



# *Collaboration*

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The central courtyard and samadhi, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Photo by Kiran Kakad.

We open our seventh year of publication with a feature on the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The Ashram, Sri Aurobindo said, is the creation of the Mother, an early step in the progressively widening circle of the Divine Force in its action on the world. Thousands of visitors are drawn here every year, especially for the four Darshan days, February 21, April 24, August 15, and November 24.

In addition, we continue our series on Integral Psychology and the Mother's Agenda, both of which we hope will throw light on the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the evolution of the Divine Consciousness in the world. We are also happy to

present an article written especially for *Collaboration* by Edith Schnapper, "The First of the Trinities." And, of course, we'll give news of Auroville and other centers which so many of you find interesting.

While we have had to increase the price of a subscription to *Collaboration* to \$5.00 a year, we do want to thank all our friends who so generously responded to our appeal for funds. Your help and support enable us to carry on our work.

Readers are invited to submit relevant articles as well as poetry for consideration for *Collaboration*.

# THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

## *Sri Aurobindo*

This Ashram has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit.

This is not an Ashram like others—the members are not Sannyasis; it is not Moksha that is the sole aim of the Yoga here. What is being done here is a preparation for a work—a work which will be founded on Yogic consciousness and Yoga-Shakti, and can have no other foundation. [1]

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There are only two possible foundations for the material life here. One is that one is a member of an Ashram founded on the principle of self-giving and surrender. One belongs to the Divine and all one has belongs to the Divine; in giving one gives not what is one's own but what already belongs to the Divine. There is no question of payment or return, no bargain, no room for demand and desire. [2]

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A sadhak in the Ashram is expected to observe the following conditions:

All physical sexual relation or connection between sadhak and sadhika are absolutely forbidden and inadmissible in the Ashram.

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All vital relations of a sexual character are contrary to the sadhana and must also be given up by those who wish to stay in the Ashram and progress in the Yoga.

Even a husband and wife must stop all conjugal relations and regard each other as fellow-sadhaks only and not as husband and wife. It is not as man and woman that the sadhaks are here; they have not come here to continue or to form vital or physical relations between themselves under any pretext but to practise Yoga.

Any sadhak forming vital relation with others under the pretext of a psychic or spiritual relation is deceiving himself and violating the Truth and breaking the rule of the Yoga.

No sadhak should worship another sadhak or look on him as the embodied Divine; such movements are contrary to the sadhana and to the discipline of the Ashram and create false movements in the atmosphere. [3]

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The Mother has not laid stress on human fellowship of the ordinary kind between the inmates (though good feeling, consideration and courtesy should always be there), because that is not the aim; it is a unity in a new consciousness that is the aim, and the first thing is for each to do his sadhana to arrive at that new consciousness and realise oneness there. [4]

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The Mother does not at all approve of the idea of a complete retirement. It does not bring the control, only an illusion of a control because the untoward causes are removed for a time. It is a control established while in contact with the outward things that alone is genuine. You must establish that from within by a fixed resolution and practice. Too much mixing and too much talk should be avoided, but complete retirement is not the thing. It has not had the required result with anyone so far. [5]

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It was the Mother who selected the heads [of departments] for her purpose in order to organise the whole; all the lines of the work, all the details were arranged by her and the heads trained to observe her methods and it was only afterwards that she stepped back and let the whole thing go on on her lines but with a watchful eye always. The heads are carrying out her policy and instructions and report everything to her and she often modifies what they do when she thinks fit. Their action is not perfect, because they themselves are not yet perfect and they are also hampered by the ego of the workers and the sadhaks.

But nothing can be perfect so long as the sadhaks and workers do not come to the realisation that they are not here for their ego and self-indulgence of their vital and physical demands but for a high and exacting yoga of which the first aim is the destruction of desire and the substitution for it of the Divine Truth and the Divine Will.

Whatever work is done here, one has always to learn to subordinate or put aside one's own ideas and preferences about things concerning it and work for the best under the conditions and decisions laid down by her. This is one of the main difficulties throughout the Ashram, as each worker wants to do according to his own ideas, on his own lines according to what he thinks to be the right or convenient thing and expects that to be sanctioned. It is one of the principal reasons of difficulty, clash or disorder in the work, creating conflict between the workers themselves, conflict between the workers and the heads of departments, conflict between the idea of the sadhaks and the will of the Mother. Harmony can only exist if all accept the will of the Mother without grudge and personal reaction.

Independent work does not exist in the Ashram. All is organised and interrelated, neither the heads of departments nor the workers themselves are independent. To learn subordination and cooperation is necessary for all collective work; without it there will be chaos. [6]

Concentration upon oneself means decay and death—concentration on the Divine alone brings life and growth and realisation. —*The Mother*

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Larger contributions, all tax-deductible, are welcome for the work of the center. In addition, contributions for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and for Auroville may be made through Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc.

## *The Difference Between the Ashram and Auroville*

The Ashram is the central consciousness. Auroville is one of the outward expressions. In both places equally the work is done for the Divine. [7]

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The Ashram will retain its true role of pioneer, inspirer and guide. Auroville is the attempt towards collective realization.

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There is no fundamental difference in the attitude towards the future and the service of the Divine.

But the people in the Ashram are considered to have consecrated their lives to Yoga (except, of course, the students who are here only for their studies and who are not expected to have made their choice in life).

Whereas in Auroville simply the good will to make a collective experiment for the progress of humanity is sufficient to gain admittance. [8]

### References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Aurobindo Ashram* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1974), p. 7.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
4. Ibid., p. 15.
5. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
6. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
7. The Mother, *Mother India*, February 1980, p. 70.
8. The Mother, *The Mother on Auroville* (Auroville: Auropublications, 1977), p. 16.

## ABOUT THE ASHRAM *The Mother*

Sri Aurobindo has told us and we are convinced by experience that above the mind there is a consciousness much wiser than the mental wisdom, and in the depths of things there is a will much more powerful than the human will.

All our endeavour is to make this consciousness and this will govern our lives and action and organise all our activities. It is the way in which the Ashram has been created. Since 1926 when Sri Aurobindo retired and gave me full charge of it (at that time there were only two rented houses and a handful of disciples) all has grown up and developed like the growth of a forest, and each service was created not by any artificial planning but by a living and dynamic need. This is the secret of constant growth and endless progress. The present difficulties come chiefly from psychological resistances in the disciples who have not been able to follow the rather rapid pace of the sadhana and the yielding to the intrusion of mental methods which have corrupted the initial working.

A growth and purification of the consciousness in the only remedy.

## II

None of the present achievements of humanity, however great they are, can be for us an ideal to follow. The wide world is there as a field of experiment for human ideals.

Our purpose is quite different and if your chances of success are small just now, we are sure that we are working to prepare the future.

I know that from the external point of view, we are below many of the present achievements in this world, but our aim is not a perfection in accordance with the human standards. We are endeavouring for something else which belongs to the future.

The Ashram has been founded and is meant to be the cradle of a new world.

The inspiration is from above, the guiding force is from above, the creative power is from above, at work for the descent of the new realisation.

It is only by its shortcomings, its deficiencies and its failures that the Ashram belongs to the present world.

None of the present achievements of humanity have the power to pull the Ashram out of its difficulties.

It is only a total conversion of all its members and an integral opening to the descending Light of Truth that can help it to realise itself.

The task, no doubt, is a formidable one, but we received the command to accomplish it and we are upon earth for that purpose alone.

We shall continue up to the end with an unflinching trust in the Will and the Help of the Supreme.

The door is open and will always remain open to all those who decide to give their life for that purpose.

## III

*Disciple:* What should the Ashramites, if they truly wish to transform themselves totally, do in order to make things easy for themselves, for others and for the Mother as well?

*Mother:* By definition, the Ashramite has resolved to dedicate his life to the Divine Realisation. But to be true to his resolution he must be sincere, faithful, modest and grateful in his consecration, because these qualities are indispensable for all progress, and progress, a steady and rapid progress, is indispensable to follow the pace of Nature's evolutionary advance.

Without these qualities, one may have sometimes the appearance of progress but it is only an appearance, a pretence, and at the first occasion it crumbles down.

To be sincere, all the parts of the being must be united in their aspiration for the Divine—not that one part wants and the others refuse or revolt. To be sincere in the

aspiration,—to want the Divine for the Divine's sake, not for fame or name or prestige or power or any satisfaction of the vanity.

To be faithful and steady in their consecration,—not to have faith one day and the next one, because things are not as they wish them to be, to lose their faith and shelter all sorts of doubts. Doubt is not a sport to indulge in with impunity; it is a poison which drop by drop corrodes the soul.

To be modest means to have correct appreciation of what one is, and never to forget that whatever are one's achievements, they are practically nothing compared to what one ought to be to fulfill the Lord's expectation.

And above all to feel in an absolute way one's own incapacity to judge the Divine and His ways.

To be grateful, never to forget this wonderful Grace of the Supreme who leads each one to his divine goal by the shortest ways, in spite of himself, his ignorance and misunderstandings, in spite of the ego, its protests and its revolts.

The pure flame of gratefulness must always burn in our heart, warm, sweet and bright, to dissolve all egoism and all obscurity; the flame of gratefulness for the Supreme's Grace who leads the sadhak to his goal—and the more he is grateful, recognises this action of the Grace and is thankful for it, the shorter is the way. [1]

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The usual sadhanas have for their aim union with the Supreme Consciousness (Sat-chit-ananda). And they who reach there are satisfied with their own liberation and leave the world to its unhappy plight. On the contrary, Sri Aurobindo's sadhana starts where the others end. Once the union with the Supreme is realised, one must bring down that realisation to the external world and change the conditions of life upon the earth until a total transformation is accomplished. In accordance with this aim, the sadhaks of the Integral Yoga do not retire from the world to lead a life of contemplation and meditation. Each one must devote at least one-third of his time to a useful work. All activities are represented in the Ashram and each one chooses the work most congenial to his nature, but must do it in a spirit of service and unselfishness, keeping always in view the aim of integral transformation.

To make this purpose possible the Ashram is organised in such a way that all its inmates find their reasonable needs satisfied and have not to worry about their subsistence.

The rules are very few so that each one can enjoy the freedom needed for his de-

velopment; but a few things are strictly forbidden; they are (1) politics, (2) smoking, (3) alcoholic drink and (4) sex enjoyment.

Great care is taken for the maintenance of good health and the welfare and normal growth of the body of all, small and big, young and old. The education given seeks an all-round mental development and is based upon the teaching and ideal of Sri Aurobindo. [2]

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There is in the Ashram no exterior discipline and no visible test. But the inner test is severe and constant, one must be very sincere in the aspiration to surmount all egoism and to conquer all vanity in order to be able to stay here. A complete sur-

render is not outwardly exacted but it is indispensable for those who wish to stick on, and many things come to test the sincerity of this surrender. However, the Grace and the help are always there for those who aspire for them and their power is limitless when received with faith and confidence. [3]

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We are not here to begin once more, continue, perpetuate what is done elsewhere. [4]

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What we are attempting here is to prove to the world, through a concrete example, that by some inner psychological realisation and some outer organisation a world

can be created where most of the causes of human misery will cease to exist. [5]

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Here you must do only what can be done publicly because nothing can remain hidden. [6]

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#### References

1. The Mother, *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, August 1964, pp. 96-100.
2. The Mother, *Sri Aurobindo Ashram* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1974), p. 9.
- 3-5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

## SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is an organic growth, a living expression of the personalities of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

When Sri Aurobindo came to Pondicherry in 1910 he lived at first with a few inmates in his house; afterwards a few more joined them. He had first the relation of friends and companions rather than of a guru and disciples with those who lived with him; afterwards there was a gradual development of spiritual relations. When the Mother, after a long stay in France and Japan, returned to Pondicherry on 24 April 1920 the number of disciples began to increase rapidly, and as the Ashram thus began to develop, it fell to the Mother to organise it. It was found necessary to make arrangements for lodging those who came and houses were bought and rented according to need for the purpose. Arrangements were also made for the maintenance, repair and rebuilding of houses, for the service of good, for decent living and hygiene, etc. When ... Sri Aurobindo retired into seclusion [1926] to pursue his sadhana undisturbed, the whole material and spiritual charge of the Ashram devolved on the Mother.

The Mother herself had long wanted to organise a spiritual community. She has said, "At the beginning of my present earthly existence I was put into touch with many people who said they had a great inner aspiration, an urge towards something deeper and truer, but were tied down, subjected, slaves of that brutal necessity of earning their living, and that this weighed down upon them so much, took away so much of their time and energy that they could not engage in any other activity, inner or outer. I heard that very often.... I used to tell myself that if ever I could do it, I would try to create a little world...where people would be able to live without having

to be preoccupied by problems of food and lodging and clothing and the imperious necessities of life, to see if all the energies freed by this certainty of an assured material living would spontaneously be turned towards the divine life and inner realisation." It is under the guidance of the Mother that the Ashram has developed into what it is today.

A word about the term "ashram" would not be out of place here. It is thought nowadays that an ashram is something like a monastery or math, a cloister of recluses where asceticism is the rule. But in olden times, in the ages of the epics, the Upanishads and the Vedas, an ashram was the house of a Master around whom disciples of all ages, and of both the sexes at times, gather to acquire diverse kinds of knowledge. The Master tended them as a father, equipped them with the best of himself and let them choose the path of their own future development when the time had come. The ashram was thus a family household on a larger and nobler basis. The spirit behind it was not one of barren self-denial, but rather of glad acceptance of life and all its possibilities.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram has this same catholic and dynamic character....

At present the Ashram community is made up of some 1,900 persons, 1,700 inmates (this figure includes the 700 students of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education) and 200 visitors. [Note: As of 1980, the figures are 1163 Ashramites, plus 500 children in the school of whom 112 are boarding students.] Inmates live and work in more than 400 buildings spread all over the town of Pondicherry; but the lives of all are centred around a group of houses, the Ashram main buildings, which include those in which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lived during

most of their stay in Pondicherry. These houses are arranged around a courtyard, in the centre of which is the samadhi, the flower-covered shrine which holds, in two separate chambers, the mortal remains of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The residents of the Ashram have dedicated themselves to the ideal of Sri Aurobindo. His teachings are their beacon light and the Mother their pilot. That man can grow out of his present imperfections into a perfect individuality, that the perfect man can become a nucleus and a force for the evolution of a perfect society and that the true unity of the human race can outflow from a union in the Divine, is in substance the central part of his teaching. The key to this change of man is essentially spiritual and it lies in the evocation and development of the latent faculties of his inner and inner-most being. Man has to cease to live on the surface; he must learn to live from within outward—he must find his soul....

The basis of life here is wholly spiritual. An inner discipline is given, but it is on broad lines allowing each individual the necessary freedom for his nature and temperament to grow and change spontaneously. Broadly the discipline consists of a progressive surrender of oneself—inward and based upon it the outward also—to the Divine; meditation, concentration, work, service—all these are means for a self-gathering in all one's movements with the sole aim of delivering oneself into the hands of a Higher Power for being worked on and led towards the Goal. The Power guides and helps each according to his nature and need....

