



Collaboration

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A scene at Matagiri on August 15, 1980, at the gathering in observance of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. In the center background seated on the table are Jean and Gordon Korstange giving a concert of Indian flute and devotional music.

The year 1980 was one of turmoil and upheaval throughout the world. One has only to recall the earthquakes in Italy and elsewhere, the eruption of Mount St. Helena in the U.S., and such "man-made" events as the hostage crisis in Iran and the Iran-Iraq war. It is also the year in which the first volume of *Mother's Agenda* appeared in English in America (and England). In India upheavals of all kinds are regarded as the work of Mahakali, the "terrible Mother," the Mother in her aspect of warrior and overturner. The Mother is the Divine Energy which has created the worlds and is leading all to its divine fulfilment, the Great Perfec-

tion which the Supreme sees within Himself and the seeing unleashes His divine energy, Shakti, the Divine Mother.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have opened a new way for man's evolution, indeed for the evolution of the world, the seat or focal point of evolution. The mighty yoga they undertook in themselves has its effects everywhere. The Mother's journey into a new area of sadhana, of yoga, of the divine work, within the very cells of her body, was recorded in her conversations with Satprem and called *Mother's Agenda*. In it Mother lays waste all man's pre-conceived ideas, the whole mental structure he has erected for

THE YOGA OF
SELF-PERFECTION
Sri Aurobindo

everything-from death and illness to the spiritual life-as she moves steadily forward to bring "something else" into manifestation. Her **Agenda** is indeed a "force in action," and to read it is to be part of her overwhelming stride through the world. It is a radioactive, or perhaps better, "Shaktiactive," work. That it has now begun to appear in America is not insignificant given the role both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother said America has to play in the evolution.

Many of the pieces we have chosen for this issue of **Collaboration** touch upon the great "yoga of self-perfection" which Sri Aurobindo outlined in his **Synthesis of Yoga** and Mother undertook to live out in her life. We have also included an extract from the first volume of her **Agenda** which gives some hint of the extraordinary "inner life" she had as well as something of her nature in this embodiment. Also included are an interview with Satprem which also reveals something of the Mother and her working, and Nolini's "Great Holocaust," which has appeared in these pages previously but which seems to be apropos now too.

We are beginning also to publish extracts from a diary kept by a disciple which throw some light on a particular phase in the history of the Ashram as well as on how one sadhak at least was caught "between two worlds."

Readers are invited to submit material for **Collaboration**. We are interested in poetry and nonfiction, particularly articles or "reflections" on Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, etc.

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The principle in view is a self-surrender, giving up of the human being into the being, consciousness, power, delight of the Divine, a union or communion at all the points of meeting in the soul of man, the mental being, by which the Divine himself, directly and without veil master and possessor of the instrument, shall by the light of his presence and guidance perfect the human being in all the forces of the Nature for a divine living. Here we arrive at a farther enlargement of the objects of the Yoga. The common initial purpose of 111 Yoga is the liberation of the soul of man from its present natural ignorance and limitation, its release into spiritual being, its union with the highest self and Divinity. But ordinarily this is made not only the initial but the whole and final object: enjoyment of spiritual being there is, but rather in a dissolution of the human and individual into the silence of self-being or on a higher plane in another existence. The tantric system makes liberation the final, but not the only aim; it takes on its way a full perfection and enjoyment of the spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence, and even it has a glimpse of a supreme experience in which liberation and cosmic action and enjoyment are unified in a final overcoming of all oppositions and dissonances. It is this wider view of our spiritual potentialities from which we begin, but we add another stress which brings in a completer significance. We regard the spirit in man not as solely an individual being traveling to a transcendent unity with the Divine, but as a universal being capable of oneness with the Divine in all souls and all Nature and we give this extended view its entire practical consequence. The human soul's individual liberation and enjoyment of union with the Divine in spiritual being, consciousness and delight must always be the first object of the Yoga; its free enjoyment of the cosmic unity of the Divine becomes a second object; but out of that a third appears, the effectuation of the meaning of the divine unity with all beings by a sympathy and participation in the spiritual purpose of the Divine in humanity. The individual Yoga then turns from its separateness and becomes a part of the collective Yoga of the divine Nature in the human race. The liberated individual being, united with the Divine in self and spirit, becomes in his natural being a self-perfecting instrument for the perfect outflowing of the Divine in humanity.

This outflowing has its two terms; first, comes the growth out of the separative human ego into the unity of the spirit, then the possession of the divine nature in its proper and its higher forms and no longer in the inferior forms of the mental being which are a mutilated translation and not the authentic text of the original script of divine Nature in the cosmic individual. In other words, a perfection has to be aimed at which amounts to the elevation of the mental into the full spiritual and supramental nature. Therefore this integral Yoga of knowledge, love and works has to be extended into a Yoga of spiritual and gnostic self-perfection. As gnostic knowledge, will and Ananda are a direct instrumentation of spirit and can only be won by growing into the spirit, into divine being, this growth has to be the first aim of our Yoga. The mental being has to enlarge itself into the oneness of the Divine before the Divine will perfect in the soul of the individual its gnostic outflowing. That is the reason why the triple way of knowledge, works and love becomes the keynote of the whole Yoga, for that is the direct means for the soul in mind to rise to its highest intensities where it passes upward into the divine oneness. That too is the reason why the Yoga must be integral. For if immergence in the Infinite or some close union with the Divine were all our aim, an integral Yoga would be superfluous, except for such

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greater satisfaction of the being of man as we may get by a self-lifting of the whole of it towards its Source. But it would not be needed for the essential aim, since by any single power of the soul-nature we can meet with the Divine; each at its height rises up into the infinite and absolute, each therefore offers a sufficient way of arrival, for all the hundred separate paths meet in the Eternal. But the gnostic being is a complete enjoyment and possession of the whole divine and spiritual nature; and it is a complete lifting of the whole nature of man into its power of a divine and spiritual existence. Integrality becomes then an essential condition of this yoga

* * * * *

A divine perfection of the human being is our aim. We must know then, first, what are the essential elements that constitute man's total perfection; secondly, what we mean by a divine as distinguished from a human perfection of our being. That man as a being is capable of self-development and of some approach at least to an ideal standard of perfection which his mind is able to conceive, fix before it and pursue, is common ground to all thinking humanity, though it may be only the minority who concern themselves with this possibility as providing the one most important aim of life. But by some the ideal is conceived as a mundane change, by others as a religious conversion.

The mundane perfection is sometimes conceived of as something outward, social, a thing of action, a more rational dealing with our fellow-men and our environment, a better and more efficient citizenship and discharge of duties, a better, richer, kinder and happier way of living, with a more just and more harmonious associated enjoyment of the opportunities of existence. By others again a more inner and subjective ideal is cherished, a clarifying and raising of the intelligence, will and reason, a heightening and ordering of power and capacity in the nature, a nobler ethical, a richer aesthetic, a finer emotional, a much healthier and better-governed vital and physical being. Sometimes one element is stressed, almost to the exclusion of the rest; sometimes, in wider and more well-balanced minds, the whole harmony is envisaged as a total perfection. A change of education and social institutions is the outward means adopted or an inner self-training and development is preferred as the true instrumentation. Or the two aims may be clearly united, the perfection of the inner individual, the perfection of the outer living.

But the mundane aim takes for its field the present life and its opportunities; the

Disciple: "To know oneself is to control oneself": What does it mean?

Mother: This means to be conscious of one's inner truth, conscious of the different parts of one's being and of their respective working. One must know why one does this, why one does that; one must know one's thoughts, know one's feelings, know all one's activities, all one's movements, what one is capable of, etc. And to know oneself is not sufficient; this knowledge must lead to conscious control. To know oneself perfectly means to control oneself perfectly.

But one must have an aspiration every moment of one's life.

religious aim, on the contrary, fixes before it the self-preparation for another existence after death, its commonest ideal is some kind of pure sainthood, its means a conversion of the imperfect or sinful human being by divine grace or through obedience to a law laid down by a scripture or else given by a religious founder. The aim of religion may include a social change, but it is then a change brought about by the acceptance of a common religious ideal and way of consecrated living, a brotherhood of the saints, a theocracy or kingdom of God reflecting on earth the kingdom of heaven.

The object of our synthetic Yoga must, in this respect too as in its other parts, be more integral and comprehensive, embrace all these elements or these tendencies of a larger impetus of self-perfection and harmonise them or rather unify, and in order to do that successfully it must seize on a truth which is wider than the ordinary religious and higher than the mundane principle. All life is a secret Yoga, an obscure growth of Nature towards the discovery and fulfilment of the divine principle hidden in her which becomes progressively less obscure, more self-conscious and luminous: more self-possessed in the human being by the opening of all his instruments of knowledge, will, action, life to the Spirit within him and in the world. Mind, life, body, all the forms of our nature are the means of this growth, but they find their last perfection only by opening out to something beyond them, first, because they are not the whole of what man is secondly, because that other something which he is, is the key of his completeness and brings a light which discovers to him the whole high and large reality of his being. [From *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pon dicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971) pp. 586-91.]

