resident of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for more than 30 years, personal secretary to the Mother for over 20 years, a scholar and author of more than 80 works on Sri Aurobindo, the spiritual traditions and scriptures of India, including *All Life Is Yoga* and the recently published *The Yoga of Works*, is in the United States on a speaking tour. He will be in the New York City area in March; Matagiri, 7 - 9 March; Connecticut, 14-16 March; Boston, Vermont, 17-18 March; Princeton, Philadelphia, 24-26 March; Washington, 27-29 March; Ohio (Gambier and Kent), 30 March-4 April; Detroit-Windsor, 5-6 April; Boulder-Denver, 10-15 April; Taos, 16 April; Albuquerque, 17 April; Arizona (Sedona and Phoenix), 18-23 April; Los Angeles area, 24 April-1 May; Big Sur, Santa Cruz, 2-5 May; Wainwright House (Rye, NY), 15 May; New York and Princeton, 16-18 May. **All dates are tentative** so contact Matagiri or the nearest Sri Aurobindo center (see list at end of issue) for details.

Sri Pandit is being accompanied by Vasanti Rao Bolikere, his secretary and editor, a vocalist of traditional and devotional Indian music; and three Americans, Tatsat, Barbi Dailey, and Stan Anderson.

¶The Darshana Discussion Group conducted by Prof. **Robert A. McDermott** in New York City will conclude with a talk by M.P. Pandit of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on "Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and New Age Consciousness" on 6 March; and with "Summary Remarks on Esoteric and Exoteric" by Robert Pollock on 10 April. Call Prof. McDermott at the Philosophy Dept. of Baruch College, 212-673-7700, for details of time and place.

¶**Hilary Anderson**, assistant professor of integral psychology and dean of counseling and guidance at the California Institute of Asian Studies, has an article, "The Process of Self-Integration in Integral Yoga Psychology," in the Nov.-Dec. 1976 issue of *The Yoga Journal*. In the same issue Sri Aurobindo's work is referred to also by Judith Lassiter, a student in Yoga psychology at the California Institute of Asian Studies, in her article, "Yoga: A Living Philosophy." The March-April 1977 issue contains "The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo," extracts from his writings. The journal is published bimonthly by the California Yoga Teachers Association (1627 Tenth Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122).

¶Dr. **Vasant Merchant** of the Humanities Dept. of Northern Arizona University (Box 6031, Flagstaff, AZ 86001) spoke at the 7th International Yoga and Esoteric Sciences Congress in February at the Adams Hotel in Phoenix. Her topics were "Fate and Free Will" and "The Destiny of Man."

Her two talks at the International Yoga and Meditation Conference last summer in Chicago are available on tape: "The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo for Modern Man" and "Supramental Meditation of Sri Aurobindo," may be obtained from Himalayan Institute, 1505 Greenwood Rd., Glenview, IL 60025 for $4.95 each.

¶Three papers concerning the work of Sri Aurobindo were read at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in St. Louis, October 28-31, 1976. Dr. **Robert N. Minor** of Allegheny College read "Sri Aurobindo's Integral View of Other Religions"; Dr. **Larry D. Shinn** of Oberlin College read "Auroville Revisited: Unity and Disorder in a South Indian Utopia"; and Dr. **June O'Connor** of the University of California at Riverside read portions from her study "Mother Mira of Pondicherry."

¶**Gene Maslow** reports that the Integral Consciousness Institute is preparing to initiate its first programs. Focusing on the exploration, study and enhancement of the creative processes and research into the forms of aesthetic values, it has formulated a set of principles for its functioning: self-discovery, higher consciousness, integrality, and self-expression. Besides Mr. Maslow, faculty include Arthur Josephson, artist; Winslow Dean Elliott and Mimi Lobel, architects; Leonard Horowitz, artist and filmmaker; F.M. Esfandiary, New School lecturer; Moshe Davidowitz, philosophy lecturer; Charles Maloney, integral psychology; Hal Hellman, science writer; Irene M. Norton, guidance counselor; Charlotte Holtzermann, dancer and body-movement teacher; Edward J. Fox, educator; and Swami Bua Jai, Hatha Yoga instructor. The address is 24 E. 21st St., New York, NY 10010; phone 212-677-7979.

Equals One May Be Discontinued

Maude P. Smith, co-editor of **Equals One**, an Auroville journal, reports that the next issue, *Aurograms*, may be the last. The publication, to which the Mother gave particular attention and wished it "to help bring down the consciousness of oneness," was begun in the mid-1960s and has offered a variety of imaginative essays, poetry and illustrations focused on the future. Maude writes: "The only way we can continue is through the special (and continuing) help of our friends, and we don't like to ask for that, as times are difficult for everyone. We can only present the picture and see how our readers feel. If they feel that *Equals One* is sufficiently important to them—or to the world—we are asking them to let us know....

Subscriptions are $6.00 a year and may be ordered through Matagiri. Anyone wishing to donate an ad or otherwise help, please write to Matagiri, or directly to Maude Smith, Equals One, Pondicherry 605002, India.

NEWS OF CENTERS

Los Angeles: East-West Cultural Center (2865 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; tel. 213-386-0999) celebrated the Mother's birthday with a morning meditation on Sunday, 20 February, and a tape of the Mother reading *The Mother*. At the Auroville meeting in the afternoon, June Maher of the Auroville Association of Aptos shared her experiences after spending nearly a year in Auroville. Friends of the center also presented the Mother's short drama, *The Great Secret*.