The very work required to keep the life of the Ashram moving is made a part of the sadhana. The Mother says, "To work for the Divine is to pray with the body." Each sadhak takes up the task that is allotted to



him and tries to do it as perfectly as possible, treating it as an opportunity to learn selfless service and making of it an offering to the Divine. No qualitative gradation, according to the common notions of higher and lower, is attached to any kind of work. In the Ashram, what is important is not what the work is, but how it is done....

At the Ashram all live and work in perfect equality. Among sadhaks no distinctions of sex, creed, caste or national origin are observed; all are looked upon as souls and as children of the Mother. There is besides no hierarchy of officials and subordinates. All work in association and as a unity; but the unit is a complex and diversified one which is organised into different services, each of which is under the general supervision of one or more sadhaks....

...[The Ashram houses] are kept up by the House Maintenance Service. Other necessary work is done by the Water-Supply and Electric Services and the Sanitary Service. Many of the inmates do their own washing and cleaning; but there are a sufficiently large number who have their services attended to by the Domestic Service during fixed hours of the day.

All living rooms are furnished with the minimum of a cot, a table, chair, clothes stand and cupboard. Usually more items of furniture are to be found according to the need of the occupant. The Furniture Service, which runs two carpentry workshops, looks after the needs of the inmates...and visitors.

The Tailoring Sections attend to the supply of apparel and the Blanchisserie (laundry) to washing and ironing.... There is a Footwear Service which supplies new sandals every year and attends to mending and repairs.

There is a common kitchen and Dining Room where there are arrangements to attend over 2,000 people at a time. Even larger numbers can be accommodated when necessary. The food given is sattwic and is served with practically no spice. The normal fare at breakfast is one cup of milk (with cocoa if desired), whole-wheat bread and wheat porridge, one banana and sugar. Lunch consists of rice, bread, one bowl of vegetable or dal, one cup of curd or milk, two bananas, lemon (when available) and sugar. At supper one bowl of vegetable or dal, porridge, bread, one cup of milk or curd and sugar are served. It goes without saying that adjustments in quantity are made to suit the requirements of individuals....

The Ashram has its own flour mill, oil mill and a bakery which supplies all the bread consumed. There is a Fuel Service which supplies the kitchen and also individuals....

The yield of the Ashram's paddy fields

is adequate to meet its needs. Fodder and sugar cane are supplied by other fields and coconuts are grown in several groves. Part of the Ashram's requirements of vegetables and fruits are met by its gardens.... There are also dairy units...and poultry sections.

The Ashram has several horticultural gardens where the many flowers which adorn the samadhi and grace residences and work places are grown. The vegetable kingdom has a consciousness of its own and the Mother has interpreted the true inner and occult significance of each flower...and given them an important role in the collective life of the Ashram.

Though reliance on the yogic force and on Nature is encouraged and even enjoined to keep the body free from illness, the Ashram maintains dispensaries staffed by competent physicians of the allopathic, homeopathic and ayurvedic systems.

There are workshops where a number of inmates are learning and executing various kinds of work, including automobile and machinery repair, foundry work, sheet [metal] work, tinning, welding and spray painting....

The Ashram's Weaving Service and its Cottage Industries produce a variety of textile products. The Cottage Industries also makes incense sticks, door mats and other useful and beautiful items.

The Ashram has its own well-equipped printing press with monotype and linotype composing equipment for various Indian and foreign languages, automatic presses for letterpress and offset printing, and facilities for bookbinding.

The sales of all Ashram publications and photographs are handled by its book-sales agencies....

The requirements of the Ashram are ordered and secured by the Purchasing Department and are kept in the Ashram stores named Prosperity....

The Ashram has a growing library where there are at present some 85,000 books in 25 languages....

Man is essentially a mental being and any discipline that aims at his complete development has, of necessity, to take note of the need of training and processing the mind in order to make it function in its proper role of being at once the receiving medium and the transmitting agent of higher knowledge. For that, the mind has to be developed to a degree of sufficient clarity, and disentangled from the meshes of life-desires and passions and sense impressions that normally hold it captive. A life of its own must be given to the mind. This need has met with a natural fulfilment through Sri Aurobindo, whose writings and intellectual efflorescence have created a new age in the world of letters and opened fresh vistas on the cultural horizon. Under

his aspiration and lead have arisen a growing number of writers, poets, artists of different disciplines, musicians, and exponents of dance and drama.

There is also provision for the development and training of the physical body. For the body too has an important function in the integral perfection of man which is the aim of all endeavour here. Under the personal guidance and supervision of the Mother a scheme of physical education has been worked out with minute care. The scheme, consisting of courses of physical culture, gymnastics, athletics, outdoor games, aquatics, etc., aims at a detailed education of the human body, making of it a conscious entity with an individuality of its own: the concretised rhythm of the indwelling Spirit....

The Ashram maintains a number of guest houses for the many visitors who come in a continuous stream all year round. On arrival, guests are issued a boarding and lodging card by the Visitor's Service. This they must present at the dining room and at certain other places when required.... Visitors must meet their own expenses. The vehicles of the Ashram's Transport Service may be engaged for pickup and delivery to the station, etc. The Reception Service helps the newcomers acquaint themselves with the Ashram....

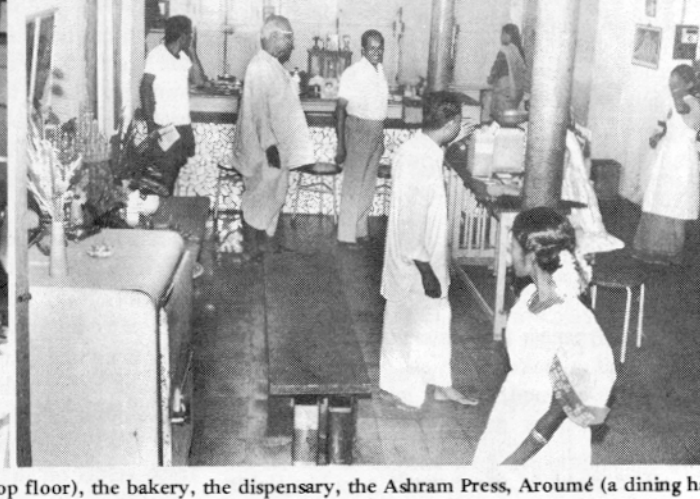
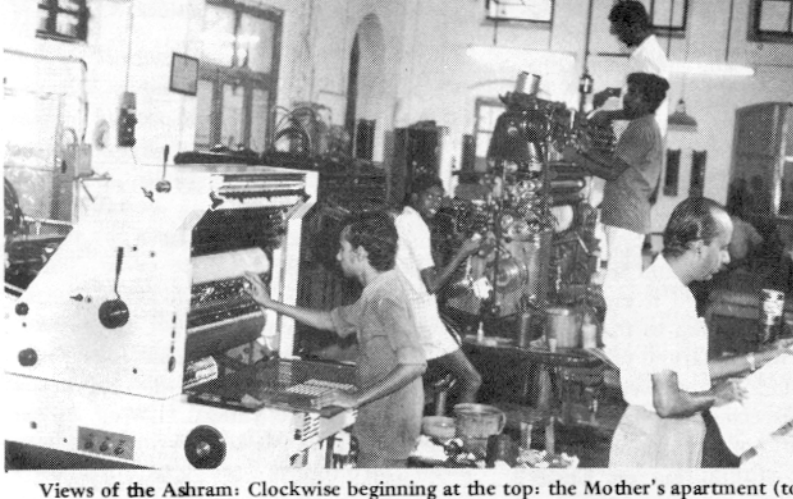
The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is administered by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, a public charitable trust [i.e., corporation] managed by a board of five trustees, most of whom were appointed by the Mother. The Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education is an intrinsic part of the Trust.

The Ashram is supported by the devotees and admirers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.... [From Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1975), pp. 54-63.]

## WALKING Bob Hejny

[Bob Hejny lives in Woodstock, N.Y., where he looks after gardens.]

To be  
above worldly webs,  
afloat on higher air,  
To be  
inflamed with Love,  
the Essence,  
To fall  
suddenly,  
wondering,  
To reach  
and touching,  
kindled,  
To return.



Views of the Ashram: Clockwise beginning at the top: the Mother's apartment (top floor), the bakery, the dispensary, the Ashram Press, Aroumé (a dining hall)





*The Subconscious (2)*

In our yoga we mean by the subconscious that quite submerged part of our being in which there is no wakeningly conscious and coherent thought, will or feeling or organized reaction, but which yet receives obscurely the impressions of all things and stores them up in itself and from it too all sorts of stimuli, of persistent habitual movements, crudely repeated or disguised in strange forms can surge up into dream or into the waking nature. For if these impressions rise up most in dream in an incoherent and disorganized manner, they can also and do rise up into our waking consciousness as a mechanical repetition of old thoughts, old mental, vital and physical habits or an obscure stimulus to sensations, actions, emotions which do not originate in or from our conscious thought or will and are even often opposed to its perceptions, choice or dictates. In the subconscious there is an obscure mind full of obstinate Sanskaras, impressions, associations, fixed notions, habitual reactions formed by our past, an obscure vital full of the seeds of habitual desires, sensations and nervous reactions, a most obscure material which governs much that has to do with the condition of the body. It is largely responsible for our illnesses; chronic or repeated illnesses are indeed mainly due to the subconscious and its obstinate memory and habit of repetition of whatever has impressed itself upon the body-consciousness. But this subconscious must be clearly distinguished from the subliminal parts of our being such as the inner or subtle physical consciousness, the inner vital or inner mental; for these are not at all obscure or incoherent or ill-organized, but only veiled from our surface consciousness. Our surface constantly receives something, inner touches, communications or influences, from these sources but does not know for the most part whence they come. [1]

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The subconscious is universal as well as individual like all the other main parts of the Nature. But there are different parts or planes of the subconscious. All upon earth is based on the Inconscient as it is called, though it is not really inconscient at all, but rather a complete "sub"-conscience, a suppressed or involved consciousness, in which there is everything but nothing is formulated or expressed. The subconscious lies between this Inconscient and the conscious mind, life and body. It contains the potentiality of all the primitive reactions to life which struggle out to the surface from the dull and inert strands of Matter and form

by a constant development a slowly evolving and self-formulating consciousness; it contains them not as ideas, perceptions or conscious reactions but as the fluid substances of these things. But also all that is consciously experienced sinks down into the subconscious, not as precise though submerged memories but as obscure yet obstinate impressions of experience, and these can come up at any time as dreams, as mechanical repetitions of past thought, feelings, actions, etc., as "complexes" exploding into action and event, etc., etc. The subconscious is the main cause why all things repeat themselves and nothing ever gets changed except in appearance. It is the cause why people say character cannot be changed, the cause also of the constant return of things one hoped to have got rid of for ever. All seeds are there and all Sanskaras of the mind, vital and body,—it is the main support of death and disease and the last fortress (seemingly impregnable) of the Ignorance. All too that is suppressed without being wholly got rid of sinks down there and remains as seed ready to surge up or sprout up at any moment. [2]

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The subconscious is not the whole foundation of the nature; it is only the lower basis of the Ignorance and affects mostly the lower vital and physical exterior consciousness and these again affect the higher parts of the nature. While it is well to see what it is and how it acts, one must not be too preoccupied with this dark side or this apparent aspect of the instrumental being. One should rather regard it as something not oneself, a mask of false nature imposed on the true being by the Ignorance. The true being is the inner with all its vast possibilities of reaching and expressing the Divine and especially the inmost, the soul, the psychic Purusha which is always in its essence pure, divine, turned to all that is good and true and beautiful. The exterior being has to be taken hold of by the inner being and turned into an instrument no longer of the upsurging of the ignorant subconscious Nature, but of the Divine. It is by remembering always that and opening the nature upwards that the Divine Consciousness can be reached and descend from above into the whole inner and outer existence, mental, vital, physical, the subconscious, the subliminal, all that we overtly or secretly are. This should be the main preoccupation. To dwell solely on the subconscious and the aspect of imperfection creates depression and should be avoided. One has to keep a right balance and stress on the positive side most, recognising the other but only to reject and change it. This and a constant faith and reliance on the Mother are what is needed for the transformation to come. [3]

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The inner being does not depend on the subconscious, but the outer has depended on it for thousands of lives—that is why the outer being and physical consciousness's habit of response to the subconscious can be a formidable obstacle to the progress of the sadhana and is so with most. It keeps up the repetition of the old movements, is always pulling down the consciousness and opposing the continuity of the ascent and bringing the old nature or else the tamas (non-illumination and non-activity) across the descent. It is only if you live wholly and dynamically in the inner being and feel the outer as a quite superficial thing that you can get rid of the obstruction or minimise it until the transformation of the outer being can be made complete. [4]

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The conscious parts have to be prepared first—impossible to deal successfully with the subconscious till then, except in points and details. Just as the musician has first to learn the right principle and execution of his music with his mind and vital (aesthetic) perception and will—and teach his fingers to execute it—afterwards the subconscious in his fingers will learn its work and do the right thing of itself—e.g., touching the right keys without his eyes having to follow. [5]

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It is not a fact that formless things can have no power—all that is necessary is that they should have a force in them. The subconscious influences the body because all in the body has developed out of the subconscious and all in itself still is only half conscious and much of its action can be called subconscious. It is therefore much more easily influenced by the subconscious than by the conscious mind and conscious will or even the vital mind and vital will except in those things in which a conscious mental or vital control has been established and the subconscious itself has accepted it. If it were not so, man's control of his actions and physical states would be complete, there would be no illness or if there were, it would be immediately cured by mental action. But it is not so. For that reason the higher consciousness has to be brought down, the body and the subconscious enlightened by it and accustomed to obey its control. [6]

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As there is a superconscious (something above our present consciousness) above the head from which the higher consciousness comes down into the body, so there is also a subconscious (something below our consciousness) below the feet. Matter is under the control of this power, because it is that out of which it has been created—that is why matter seems to us to be quite unconscious. The material body is very much

[This is the second installment in the series of "letters" Sri Aurobindo wrote to a fictional correspondent, begun in our last issue. They present his ideas on Indian and European cultures. They were probably intended for the *Karmayogin*, but never appeared there. It should be borne in mind that these were written to arouse an India ruled by Great Britain, which explains the stress and many of the references in them.]

4

The idea that the Europeans have organised enjoyment just as the Hindus have organised asceticism, is a very common superstition which I am not bound to endorse merely because it is common. Say rather that the Europeans have systematised feverishness and the Hindus universalised inertia and mendicancy. The appearance of things are not the things themselves, nor is a shadow always the proof of a substance. I admit that the Europeans have tried hard to organise enjoyment. Power, pleasure, riches, amusement are their gods and the whirl of a splendid and active life their heaven. But have they succeeded? I think that nowhere is life less truly enjoyable than in brilliant and arrogant Europe. The naked African seems to be to be happier and more genuinely luxurious than the cultured son of Japhet.

It is this very trying hard that spoils the endeavour. What a grotesque concept indeed is this of trying hard to be joyous! Delight, joy, *ananda* either are by nature or they do not exist; to be natural, to be in

harmony with the truth of things is the very secret of bliss. The garden of Eden is man's natural abode and it is only because he wilfully chose to know evil that he was driven out of his paradise.