It is never too soon to begin, never too late to continue. That is to say, even when you are quite young, you can begin to study yourself and to know yourself and little by little to control yourself. And even when you are what people call "old," when old many many years, it is not too late to make the effort to know yourself better and better and to control yourself better and better. That is the science of living.

To perfect yourself, you must first of all become conscious of yourself. I am sure, for example, that the following incident must have happened to you many times in your life. All of a sudden someone asks you, "Why have you done that?" Well, the spontaneous answer is "I do not know." If someone asks you, "What were you thinking about?" you answer, "I do not know." "Why are you tired?"—"I do not know." "Why are you glad?"—"I do not know," and so on. I may take indeed fifty persons and ask them all of a sudden without preparation, "Why have you done that?," and if they are not "awake" within, all will reply, "I do not know" (naturally, I do not speak of those who have undergone a discipline for knowing themselves and for following their movements to the extreme limit; they of course can collect themselves and concentrate and give the right answer, but only after a time). You will see that it is like that, if you look at your whole day. You say something and you do not know why you say so—it is only when the words have gone out of your mouth that you perceive that it was not quite what you wanted to say. For example, you go to see someone, you prepare in advance the words you are going to say, but once before the person in question, you say nothing or it is other words that come out of your mouth. Are you able to say to what extent the atmosphere of the other person has influenced you and prevented you from saying what you had prepared? How many people are able to say that? They do not perceive even that the person was in such or such a state and that was why they could not tell him what they had prepared. Naturally there are obvious cases when you find people in such bad humour that you can ask them nothing. I do not speak of that. I speak of a clear perception of mutual influences, what acts and reacts upon your nature—it is this that one doesn't have. For example, you are suddenly uneasy or happy, but how many people can say, "It is like that"? And it is difficult to know, it is not at all easy. One must be "awake" very much;

The *Mother*

one must be constantly in a state to observe with great attention.

There are people who sleep twelve hours daily and say the rest of the time, "I am awake"! There are people who sleep twenty hours per day and the rest of the time half awake!

To be in this state in which you observe attentively you must have so to say antennae everywhere that are in constant contact with your centre of true consciousness. You record everything, you organise everything and, in this way, you cannot be taken unawares, you cannot be deceived, mistaken, and you cannot say any other thing than what you wanted to say. But how many people live in this state normally? That is what I mean to say exactly when I speak of "becoming conscious." If you want to derive the greatest profit out of the conditions and circumstances in which you find yourself, you must be fully awake; you must not be taken by surprise. You must not do things without knowing why, you must not say things without knowing why. One must be constantly awake.

You must understand also that you are not separate individualities, and that life is a ceaseless exchange of forces, of consciousnesses, of vibrations and of movements of all kinds. It is as in a crowd; where everyone pushes, everyone goes forward, and when all go backward, everyone goes backward. It is the same thing in the inner world, in your consciousness. Constantly there are forces and influences that act and react upon you, it is like a gas in the atmosphere, and unless you are quite awake, these things enter into you and it is only when they have entered well into you and come out as if they were from you that you are aware of them. How often do men meet people who are nervous, full of anger and bad mood, like that, without knowing why. How is it that when you play against some persons you play very well, and when you play against others you are unable to play? And people who are quiet, not wicked, who suddenly become furious when they are in the midst of a furious crowd? And one does not know who started the thing; it is a thing that passed by and swept the consciousness. There are people who are capable of releasing vibrations like that and others respond without knowing why. Everything is like that, from the smallest to the biggest.

To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of what self? The Self above all mixture, that is to say, what I call the Truth of your being. And so long as you are not conscious of the Truth of your being, you are moved by all sorts of things

My nights contain so many things that I don't always do the necessary work to remember-that takes up a lot of time. Sometimes I get up during the night and sit there recalling precisely everything that has already happened, but that sometimes takes half an hour!-and as urgent work still calls, I don't take the time to remember and it gets erased. But then you know, with all that's coming you could write volumes!

From a documentary standpoint, my nights are getting quite interesting. In the "Yoga of Self-Perfection" [in *The Synthesis of Yoga*], Sri Aurobindo describes precisely this state you reach in which all things assume meaning and a quality of inner significance, clarification of various points, and help. From this point of view, my nights have become extraordinary. I see infinitely more things that I saw before. Before, it was very limited to a personal contact with people. Now ... In my nights, each thing and each person has the appearance, the gesture, the word or the action that describes *exactly* his condition. It's becoming quite interesting.

Of course, I much prefer being in my great currents of force-from a personal standpoint, such immensity of action is much more interesting. But these documentary things are also valuable. It is so tremendously different from the dreams and even the visions you have when you enter certain representative realms of the mind (which is what I used to do). It is so different, it has another content, another life altogether: it carries its light, its understanding, its explanation within itself-you look, and everything is explained.

without being aware of it at all. Collective thought, collective suggestions is a formidable influence, acting constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one is not aware of it. You think that you are thinking *like that*, but in reality it is the collectivity that thinks like that. The mass is always inferior to the individual. Take individuals of like category, well, when they are alone, they are at least two degrees higher than people of the same category that are in a crowd. There is a mixture of things obscure and unconscious and you slip inevitably into the unconscious. To escape from that, there is only one means; to become conscious of oneself, more and more conscious and more and more attentive.

Try to do this little exercise: at the beginning of the day, say, "I will not speak without thinking of what I say." You be-

It always gives me the feeling that I am shrinking a little, but it's interesting. And it's useful, for I am constantly moving about and doing things with people; it indicates to me what I have to say and do with each one. It's useful. But all the same, I miss the fullness and joy of the more impersonal Movement of forces.

Before going to bed, sometimes I say to myself, "I will do what is necessary to spend my night in these great currents of force (because there is a way to do it). And then I think, "Oh, what an egotist you are, my girl!" So sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't-when there's something important to do, it doesn't happen. But all I have to do is concentrate in a certain way before going to sleep to spend my whole night in these ... very far from here, very far .. I can't say very far from the earth, for surely it's in an intermediate zone between the forces from above and the earth's atmosphere. That's what it mainly is, in any case. It's a great universal current as well, but mainly it's what descends and comes into the earth, and it is permeating the earth's atmosphere all the time, all the time, and it comes with this wide, overall vision-it makes for wonderful nights. ... I no longer bother about people at all—at least not as such, but in a more impersonal way. [*silence*]

I have been pestered my whole life by ... something similar to the sense of duty without its stupidity. Sri Aurobindo had told me that it was a "censor," that I had with me a "considerable" one! It was constantly, constantly telling me, "No, it's not like that, it's like this ... Oh, no! It's wrong to do that; be careful, don't be ego-

[Continued on following page]

lieve, do you not, that you think all that you say! It is not at all the case, you will see that so many times the word you do not want to say is ready to come out, but you are obliged to make a conscious effort to stop it from coming out.

I knew people who were very scrupulous about telling a lie, but when directly they are in a group instead of saying the truth, they tell a lie spontaneously. They did not intend to do so, but it came "like that." Why? Because they were in the company of liars: there was an atmosphere of falsehood and they simply caught the malady!

It is in this way that little by little, slowly, with perseverance, first of all with great care and attention, one becomes conscious, learns to know oneself and afterwards to become master of oneself. [*Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1964, pp. 45-51.]

27 November 1965

[This talk begins with Mother's comments on the message distributed on the Darshan day of 24 November.]

"It is certainly a mistake to bring down the light by force—to pull it down. The Supramental cannot be taken by storm. When the time is ready it will open of itself—but first there is a great deal to be done and that must be done patiently and without haste."—Sri Aurobindo

Mother: That is good for reasonable people. They will say, "There, he does not promise miracles."

Disciple: Why? Do many people have the tendency to "pull down"?

Mother: People are in a hurry, they want to see the results immediately.

And then, they believe they are pulling down the Supramental—they pull down some small vital individuality who mocks at them and in the end makes them play the shabby fool. This is what happens most often—99 times out of a hundred.

A small individuality, a vital entity who plays the big play and makes a great show, plays of light. Then the poor fellow who has "pulled" is bedazzled; he says, "There, it is the Supramental," and he falls into a pit.

It is only when you have touched, seen in some way and had a contact with the true Light, that you can distinguish the vital, and you perceive that it is altogether like the plays of light on a stage, an artificial light. But otherwise, others are dazzled—it is dazzling, it is "wonderful," and then they are deceived. It is only when you have *seen* and when you have had the contact with the Truth, ah, then you smile!

It is quackery, but you must know the truth in order to recognise quackery.

At bottom, it is the same for everything. The vital is like a superstage that gives shows—very attractive, dazzling, deceptive: it is only when you know the True Thing that you recognise immediately, instinctively, without reasoning, and you say, "No, I do not want that."