On Sunday, 27 February, Dr. Judith Tyberg, founder of the center, showed a film strip of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, recounted stories surrounding them and explained the symbols connected with them.

Dr. Tyberg has begun a new *Life Divine* class, which meets Fridays at 8:00 p.m. in the center library.

Frederic Ross, vice-president of the center, leads the Spiritual Inquiry group Fridays, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

San Francisco: Cultural Integration Fellowship (2650 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94118; tel. 415-643-3949 or 386-9590) offers "The Yoga and Vision of Sri Aurobindo Through Meditation on His Epic Poem *Savitri*" the first and third Sundays of the month, Jan. to March 19.

Boulder, Colo.: Sri Aurobindo's Action Center (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306) holds weekly meetings at 2121 Canyon Blvd., Apt. 315, Boulder, Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. with readings, discussion and meditation.

Joseph Spanier, who attended the World Union International Conference on "The Next Future" in Pondicherry, India, this past January, was elected, with Dr. Kathryn Breese Whiting, president of the Phoenix Institute of California, to the executive council of World Union.

On 28 February 1977 the first issue of *Auroville Voice* was published, offering the news, needs and aspirations of Auroville. A yearly minimum contribution of $5.00 is suggested for a subscription, which may be sent to Sri Aurobindo's Action Center; any excess funds remaining after expenses will be donated to Auroville.

Chicago, Ill: The **Sri Aurobindo Center** (% Dr. Lakshman Sehgal, 2851 Dr. Martin L. King Dr., Apt. 1217, Chicago, IL 60616; tel. 312-842-5351) will observe the April Darshan on April 23 with a special program of meditation, the Mother's music, devotional music, readings, a talk, and refreshments. The program will be held at the Sivanand Hall of the Vivekananda Vedanta Center, 5423 S. Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Baby-sitting facilities are available. Call Dr. Sehgal at the above number for further details.

NEWS OF FOREIGN CENTERS

We have received the following report from Madeleine Gosselin: "In December 1976 the Sri Aurobindo house in Gaspésie burned to the ground with the loss of all its contents. The four people living in the house, three young ladies and a child, escaped safely. This house was connected with **Le Centre Sri Aurobindo** (4127 rue St. Denis, Montreal, Que. H2W 2M7, Canada), so it is normal that these people were invited to join us in the center in Montreal, as we do not intend to reopen a center in Gaspésie at present."

The **Oriya-Aurovilian**, a quarterly published by the Orissa State Auroville Committee (39, Udyan Marg, Bhubaeswar, India), offers a variety of articles by Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and others. The November 1976 issue has articles on "The True Emancipation of Women" by S. Mohanty, "A Woman Worthy of Worship" (on Mother Teresa) by Amar Singh, poems and illustrations, and passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Anyone interested in subscribing should write to the editor, Amar Singh, at the above address.

SRI AUROBINDO CENTERS—UNITED STATES

ARIZONA: **Sri Aurobindo Center**, Crescent Moon Ranch, Star Route 2, Sedona, AZ 86336. Tel: 602-282-7552 or 282-5794.

Paradise Tau, 4335 N. 36th St., Phoenix, AZ 85018. Tel.: 602-955-7398.

CALIFORNIA: **Auroville Association**, 212 Farley Drive, Aptos, CA 95003. Tel.: 408-688-4173.

Cultural Integration Fellowship, 2650 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94118. Tel.: 415-648-3949 and 386-9590.

East-West Cultural Center, 2865 West 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Tel.: 213-DU 6-0999.

Atmaniketan Ashram, 6900 Eastondale Ave., North Long Beach, CA 90805.

Sadhana Sri Aurobindo, % Aspen, 13774 E. Teague, Clovis, CA 93612. Tel.: 209-298-8293.

COLORADO: **Sri Aurobindo's Action Center**, P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306. Tel.: 303-447-0982.

ILLINOIS: **Sri Aurobindo Center**, % Dr. Lakshman Sehgal, 2851 Dr. Martin L. King Drive, Apt. 1217, Chicago, IL 60616. Tel.: 312-842-5351.

MASSACHUSETTS: **Sri Aurobindo Books**, 84 Charles St., Boston, MA 02114. Tel.: 617-723-5759.

MARYLAND: **Sri Aurobindo Society**, % Raichura, 2322 Glenmont Circle, Apt. 212, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Tel.: 301-942-6168.

MINNESOTA: **Sri Aurobindo Society**, 3124 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408. Tel.: 612-825-5206.

NEW YORK: **Matagiri**, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457. Tel.: 914-679-8322.

Sri Aurobindo Library, % 140 W. 58th St., Apt. 8B, New York, NY 10019. Tel.: 212-757-7584. Open by appointment only.

PENNSYLVANIA: **Arya**, % Naren Bhatt, 5132 Haverford Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17109.

SRI AUROBINDO CENTERS—CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA: **Future Child**, Box 1419, Salmon Arm, BC V0E 2T0. Tel.: 604-832-2369.

Sri Aurobindo Society, % Auro-Book Store, 319 W. Pender St., Apt. 203, Vancouver, B.C.

QUEBEC: **Centre Sri Aurobindo**, 3127 rue St. Denis, Montreal, Que. H2W 2M7. Tel: 514-844-7675.

Société pour le Developpement d'Auroville, 4461 St; André, Montreal, Que. H2J 2Z5.

O-Pti-Zoizo, 1596 St. Laurent Blvd., Montreal, Que.