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I suspect that it is a malady of your intellect to demand figs from thistles and cry fie upon the thistle if it merely produces thorns. After all, would it not be a monotonous world that consisted only of roses and sweeting, of virtue and success? Thorns have their necessity, grief has its mission, and without a part of sin, suffering and struggle heaven might not be so heavenly to the blest. I am not prepared to deny a kind of beneficence to evil; I have sufficient faith in God's Love and Wisdom to believe that if evil were merely evil, it could not continue to exist.

I will tell you all the evil,—since we must use these inadequate terms,—that I think about Europe and then I will tell you what a great work I see it beating out with difficulty for man's ultimate good. That there would be much that is wrong and perverse, that there should even be an infinite corruption, in Europe and Asia at this moment, was, if you consider it, inevitable. It is the Age of Iron, not even thinly coated with gold, only splashed here and there with a counterfeit of the nobler metal. Kali at the lowest depth of one of his plumb descents, his eyes sealed, his ears deaf, his heart of bronze, his hunger insatiable, but his nerve relaxed and impotent, stumbles on through a self-created darkness with the marshlight and the corpse-light for his guides, straining out of those blind orbs after an image of Power that he cannot seize. Time was when he dreamed of love and prated of humanity, but though he still mouths the words, he has forgotten the things. He groped too after wisdom; he has grasped only Science. By that Science he has multiplied comforts till comfort itself has grown uncomfortable; till life is cumbered and hampered with appliances; and to this uncomfortable luxury and encumbered efficiency he has given the name of civilisation. At present he hungers only after force and strength, but when he thinks he has laid his hands on them, it is Death instead that puts his sign on the seeker and impotence and sterility mock at him under the mast of a material power.

For my part I see failure written large over all the splendid and ostentatious achievements of Europe. Her costliest experiments, her greatest expenditure of intellectual and moral force have led to the bankruptcy of moral elevation and discouraging of man's once infinite hope.

When one considers how many and swift her bankruptcies have been, the imagination is appalled by the swiftness of this motor ride to ruin. The bankruptcy of the ideas of the French Revolution, the bankruptcy of utilitarian Liberalism, the bankruptcy of national altruism, the bankruptcy of humanitarianism, the bankruptcy of religious faith, the bankruptcy of political sincerity, the bankruptcy of true commercial honesty, the bankruptcy of the personal sense of honour, how swiftly they have all followed on each other or raced with each other for precedence and kept at least admirable pace. Only her many-sided science with its great critical and analytical power and all the contrivances that come of analysis, is still living and keeps her erect. There remains that last bankruptcy yet to come and when that is once over, what will be left? Already I see a dry rot begun in its most sapful and energetic part. The firm materialism which was its life and protection, is beginning also to go bankrupt, and one sees nothing but craze and fantasy ready to take its place. Europe is full of the noise and apparel of life, of its luxurious trappings, of a myriad-footed material clang and tread, but of that which supports life she is growing more and more empty. When they had less knowledge, her people had wiser and stronger souls. They had a literature, a creative intellectual force, a belief, a religion good or bad, a hope, a light that led onwards, a fixed path. Now they have only hungers, imaginations, sentiments and passions. The hungers are made decent, they are even disguised as "ideals" and "rights," the sentiments deftly intellectualised, even superficially moralised; the imaginations are tricked out to look like reason, the passions decorously masked and deceived. They criticise everything subtly rather than well, but can create nothing—except machines. They have organised society with astonishing success and found the very best way to spread comfort and kill their souls. Their system of government is a perpetual flux. Its past looks back to a yet corrupter aristocracy, its future sinks to anarchic dissolution, or at best rests in a tyrannical materialistic socialism which seeks to level all that is yet high to the grade of the artisan instead of making the artisan himself worthy of a throne. A thousand newspapers vulgarise knowledge, debase aesthetical appreciation, democratise success and make impossible all that was once unusual and noble. The man of letters has become a panderer to the intellectual appetites of a mob or stands aloof in the narrowness of a coterie. There is plenty of brilliance everywhere, but one searches in vain for a firm

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continued from preceding page

under the influence of this power for the same reason; it is why we are not conscious of what is going on in the body, for the most part. The outer consciousness goes down into the subconscious when we are asleep, and so it becomes unaware of what is going on in us when we are asleep except for a few dreams. Many of these dreams rise up from the subconscious and are made up of old memories, impressions, etc., put together in an incoherent way. For the subconscious receives impressions of all we do or experience in our lives and keeps these impressions in it, sending up often fragments of them in sleep. It is a very important part of the being, but we can do nothing much with it by the conscious will. It is the higher Force working in us that in its natural course will open the subconscious to itself and bring down into it its control and light. [7]

#### References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 1:353.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 354-55.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 355.
- 4-7. *Ibid.*, 3:1593, 1595, 1596, 1597 respectively.



foundation, the power or the solidity of knowledge. The select seek paradox in order to distinguish themselves from the herd; a perpetual reiteration of some startling novelty can alone please the crowd. Each favourite is like an actor from whom the audience expect from day to day the usual passion or the usual farce. Paradox and novelty therefore thrive; but the select have an easily jaded appetite, the multitude are fickle and novelties have their hour. Therefore even the favourite palls. But these people have a great tamasic persistence of habit and a certain loyalty to established names; much that they read is from habit rather than enjoyment. Otherwise there would be no stability in this chaos of striking worthlessness and this meteor-dance of ephemeral brilliance. For more than half a century the whole of Europe has not been able to produce a single poet of even secondary magnificence. One no longer looks for Shakespeare or Dante to return, but even Wordsworth or Racine have [...illegible word] become impossible. Hugo's flawed opulence, Whitman's formless plenty, Tennyson's sugared emptiness seem to have been the last poetic speech of modern Europe. If poetical genius appears, it is at once taken prisoner by the applauding coterie or the expectant multitude and, where it began, there it ends, enslaved in ignoble fetters, pirouetting per-

petually for their pleasure round a single accomplishment. Of all literary forms the novel only has still some genius and even that is perishing of the modern curse of overproduction.

Learning and scholarship are unendingly active over the dead corpse of creative power as in Alexandria and with the later Romans before the great darkness. Eccentricity and the hunting after novelty and paradox play in it over an ostentatious precision and accuracy. Yesterday's opinion is today exploded and discarded, new fireworks of theory, generalisation and speculation take the place of the old, and to this pyrotechnic rushing in a circle they give the name of progress. The possibility of a calm insight and wisdom seems to have departed from this brilliant mob of pushing, overactive intellects. Force there is, but force doomed to a rapid dissolution, of which the signs are already not wanting. The very churches and chapels are now only the theatres of a habitual stage performance of portentous and unnecessary dullness. With the exception of a small minority full of a grotesque, superficial but genuine passion, nobody believes, nobody feels; opinion, convention, preference and habit are alive and call themselves religion, but the heart that loves God is not to be found. Only a few of the undeveloped are really religious, the castbacks and atavists of this European evolution.

## THE MOTHER'S AGENDA (2) (Notes on the Way)

12 January 1965

*Mother:* ...The whole thing is to hold on. And to hold on, I have found only one way, it is this Calm, the inner calm—the calm that is to become all the more...how to say? complete, as the struggle is more material.

There has been for sometime past (particularly since the first of January) a kind of bombardment of adverse forces—a fury, you know. Then you must feel like that [*Mother becomes immobile like a statue*], that is all. And when physically you have been much shaken, you must not ask too much of the body, you must give it a good deal of tranquillity, a good deal of rest.

*Disciple:* The difficulty is that I am very much absorbed by the condition of this body, it takes away much of my consciousness—the physical mind, for example, invades me completely.

*Mother:* Yes, I know it very well. But that is always the difficulty, the difficulty of everyone. That is why in the past they used to tell you: "Get away! leave it alone to flounder about—you get away." But we have no right to do that, it is contrary to

our work. You know, you can arrive very well at an almost absolute freedom with regard to the body, so much so that you can feel nothing, nothing at all, but I have no more the right to exteriorise myself, just imagine! Even when I am quite unwell or things are quite difficult or even when I am left a little quiet, that is to say, at night and I say to myself: "Oh, to go into my blissfulness"—it is not permitted. I am bound there [*Mother touches her body*]. It is there, there, it is to be realised.

It is for that.

Only from time to time, for a precise action (sometimes it comes like a lightning, sometimes for a few minutes only), the great Power that was there before, that used to be constantly felt, comes rushing, does its work and goes away. But never on this body. Never does it do anything for this body—it is not a higher intervention that will change, it is from within.

The same thing is happening to you, it happens to everybody who does the work, that is the difficulty. That is why I tell you: It does not matter, do not worry if you are

The moral nerve is equally relaxed. Immorality which does not know how to enjoy, impotence and dullness of the capacity for enjoyment masquerading as virtue, decorum and prudery covering a cesspool, appetite and rapid satiety of the imperial Romans combining in various proportions or associating on various terms with the *euprepeia* and looseness of the Greeks. But the Pagan virility, whether united to Roman coarseness or Greek brilliance, is only to be seen in a few extraordinary individuals. Society is cast in the biune mould of monogamy and prostitution. You will find such a Parisian, who keeps his wife and mistress and frequents his state-licensed harlots as well, shocked and pained at the idea of polygamous Indians enjoying the same rights as the virtuous sons of Europe. Some are even afraid that the resurgence of Asia may end in the lowering of Western morals. There can then be a descent from as well as to Avernus! In a word, the whole of Europe is now a magnified Alexandria, brilliant forms with a perishing soul in imitation of the forms of health, feverish activity with no capital but the energy of the sickbed. One has to concede however that it is not altogether sterile, for all Europe and America pullulate with ever multiplying machinery. [*From Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research 3 (December 1979), no. 2, pp. 195-99.*]

occupied with your body; only try to *profit by* that—profit by this preoccupation—to bring into it Peace and Peace. Always it is as though I was enveloping you within a cocoon of peace. And then, if you could precisely put into this mind that vibrates, stirs all the while, truly like a monkey—if you could put in there...this Peace which acts directly into the material vibration—a Peace in which everything relaxes.

Do not think—do not think of trying to transform the physical mind or to silence it or abolish it; all that is still activity. Simply let it go on, but put the Peace, feel the Peace, live the Peace, know the Peace—the Peace, the Peace.

That is the only thing. [*Bulletin*, April 1965, pp. 59-60]

24 March 1965

*Disciple:* S. had a rather bad dream: she came into a house over which one had to keep watch, and none had done it; enemies had entered. S. went into the house, found a room and Sri Aurobindo was there with a wound in his foot; he was groaning. He had been wounded by the enemies who were al-

light—not of Ananda, but a pleasant light, so I knew that there was something in it.

And there are degrees, to be sure, an almost infinity of qualities.

That is the way given to me for finding out the position of things.

And it is quite simple, quite outside thought. Only afterwards, when you asked me, for example, about the dream, I said, "Logically, since the vibration is there [*gesture downward*] it must be a memory." And with a kind of certitude, because...because the perception is altogether impersonal.

It is an extraordinarily delicate mechanism and its field of receptivity [*gesture of gradation*] almost infinite.

My way of knowing people is also like that now. But for a long time past when I see a photograph, for example, it does not at all pass through thought, these are not deductions or intuitions—that creates a vibration somewhere. And then amusing things also happen. The other day I was given the photograph of someone, I feel quite well, by the place which is touched, by the answering vibration, I know that this man has the habit of handling ideas and possesses the assurance of someone who teaches. I ask, in order to see, "What does this man do?" I am told he does business. Then I say, "But he is not made for business, he understands nothing of it." And after three minutes I am told: "Ah, excuse me please, he is a professor!" [*Mother laughs*] It is like that.

It is so constantly, constantly.

And the valuation of the world, the vibrations of the world.

That is why I asked you to give me your hands just now—why? It was just to have the vibration. Well, I felt what is called in English "a sort of dullness." I said to myself: he is not all right.

And no thinking, nothing, simply like that [*Mother remains still in a gesture of self-offering upward*].

Then what is it that is not all right? [*Mother laughs*] Yes, it is that, it is a kind of "dullness."

*Disciple*: Yes, I am very much sunk in Matter.

*Mother*: It is that.

*Disciple*: And it is not funny.

*Mother*: No, but can't you get out of it?

*Disciple*: I am harassed. And my body does not help me either.

*Mother*: Ah, no, the body never helps, now I am convinced of it. You can to a certain extent help your body (not very much, still, to an extent), you can help your body. But the body does not help you. Always its vibration is on the ground.

*Disciple*: Yes, it is heavy.

*Mother*: Without exception. Without ex-

ception it is a lowering, and above all it is that; it is something that makes you dull, dull—it does not vibrate....

But with this sadhana that I am following there are some leading strings which one can pursue. I have some phrases of Sri Aurobindo.... For the other sadhanas I had the habit: whatever he said was clear, that showed the way, one had not to search. But here he has not done it, only he has said or made some remarks from time to time and these remarks are useful to me (also there is the night when I meet him, but I do not want to count too much upon that, for... you become too anxious to have this contact and that spoils everything). There are a few remarks that have been retained by me and they are, yes, like leading strings; for example: "Endure, endure."

Suppose you have a pain somewhere; the instinct (the instinct of the body, the instinct of the cells) is to shrink and seek to reject—that is the worst thing, that increases invariably. Therefore, the first thing to teach to the body is to remain quiet, to have no reaction at all; above all, no fidgeting, not even a movement of rejection—a perfect immobility. That is the bodily equality.

A perfect immobility.

After the perfect immobility comes the movement of inner aspiration (I always speak of the aspiration of the cells—I use words for what has no word, but there is no other way of expressing), surrender, that is to say, spontaneous and total acceptance of the supreme Will (which one does not know). Does the All-Will want things to go this side or that side, that is to say, towards the disintegration of some elements or towards...? and there also there are infinite shades: there is the passage between two heights (I speak of cellular realisations, do not forget that), I mean one has an inner poise, a poise of movement, of life and it is understood that while passing from one movement to a higher movement, almost always there happens a descent and then an ascent—it is a transition. Then does the shock you receive push you downward to make you rise again or does it push you downward to abandon the old movements, for there are cellular ways of being that should disappear in order to give place to other ways? There are others that tend to rise upward again with a higher harmony and organisation. This is the second point. And one must wait and see without postulating in advance what should be. Above all, there is the desire—the desire to be at ease, the desire to be in peace, all that—which must cease, disappear absolutely. One must be absolutely without reaction, like that, immobile [*gesture, with palms open, of offering upward*]. And then, when one is like that ("one" means the cells), after a time

lowed to enter into the house. Seeing Sri Aurobindo wounded, she ran, ran looking for you.

*Mother*: It is perhaps simply an image of what happened on February 11. [*The Ashram was attacked by rioters during the anti-Hindi protest. Some houses were looted and burnt.*]

*Disciple*: It is not something that is going to happen?

*Mother*: Premonitory? No.

The foot means his physical action through some people or through the Ashram or through me.