And for everything it is so. Where it has taken a capital importance in human life is with regard to love. Vital passions, vital attractions have almost everywhere taken the place of true feeling, which is quiet, whereas the other puts you in ferment, gives you the feeling of something "living." It is very deceptive. And you do not know it, you do not feel it, you do not perceive it clearly unless you know the True Thing. If you have touched true love through the psychic and the divine union, then the other thing appears hollow, thin, empty—an appearance and a comedy, more often tragic than comic.

Whatever one may say about it, however one may explain it, is of no use at all, because he or she who is caught says immediately, "Oh, this is not what it is for others"—what happens to yourself is never like what happens to others! One must have the true experience, then the whole vital appears like a masquerade—not attractive.

And when you "pull," well, it is much more than 99 times out of one hundred . . . out of a million there is found only one case where one happens to pull the True Thing—this proves one was ready. Otherwise it is always the vital which you pull, the appearance, the theatrical show of the Thing, not the Thing itself.

To pull is always an egoistic movement. It is a deformation of aspiration. True as-

piration consists in a giving, a self-giving, whereas to pull means to want for oneself. Even if in the mind you have a vaster ambition—the earth, the universe—that means nothing, these are mental activities. [long silence]

You felt nothing special on Darshan day?

Disciple: No.

Mother: Sri Aurobindo was there from morning till evening.

For, yes, for more than an hour he made me live, as in a concrete and living vision of the condition of humanity and of the different strata of humanity in relation to the new or supramental creation. And it was wonderfully clear and concrete and living. . . . There was all the humanity which is no longer altogether animal, which has benefited by mental development and created a kind of harmony in its life—a harmony vital and artistic, literary—in which the large majority are content to live. They have caught a kind of harmony, and within it they live life as it exists in a civilised surrounding, that is to say, somewhat cultured, with refined tastes and refined habits. And all this life has a certain beauty where they are at ease, and unless something catastrophic happens to them, they live happy and contented, satisfied with life. These people can be drawn (because they have a taste, they are intellectually developed), they can be attracted by the new forces, the new things, the future life; for example, they can become disciples of Sri Aurobindo mentally, intellectually. But they do not feel at all the need to change materially; and if they were compelled to do so, it would be first of all premature, unjust, and would simply create a great disorder and disturb their life altogether uselessly.

The Mother's Nights and Her "Censor"

[Continued from preceding page]

tistical; be careful—do this, do that." He was right, but I sent it away long ago—or rather, Sri Aurobindo sent it away. But there remains the habit . . . of not doing what I like. Rather, of doing what *must* be done, and whether it's pleasant or not makes no difference.

This, too, Sri Aurobindo had explained to me. I used to tell him, "Yes, you always speak of life's 'delight,' life for the sake of its delight." But as soon as I had the notion, as soon as I was put in the presence of the Supreme, it was: "For You—exclusively what You want. You are the sole, the unique and exclusive reason for being." And that has remained, and this movement is so strong that even when . . . you see,

now I have ecstasy and ananda in abundance—everything comes, everything. But even then, even what that is there, something in me always turns towards the Supreme and says, "Does this *truly* serve You? Is it what You expect of me, what You want from me?"

This has protected me from all seeking for pleasure in life. It was a wonderful protection, because pleasure always seemed so futile to me—yes, futile; for the sake of your personal satisfaction. Later, I even understood how foolish it is, for you can never be satisfied—though when you're small you don't yet know that. I never liked it: "But is it really useful, does it serve some purpose?"

And I still have this attitude in regard to my nights. I have this widening of the consciousness, this impersonalization, this wonderful joy of being above . . . all that. But at the same time I also have "I'm here in this body, on earth, to do something—I mustn't forget it. And this is what I have to do." But probably I'm wrong!

I'm waiting for the Lord to tell me clearly,

But when I saw that, I always see Him smiling—a smile . . . it's all very good to smile, but . . . it encourages you more than it cures you! [*Mother's Agenda*, vol. 1 (Paris: Institut de Recherches Evolutives, 1979). 2 October 1960, pp. 426-28.]

This was very clear.

Then there were some—rare individuals—who were ready to make the necessary effort to prepare for the transformation and to draw the new forces, to try to adapt Matter, to seek means of expression, etc. These are ready for the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. They are very few in number. There are even those who have the sense of sacrifice and are ready for a hard, painful life, if that would lead or help towards this future transformation. But they should not, they should not in any way try to influence the others and make them share in their own effort; it would be altogether unfair—not only unfair, but extremely maladroit, for it would change the universal rhythm and movement, or at least the terrestrial movement, and instead of helping, it would create conflicts and end in a chaos.

But it was so living, so real that my whole attitude (how to say it—a passive attitude which is not the result of an active will), the whole position taken in the work has changed. And that has brought a peace—a peace and a calmness and a confidence altogether decisive. A decisive change. And even what seemed in the earlier position to be obstinacy, clumsiness, inconstancy, all kinds of deplorable things, all that has disappeared. It was like the vision of a great universal Rhythm in which each thing takes its place and . . . everything is all right. And the effort for transformation, reduced to a small number, becomes a thing *much* more precious and much more powerful for the realisation. It is as though a choice has been made for those who will be the pioneers of the new creation. And all these ideas of “spreading,” of “preparing,” or of “churning Matter” . . . are a childishness. It is human restlessness.

The vision was of a beauty so majestic, so calm, so smiling, oh! . . . it was full, truly full of the divine Love. And not a divine Love that “pardons”—it is not that at all, not at all! Each thing in its place, realising its inner rhythm as perfectly as it can.

It was a very beautiful gift.

Well, all these things people know in some part, intellectually, like that, in idea; they know all that, but it is quite useless. In everyday practice you live in another way, with a truer understanding. And there, it is as though you touched the things—you saw them, you touched them—in their higher disposition.

It came after a vision of plants and the spontaneous beauty of plants (it is something so wonderful), then of the animal with so harmonious a life (so long as men do not intervene), and all that was in its right place; then of the true humanity as

humanity, that is to say, the maximum of what a mental poise could create of beauty, harmony, charm, elegance of life, taste of living—a taste of living in beauty, and naturally suppressing all that is ugly and low and vulgar. It was a fine humanity—humanity as its maximum, but nice. And perfectly satisfied with its being humanity, because it lives harmoniously. And it is perhaps also like a promise of what almost the whole of humanity will become under the influence of the new creation. It appeared to me that it was what the supramental consciousness could make of humanity. There was even a comparison with what humanity has made of the animal species. It is extremely mixed, naturally, but things have been perfected, bettered, utilised more completely. Animality, under the mind's influence, has become another thing, which is naturally something mixed, because the mind was incomplete. In the same way there are examples of a harmonious humanity among well-balanced people, and this seemed to be what humanity could become under the supramental influence.

Only, it is very far ahead. You must not expect that it will be immediately—it is very far ahead.

It is clearly, even now, a period of transition which may last quite a long time and which is rather painful. Only, the effort, sometimes painful (often painful) is compensated by a clear vision of the goal to attain, of the goal that *will* be attained: an assurance, yes, a certainty. But it would be something that would have the power to eliminate all error, all deformation, all the ugliness of the mental life—and then a humanity very happy, very satisfied with being human, not at all feeling the need of being anything other than human, but with a human beauty, a human harmony.

It was very charming, it was as though I lived in it. The contradictions had disappeared. It was as though I lived in this perfection. And it was almost like the ideal conceived by the supramental consciousness, of a humanity become as perfect as it can be. And it was very good.

And this brings a great repose. The tension, the friction, all that disappeared, and the impatience. All that had completely disappeared.

Disciple: That is to say, you concentrate the work instead of diffusing it a little everywhere?

Mother: No, it may be diffused materially, because the individuals are not necessarily collected together. But they are few in number.

That idea of a pressing need to “prepare” humanity for the new creation, that impatience has disappeared.

Disciple: It must first of all be realised in some.

Mother: Quite so.

I was seeing, I saw that in such a concrete way. Apart from those who are fit to prepare the transformation and the supramental realisation, and whose number is necessarily very restricted, there must develop more and more, in the midst of the ordinary human mass, a superior humanity which has towards the supramental being of the future or in the making the same attitude as animality, for example, has towards man. There must be, besides those who work for the transformation and who are ready for it, a superior humanity, intermediary, which has found in itself or in life that harmony with Life—that *human* harmony—and which has the same feeling of adoration, devotion, faithful consecration to “something” which seems to it so high that it does not even try to realise it, but worships it and feels the need of its influence, its protection, and the need to live under that influence, to have the delight of being under that protection. It was so clear. But not that anguish, those torments of wanting something that escapes you because—because it is not your destiny to have it, and because the amount of transformation needed is premature for your life and it is that then which creates a disorder and suffering.