I do not think it is serious. It is the image of what happened and it was recorded somewhere. [*silence*]

It is quite a curious development. For sometime past, but in a more and more precise manner, when I hear something or something is read to me or I hear the music or someone narrates a fact, I feel it immediately; the origin of the activity, the plane on which it is happening or the origin of the inspiration is rendered automatically to the quality of the vibration. It is either constructive or negative, and when that touches however little it may be, at a given moment, a domain of Truth, there is...how to say, a spark, as it were, of a vibration of Ananda. And the thought is absolutely silent, immobile, nothing—nothing [*Mother opens her hands upward in a gesture of total self-offering*]. But that perception is becoming more and more precise. And I know in this way—I know from where comes the inspiration, where the action is situated and the quality of the thing.

And it has a precision, oh, infinitesimal, in detail. The first time I felt it clearly was when I heard the music composed [by Sunil, an Indian disciple] for "The Hour of God"; it was the first occasion and at that time I did not know that it was a well-organised thing, a kind of organised experience. But now, after all these months, that has been regularised and for me it is an absolutely sure indication, it does not correspond to any active thought, any active will—I am simply an infinitely delicate machine for recording vibrations. That is how I know from where things come. There is no thought. That is how the vibration of the dream came to me [*Mother makes a gesture downward, under the feet*], it was in the domain of the subconscious. So I knew that it was a matter of recording.

The other day when Z. read to me his article, it was neutral [*vague gesture about mid height*] all the while neutral, then all of a sudden, a spark of Ananda; it was this which made me appreciate. And just now, when you read this text of Y. there was a small ray of light [*gesture at the height of the throat*], then I knew. A pleasant ray of

comes the perception of the category to which the movement belongs and one has only to follow, whether it is something that has to disappear and be replaced by another thing (which is not known for the moment) or it is something that has to be transformed.

And so on. All the while it is like that.

All this is to tell you that the thought is absolutely immobile, everything happens directly; questions of vibration. Well, it is only in this way that one can know what one should do. If the thing passes through

the mind, especially the physical thinking which is absolutely imbecile, absolutely, you can know nothing; so long as it is working you are always led to do what you should not do, to have particularly the bad reaction—the reaction that helps the forces of disorder and obscurity instead of counteracting them. I am not speaking of anxiety, because it is for a very, very long time past there is no anxiety in my body—a long time, many years—anxiety is like swallowing a cup of poison.

This is what is called physical yoga.

## THE FRONTIERS OF EVOLUTION

*Satprem*

[The feature article in our last issue, prepared by guest editor Lynda Lester, presented extracts from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on the supramental transformation. The following material, from *Mother: The Divine Materialism* by Satprem (Madras: Macmillan India Press, 1977) was part of the presentation. But permission to publish it was not received until after we had gone to press. As permission has now been received, we offer these extracts.]

In the atom, the supreme Ray is hidden, fragmented, divided, pulverized; the ONE supreme, complete, powerful, immortal, is at the heart of a little forgetful cell as much as throughout all interstellar space. For, in truth, "the Spirit who is here in man and the Spirit who is there in the Sun, lo, it is one Spirit and there is no other." And there is a moment in evolution, a supreme moment, when the coincidence draws near, when, freed from the obscure layers that are really the layers of forgetfulness, the radiant consciousness leans over its little body and becomes itself, complete, powerful, luminous, immortal, down to the most obscure little cell. Then the Being from "above" joins the being from "below," the superman becomes man, the untruncated totality finds itself again even in the darkest fragment—what was *is*. The time changes. And death will be conquered, because death was only self-forgetfulness. When the body will remember itself totally, when it will be totally what it is, enlightened, clarified, when the two will have embraced in even the most obscure cell, we shall become completely immortal in a new body and on a new earth. "O men," said the Vedic Rishis, "follow the shining thread... weave an inviolate work, become the human being, create the divine race. . . . Seers of Truth are you, sharpen the shining spears with which you cut the way to that which is Immortal; knowers of the secret planes, form them, the steps by which the gods attained to immortality" (X. 53. 5, 6, 10). "Then shall thy humanity become as if the workings of these gods; it is as if the visible heaven of light were founded in thee" (V. 66.2).

This coincidence of the two is what Sri Aurobindo and Mother will call *the transformation*. It is the passage of the human body to a supramental or super-human body. [pp. 183-84.]

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If a single body is touched, all other bodies can be touched, for there is only one Matter and one body. If Matter changes at one point, it can change at all points....

One pure little cell in a single corner of matter, this is what can change the world. [pp. 188, 338.]

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We don't know to what extent everything is absolutely important and how the least gesture can reverberate across the world if it is absolutely *the* gesture—if it is. [p. 333.]

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Now we are at the point when a new heaven is going to touch a new earth. . . . The frontiers of evolution are here. [pp. 187, 195.]

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But if once, only once, this little door has opened, this little skylight in the fortress, this little golden breath, you return to it, as if you are forcibly led back to it—because it is nothing and it is full of a supreme force that passes through the years like a smile. It is even that which passes through all lives. Suddenly, this useless second comes to pull you by the sleeve as if it alone existed in a million empty hours. A little drop of pure diamond. It is the Force itself. Pure. It is the only thing that *was* through a million muddles. It is not at all serious, and it is all that remains. It's as fragile as a smile and more powerful than tons of stockpiled uranium—but it's millions of years old, it is not in a hurry, it doesn't show off, it awaits its hour, it doesn't need to make miracles: it is *the* miracle. It can remake the world in a second. It is the power of the world. [p. 217]

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One must overcome all that. And the only way to do it: every second all the cells must be [*gesture of offering upwards*] in adoration, in aspiration—adoration, aspiration...nothing else. Then after a time there is also delight, then that ends by blissful trust. When this trust is established all will be well. But...it is easy to say, it is much more difficult to do. Only for the moment I am convinced that this is the only means, there is no other. [*Bulletin*, August 1965, pp. 95-105.]

*Yes, this inevitable Need. Nothing else counts. That is all. Only that.* The supramental work of the end was at the beginning of the great voyage, the fire of aspiration that burns and burns from body to body, that is built more and more, that remembers more and more, until it touches its round totality and its solar body. [p. 282]

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Then each one will have his real name beneath all the costumes, or costumeless, his unique vibration, his irreplaceable music in the great Totality, his memory finally restored, and his great wings. And we shall open our eyes unto our earth as if we had never seen it before.

Perhaps it will be another earth.

Another history.

Another gravitation beneath the stars.

Our real country at last and our indestructible body.

Beyond the tombs, and beyond the summits. [p. 61]

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Only the body can understand. . .

I saw this Secret. . . I saw that it is in terrestrial Matter, on the earth, that the Supreme becomes perfect. . . To be capable of understanding the spiritual extreme, the material extreme, and to find the meeting point, there were . . . it becomes a real force. [p. 99]

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It was something that was not at all human but was there and acted quietly THROUGH me . . . Something that takes hold of the body, oh, a vibration so warm, so sweet, and at the same time so terribly powerful! [pp. 257-58]

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If one wants to do the work in a solitary way, it is absolutely impossible to do it in a total way, because all physical beings, however complete they may be, are only partial and limited: they represent only one law in the world. It may be a very complex law, but it is only one law . . . Each individual

being, even if he is of an entirely superior quality, even if he has been created for an entirely special work, is only one individual being; that is, **THE TOTALITY OF THE TRANSFORMATION CANNOT TAKE PLACE THROUGH A SINGLE BODY . . .** If one wants to have a general action, at least a minimum of physical individuals is necessary. [pp. 357-58]

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Truly a thirst, a need, a need. All the rest has no importance, it is **THAT** that one needs. No more ties—free, free, free, free. Always ready to change everything, except one thing: to aspire, to have this thirst. I understand it well: there are those who do not like the idea of a “Divine” because immediately it gets mixed up with all these horrible ideas and then somewhat complicates their existence—but one doesn’t need that! The “something” that one needs, the Perfection that one needs, the Light that one needs, the Love that one needs, the Truth that one needs, the supreme Perfection that one needs—and that’s all. As for formulas . . . the fewer there are, the better. But that: a need, a need, a need, which only **THE Thing** can satisfy—nothing else; no half-measures, only that. And then, go on! Go on! Your path will be your path, it makes no difference—no matter what path, no matter, even the excesses of the American youth can be a path, it makes no difference! [p. 208]

## THE FIRST OF THE TRINITIES

### Edith Schnapper

[Edith Schnapper is an English disciple of long standing, a graduate in music, philosophy, and art history, who formerly taught at Cambridge University. She is the author of *The Inward Odyssey* and other works. This piece was written especially for *Collaboration*.]

The Integral Yoga represents a field of experience so vast that it is easy to become overawed by it. As a result, we often fail to respond to its unending challenges because we are reluctant to leave the safety of past attainments. Yet sometimes a sentence in Sri Aurobindo’s or the Mother’s writings breaks through our state of inertia, enabling us to rise to the call. The following is one of these unique, mantric utterances that confront us with a categorical statement of truth:

“The Transcendent, the Universal, the Individual are three powers overarching, underlying and penetrating the whole manifestation; this is the first of the Trinities. In the unfolding of consciousness also, these are the three fundamental terms and none of them can be neglected if we would have the experience of the whole Truth of experience.” [1]

Are we not often guilty of just such a neglect by one-sidedly concentrating on

one or the other of these aspects of the Divine, thus precluding an integral transformation of our being. Sri Aurobindo insists that all three are interconnected and, what is more, are informed by a unifying flow of force which we are asked to enter in order to become one with it. Our efforts, then, should be directed towards that end; or is it more to the point to say, should now be directed towards that end? For it appears that the Integral Yoga has reached a phase when the task of synthesizing the three divine poises in life has to be attempted. Are we ready to give ourselves to this new venture?

It is likely that many of us enter the search through the door labeled “individual yoga.” We feel that this is the line we are called upon to pursue, and to do so in faith and devotion throughout life. And yet, the individual yoga reveals itself to be an open-ended pursuit; for if we allow it to do so, it will, at a certain stage, grow beyond its own confines. What form this will take depends on our individual disposition; whatever this may be, we come to realize that, in order to complete the Integral Yoga, we have to give its innate tendencies free play and allow it to widen and universalize itself.

If we do so, we experience a shift of emphasis. Something is awakened in us which quickens our yoga and results in a change of orientation. It is as though we were being molded into a tiny cell of a vast organism where everything we do, feel and say matters because nothing has an independent life of its own. We do not lose our individuality, but its meaning changes; it loses its separative character, seeking participation in a dynamic process of radical change.

These happenings can be exhilarating but also frightening and even painful; it depends on our sincerity and courage. The first shift of emphasis we notice is one away from our purely individual endeavors. We feel the need of support from others who are going through a similar development; as a result, we look for groups or communities we can join or form. At the same time, we realize that these have to be of a special type, one that has only fairly recently emerged and done so tentatively and in a spirit of experimentation. At this point, it is essential to clear our minds of a major misconception prevalent today. It is a fallacy to take for granted that any spiritual community, whether of the monastic or the Ashram type, is necessarily engaged in what the Mother has called “collective yoga,” that is, in that yogic process which seeks to synthesize in consciousness the Trinity of divine powers, and in which a collective realization plays a decisive part.

Most communities are engaged in guiding the individual seeker to find, and live

by, the inner Presence and in creating the necessary conditions to facilitate the attainment of this goal. Members of such communities pursue their individual yoga together; they do so collectively, and we know only too well the benefits that are derived by living in close company with like-minded people. At some stage of our yoga, many of us cannot do without such mutual support; we need to develop in us a spirit of tolerance, of mutual help and understanding, fostered by a strong bond of common aspiration, usually inspired by commitment to the teaching of a spiritual master, whether physically present or not.

Within the framework of the Integral Yoga this is a stage which should lead to, but in itself does not represent, a universalization of the yoga. It is essential, therefore, to distinguish between a community dedicated to the pursuit of an individual yoga, and doing so collectively, and one which, having grown from such a basis, aims at surpassing itself, making this its foremost spring of action. These alternatives determine the character of a group or community.

The sadhak, then, who has reached that point of transition must not only be open to change, but must be ready to face the upsurge of new problems and even of setbacks; for he is likely to find that the steady progress of his yoga is rudely interrupted. Under the pressure of the collectivity it becomes difficult or impossible for him to maintain the level of experience he had reached and what is even more disturbing, he discovers that his individual sadhana alone does not suffice any longer.

What then happens at this point of transition? Although both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have written at length on this subject, in immediate experience we are like children about to enter adolescence without any clear notion of what is happening to us. Therefore, any attempt to describe this nascent stage adequately must remain tentative, for only when a spiritual phenomenon has become one with life can it be truly known and understood.

Any period of transition partakes of both the old and the new; for this reason, what we are likely to experience first is a building up of tension and a clash of opposing tendencies. The mounting pressure for change is resisted by our habitual reactions claiming their accustomed due. In yogic terms, we find it difficult and often painful to let go of the very thing, a practice, an acquired attitude or response, that has helped us along and, perhaps, has become the firm basis of our yoga. We have to learn that our refusal to open ourselves to change means, in Sri Aurobindo’s view, that what had been a help at a certain phase may become a bar to our development. This does not

mean, however, that we have to lose the fruits of our past efforts, for what we have embarked upon is a process of growth that involves not the loss of what had gone before, but its transformation. The individual yoga, therefore, cannot and must not be abandoned, but we have both to allow and to help it to change itself; only if this is not understood will it appear in opposition to and even clash with the process of universalization. In fact, at the deepest level of our individual yoga we touch a turning point where the direction of our seeking is reversed. A universal law appears to spring into action which teaches us that, if we follow a particular psychospiritual process to its culmination, it will turn towards and eventually embrace what we regarded as its very opposite. This may confuse us, for dualistically oriented as we are, we are faced with a contrary movement that seems to run counter to everything we set out to achieve. We feel confronted with a choice: do we cling to the hard-earned fruits of our past efforts or do we follow the new trend and let go?

"To let go" sounds an easy thing to do, but what in fact is asked of us is our participation in "the great world rite" [2], sacrifice, and to do so from moment to moment; for without it, entry into the universal or cosmic poise of the yoga is barred. Probably there are no more revealing words spoken by our Gurus than those dealing with sacrifice; and yet its deeper meaning evades many of us. Its true significance for our yoga transpires if we remember the derivation of the term. It is literally "to make holy," to divinize; as such, it in no way implies an attitude of mortification, but on the contrary, envisages a life of total attention in act, thought, and feeling to the Divine, with nothing to stand in the way, not even the fruits of our endeavors. We find that this alone opens the way to unhindered progress.

If the individual yoga bears the fruit of the discovery of the Divine indwelling, it is this, in the limitations put upon it by ourselves, that has to be offered and given up. We have to learn that a predominantly inward search, if one-sidedly pursued beyond a certain point, will add to our chronic sense of isolation. What is asked of us here is not the sacrifice of the inward search as such, but of its narrow interpretation, hindering its growth towards a wider experience. It is as though a change of direction was asked of us which not only involves a shift of values but a change of the rules governing our search. We feel the need to relate to ourselves more actively and more consciously to others, and the world in general. What we now seek is relationship based not only on common interests and the pursuit of a common ideal, but on

a meeting in depth between soul and soul. Such contact implies openness and mutuality and, therewith, a balance between giving and receiving.

Ideally we give ourselves; in doing so, we fulfill the precondition for opening ourselves to and receiving the other. What is involved here is not, as it may seem, two sequential movements, but spontaneous as well as simultaneous gestures of at-onement. Sadly, this is an ideal which, as a basis of life, is mostly out of our reach. We know it from isolated moments, but are unable to perpetuate it, and this for two main reasons. The first is that we hardly ever give ourselves wholly. We withhold the support of parts of our being, usually out of fear of losing our much-treasured independence. This makes impossible what Sri Aurobindo has called "the merging of two souls into one." The second reason stems from the fact that to open ourselves fruitfully to the other presupposes a measure of equality which, certainly at the beginning, few of us can muster. Without it, we are only too easily put off balance owing to our inability to equalize the intake and output of (mainly vital) energies. A period of adjustment is called for, and it is here that our inner adhesion to the Divine Presence as a balancing force is tested.

Before we entered the phase of universalization, we had, in all likelihood, developed a well-functioning defense mechanism, holding at bay what we regarded as disturbing influences intruding from outside. We had learned to erect barriers in order to withdraw safely into the inner domain. With our new orientation, this mechanism too has to change. Whilst contact with the inner Divine Source must remain, our defensive stance has to be relinquished and to be replaced by the dynamism of our self-giving; this, according to the measure of its intensity, will neutralize, as well as transform, and untoward influences assailing us.

Wherever we turn in this process of change, we come up against the demand for surrender and sacrifice. What we have gained, we have to assimilate, become it, offer it up and walk on. We are not allowed to linger so as to derive security and protection from anything but the realization, so often expressed by Sri Aurobindo, that "the Divine is all and all is the Divine." This realization, as a practical support in everyday life, has to grow in us but often does so by slow stages only. During this period of transition our need for protection persists and, as we have seen, this is one of the reasons we seek the company of fellow sadhaks. Is this too a defensive move, intended to erect protective walls around a center?

An element of protection is, no doubt, present, but the form it takes and the way it functions are different, and this will show

itself both outwardly and inwardly. Visible boundaries will tend to be absent as will be strict rules imposed upon the community. The sense of protection will be the natural result of the Divine Presence. This will supply not only protection but directives for acting as the need arises.

The more this new type of collective living develops, whether on a large or a small scale, the more it will move away from the prevalent trends governing the world today. This is a sad but inevitable fact that shows itself in difficulties and even breakdowns of communication, and this applies to the individual as well as the collective level. Ordinarily a community would meet such challenges by unity of purpose and a united stand. In the new type of collectivity, unity has to be found as the result of something else, without which a group can neither stand nor be maintained. For, as Sri Aurobindo insists, neither vital or physical unity, nor mental, moral or emotional unity any longer suffice. The unity we are asked to seek is spiritual and as such is the natural outflow of the total self-giving demanded of us. As we shall find, this alone has the power to awaken in us the realization, as well as the recognition, of the Divine Self in all. It is no longer sufficient to meet as person to person, even if linked by close mutuality and affection, for the unity achieved in this way will, because of its partiality, be only temporary.

The lesson to be learned is that two entities of whatever kind can never become one whilst they remain on their respective levels of significance. True unity needs a third element, itself belonging to a higher or deeper level. Only by meeting in "the higher third" can separation be lastingly overcome; this, however, involves surrender of our independent status. It is the sacrifice demanded of us at this stage whose fruit is the blissful experience of an all-embracing unity. We are surprised not only by joy but by love and are reminded of the Mother's words that "love finds its supreme expression in the bliss of union" [3]. Such an experience, even if only fleetingly touched, changes our yoga because it changes us. We now strive for the attainment of an ideal state in which "our very inspiration and respiration, our very heartbeats can and must be made conscious in us as the living rhythm of the universal sacrifice" [4]. We are asked to live in and by this rhythm as individuals and, in doing so, to perform collectively and in concert "the great world rite" from moment to moment. Yet just because this rite is not only communal but universal in character, it will of itself in time grow beyond any limitations in space. It will, as envisaged by the Mother, embrace in a collective reality all those who in their consciousness have identified themselves



with the living, because ever-changing, process of the Integral Yoga.

Wherever this world rite is performed as a constant and basic observance in everyday life, there a living bond establishes itself spontaneously, forming the ground for the collective reality to be born. As all those who take part in this ritual of sacrifice, however tentatively, can testify, the close bond that is created in an almost mysterious way cuts across all limitations normally imposed by different customs, habits, or life-styles. To meet within this context even as so-called strangers means immediate recognition as well as immediate at-onement in the universal Divine Presence that informs us. When this happens, we feel as though we had been initiated into membership of an invisible brotherhood, dedicated to the task of laying the foundation, stone by stone, for a radical change in human consciousness.

Compared to the major trends in a shifting world scene, we are like tiny cells struggling to maintain ourselves in an alien environment; yet we are secretly helped by the presence of a new awareness planted as a seed in the earth consciousness and as such, it is available to us everywhere. It may well be that this is the preparation necessary for the eventual appearance of the gnostic type of community at various times, in various places and countries.

Having entered the universal stream of sacrifice, we come to realize that all we do, say, or feel is the result of and is carried by a vast and, to us, invisible movement of consciousness in which we are embedded and in which we move and live; and gradually it will dawn upon us that our individuality is nothing but a specialized form of that universal life current, in which an intense and intricate interchange takes place between the whole and its parts. Nothing, therefore, belongs to us alone, everything belongs equally to the world. Whatever we achieve, on whatever small a scale, has thereby been made available to the community at large. We have planted a seed in the hope that it will grow and act as a heaven.

Within the framework of the Integral Yoga, those who partake of this new rhythm of life call themselves Aurovilians or Friends of Auroville; because, as we know, it is at Auroville that the Mother launched the crucial experiment of a collective as well as a universal realization and where its first large-scale laboratory has grown up. Without it, the far-flung cells would not and could not exist and, by the same token, without these scattered outposts, Auroville could not maintain itself. For to do anything in isolation—and this applies equally to the widely dispersed settlements that constitute Auroville—be-

comes an absurdity to those who are linked by the unity of rejection of the old ways, by the unity of their aspiration towards the new, and by the unity of their surrender of a separate selfhood. It is as though they were breathing in one and the same rhythm, thus creating identical wave patterns wherever they may happen to find themselves.

Every stage of the Integral Yoga is not only the carrier of the fruits prepared previously, but it is itself the seedbed for new growth. Although we have been given indications of what the future will demand from us, we are yet too deeply enmeshed in a welter of contrary tendencies to be able to do more than to walk on in readiness for the next step to declare itself and, in the process, to observe certain stirrings in us which might indicate the nature of what is to come.

In those rare moments when separation falls away and we experience the happiness of true unity and indeed union, we naturally long to repeat and to perpetuate the experience and, more than that, we seek to deepen and intensify it. Our longing, if it is sincere and sustained, tends to call forth a response which, so we have to acknowledge, points once again in a new direction. Perhaps, unexpectedly, we remember the Hindu maxim "Thou art That" or a similar teaching, which we have heard many times before, but which in actual experience was beyond us. Now it appears to have come to life, urging us to venture forth once again into unknown territory. Could it be then that the realization of the possibility of identification with the Divine in daily awareness and consciousness is to determine the next step of our yoga?

The various phases in this process of growth interpenetrate with new tendencies emerging long before the old trends have reached maturity; for this reason and following our two Gurus' guidance, dare we say that the yearning in us for the experience of identification means that the transcendent aspect of the Divine has become operative in us?

This sounds like a paradox, which, indeed, it is; for how can transcendence and

our identification with it in life possibly be linked or even find a common denominator? To our way of thinking, this represents an absurdity, for we are here faced with a contradiction in terms; and yet such absurdities, constituting an affront to our sense of logic, are well known on the spiritual path. In fact, if used in the right way, they reveal themselves as one of the most potent means of progress; for if we go along with them, we find that the unease and tension they produce are the very source for the necessary impulse to transcend ourselves.

We begin to realize that, although we can never hope to know the Transcendent Divine, we can yet experience our essential identity with It. The precondition appears to be that, with our whole being, we acknowledge the fact of our total ignorance, for only then are we allowed to enter the "Cloud of Unknowing," that state where ego-knowledge and therewith ego resistance are left behind. Although in its full realization this is as yet a far cry, potentially it is with us and molds our lives. And we begin to see that under its influence as a third cementing force, the seeming opposition of the individual and the universal poises of the Divine Life fades away; we experience them increasingly not as separate phases in the yoga, but as three interpenetrating aspects of one and the same Consciousness-Force; and we realize that they do not stand for mental abstractions, but for intimate experiences in everyday living. We learn to recognize them as that veiled yet active divine indwelling, guiding us from within, as that elusive yet exhilarating sense of a hidden oneness to which we feel irresistibly drawn in feeling of recognition and love, and as that insoluble mystery lying at the heart of existence which, in moments of bliss, we know we are.

#### References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1976), p. 247.
2. Ibid., p. 99.
3. The Mother, *Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education XXI* (1969); 79.
4. *Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 102.

I did my Lover's command in the world and the will of my Captor; but they cried, "Who is this corruptor of youth, this destroyer of morals?" —Sri Aurobindo

We find in others what is in us. If we always find mud around us, it proves that there is mud somewhere in us.

—The Mother

Our worth lies only in the measure of our effort to exceed ourselves, and to exceed ourselves is to attain the Divine.

—The Mother

All depends upon the choice of the force that you allow to make use of you as its instrument. And the choice has to be made at every moment of your life.

—The Mother

Whatever the sincerity, simplicity and purity of the relation between two human beings, it shuts them off more or less from the direct divine force and help and limits their strength, light and power only to the sum of their potentialities. *The Mother*

# EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE

## THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

[The Mother reads a note written from memory by a disciple.]

"Auroville will be a self-supporting township.

"All who live there will participate in its life and development.

"This participation may be passive or active.

"There will be no taxes as such but each will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money.

"Sections like industries which participate actively will contribute part of their income towards the development of the township.

"Or if they produce something (like foodstuffs) useful for the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township which is responsible for feeding its citizens.

"No rules or laws are being framed. Things will get formulated as the underlying Truth of the township emerges and takes shape progressively. We do not anticipate."

I thought I had said more than that because I said a good deal about it, inwardly—on the organisation, the food, etc. We are going to make experiments.

Some things are really interesting; first of all, for example, I would like each country to have its pavilion, and in the pavilion there will be the cooking of that country—that is, the Japanese will be able to eat Japanese food if they want to, etc. But in the town itself there will be food for both vegetarians and nonvegetarians, and there will also be some attempt to find the food of tomorrow.

The whole process of assimilation which makes you so heavy—it takes so much of a person's time and energy—that should be done *beforehand*, you should be given something which is immediately assimilable, like the things they are making now; for example, they have vitamin pills and proteins which can be assimilated directly, which don't have much volume—a huge quantity is needed to assimilate very little. Now that they are skilful enough in chemistry, it could be simplified.

People do not like this simply because they take an intense pleasure in eating; but when you no longer take pleasure in eating, you still need nourishment without wasting your time on it. An enormous amount of time is wasted—time in eating, time in digesting, and all the rest. And there, I would like an experimental kitchen, a kind of

culinary laboratory for experimenting. People would go to one place or another according to their tastes and inclinations.

And they don't pay for their food, but they should offer their work or their produce: those who have fields, for example, should give the produce from their fields; those who have factories should give their products; or one gives one's labour in exchange for food.

That in itself eliminates much of the internal exchange of money. And for everything we could find things like this. Basically, it should be a city for study, for study and research into a way of life which is both simplified and in which the higher qualities will have *more time* to develop.

It is only a small beginning.

"Auroville will be a self-supporting township": I want to insist on the fact that it will be an experiment, it is for making experiments—experiments, research, study, Auroville will be a city that will try to be, or will tend to become, or attempt to be "self-supporting," that is to say...

*Disciple:* Autonomous?

*Mother:* "Autonomous" is understood to mean some kind of independence which breaks off relations with others, and that is not what I mean.

For example, those who produce food, like Aurofood—of course, when we are 50,000 it will be difficult to provide for all the needs, but for the moment we are only a few thousand at most—well, a factory always produces far too much, so it will sell outside and receive money. "Aurofood," for example, wants to have a special relationship with the workers; not at all the old system, something which would be an improvement on the communist system, a more balanced organisation than sovietism, that is, something which does not err too much on one side at the expense of the other.

There is one thing I wanted to say: the participation in the well-being and life of the town as a whole is not something calculated on an individual basis, that is, this individual should give so much, it is not like that. It is calculated according to the means, the activity, the capacity for production; it is not the democratic idea which cuts everything up into equal pieces, which is an absurd machinery. It is calculated ac-

cording to one's means: one who has much gives much, one who has little gives little; one who is strong works hard, one who is not strong does something else. You see, it is something truer, deeper. That is why I make no attempt to explain now, because people will start to make all kinds of complaints. All this must come about automatically, so to speak, with the growth of the city, in the true spirit. That is why this note is extremely concise.

For example, this sentence: "All who live there will participate in its life and development according to their capacities and means, not mechanically—so much per unit. That's it, it must be something living and true, not a mechanical thing; and according to each one's capacities, that is, one who has material means, such as those provided by a factory, should give in proportion to its production, not so much per individual, per head.

"The participation may be passive or active": I do not understand what "passive" means; I said it in French and it has been put into English. What could that mean, "passive"?... It would be something more like planes or different levels of consciousness.

*Disciple:* You meant that those who are wise, who work within, do not need to...

*Mother:* Yes, that's it. Those who have a higher knowledge do not need to work with their hands, that is what I meant.

"There will be no taxes as such, but each one will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money." So that is clear: there will be no taxes, but each one will have to contribute to the collective welfare by his work, in kind or in money. Those who have nothing but money will give money. But to tell the truth, "work" can be inner work—but one cannot say that, because people are not honest enough. The work can be an occult, completely inner work, but for that, it must be absolutely sincere and true, and with the capacity for it: no pretension. But not necessarily a physical work.

"Sections like industries which participate actively will contribute part of their income towards the development of the township; of it they produce something (like foodstuffs) that is useful to the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the

[This is the fourth installment from the Auroville report *Progress*.]

township, which is responsible for feeding its citizens." This is what we were just saying. The industries will participate actively, they will contribute. If these industries produce articles which are not constantly needed and therefore in amounts or quantities that are too great to be used within the city, but which will sell outside, they, of course, should participate with money. And I give food as an example; those who produce food will give what they produce to the town—in proportion to what they produce, of course—and the town is responsible for feeding everyone. That means that people will not need to buy food with money; but it must be earned.

It is a sort of adaptation of the communist system, but not in a spirit of levelling; according to the capacity, the position—not the psychological or intellectual, but the inner position of each one.

What is true is that materially every human being has the right—but it is not a "right"... The organisation should be such, should be so arranged, that the material needs of everyone are assured, not according to ideas or rights and equality, but on the basis of the minimum needs. And once that is established, each one should be free to organise his life according to—not according to his financial means, but his inner capacities.

"No rules or laws are being framed. Things will get formulated as the underlying Truth of the township emerges and takes shape progressively. We do not anticipate." What I mean is that usually,—always so far, and now more and more—men lay down mental rules according to their conceptions and ideals, and then they apply them [*Mother brings down her fist to show the world in the grip of mind*], and that is absolutely false, it is arbitrary, unreal—and the result is that things revolt or wither and disappear... It is the experience of Life itself that should slowly elaborate rules which are as flexible and wide as possible, to be always progressive. Nothing should be fixed.