For example, one of the very concrete things that brings out the problem well: humanity has the sexual impulse in a way altogether natural, spontaneous, and, I would say, legitimate. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality. Many other things will disappear, as for example the need to eat and perhaps also the need to sleep in the way we sleep now. But the most conscious impulse in a superior humanity, which has continued as a source of—bliss is a big word, but joy, delight—is certainly the sexual activity, and that will have absolutely no reason for existence in the function of Nature when the need to create in that way will no longer exist. Therefore, the capacity of entering into relation with the joy of life will rise by one step or will be oriented differently. But what the ancient spiritual aspirants had sought on principle—sexual negation—is an absurd thing, because that must be only for those who have gone beyond this stage and no longer have animality in them. And it must drop off naturally, without effort and without struggle. To make of it a centre of conflict and struggle is ridiculous. It is only when the consciousness ceases to be human that it drops off quite naturally. Here also there is a transition which may be somewhat difficult, because the beings of transition are always in an unstable equilibrium; but within oneself there is a kind of flame and a need which makes it not pain-

ful—it is not painful effort, it is something that one can do with a smile. But to seek to impose it upon those who are not ready for this transition is absurd.

It is common sense. They are human, but they must not pretend that they are not.

It is only when spontaneously the impulse becomes impossible for you, when you feel that it is something painful and contrary to your deeper need that it becomes easy; then, well, externally you cut those bonds and it is finished.

It is one of the most convincing examples.

It is the same with regard to food. It will be the same thing. When animality will drop off, the absolute necessity of food also will drop off. And there will probably be a transition where one will have less and less purely material food. For example, when you smell flowers it is nourishing. I have seen it, you nourish yourself in a more subtle way.

Only, the body is not ready. The body is not ready and it deteriorates, that is to say, it eats itself. That proves that the time has not come, that it is only an experience—an experience that teaches you something, teaches you that it will not be a brutal refusal to come into contact with the corresponding Matter and an isolation (one cannot isolate oneself, it is impossible), but a communion on a higher or deeper plane. [silence]

Those who have reached the higher regions of intelligence, but have not dominated the mental faculties in them, have an innocent need that everybody should think like them and be able to understand as they understand. And when they see that others do not, cannot understand, their first reflex is to be horribly shocked; they exclaim, "What an idiot!" But they are not at all idiots—they are different, they are in another domain. You do not go and say to an animal, "You are an idiot," you say, "It is an animal." Well, you say, "It is a man." It is a man; only, there are those who are no longer men and are not yet gods, and they are in a situation . . . rather awkward.

But it was so soothing, so sweet, so wonderful, that vision—each thing expressing its kind quite naturally.

And it is quite evident that with the amplitude and totality of the vision, there comes something which is a compassion that understands—not that pity of the superior for the inferior; the true divine Compassion, which is the total comprehension that each one is what he must be. [Mother's Collected Works, vol. 11 *Notes on the Way* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1980), pp. 22-29.]

INTERVIEW WITH SATPREM

[Following is a translation of an interview with Satprem published in the French magazine *Lui* in January 1980. The translation was provided by the Institute of Evolutionary Research in New York, the publisher of *Mother's Agenda*.]

Neither a guru nor a philosopher, but a man who reflects and who is trying to discover a "passage towards a new, superior state of man." A sage who wants to pierce through the secret of Matter . . . For Jacques Chancel [the interviewer on the famous *Radioscopie* program on French radio], Satprem is an "adventurer of the inner" . . . Surprising itinerary for this Breton from Paris who followed all the paths of the world before finally settling down in India, at the age of thirty. For at the time of his first visit he had been "fascinated" by Sri Aurobindo, great guide and thinker about whom he wrote several books, among them *Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness*. And by Mother, beside whom he lived for 19 years, recording her *Agenda* . . . This was the first time that Satprem had come to Paris in 20 years. Frederick de Towarnicki was able to meet him for *Lui*.

Lui: You left Europe when you were 21. You are French. You have been living in India for the last 19 years and today you are still pursuing your quest there for knowledge and wisdom. You were very close to the extraordinary spiritual guide, Sri Aurobindo, a great master of yoga, and Mother, who was at the head of the Pondicherry Ashram. How and where did your novel-like life begin?

Satprem: The beginning was a question. A question that I first asked myself in the Nazi concentration camps, when I was in a state of total nothingness: "What is man? What is life, Matter, death? What remains in a man when all has been wiped out? When nothing more exists?" My entire life has been an attempt to answer this.

As a child, I was already suffocating. Who was I? Who was this being that was me? I never could feel it, I never could get to what was really "me." It was always others that spoke, that "knew," that decided things for me. There was always a school, a father, a mother, knowledge, religion, professors. . . . There was always someone or something holding me back, a screen between reality and myself.

Lui: So then you have tried to answer your question?

Satprem: The first time, around 1950, I sought life at its source, by leaping backwards several million years: I returned to the Earth's past by living in the virgin forests of Guyana. There were moments when I felt this forest as it must have existed at the time of the great primates.

Water, wind, rain, the plants, the insects, the snakes, the trees, all mixed together in a kind of intense complicity. The nights were vibrant with a million sounds and secret movements. It was an unbelievably sumptuous madness! What was man in the midst of this extraordinary vibration? A minuscule point. He was no longer the center of everything! I also experienced moments of indescribable joy, and I discovered this inner harmony that links all things. It was already a new regard. At times my body grew light and no longer seemed to obey the laws of gravity. . . . But this return to the Earth's past—as I later understood—was not enough. One had to be still farther, deeper, towards man's future which is as yet only a rough draft.

Lui: Then you wandered all over India, didn't you?

Satprem: Yes, I was a kind of wandering monk. Doing that, I saw and understood many things. I practiced Tantrism, I became a sannyasi. But even there I received no convincing answers, and what did it matter here and there to meet some isolated yogis floating in the heights of the mind? Along the way I had seen too many men stricken by sickness and pain. . . .

Lui: So then you went on?

Satprem: Yes. I was interested in the Tantra, but I didn't want to get stuck in one experience. Not in a religion or a spiritual technique any more than in a virgin forest. Nor, as I once wrote, become a "bureaucraft of adventure." So again, I had to ask the question "Where is the man in all this? Has he flowered already? If not, what is he?" And only with Sri Aurobindo and Mother did I understand where and how I could answer this question I had asked myself in the concentration camps. . . .

Lui: You are a Breton. Is Satprem your pen name?

Satprem: Mother gave it to me. It means "he who truly loves."

Lui: Is what you discovered a sort of "third eye"?

Satprem: No, it is simpler than that, much more direct. It is what is left when we peel off this varnish that has been glued onto us, or else when we burst out of this bowl in which we are trapped, like a fish, and which distorts our vision. And really, what would you think of a fish who pretends to grasp the reality of the world looking out of his fishbowl? What is truly

adventurous in Mother and Sri Aurobindo is that they did not seek to conduct their experiment in some “up above” or in an established religion. They did not believe in the heaven of a would-be liberated yogi any more than in our hygienic heaven which is at present suffocating us. They wanted to experiment in their own earthly bodies, in the very midst of evolution. Without microscopes, without test tubes and telescopes and rockets, they were determined to explore Matter itself, and that is where they went! They thus discovered a new mental vibration. And the fact of discovering another state of consciousness deep within themselves, deep within their bodies, within their very cells, is bound to transform the world’s condition. Mother and Sri Aurobindo tried to open up for us a passage to another stage of evolution. For we are, I believe, on the eve of a great upheaval. ...

Lui: By that, do you mean a reversal of consciousness?

Satprem:

Lui:
place?

Satprem:

But in this world visibly governed by violence, desire for power or money, isn't it an illusion to think we are living through a transitional stage that is leading man to a higher level?

precisely. We to doubt ourselves. The walls are beginning to crack. Everyone is feeling that our usual solutions are no longer effective. We are realizing just how broke we are. What we are witnessing is not the end of a civilization, but rather of a cycle in the paleontological or geological sense. There is something going on we don't know about. Millions of men-bombarded, ripped apart by contradictory information-are asking new and painful questions: “What is the meaning of all this?”

what it should be, that what they have been taught has no relation to reality. They are reaching out, calling for

something. There is a change in perception, in their way of seeing: the hope for a new, more transparent perception of

can discover new dimensions. One day our children will live.

Lui: But what do you feel when you have such an experience, when you enter into real matter? Is the word “matter” really the right one?

Satprem: Matter as we know it is something quite different from what it really is. The most accurate word would be “energy.” Or even “consciousness-energy.” In India they speak of the “shakti.” ... It's an incredible current! It is the very essence of what we call matter. When Mother began experiencing this cellular consciousness, she said that once you have traversed all the layers of evolution and come to matter as it really is, you perceive waves vibrating “at lightning speed within total immobility.” When that happens, “you” and “I” are no longer two different things but one tremendous current. ...

Lui: By living closely with the animals, did you discover the power that lies behind instinct?