That is the great error of governments; they make a framework and say, "There you are, we have set this up and now we must live by it"; and so of course they crush life and prevent it from progressing. Life itself must develop more and more in a progression towards Light, Knowledge, Power, little by little establishing rules that are as general as possible, so that they can be extremely flexible and change with the need—and change as quickly as the needs and habits do.

The problem finally comes down to this: to replace the mental government of the intelligence by the government of a spiritualised consciousness. 12/30/1967. [*From The Mother on Auroville (Auroville: Auro-publications, 1977), pp. 20-25.*]

**Center Playground/School.** In early 1976 the original building was constructed together with a small wading pool, sand pile, and some climbing equipment. A large, airy, keel-roofed structure, it contains a kitchen and bath and was then used as a private house as well as an environment for a group of small children who came each morning. This continued until 1977, when a more organized program developed involving more children and several part-time helpers, and included weekly visits to the Matrimandir Nursery to study plants and nature as well as regular trips to the beach. Early in 1979 the responsibility fell temporarily to a few parents who continued for several months, but then called a "recess" to reexamine the situation and make repairs to the building.

At about the same time the informal school for basic reading and writing, arts and handicrafts that Shraddhavan had in her small house in Certitude had grown to three adults and 30 children with more and more children from the Center area asking to join. As the house was bursting, they began looking for a more suitable place and the empty Center Playground/School seemed the most natural choice. With much co-operation and support from parents and neighbors, there is now a new energy and a progressively developing program underway for about 40 European, American, and Tamil children varying in age from 2½ to 17. The older children come both from the children's community of Ami and from a group of Tamil boys who had attended the old school in Aspiration but had recently been working at Shraddhavan's house on math and English with Gordon from Kottakarai. Marieka, Gordon, and Sugumwan, a Tamil teacher, have joined Shraddhavan to form the nucleus of the adult presence at the school with a number of others helping for short periods or in connection with additional school activities and outside trips.

The Playground/School has been functioning now [November 1979] for a little over two months and it is gradually becoming clear which aspects of the new arrangement are most successful and where there is need for improvement. On the positive side, the participation by parents and others in the community, the large number of children from a wide variety of backgrounds and the significant difference in ages add a new richness of experience for all. The main building, though of typical "temporary" construction, is in good condition and in a central location. Teaching aids for math and general reading material for all ages is adequate. Most important, there is a good basis for development and growth.

There are several areas where there is hope for improvement. With 40 children, the one main building is already stretched to the limit and it is felt that the addition of more space for quieter study is needed, leaving the main room for games, art, music and group activities. Very simple reading material in French, construction-type toys for young children and cassettes of music, stories and dance would be very useful. At this time the running expenses are met by modest donations, largely from parents.

**Ami.** The original function of Ami was an informal guesthouse, a group of small keel and bamboo "capsules," with a larger building which served as office, kitchen, and dining room, all scattered among the trees of a cashew grove. When in October 1977 the person caring for the guesthouse left Auroville, it was proposed that the building be used as a children's community. After some discussion at Pour Tous meetings, this idea was accepted on a 6-month trial basis and two adults living close by agreed to be "available." A small monthly donation was offered to meet basic maintenance expenses and 7 girls, aged 9 to 15, moved in. They immediately began doing their own cooking, with occasional help from invited adults, and started a vegetable garden. They organized a program of learning activities, inviting people to come to the community at different times to teach art, candle-making, puppet-making, body movement, the Trachtenburg system of math, and later on, French, biology, ornithology, English, cooking, gymnastics, singing and sewing.

The community has always had a very fluid atmosphere, the direction and decisions left entirely to the children, with adult influence always available but given only upon request. As such, the community has gone through many phases as the children have changed, as some went away and others joined. They have tried taking care of household chores in a variety of ways from hired help to an organized program of sharing, and have invited a number of adults to participate in different ways at different times. (They also invited one to leave who was not in harmony with their feelings about the community.)

At present, residents of Ami include some chickens, 2 dogs and a cat, one adult, and 9 girls aged 9-17. The original regular donation is no longer received and maintenance costs are now met by donations from Aurovilians and through the Children's Envelope, but do not cover needed building repairs and new additions, such as a dance floor (for gymnastics).

Some of the special activities made possible in the past have been trips to a bird sanctuary, to Madras to see *Star Wars*, to a horse fair and boating on a nearby river. In a more creative vein, they have produced two films for videotape, one called "Disherella," a comic takeoff on Cinderella, and "The Frog Prince," with a real trained frog. Equally appreciated by Aurovilians of all ages were the two circuses featuring everything a good circus should have, from clowns to acrobats and trained animals.

Gratitude is basically a community of one, but it is far from being uninhabited. The one human resident is an American woman, Dietra, whose interest in wildlife, especially birds, led her to choose an area of roughly 6-7 acres in one of the few dense sections of scrub jungle in Auroville. Her aim is to preserve the natural habitat of birds and other small wild animals and to provide an environment where study and observation might awaken a greater appreciation of wildlife, especially in children and the local Tamil villagers.

In keeping with this idea, much of the area has simply been protected and allowed to maintain its own ecology, other areas have been developed for particular purposes. Approximately 200 forest trees have been planted to extend and densify the natural flora, 100 fruit trees, 2 milk cows and 1 bullock serve more domestic functions. With all the emphasis on birds, the closest thing one finds to a birdcage is a series of three large, interconnecting aviaries which are so naturally designed as to be nearly invisible against a deep green background of trees and shrubs. The purpose of the aviaries is to provide protection for orphaned and wounded birds which somehow find their way to Gratitude in a fairly constant stream. While the birds are maturing or recuperating, they provide an opportunity for discreet observation, but as soon as they are able to make it on their own, they are released.

The most frequent visitors to Gratitude are the Auroville children, who have come regularly at least three times a week for the past year and a half for "classes" in ornithology and art and for a cooking session on Saturdays. Future development will be more and more oriented towards the children with plans for the creation of a studio for science, drama, and observation of wildlife. The studio would be designed to blend with the environment at the edge of one of three ponds which Dietra hopes to build as soon as funds allow, on a recently acquired piece of land. The ponds would be densely planted to encourage many species of water birds to visit and nest. They would be filled during the monsoon, but it is expected that a second borewell will be necessary to maintain a minimum water level during the dry season.

There are two houses in Gratitude; one of them would be ideally suited for future guest teachers.

### Greenwork

In Auroville one ordinarily speaks of the "greenbelt" when referring to those communities whose main purpose and work is afforestation and are mainly located in the future geographical greenbelt that will surround the city. From the beginning, however, afforestation communities were also involved in agriculture, fruit culture and vegetable growing, either for their own use or for sharing with others through Pour Tous. More and more, as Auroville continues to move towards self-sufficiency, these communities are developing a stronger emphasis on food production-related activities, finding a harmonious balance in intermingling this with afforestation and the many-faceted work of conservation and regeneration of the land. For this reason the word "greenwork" seems more accurately descriptive of these various efforts to restore and make productive the ecologically devastated area in which Auroville is located.

Though the people and places may differ widely in personality and approach to the work, there are many areas of agreement that form a strong basis of harmony and collaboration. One predominant feeling among those in greenwork is that their *raison d'être* in Auroville is to grow towards the ideals of Auroville; what has brought them into this particular facet of the city's development is the vision of the land as the body of Auroville and the conviction that the body must be healthy in order for the spiritual development to progress freely. Almost no one came with past experience in forestry or farming and some feel that when the initial stages of intensive work are over, they will move on to other areas. Meanwhile, the attitude is one of stewardship, not ownership, where care and consciousness and effort have the possibility of reversing the circumstances that have brought about the present state of imbalance and ill health in the land.

There are many secondary motivations and affinities as well. One of the most important is interaction through work with the villagers whose skills are mainly land-oriented. This presents a constant challenge but a unique opportunity also to develop mutual respect, trust, friendship, understanding and more. It is interesting that a few years ago the villagers' opinion of Aurovilians vis-a-vis the land was that if the land was lying fallow, it must belong to Auroville. Now the situation has changed and continues to change as more villagers show a willingness to collaborate in caring for the land. In addition, there is the idea of alter-

ing the weather conditions through afforestation; the psychological need for the beauty and protection of plant life; the concern for the roads that are destroyed by erosion or become an ordeal by fire in the heat of the day due to lack of shade trees. the basic need to improve the quality of life and physical health by introducing different varieties and methods of growing vegetables, fruits, and grains; the concern for the literal loss of the land by water and wind erosion and depletion of soil-building materials as a result of overgrazing of grass, shrubs, and trees by village animals; or the interest in improving the agricultural methods of our Tamil neighbors, realizing that Auroville is integrally affected by the conditions that surround it. These are only the more prominent aspects of greenwork and they are not in reality separate or exclusive, but touch the life of everyone here. To the degree that different areas of land are afflicted more acutely with some of these problems than others, or that the community or individual develops an interest in a particular area, emphasis in the work varies from place to place.

As a whole, progress in greenwork during the past 9 years has been the result of first-hand study and experimentation for the simple reason that nothing like Auroville has ever been tried before—the very basis of the work is something entirely new. Even in the physical sense, reclamation of land under these specific conditions is not a common, well-documented experience. As greenwork is not a fund-generating project, progress has also tended to move ahead in spurts depending on the availability of funds. After the abrupt discontinuation in 1975 of financial support channelled through the Sri Aurobindo Society, the financial burden was initially borne (on a bare subsistence level) by individuals in greenwork communities, gradually but sporadically aided more and more since that time by contributions from other Auroville projects, by help from the German FAO (Tamil Fund), which subsidizes work aiding rural development in Tamil Nadu, and by donations from friends in India and abroad who contribute directly to the Pour Tous Fund. The exception to this is work done on government land within Auroville, i.e., land adjacent to public roads, land eroded beyond agricultural use, reservoirs and catchment areas. In these places the work is determined in collaboration with representatives of the Indian Forest Department and part of the expenses are reimbursed by the government. Greenwork meetings are held regularly to discuss work of common interest, to decide priorities for available funds and to share experience. Those involved in growing food meet regularly as well with others in the newly formed Food Coop.

In the past few years, as responsibility for more land has been taken in hand, it has been possible to link up the various individual erosion-control projects. In December 1978 a special donation of Rs 8,000 made possible the most extensive soil and water conservation project yet undertaken and for the first time people worked together on the land over the whole of Auroville. A network of water-retaining bunds was built, beginning at Forecomers, spreading out in all directions, with a team covering each watershed. Work was also begun in the area of Aspiration and Discipline. This project was basically successful because of its comprehensive and integrated approach and was continued in the 1979 monsoon season with a series of donations totalling Rs 37,000. This year efforts concentrate on repairing and strengthening what had been done before and extending the work over a larger area, beginning in places to include village land.

### Northeast

Fertile began in true pioneer spirit in 1972 with a well drilled not far from some huge banyan trees, at the time unprotected and constantly attacked by villagers gathering leaves for their goats, branches for firewood, etc. A good pump was brought for the well, but with train strikes and other problems, it took 8 months to come and when it finally arrived, it was faulty and didn't work. Water for drinking and cooking and for the first trees was brought on a rented cattavendi (bullock cart) at the rate of Rs 5 per barrel. The 1,500 trees which had been planted in the monsoon in anticipation of the pump struggled to survive during the hot season and some 40% are still there against impossible odds. At the moment there are 25 acres of land fully reforested and many fruit trees and flowers in the area around the pump.

At first the settlers lived together around the pump site, but it soon became apparent that to protect the land, it would be necessary to spread out. At the original site, called "7 Banyans," an Australian architect has lived with his family (Johnny, Jan, Jonas and Aurojina), doing many experiments in construction with native materials, including a Buckminster Fuller dome, which was very beautiful but leaked in the rains; a big astrolubium, later made into an algae tank but which is now a hyacinth pond with ducks and fish for the kids; and the first working methane-gas tank in Auroville. He has trained a team of local roofers who now are expert enough to work independently putting up most of Auroville's innovative bamboo and keet (woven coconut leaves) structures. They do monsoon agriculture at Fertile and have a vegetable garden, which with the fruit trees and milk

cow make them almost self-sufficient several months a year.

Fertile Windmill was the first offshoot of Fertile, begun by a lone Hungarian-Italian with a windmill set up by Abri Workshop out of parts recovered from a collapsed government project. In this area there was literally not one blade of grass, not one tree apart from a few scraggly palmyras. Vijay was lucky enough to be joined by Perumal, an exceptional and humble villager who is now an Aurovilian, with his small family. Together, they planted mangoes around the windmill, forest and cashew trees and a casuarina forest. Grants from government, Tamil Fund and personal fundraising paid for the work, especially that of surrounding the 25 acres with a thorn fence—a project which has continued as a thorn nursery and supplied Auroville with 75,000 seedlings for living fences this year [1979]. Fields have been bunded for water conservation and a bullock-drawn water tank provides for trees too far from the windmill to be reached by pipes. An old cow served by a good bull has provided two excellent heifers and one of them is going to calve now. Fertile Windmill is now building a large water tank, considering installing a methane-gas plant and is the home of Dee's successful leathercraft workshop (Bellaura Crafts [see Spring 1980 issue of *Collaboration*]), but the emphasis is on reforestation, water conservation, and erosion control with a bit of monsoon agriculture on the side.

**Dana:** The second offshoot was another windmill right in the midst of a dense cashew grove. This place, originally called "Fertile Etoile," is now called Dana and is considered part of Revelation [which will be reported in the next issue] since Gerard moved there about a year and a half ago. Around the original trees and bunding work, Gerard has planted a good fence, added a diesel pump, and started a papaya plantation. Last year the pruning of the cashew trees provided the bakery with much-needed firewood while improving the trees.

**Fertile East:** Around 1974 Patrick and Heidi moved into the area of about 15 acres called Fertile East. Water supply, provided by the original diesel pump and an electric pump added two years ago, has generally determined the rate of development as their feeling is to expand slowly according to their ability to give good care to the plants. There is a wide variety of fruit trees which are interplanted during the monsoon with season crops, and many flowering and forest trees. The most recent development is the heifer.

**Three Banyans:** About a year after Fertile (or 7 Banyans) had begun, George moved to 3 Banyans, which touches the pal-

myra pond. He has planted trees for shade, an orchard for several kinds of fruit, and tries to live in an equilibrium with nature, along with Barbara and Satyam.

**2 Banyans:** In 1973 George helped Jean, Colleen, and their young daughter, Aurosha, to settle next to him at 2 Banyans, a 6-acre homestead with 150 fruit and nut trees, a small dairy producing milk and heifers, a small vegetable garden for the family, and a poultry hut of 12 birds in a portable chickenhouse. Twenty acres of land have been reforested with drought-resistant species that are now being interplanted with valuable timber species.

Wind-energy research has produced the first Auroville-made windmill with cloth sails, which has provided the homestead with water for two and a half years. In the search for alternative building materials, an egg-shaped dome made of sun-dried mud bricks was constructed and has been used for poultry for nearly two years. In the barn there is a ratproof grain storage with a flat roof made of mud supported by split palmyra trunks.

Erosion control and conservation work including bunding of fields and gully plugs in the whole watershed area on Auroville, village, and government land and the deepening and repair of the walls of the government catchment pond which collects rainwater during the monsoon for village use in the dry season. Road repair and causeway construction provide access to Auroville and village land.

**Aurogreen:** Between the communities of 2 Banyans and Fertile, which are trying to establish a sound ecosystem through their approach to water conservation and afforestation, there is Aurogreen with its concentration on organic agriculture and animal husbandry. All this—afforestation, agriculture, water conservation, and animal husbandry—can in no way be separated from each other but are interrelated and create one whole unit.

Aurogreen was started in 1975 and a year-round irrigation system is working, based on a deep-bore well completed a little more than 2 years ago. There are cashews, extensive orchards of mangoes, lemons, coconuts, papayas, and many other fruit trees maintained by this system. Along with the trees there are also two and a half acres of vegetable gardens, bananas and extensive plantations of green fodder grasses for the cows. Another area of about 3 acres is presently being prepared for irrigation and will be used for crops and pulses.

Now [November 1979] there is a herd of 28 animals plus some recently born heifers. The dairy products from 13 lactating milk cows are distributed throughout Auroville.



... Composting is a vital part of Aurogreen's land-improvement program. Twenty tons per month are presently produced, utilizing the manure and bedding from the dairy as well as crop waste and gliricidia shreds. It is hoped to increase this considerably in the future because heavy applications of compost are required to restore the land, which is practically devoid of nutrients. Even more critical, the soil lacks organic material to maintain the biological process necessary to plant life and which creates the moisture holding and anti-erosion capacities. The gliricidia tree, through its extensive deep root system and capacity to add nitrogen to the soil, plays a very vital part in this process. Another leguminous tree, leucaena, is being interplanted in the mango orchard and will be an additional source of cattle feed as well as timber.

Aurogreen is an approach within Auroville to show possibilities of irrigated farming in the organic way and will hopefully also influence indigenous farming methods. [In our next issue, *Samridhi, The Meadow, Peter's Place, Michael's Place, Utilité, Revelation, Discipline, 9 Palms, Kottakarai, and others.*]



Parichand (in dhoti), in charge of the Ashram's Samadhi flower displays for 45 years, planting a tree in Auroville. Far left is Narad of the Matrimandir Gardens.

## UNITY RESOURCES

[Following is an abridged report on the Auroville information and resources center.]

Unity Resources has been functioning actively since June 1979. It aspires to be a comprehensive resource center for all of Auroville where meaningful information related to Auroville's work and vision is received, organized, kept safely and made openly available for widespread dissemination throughout the community;

—correspondence is carried out with individuals and groups in India and abroad who are involved in a particular area or areas of work of interest and relevance to Auroville. This includes, for example, groups oriented toward afforestation, cottage industries, and appropriate technology;

—materials on Auroville, both in general and in particular fields (such as land conservation, tree planting, windmills, etc.) are made available for inquiries and external dissemination. This includes not only printed matter but also, eventually, audiovisual materials.

In short, Unity Resources is a place for the reception, coordination, storage, and dissemination of particular information for and about Auroville.

**Background:** Unity Resources was begun in response to an early request from Hexiad, an organization based in the United States interested in linking the communities of Auroville, Findhorn, and Acrosanti, and in assisting the development of communications capabilities in these communities. As

part of this concern, they suggested the establishment of a Hexiad "node" which would act as an information/communications clearinghouse and focal point. There was in particular a need to establish one central location, an office, to coordinate the volume of correspondence and information coming from Hexiad at that time.

While the initial push came from Hexiad and while some of the work of the office is still Hexiad-oriented, Unity Resources has quickly grown beyond the boundaries of being merely a "Hexiad office," and the basis now established leaves considerable room for growth and expansion as a general, all-Auroville resource center. This was, in fact, the original intent, and funds have been forthcoming from Hexiad for this purpose.

**Work Undertaken:** The following work has been undertaken and has continued without interruption since June 1979:

**a. Books.** The library is oriented toward supplying Aurovilians with practical information aiding development. Present categories are Architecture and City Planning; Appropriate Technology; Agriculture; Building and Construction; Crafts and Art; Communities and Groups; Auroville; Energy; Health and Nutrition; India; Land Use and Development; Miscellaneous; Resources Guides and Materials; Spiritual.

**b. Journals.** The following journals are among those received: *Renewable Energy News; Energy Update; Rain; Voluntary Action; Science Today; Inside/Outside; Organic Gardening and Farming; Co-Evolution*

*Quarterly; Time; Soil Association Journal; New Age; Smithsonian, etc.*

### Filing System:

**a. Appropriate technology and development information.** This is a branch of the library to hold pamphlets and articles.

**b. Groups, Organizations, and Newsletters.**

**c. Auroville Information Repository.** Most of this is sketchy historical information. It is hoped that this will become more complete and updated with information on Auroville suitable for dissemination.

**d. Contact File.** A list of different groups and individuals whom we have been in contact with directly, who have themselves been in prior contact with AV or with whom contact is expected shortly.

**e. Information Notebooks.** Looseleaf notebooks to hold and preserve newspaper and magazine articles, especially from the Indian press, relating to work or events in the fields of appropriate technology, etc.

**Correspondence:** An attempt has been made to update past correspondence and establish initial contact with others whose work is of a direct relevance to Auroville, especially from India.

**Collation of Information Regarding Contacts:** Much overlapping and duplication of requests, etc., has occurred in the past. An attempt is being made to gather all the contacts Aurovilians have had individually with groups or individuals whom others in the community might want to know of or contact in the future. This would be, in effect, a centralized Auroville address book.

**Investment and Development:** Unity Office has needed substantial development and repair. The office is still underdeveloped, cramped and overlaps with Land Service.

**Coordination of Requests:** Unity acts as a clearinghouse and coordination center for requests from Auroville to Auroville centers outside. This is primarily in the area of periodical and book requests, which are handled by Matagiri and channeled through Unity.

**Collection and Printing of Articles on Auroville.** When requests for information are received from different groups and individuals, when we make a new contact, we have virtually nothing at hand to give them. However, scattered in different Auroville publications and related journals is a considerable body of useful, accurate appropriate and still relevant material written by Aurovilians about Auroville. We have begun to retype onto stencils these articles and to print them, so that we should have reasonably soon a diverse body of information on Auroville ready for dissemination.

**International Tree Crops Institute:** Unity acts as the coordinating point for the Auroville branch of ITCI.

**Hexiad:** Unity acts as the central point for the coordination of all Hexiad-related activities, including meetings, correspondence, and accounting.

**Auroville Notes and Auroville Review:** The Notes and the *Review* are worked on at Unity and the Notes are printed in the office.

## A WINDOW ON DREAM CITY OF AUROVILLE

[The following is condensed from an article which appeared in the *Times of India* from Delhi.]

*New Delhi, March 4.* A small group of young men and women have brought to the Capital a graphic exhibition, a slide and sound show on Auroville, a dream city founded by mixing the soil of 121 countries with the blessings of the Mother of the Pondicherry Ashram.

The exhibition, put up by them at the Max Mueller Bhavan here, unfolds the saga of the "city of human unity" inaugurated on February 28, 1968, on 2,000 acres of barren land, 10 kilometres north of Pondicherry.

To understand the material and spiritual growth of Auroville, one must understand the four-point charter given by the Mother, for this dream city [there follows the Auroville Charter].

The group, including Canadian, French,

German, Tanzanian and Indian citizens of the international city—mostly young, the oldest being 42, and all eager to tell their story. They believe that after 12 years of existence, the time has come to open Auroville to the outside world. The exhibition began its tour of India with the small group of Aurovilians who are at hand to answer questions on what they do, how they live, and their experience in the 535-strong international community.... [There follows a brief introduction to the exhibition team, giving age, background, present work in Auroville, etc., of each member.]

The group in Delhi now is typical of people belonging to 25 different countries from all continents who are living with their Indian friends from almost all Indian states, braving material and cultural shocks to create a brave new world of their own. They have fought hard on many fronts. They planted and grew almost 700,000 fruit and forest trees in the complex, experimented and created dwellings ranging from treetop huts to ultramodern cement concrete units, set up windmills and biogas plants for harnessing energy and created handicraft workshops which are exporting their products to several countries of the world.

Everyone at Auroville does something for the material achievement of a spiritual-humanitarian ideal. The activities cover water conservation, afforestation and erosion control; agricultural, organic farming and animal husbandry; creation of workshops and buildings; research in alternative energy; general maintenance of the community services; education, information and cooperation with Indian and international institutions and garden landscaping and botanical studies.

They have created new designs and products in handicrafts which reflect the fusion of the design and skills of several countries using Indian raw materials available in the area—wood, leather, textiles, paper. In fact, the "city" is fast becoming one of the most valuable rural-regeneration laboratories and the villages around are beginning to pay attention to what the Aurovilians are doing and realising that emulating them can be rewarding.

The Aurovilians are receiving support from Auromitra—Friends of Auroville Research Foundation, an all-India organization dedicated to the aims of scientific research in integrated rural development, India's all-round progress and international collaboration for the highest welfare of mankind. It seeks to organize and encourage scientific research for the advancement of knowledge, relevant particularly to rural, educational and community development and to cooperate with the Aurovilians for applying, texting, evaluating and spreading the results of this research.

## THE PATTERN OF RECENT EVENTS

The following is offered as information regarding recent events concerning Auroville lands and the coming harvest season.

*February 27:* A village group comprised of SAS [Sri Aurobindo Society] hired "watchmen" and village toughs came to Revelation and attempted to force their right to harvest the cashew nuts previously under the management of resident Aurovilians. Aurovilians were threatened and the group attempted to break through the Revelation fence. The group dispersed only when a larger number of Aurovilians arrived on the scene.

*February 28.* A dozen Society-paid villagers from Kuilpalayam came to Dana claiming to have received the lease to the cashew topes from the SAS. Gerard asked to see the lease papers, and was then assaulted by this group, some of whom had cutties and clubs. After sustaining injuries on the back, Gerard escaped and called for help. By the time the help of other Aurovilians arrived, however, the group had disappeared.

*February 8 - March 1:* This same Kuilpalayam group intimidated several Auroville residents in the Dana area with threats of violence. The group visited Michael, Jean-Marie, Peter and Drew, in each case asserting its right to force the harvests of the topes which the Aurovilians were managing.

*March 2:* Jean of 2 Banyans was harassed.

*March 4:* A dozen village toughs, employed by the SAS as "watchmen," apprehended Jaap as he was working in Kottakarai and threatened to beat him if he did not turn over palmyra leaves and tamarind fruits which he had already harvested from lands which he has looked after for 7 years. A large number of Aurovilians came to his aid and the "watchmen" fled. Four of these were later caught at the Bharat Nivas, were brought to the police, where they were charged and arrested.

The authorities have been informed about these incidents. It is being made clear to them that this is not a problem between Auroville and the surrounding villages. Rather, it is a concerted attempt by the SAS to incite violence in Auroville through harassment and intimidated by hired agents under the guise of an Auroville-village conflict. It is also apparent that these are attempts by the SAS to claim possession of lands which Aurovilians have worked and cared for for years. The authorities have received requests from Auroville to help prevent further attempts at provocation of violence and to respect the basic rights of Aurovilians in the lands which they have taken responsibility for developing. [From *Auroville Notes* no. 137.]

## AUROVILLE PROJECTS

• **Matrimandir** architect Piero and his wife, Gloria, are planning a trip to Europe and the United States. The trip is necessary to finalize specific items in the construction of the Matrimandir.

The Matrimandir raw structure is being completed. The concreting of the ramps and the spherical shell remains to be done, which will take some time but can continue without Piero's direct supervision. Final decision will have to be taken by Piero personally on the ventilation/air conditioning for the inner chamber; optical device to direct the beam of light on the crystal; the crystal; and fastening of a final skin on top of the concrete structure.

Taking into account the finances and the time required to procure the necessary materials for these four items, it is urgent that Piero and Gloria inspect the options on the market, make definite selection, and arrange necessary supply. Preliminary investigation indicates that they should travel to Italy, France, Germany, and the U.S.

Donations to help pay for this trip are very welcome, and may be made payable to Auroville Pour Tous Fund, and sent to Frederick, Auroson's Home, Auroville 605101, India, or sent to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

• From the **Matrimandir Gardens**, Narad writes: "When Mother spoke to me about the Matrimandir Gardens in 1970, She said, 'I would like you to begin with the Garden of Unity.' For the past ten years we have been caring for the Banyan tree (which is also the geographical center of the city) and have made preliminary experiments with grasses and groundcovers as well as fencing the area to protect it from grazing animals. This year, under the inspiration of Francois, we have begun the first major effort towards the realization of the Garden of Unity.

"First, we enlarged the enclosure from 15 meters to 21 meters in order to give a spacious feeling around the Banyan and to allow it to grow freely for many years. Secondly, we have purchased granite to make a circular bench with three entrances at a distance of 21 meters from the tree. This will give a solid demarcation line and a place for people to sit as well. Thirdly, we have propagated grasses and groundcovers in the nursery to create a cool, green environment.

"At present more than half of the digging and composting work has been done. We have come to a temporary halt due to a lack of funds and need approximately Rs 6,000 [about \$750] for finishing of the granite, purchase of additional compost and hose pipes, water lines and valves. May we ask your help?"

Contributions may be sent directly to Auroville Pour Tous Fund, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104, India; or to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

• Monique Patenaude of Auroville has written us the following letter: "Four years ago an American came to Auroville and began to build a fence around a small piece of land close to Aspiration. Other people helped and together they connected water from the Hand-Made Paper Factory to their place; they constructed a small tank, completed a cactus fence, and planted 144 trees (44 fruit trees). A small oasis was born in the middle of a red desert.

"For a while, they were 6 people living in temporary houses in what we call the 'Field of Aspiration.' Little by little they left. But the Field remains there: a beautiful garden. Only one house is still standing, but the roof is completely rotten and the first floor half broken. There is no toilet, no shower.

"Recently, in spite of the difficult material conditions, I decided to move there, to take care of the place and continue its development. Some days after, two other Aurovilians decided to do the same. Presently we are trying to get money to settle properly and to continue the project.

"1. We need. . . to build a storeroom to stock the material and the tools for our gardening and construction: Rs 700; to build the first floor of two small houses (on granite pillars): Rs 3,000; to repair the the house which is already there: Rs 3,000; to build an ecological toilet and a shower: Rs 1,300. Total for the first part of the project: Rs 8,000 (about \$1,000).

"If that step is taken, the project is sure to be realized.

"2. The second phase of our plans is to dig a well to provide enough water for this area. The electric power is absolutely insufficient, especially during the dry season. The well and the hand pump will cost Rs 9,000. We also want to build a small windmill appropriate to the needs of the place. An Aurovillian who has already built one is ready to construct this new one: Rs 4,000. And to build another tank [i.e., pond]: Rs 500. Total for the second phase: Rs 13,500 [about \$1,700].