Satprem: We humans talk of “instinct” when we speak of the species other than man. We say that what drives a bird from Siberia to his tropical lagoon is instinct. But it doesn't work like that. In fact, the tropics and Siberia, and the entire map of the world, unfold ... within the bird. He does not fly above the environment and look at it from on high; rather, it is something that happens inside him. In this same way, each species goes towards its own work and its own goals, each is harmonious in its own way: the human species is not yet so. But as I said before, what Mother and Sri Aurobindo discovered was a tremendous level, this new, cellular consciousness within us, which as yet we hardly know.... I think that evolution is the discovery of what man is. Each progress of the species is a step towards the reality of what “is.”

Lui: You were the friend, the confidant of the Mother. Who was she?

Satprem: Mother came to India in 1914. She had a rather strange background. Her father was Turkish, her mother Egyptian, and they both lived at the court of the Khedive in Egypt. But one day, her mother refused to bow down before the Khedive, and she and her husband had to leave Egypt. So Mother was born in Paris in 1878, on the Boulevard Haussmann. She knew Renoir, Manet, Sisley, and Rodin quite well. ... She lived in Paris when Fauvism and cubism were born. What stories she told us! She was a wonderful storyteller! As an adolescent, she had rather bizarre experiences; she would feel herself going out of her body, spreading wide in space, but she did not understand what was going on within her. She was 20 when Einstein formulated his theories on the equivalence of matter and energy, and on relativity. Mother was like a cyclone and, basically, very Occidental: an extraordinary force in action. ...

Mother lived an experience that had nothing to do with intellect, sects, “spirituality”. ... She lived it right to the end, until her ninety-fifth year. She never stopped. Three days before her death, and right to her last breath, she said, “Help me to walk. I want to walk ...” Mother told us that Sri Aurobindo had come to accomplish a work that concerns the entire terrestrial evolution. ... With her I understood that I had to set out towards the “future of man.”

Lui: But how does this experiment express itself practically?

Satprem: First of all, let's keep it simple: we must try to bring more consciousness, more transparency, into each movement of our lives. At each second I am preoccupied with being as fully “open” as possible, with more fully perceiving the surface falsehood and illusion. If that second is lived fully, all the rest automatically follows from it. Then things appear with a kind of self-evidence. And even suffering loses its reality. I don't even know what sickness means any longer. What interests me is this pulsation or this respiration beating within me when I walk, when I live, when I contemplate nature ... or when I go in an elevator: a kind of immediate density, a sensation of harmony. The touchstone is the present second: how it is lived, the way one “is” in that second, seeking a new depth. I do not hide behind “explanatory systems.” for those who have made this experiment, it is very simple. ... And they come to realize that their bodies know more about it than they do.

One day, for example, I was walking along the eroded canyons near Auroville, I was attacked by three ruffians who, as

I later learned, had been paid to kill me. But strangely enough, when they came upon me, I had absolutely no reaction, neither of fear nor even reflection. I was in a kind of blank state. Only, when I raised my eyes and looked at the leader of these men, his arm fell back down and everything stopped. And calmly, I walked away, as if nothing had happened. And suddenly I understood that for the body, our physical body, actually "nothing" had happened.

Lui: How do you see India today? As a propitious ground for inner experiences? . . .

Satprem: There is an inner India that touches you deeply, and a kind of air that you can't find anywhere else. Of course, modern India absorbs many Western ideas as a result of its technical and industrial development. And yet—how can I explain this?—you can breathe there; there is a "soul" of India, something you can feel very physically. In most cases, the people are so simple, with such a depth of calm to them. What is striking is that even when they are "materially poor," they are seldom miserable, whereas in the West, even when they are "materially rich," their lives so often remain rather miserable.

Lui: Is the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother along the lines of those ancient Hindu sacred texts, the Vedas?

Satprem: Indeed, the Vedas are the great common line, centered upon the truth of Matter. Later, this line was completely lost, and it was taught that the world is an illusion (which in a sense is true) and that one had only to get out by soaring to the "spiritual" heights. But the priests, the Vedic rishis, knew that it was not the upward path or the path of ascension that had to be trod, but the path of descent . . . one had to go to the very heart of matter-energy, the place of the supramental vibrations. This secret has been totally lost, it has become unintelligible for those who read the Vedas today. But Sri Aurobindo said, "This is what I have lived, what I have discovered." And for everyone. For, once again, what is a "superman" all alone in his room? To us right here, what good are a few "liberated" yogis in the Himalayas? . . .

Lui: Satprem, do you believe in reincarnation yourself?

Satprem: What can we possibly understand of existence if we do not realize that this "moment" we call our life is the fruit of many other efforts, which explains, for example, why today we are more developed in one area than another, or why we experience certain difficulties that seem to push us towards some fated mistake? We have many lives behind us, it's obvious. . . .

In a sense, reincarnation is an evolutionary strategy that brings the species to a certain threshold from which it can advance to a higher dimension. From this point of view, it can be said that there is no need to construct the "superman"; we must let it develop by itself. . . .

Lui: But isn't Buddhism too a certain experience in matter? Can't Nirvana be considered as a "hole" in matter?

Satprem: At the time of the Buddha—500 years before Christ—mankind was not ready for what Sri Aurobindo and Mother have discovered, that the real work must be done in matter.

In Buddhism, the mind goes up into the higher regions of the fishbowl and enters a sort of vagueness in which everything evaporates, disappears. Perceiving nothing any longer, the mind experiences a kind of luminous swooning with a feeling of infinity, and it feels liberated, very much at ease. But you could as easily say that under the effect of an anesthetic on the operating table, you are liberated—for you no longer feel the pain, the suffering. And it's true. But in another sense it is an illusion, for the body wakes up and the patient comes back to the world of suffering, misery and sickness. When consciousness is thus "liberated," what does that change in the body, in matter, in evolution? Nothing at all. Why in the world have we taken a body if it is only to find a way out of it? Evolution has no mystical sense; there is nothing more material. . . .

Lui: In the West, we sometimes criticize certain Indian ashrams, as well as the rather mercantilistic reality of that experimental city, Auroville. . . .

Satprem: Mother and Sri Aurobindo have nothing at all to do with the composition of ashrams or of Auroville. You cannot prevent people (often of good will) from coming somewhere and forming groups. Including, sometimes, people too much in a hurry, too self-interested, or too zealous. . . . The Vatican, Mecca have known pilgrims and dealers in sacred objects of every type! . . . Some self-interested groups have tried to grab hold of Auroville to make a big business out of it. But that's only an appearance. The essential thing is that meaningful experiments are going on there. . . .

Lui: In one of your books you have mentioned "the death of death." What do you mean by that?

Satprem: Death is the key, the greatest obstacle and at the same time the greatest possibility. Mother crossed through all the layers of negation, the pettiness, the refusal, the doubts, all those "no's" that are piled up in us as so many "little deaths" that one day will make our "big death"! Mother said, "Man carries in him the key to open the doors and windows, but he

doesn't want to use it. He is afraid of losing his identity. . . . He wants to remain what he calls 'himself.' He loves his falsehood and his slavery. He feels that without his limits, and the suffering they represent, he would not exist. That is why the journey is so long and so difficult."

When one has crossed these final mortal layers, one opens out upon a cellular consciousness where death no longer exists. At this level, consciousness has transcended death. This does not mean that we will remain eternally in the same skin, for this consciousness has a transforming power that will change matter itself. . . .

Mother said, "Death is not the opposite of life." To be precise, there is no death. Rather, there is a certain phenomenon of life that must take a new direction in order to be able to live always, keep growing always. . . . What is really doesn't die at any level, not even that of the body.

Lui: And yet, Mother died. . . .

Satprem: It is true, she left, and the doctors declared her dead. But she had told me, "I see better with eyes closed than with eyes open. They will think I am dead because I will no longer be able to move or speak, but you who know, you will tell them." Indeed, what was it she did if not to prepare in the cells of her body the thousand eyes of our little cells which one day will undoubtedly awaken everywhere without our knowing how? For she directly perceived the supramental in her body. She realized that the physical world—and the physical body—as we know them—is a tremendous falsehood programmed by a limited mind which has conditioned our relationship with the world. Mother died in 1973, twenty-three years after Sri Aurobindo. They put her in a rosewood box beside him. All I know is that the cells of Mother's body are living because she fully experienced this consciousness that is free from death. . . .

Lui: In this world full of peril, is your message a message of hope?

Satprem: As long as we do not feel the walls, it's hopeless; as long as our civilizations think that we are going to perform miracles, it's hopeless. But now that the whole world is up against a wall, yes, it is full of hope—it's a sign that we are going to break it down. Then the supramental vibration will grow in our consciousness and in matter. "So incredibly rapid, yet motionless, warm as though made of love," said Sri Aurobindo. It is pouring forth from every pore of the earth's great body. It is what we are living through at this moment. . . .

What is there to say to a caterpillar? It must become the butterfly.

On Baca

By Ariel Browne

WE HAVE JUST Returned from Baca Grande and the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center. We are spinning back out of a purposeful maelstrom, a gathering to consider the proposal (focalized by Seyril Schochen) that the national, even international, community of devotees to The Mother and Sri Aurobindo build a place of living concentration, retreat, education and collective research in the integral yoga, the yoga of the cells, here in the Baca in Colorado.

For our gathering, the four directions with miraculous perfection yielded Bill Moss and Martha Orton (East), Wayne Bloomquist (West), Ariel and David Browne (South) and Rod and Kirti Hemsell with their gorgeous children (North). Already in the Center are Seyril and Suzanne and Kenny and Maggie, who are bright gems, holding the fire of the vision already.

I am, as always after a visit to the Baca, stunned with the pure beauty, energy and creative tension of the place. Turning to *Savitri* for guidance, this passage rushes into my lungs--a sudden bracing air, a reminiscence, or a premonition:

There were summit glories inconceivable,

Autonomies of wisdom's still self-rule

And high dependencies of her virgin sun,

Illumined theocracies of the seeing soul

Throned in the power of the transcendent's ray.

A vision of grandeurs, a dream of magnitudes

In sun-bright kingdoms moved with regal gait....

All objects there were great and beautiful,

All beings wore a royal stamp of power.

There sat the obligarchies of natural Law,

Proud violent heads served one calm monarch brow:

All the soul's postures donned divinity.

There met the ardent mutual intimacies

Of mastery's joy and the joy of servitude

Imposed by Love on Love's heart that obeys

And Love's body held beneath a rapturous yoke....

(Book I, Canto III)

There is the relentless urge to wax rhapsodic about Baca. Better to defer to *Savitri's* rhapsodies and feel the heart's overwhelming response to this place, and the cells' leaping joy.

This is a place where the labour of Earth in her passionate prevailing wrestle with the Supramental is overt. These partners in creative evolution's stretch and play are out in dance here. And the grave mountains, those lofty deities, bear down upon humanity's well-entrenched methods of defense against this visceral induction. Religion supports this defense, but Baca is not a religious place. Rather it is a place of spiritual body, and it takes you up into its fiercely patient heart if you make the slightest sign of interest.

In 1988, I made a small sign of interest, and Baca touched me with visions: The Great Divine Mother with long wafting skirts hovering above the dry, crystal plain that undergirds Baca's rise; Mother, with long wafting skirts like wings, below the body, sweeping me and everything up into the foothills of the "14-ers," the 14,000 foot high line of mountains that background Baca called the Sangre de Cristo range (the blood of Christ).

Here were other visions, but my cells will not forget the pungent, enthralling smell of cottonwood, juniper, pinon, and Earth-body; I was overcome, stung inside my nasal passages by the sharp, evocative musk of earth.

I wandered in the arid plain below Baca, forced to push through sharp, defined little deity auras. Each stone, bone, antler, plant and bird, and the brook: that sweet, rushing, slender body of silver-blue! A long-time resident described this distinct, conscious presence like this, "Every stone in the Baca is a bodhisattva." I understood. Here the land is conscious and expressive, as is its nature. Where

I live, and where most of us live, and just down the road from Baca, the Earth has been beaten into submission. Just as spouses inexplicably do to the loved one, and parents do to children, and humans do to animals. We beat that which is too bright and sensual and alive and compelling--compelling us to intimacy, and change. Intimacy is like that. Intimacy changes us, irrevocably. I say to you, "I do." It means, I change with you. I acknowledge that your presence in my life, and mine in yours--changes me forever. I will never be the same again. Your energy touches mine, and presses me. And I do to you. Even as I sit beside you, my aura and yours have already mixed it up. If we embrace, Ah, the change. If I lie beside you and dream your body into mine, and mine into yours, what new beings are we when we awake?

Baca is an incredibly intimate place of Earth. It insists its transformative spirit upon you. Walking its earth is walking in Earth-body: a sharp-sweet-tingling-prana breath-stretching-demanding-bone deep cell compelling intimacy.

During this last visit, in early May, 1993, we gathered in council in response to the call from Seyril to come and be in a gathered research of presence and collective meditation. Seyril has been the instrument of this vision for some time now, and she felt to join with the community to ask about a stirring we have all felt, a stirring of new creation toward a center for the national body of devotees to retreat, to practice, to research and contemplate. We all heard many voices calling us to gather, and deep energies compelled us. We coalesced in a swirling mass of love and gratitude, carrying the gossamer reminders of those other busy lives from which we had been freed, miraculously, to be here. We brought bright commitment and opened warm hands of trust to the One.

Our meeting place was Turtle Island, a wonderful bed and breakfast in Crestone, right next to Baca. There were about sixteen of us in that first council, and many other smaller and larger meetings brought that council into focus. We needed little incandescent light. Our hearts and souls and feet made the three rings of light which illumined intuition and unified know-

ing. From a timeless place in the cells we know exactly how to do this council, how to leave the ego and the mind aside, and move into the breath-filled calm of the unified center. Mother and Sri Aurobindo allowed us to be with Their bodies and call it darshan. And we still may gather and call it council, or darshan, or meditation, or even meeting. Such was this meeting.

What it yielded, this meeting of surrender to That, is a YES! Yes; a bright body is coming to birth in Baca.

We cannot say yet what it is. But the Great Mother holds it in her womb as it grows more luminous, and we may be below her, held in the inexpressibly soft, and purposeful, wafting of wings.

This is a new idea that comes of the collective. We who gathered felt ourselves to be representatives, geographically separate perhaps, but joined in this new being which reflects the love, the collective Love. This is our willingness to surrender to intimacy with Them. We have long ago said, and have been constantly saying,

I do. Intimacy yields.

For all of you dear ones, joined in heart with me, see what yields in you. If you are stirred and inspired, go to visit Baca. Go with The Mother and Sri Aurobindo and ask as you do--what about this Baca? Ask for all of us. And let us all know. I believe that new places on Earth are birthing in the Supramental, and Baca is one. What do you feel?

Ariel Browne is the director of Aurientation Integral Healing Center in Atlanta, Georgia

The Baca

By June Maher

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE of the Baca came in 1982. Seyril and I, at the invitation of Hanne Strong, drove down together for several days visit, staying at Hanne's townhouse in the pueblo area.

There is a vibrant and varied community in the Crestone/Baca township, but it is the land that spoke to me. My experience of the land, the place, was totally unexpected. It came in a floodtide of passionate connection that filled my being.

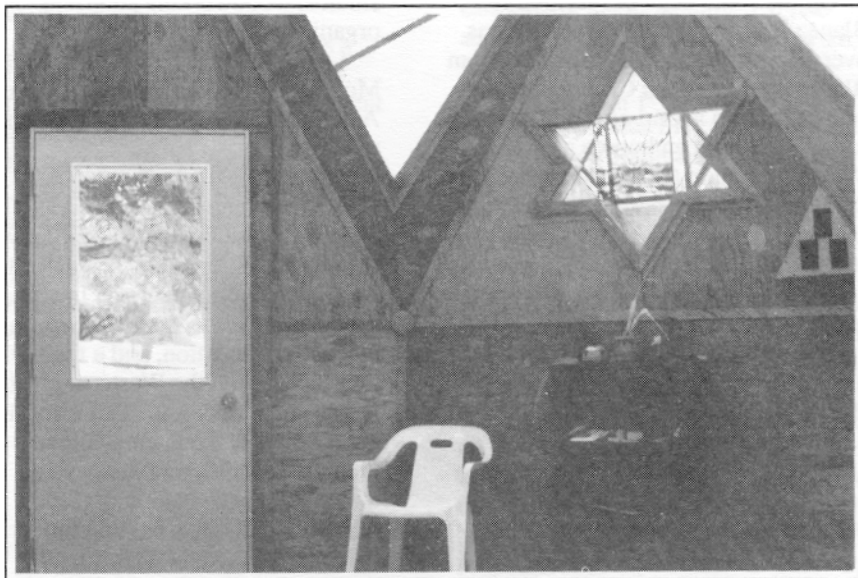
Although I have been an infrequent visitor since 1982, that first impression has never left me.

The Baca represents, or rather, is one of those special places given on Earth which are potent with possibility for human evolution. I feel the same for Auroville, which is my life's focus and service, but in a different way.

In the case of Baca, my experience has led me to feel that it is a site especially receptive and nurturing to the Child and the Body.

In this place I do believe, with mind quieted, the forces at play can open to those who are receptive a means to lighten, to infuse with health and well-being, the whole body.

In this place, in ways and means that are not yet fully known nor seen by us, there can come an acceleration to the body's cellular consciousness..."a body made beautiful by the Spirit's Light."



Inside Savitri Solar Dome

At the risk of seeming effusive, I share with readers excerpts from my journal of that time:

This also is like coming home--beauty, harmony, plenitude.

The Valley (San Luis) is aligned north and south. The sun traverses east to west--a cross, sacred to Indians when they found the earth presenting this configuration.

To honor the land and to make the greatest use of forces, energy ascending and descending, one should take into account this alignment when building.

What is the big gap is something for children, integrated with now strongly adult, thinking orientation.

Thinking, the mental might be difficult as it runs counter to the gravitational field of earth soul in

this spot. Rather, there should be emphasis an opportunity in the environment, to absorb and assimilate and thus transmute the body consciousness.