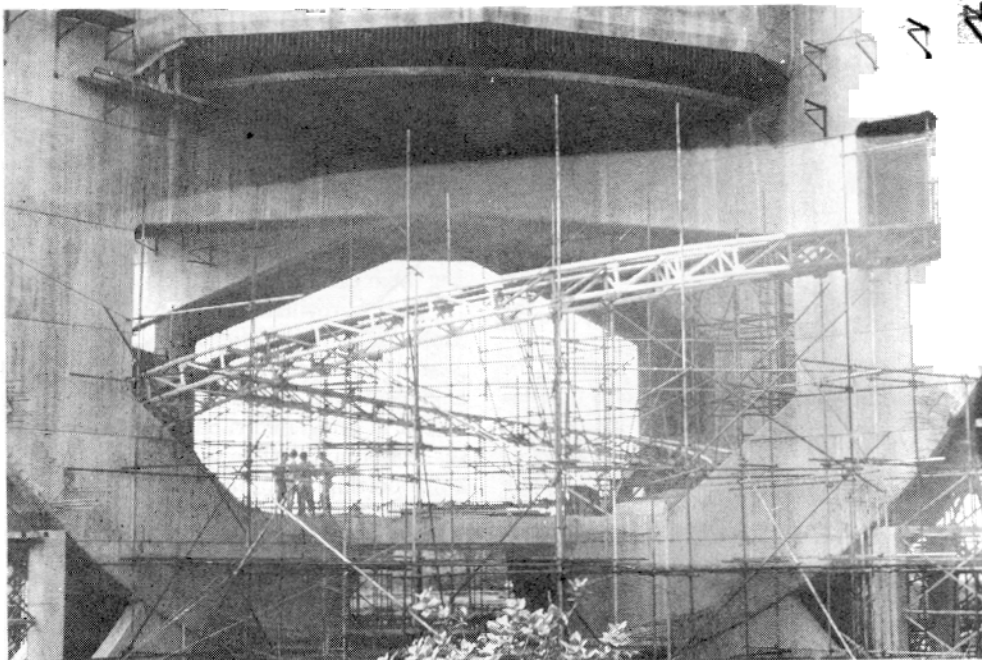
"The third part of the project is to build a workshop for handicrafts (carpentry, weaving, etc.). This workshop will contribute to assure the maintenance of the place: Rs 6,000; to complete the three houses: Rs 8,000. Total for the third part: Rs 14,000 [about \$1,750]. Grand total: Rs 35,500 [about \$4,500].

"Later on we hope to plant more fruit trees, but we have not evaluated the cost of what an experimental orchard is going to cost.

"For the moment, with Rs 1,900 already collected, we have begun to build the storeroom and one house. Meanwhile, we have begun to repair and reinforce the fence with thorny trees. We have dug bunds around all the trees for composting and watering them.

"If you wish to help the project, you can send donations to Auromitra—Friends of Auroville, c/o Auromitra Center, Attention: Monique Patenaude, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104, India.

"Ten percent of any amount received will go to the Auroville community for the maintenance of Aurovilians working on the project."



The Matrimandir. Photo by Bill Sullivan.



• **Shradhanjali:** "We are two young Indians who have been in Auroville for the last two years. Although we both graduated from Delhi University, it is only here in Auroville that we have found a true meaning to our lives.

"Over the last two years we have been designing and marketing handmade stationery items in Pondicherry and Delhi. Since we were working on a very small scale, we have been unable to meet increasing demand. The response to our efforts gave us the confidence to create stationery on a larger scale by starting a silk-screen unit of our own. We will make items such as letter paper, greeting cards, stationery cases in paper as well as cloth; and on a smaller scale, items decorated with real pressed flowers. We would like our creations to carry the stamp of Indian art and culture as well as a breath of Auroville.

"The aim of our project is to create beautiful and original items; to participate in Auroville's growth towards self-sufficiency by placing our profits directly into the community fund; and as the project develops, we hope to provide employment to local village folk and tap their natural gifts of handiwork.

"We have chosen silk-screen printing as our major tools because it is versatile, economical and can meet the quantum of demands. To set up a small silk-screen printing studio we require a basic capital. Initially we shall utilise available accommodation and other existing resources as far as possible.

"However, we require items such as furniture, screens, racks, metal sheets and

clamps, rubber squeegees and other small items, including brushes, scales, spatulas. The estimate for these items is Rs 6,000 [about \$750].

"In addition we require the following expendable items: nylon for screens, 'Five Star' film, ordinary film, paints, inks, paper, chemicals, cleaners, thinners, etc. Our monthly recurring expenditure, including general maintenance, will be approximately Rs 700 [about \$88].

"As there is a time lag between investment and financial returns, we plan to cater for one year's working capital. The approximate total (including the capital investment of Rs 6,000 and general maintenance of Rs 700 per month) is Rs 14,400 [about \$1,800].

"In order to realize this project we appeal to you our friends for help. Basically we require financial aid, but we would welcome donations in kind, help in marketing and, of course, your support and suggestions....

"Contributions may be drawn in favor of Auromitra—Friends of Auroville [tax deductible in India], and sent by registered post to Shradhanjali, c/o Abha and Radhika, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104, India."

• **Auroville Cinema Society:** "Within the frame of Cultural Activities in Auroville, we are trying to develop the cinema activity by ensuring the showing of films as regularly as possible.

"We are already receiving educational films from various embassies (France, Germany, Canada, etc.).

"It is now obvious that our present equipment is not adequate if we want to go on with this activity, and the purchase of a new 16mm projector (Indian make Photophone), as well as a new screen and a rewinder, is necessary. For this the following amount is required:

16mm projector	Rs 15,000
screen	900
rewinder	1,460
freight charges for films (1 year)	1,440
maintenance & repair (1 year)	2,200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Rs 20,000</b>
	<b>[\$2,500]"</b>

Donations may be sent to Auromitra—Friends of Auroville, c/o Auromitra Center, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam, 605104, India, or to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457, USA.

## GENERAL AND CENTER NEWS

• **Sri Aurobindo's Action Center** (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306; telephone 303-499-3373), in conjunction with Rainbow Family of Boulder, presented a videotape festival May 27 and June 2 at the Boulder Public Library. Videotapes of Auroville, Arcosanti, Findhorn, and Rainbow Family were shown. Joseph and Muriel Spanier of the center also gave a slide show and lecture on Auroville at Together Books in Denver, on May 29.

For regular meditation meetings, other activities and to subscribe to the center's quarterly *Auroville Voice*, call or write the center.

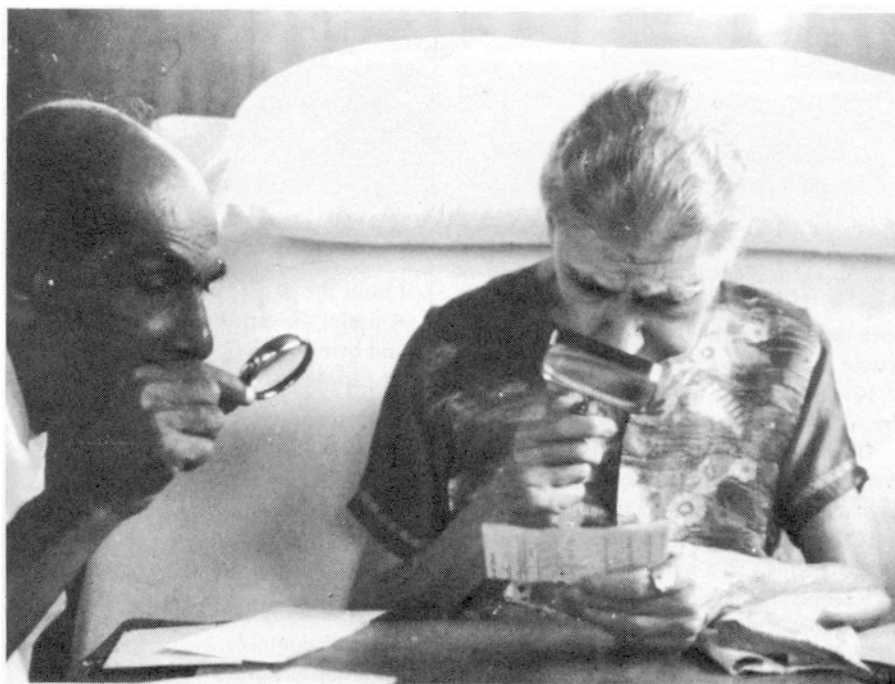
• **East West Cultural Center** (2865 W. 9 St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; telephone 213-480-8325) offered an Easter program on flowers on April 6, giving their spiritual significance as expressed by the Mother and showing slides of Auroville flowers.

On April 13 there was a concert of recorder music given by Lisette & Scott Rabinow-Wilkinson and Vicki Boeckman with poetry interludes.

May programs included a talk on Tantric art by Soham Qadri, a lecture on bhakti-yoga by Swami Prakashanand Saraswati from New Zealand, and another by Vasanti Jayaswal, director of the Kalamandiram School of Dance.

Group meditations are held Sundays 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. led by Jyotipriya, head of the center, who also offers courses in Sanskrit and Oriental studies. For other activities of the center or to purchase books and tapes, call or write the center.

• A review of Karen Schultz of *On Women*, compiled from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, appeared in the March issue of *Parents Bulletin*.



Nolini Kanta Gupta and the Mother, 6 January 1960. Photo published with permission of the Sri Aurobindo Asram.

- An article on Auroville, "The Subtlest of Catastrophes: Erosion vs. Reforestation at Auroville," appears in the Spring 1980 issue of *Co-Evolution Quarterly*. It is a collective report prepared by Colleen, David, Dennis, Jaap, Joel and Jean, all Aurovilians.

- Joey Baker, who has developed and is marketing an electric automobile, the Aurocondo, reported in the Fall 1979 issue of *Collaboration*, is preparing to produce electronic vehicles on a wider scale. He is interested in being in touch with physicists and electronic engineers who also have a spiritual viewpoint. Scientists and engineers interested in electronic transportation are requested to send resumes to Baker at Baker-Smith, P.O. Box 67203, Los Angeles, CA 90067, or call him at (213) 552-2840.

- *Gringo*, a new novel by Satprem, author of *Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness*, and other works, was issued this spring by Editions Robert Laffont of Paris. Copies may be obtained from the publisher or from Institut de Recherches Evolutives, 32 avenue de l'Observatoire, 75014 Paris, France.

- Shrikumar Nair of the Sri Aurobindo Center, P.O. Box 123, Oxford, OH 45053, is teaching a course this fall in the Experimental Programs of Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Ky. The course, *Yoga: Theory and Practice*, uses Sri Aurobindo's *Synthesis of Yoga* as one of the texts.

- Seyril Schochen, who lived in Auroville for several years and now lives in Boulder, Colo., reports that *Star Race*, her dramatization of Dane Rudhyar's novel *Return from No-Return*, about the appearance of a new race in 2107, was given a staged multimedia reading on August 23, at the Association for Humanistic Psychology meeting in Snowmass, Colo. Cinematographer Terrence O'Toole was the director and technical advisor, and used space film from NASA. Both Rudhyar and Schochen have signed over a percentage of any royalties from productions of *Star Race* to the Matrimandir, in Auroville.

- Passings: Dilip Kumar Roy, one of India's most celebrated singers and a disciple of Sri Aurobindo since 1928, died in Bombay in January. He was the author of a number of books, including *Pilgrims to the Stars*, *Sri Aurobindo Came To Me*, and *Among the Great*. Also well known as a teacher, his Ashram is located in Poona.

- Dr. Marie (Masha) Karelitz-Karry, a New York City dermatologist and longtime disciple of Sri Aurobindo, died in May. She had been associated with the New York center for many years.

- Sehra Sethna, also long a disciple and resident of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, left her body in April. Her husband, K. D. Sethna, is editor of *Mother India* magazine.

- A concerted effort is being made to give wide distribution to the little booklet *Ideal Child* by the Mother. "Let this book reach every child," she had once said of it.

Keshavji of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram has undertaken to collect contributions for its distribution. So far over 700,000 copies, in various languages (including French, German, English, Italian, Spanish, and several Indian languages), have been sent out. Inquiries may be directed to Keshavji, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605002, India, or to SABDA, Pondicherry 605002, India.

- M.P. Pandit of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram has sent us the following notice: Tresor Nursing Home of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram attends to the surgical and post-operative needs of Ashram inmates, visitors from all over the world, and local townspeople. A modern solid-state electrosurgical unit for transurethral resection of prostate is being acquired from the United States, estimated to cost \$1,500. Donations will be gratefully received. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

- Paul Molinari and Jan Edl report that there are now 12 members in their Sri Aurobindo study and meditation group. Anyone interested may contact them at 8045 Geary Blvd., no. 103, San Francisco, CA 94121.

- Yvonne Frank (Rt. 2, Box 76H, Stryker, OH 43557; telephone 419-682-5703) is interested in joining or forming a Sri Aurobindo study group in the Toledo area. Anyone interested please write directly to Mrs. Frank.

## NEWS OF MATAGIRI

On August 2 Matagiri observed its twelfth anniversary.

Classes in Sanskrit, Hindi, and Indian philosophy are being given at Matagiri by Gopal Bhattacharyya. Anyone interested please contact Gopal at Matagiri or call 914-679-8322.

Recent visitors to Matagiri include Hadassah Haskale, who was formerly with the Sri Aurobindo group in Israel and is now at the California Institute of Asian Studies in San Francisco; Linda Stewart, an authority on herbs and healing, now working with her husband, a potter, in their own herb business, Weeds of Worth, in Massachusetts; Mordechai and Nejama Shtull, who were once members of the O-Pti-Zoizo group in Montreal; David Voremberg, formerly with the Hexiad office in Cambridge; Pierre LeGrand from Auroville, who is now in the U.S. as part of the Hexiad

team; Marc Salvas, from Canada, who lived for several years in the Ashram in India.

George Nakashima and his son, Kevin, also visited. Nakashima is an eminent furniture maker and designer with a studio-workshop in New Hope, Penna. His work has been acknowledged by many including an article in *Smithsonian Magazine*. In the late 1930s Nakashima helped design and build the Ashram residence called Golconde.

Dhiraj Shah, who conducts some of the meetings at the London center, spent two days with us while he was in the U.S. Dhiraj is a tax consultant to business and has received training as a naturopath.

Recently departing were Georges Dandrimont from Rheims, who returned to France after spending about 8 months at Matagiri; and Lynda Lester, who has returned to California after spending about 5 months at Matagiri.

## CROSS SEASON SUMMARY Erika Renon

[Erika Renon lives in Menlo Park, Calif.; her work has appeared previously in *Collaboration*.]

I cannot tell the humbleness of lawn  
or speak of tumbleweed meandering.  
I love the autumn breeze in early spring.

I hold the sunset in my criss-crossed palm.  
A psalm descends from waterfalls  
and brings  
cascading sounds of limpid glistening.

I listen and evaluate the dawn.  
As others gather diamonds  
I do dew.

Small lemons swing on branches—  
pendulums of health and time—  
I do not know the rhythm or the rhyme.

Age has been lifted.  
Seasons coincide.  
And winter, most miraculous,  
turned spring.

I wonder where eternities begin.