Here the body could be trained by adepts...to become more flexible, strong, calm in order to contain these forces and pulsations.

If all is done harmoniously, without too much interference from the mind,--a place where the new race might begin to flame up, a new birth cradled protectively by this spot. Come and see for yourself!

June Maher co-founded Auroville International USA and lives in Aptos, California



Baca: A Special Place

By John Menchen

WHEN ROBERT FROST read his poem, "We were the land's before the land was ours" at the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, he captured something of the essence of the human relation to land, in particular an evolving American awareness of responsibility. In a special sense, however, this idea could apply to the Baca/Crestone "field of opportunity."

On the south edge of this area is Blanca Peak; several other mountains over 14,000 feet range northward from Blanca, including the Crestone Peaks, and these form a kind of rampart to the east. This has been known as the Sacred Mountain and Eastern Gate by the Hopi and other native peoples from time immemorial, and many shrines still exist. This area was considered a place of healing, of vision and a place to seek enlightenment.

Unfortunately, until quite recently, our society has only seen this region in terms of commercial benefit. But from 1979 (with some retreats and some advances), Maurice and Hanne Strong have sustained a vision of their stewardship that embodies the sense of a return of the land to its earlier significance.

It seems that this region in former days had been what the ancient middle eastern peoples had called "haram"--dedicated...a place where no warfare was permitted, but where meetings of clans could occur safely and resolutions of conflict be achieved. Quite clearly in our time, religious differences and the intransigence of sects fuel constant conflicts. So the return of this land to its primal claim upon us as a place to foster understanding and the making of peace between clashing religions was always part of the sustaining vision. And also in our time the repair of torn fabric of relations between people and environment is the most insistent demand that the passion for healing has raised. And this, too, has been part of the sustaining vision of the Crestone/Baca undertaking.

These are some of the projects that are already well-established here or are in practical planning stages:

- The Nada Hermitage and Spiritual Life Institute is a community of Apostolic hermits affiliated with the Carmelites of the Roman Catholic Church. On their land, they have already built a chapel, a guest house, kitchen, refectory, library, organic garden, and eighteen hermitages.

- The Crestone Mountain Zen Center includes a primary residential building, meditation halls, pottery studios, woodworking shop and organic gardens.

- Adjacent to the Zen Center is the Mountain Center of the Lindisfarne Association, a contemplative community of scholars.

- The San Luis Valley Tibetan Project is underway now, and the first building phase, a Stupa, is partially completed. Succeeding stages will be building and organizing an Institute of Tibetan Medicine, a retreat base, a monastic foundation, and a facility for interfacing with the Western scientific and medical tradition. This effort is affiliated with the Karma-Kagyü School. In a different location, an undertaking affiliated with the NYihgma School is starting up.

- The Haidakhandi Universal Ashram has completed the first phase of their mission, the building of a shrine to the Divine Mother. Further steps in transmitting the teachings of Baba Ji have been initiated.

- The Sri Aurobindo Learning Center is a non-profit educational foundation on North Baca Grant Way. Its physical structures are comprised of Savitri House, Savitri Solar Dome, which is built on Buckminster Fuller's geodesic principles, and Solar Bridge, currently under construction, will be a solarized residence, office and classroom/conference space. A pottery studio, greenhouse and two organic gardens complete the facilities for the future New Education campus. A sixty-one acre site on Baca Bluffs is to be developed as an ecological community called Savitri Solar Village; it will have a Vedic library, solar residences, community center, a school for Sacred Theatre studies, an amphitheatre, conference facilities, and community

greenhouse and gardens.

- Bringing depth to the cultural dimension is the Academy of Living Tradition, a group of artists and craftsmen who recently secured land on which to build cottages and studios. Their aim is to explore and express those aspects of art, music and architecture which incorporate traditional values in present-day form.

In a more secular dimension, the Colorado College Southwest Studies program is at the former Aspen Institute Conference Center. The facility consists of residential apartments and dormitory units and a meeting and seminar building.

New forms of education process which involve bringing people into a radical and fresh relation to self and fellows through wilderness encounters have proven very beneficial over the past decade in America. Combining these methods with a dedication to develop the attitudes and learning needed to achieve sustainable communities is part of the evolution being worked out at Baca/Crestone. Presently, there are three ongoing enterprises of this nature, Rediscovery Four Corners, Educo, and Sacred Passages.

These existing resources will be brought into play as support for a major new establishment--the training camp for the Earth Restoration Corps. Working such factors into a curriculum which stresses natural laws and the potential for human transformation into an ethical being is very exciting. The Earth Restoration Corps is a concept which has been gaining much support as more people realize the need for massive remedial action to offset the damage human action has inflicted on the natural environment. Land has been set aside for this project. In close relationship to this is the start-up phase of a model sustainable village using basic simple systems for heat and water needs and advanced photovoltaics for electricity.

Sustainable dwelling and agricultural models have always been part of the planning here, and it is encouraging to see progress along these lines. There are projects already functioning with experimental gardens and one focused on crops such as quinoa for developing an agricultural system for optimal results in high altitude conditions.

Worthy of mention is that in keeping with the original vision of fostering interreligious understanding, it is anticipated that members of other world religions such as the Muslim, Jewish and Zoroastrian faiths will establish their own foundations here.

John Menken is Senior Advisor, the Manitou Foundation, Crestone, Colorado.

Crestone/ Baca: A Living Laboratory

By Kenny Dessain

CRESTONE/BACA, Colorado has, for a number of years, been a living laboratory for alternative energy and sustainable building technologies. A survey of recent housing starts includes four straw bale structures, three Earth Ships (recycled tire walls) and half a dozen insulative pumice stone buildings which use a technique that the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center (SALC) helped pioneer.

Since 1990, SALC has hosted an annual Global Village Network Conference and helped sponsor the Crestone/Baca Alternative Energy Fair. Also in 1990, a new solarium was added to the Center, and construction began on Solar Bridge, a solar-passive, energy-efficient shelter/meeting place built largely of glass and insulative lava rock. In 1991, the Savitri Solar Dome was completed, and it has served as womb and stage for a growing number of cultural celebrations, from pre-school earth songs to the poetic offerings of a self-proclaimed "freelance Hindu pundit", C. V. Devan Nair.

This community enrichment initiative, especially the hard construction component of it, has been sup-

ported entirely by the efforts and resources of Seyril Schochen, the inspirational Director of the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center. Outside the Solar Dome sits a rack of recycled NASA solar hot water panels, ready to be plumbed to the already-installed radiant-floor heating system. Nearby, the Solar Bridge, roofed and stuccoed, awaits completion. Savitri Solar School, another SALC project, enjoyed a successful course in 1992, building a prototype solar-electric motorcycle, and utilizing the Solar Dome for a moving performance of Savitri; it will be unable to convene again this summer, largely due to the lack of a facility.

As Crestone/Baca burgeons as a retreat center, the in-resident spirit seekers and worker bees are confident that energy and support will come to nurture and accommodate this "refuge for traditional world truth" under the Sangre de Cristo peaks.

Kenny Dessain is Co-Director, Turtle Island Peace Camp Crestone, Colorado.

Children's Activities At Crestone/ Baca

By Maggie Dessain

THE CRESTONE/BACA community is a delightful place for children to grow up. Its small but burgeoning cosmopolitan population allows children the open opportunity to play and learn with friends of very divergent backgrounds. Most importantly, it has the wild, natural feel of the end of the road.

For smaller children, daycare is

arranged on an individual basis, though for the past several years, there have been organized preschools. This past year a young children's workshop met often in the Savitri Solar Dome for music, dance, and storytelling.

School-age children have, for the last three years, had the option of attending a small alternative school or riding the public school bus to Moffat, twelve miles distant, where a rural, family environment prevails in a K-12 facility with about one hundred students. Several families in the community are homeschooling.

Summertime in the Sangres is a paradise of hiking and upward-bound camping in the mountains that rise sharply to 14,000 feet just east of the residential strip along their flanks. Special summer programs for kids from inside and outside the community are legion: Baca Stables and Riding Camp, Rediscovery Camp for local and Native American teenagers, Sierra Buena Children's Tipi Day Camp, Gypsy Moth Theatre at Turtle Island, and, last year, the Savitri Solar Summer School, which brought students from Auroville, Europe and Canada to share in alternative energy projects with local youth. This year, the Earth Restoration Corps--an environmental peace corps youth training pilot program--is being planned for August and September to set up camp next to the Savitri Solar Village proposed site.

With the growing home construction in the area, as well as its development as a retreat center, there is also ample employment opportunities for high school youth and chances to become involved in everything from the World Garden to the recent performance of Baratnatyam dance by Tejas Hemsell in the Savitri Solar Dome.

Maggie Dessain is Co-Director, Turtle Island Peace Camp, Crestone, Colorado.

The Gift Of Silence

By Steven Satyavan Krolik

THE SRI AUROBINDO Learning Center, in Baca Grande, creates a promising spiritual atmosphere found in this silent land of Crestone/Baca, Colorado. High above in the East of this divine nest loom the Sangre de Cristo Range mountains that powerfully descend towards the southern region of Colorado, and this gives the impression of a great panoramic spine of powerful inspiration to the people below these majestic peaks. The viewer quickly realizes that one is witnessing a mountain range that offers strength of life to those who drink from its waters of divine nourishment.

The location of the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center is definitely unique with its strength being a healthy soundscape for the internal transformations that Integral Yogic practices manifest. By creating an ideal setting that supports the various stages of internal transformation, the gift of silence truly prepares the way for spiritual victory.

One of the purposes of the Learning Center is to clearly establish a practical foundation for a yogic sadhana. Now is the earthly time to call on the Divine Shakti to confirm and support a much-needed abode of Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's Integral Yoga. A calm inner vision of radiance reveals the human and divine dedication in making the Learning Center a terrestrial manifestation at the foothills of the great and powerful Rocky Mountains.

Here one creates their own spiritual air by breathing in and out the Divine Power that makes up the warp of eternal peace and the weft of silence. Standing on a secure foundation makes the sadhana open itself like a lotus to the Sun. With an opening of the inner quietude, one is divinely lead to calmness and wideness as the yogic path reveals its evolutionary transformations.

When visiting Baca, one carries a

vessel that is filled with mixed mental contents that require voluntary emptying, before alchemically preparing to re-create the inner quietude. Now the stage is set for divinely receiving the gifts of peace, silence and joy. In this mindful texture, the loom of wholeness meets with the Presence. Careful preparation with a receptive silence welcomes the Divine Power to make the mind, life and body an instrument for psycho-physical transformation. This new-found spirituality leads to eventual self-empire (samrajya).

Gone is the restless mind that is replaced with a sacred space for the descending Supramental change that Sri Aurobindo and The Mother offer. At Baca Grande, one walks with inspiring confidence knowing a Spiritual Soundscape makes an ideal atmospheric setting for self-transformational practices. Sitting at the Feet of the Universal Guru delights the spirit by drinking from the well of life that overflows in this area of inspired devotees of The Divine.

Our collective and individual meditations from afar and near are directed wisely for the flowering of lotus-consciousness at the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center. Now is the correct earthly time for a Center that is devoted to Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in Baca. With the Soundscape of Silence as the bedrock for calmness, the Divine lotus unfolds its infinite potential as the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center receives the Sun, giving Inspiration for its destiny.

Om Aditi

Steven Satyavan Krolik lives in San Francisco, California.

a chance overnight with a longtime friend from Santa Fe. We visited Pat and John Caverly and their family, who at the time were living on the Ranch, running a home for wayward Native American teenagers from Denver. "It's a very beautiful place," I thought to myself at the time, "but so are many places in the Colorado mountains."

Over the next year or two, I kept running into people who somehow had a connection with this small, out-of-the-way place. For instance, at a Polarity workshop in upstate New York, I met a woman whose inlaws owned a home here. I received very clear, strong inner guidance to "come here, bring my husband, buy land...." When I heard in the spring of 1988 that Shirley MacLaine was planning to build a large healing center here, I called the one person I knew in the Baca, Pat Caverly. Pat assured me that Shirley's plans were not materializing, and she suggested that I talk with Hanne Strong. Pat quickly added that Hanne travels a lot, and, in fact, was leaving the next day. "Where is she going?" I asked. "Oh, she's going to Boston." "Pat, that's where I live!"

The very next evening, my husband and I entertained Hanne and Maurice Strong in our Cambridge townhouse. Hanne tells us about the world spiritual center vision that she was given by a local prophet, and Maurice tells us about his unusual experiences at the Baca, including one with Bill Moyers and the burning bush. This "chance" encounter lures my husband, and we spend our next two summer vacations at the Baca. In addition, I make several other visits over those years, including several week-long retreats at the Crestone Mountain Zen Center.

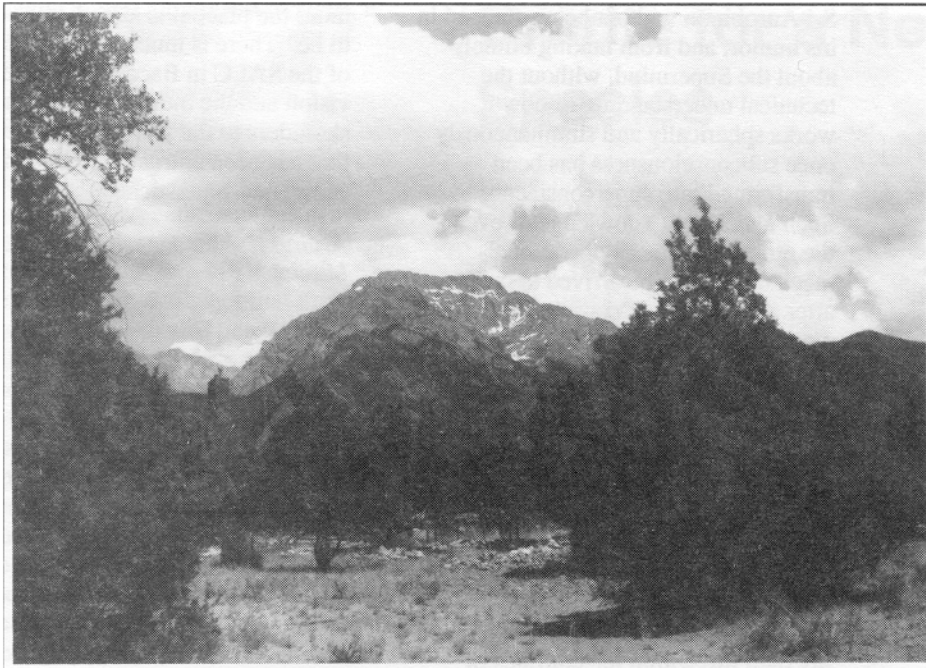
During my visits here, I received several visions and a past life recall. When my husband and I decided to separate in the spring of 1990, the opportunity in the crisis was that I was free to move here. I have continued to have very powerful experiences at the Baca.

In the spring of 1992, while on a cross country ski excursion to a yurt at the Continental Divide south of here, I remembered a near death experience that I had had when I was twenty years old. It included the proverbial tunnel, which was lined with all the peoples of the world sending me love and joy. I

The Call To The Light

By Kate Steichen

LIKE MANY WHO LIVE here, I felt called to the Baca for several years before Life conspired to bring me here from Cambridge, Massachusetts. My first visit here was



got closer and closer to the Light, and then was told that I hadn't even begun to do the work that I was here to do, and so I returned to my body and recovered from the coma I was in.

In remembering this incident last spring, I realized that the sky over the Baca is the closest image on Earth to my near death experience of the Light. I had received many direct teachings from the land here, but, until that recall, I had not fully appreciated the power of the sky.

Kate Steichen lives in Crestone, Colorado.

Synergy

By Dr. Phillip Tabb and Robert Armon

THE VISION OF THE BACA community in the San Luis Valley of Colorado is truly unique on our planet. There are few gatherings of such diverse nature as can be witnessed there. A beautiful manifestation of unity in diversity is clearly visible, and the wide range of groups and spiritually-oriented disciplines has been actualized in the schools, centers, spiritual retreats, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and traditional religious

practices which exist here in peace and harmony.

The Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, as well as other groups such as the Manitou Foundation, Carmelite Monastery, Spiritual Life Institute, Tibetan Project, Zen Buddhist Center and Native American groups, are active participants in the physical manifestation of this gentle "Baca spirit." The potential of combining energies for the benefit of the whole can be seen here. A benefit of this group effort is quite obvious to most people who have visited the Baca, and it could well be used as an example for future planetary development.

The Vesica Village Planning Group has been involved with several of the foundations and organizations in the Baca in the last ten years. As a planning and design group comprised of an international network of architects, engineers, educators and visionaries, we have witnessed the synergetic manifestation of this group effort and the effect this expanded and intensified vision has had on the education and growth of the many individuals and groups who have experienced workshops, seminars and retreats in the community.

Synergy in a metallurgical sense is an exciting and somewhat mysterious fact, but when witnessed in people in a community such as Baca,

it is far more beautiful, uplifting and rewarding for our combined spirit and planetary vision. Here is an example of true collaboration.

Dr. Phillip Tabb and Robert Armon are architects for the Vesica Group of Boulder, Colorado.

A Moonlit Night in the Rockies

By Diane Thome

I AM DELIGHTED TO SHARE, once again, some of my recollections of the experience I had at the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center in Baca, Colorado.

I had met Seyril at the A.U.M. Conference held at Mount Rainier in Washington State during the summer of 1990, and she commissioned a solo tape work from me titled "Into Her Embrace--Musings on Savitri." The Savitri Dome had just been completed, and this was the site of the premiere on a clear, moonlit night high in the Rockies, in celebration of Sri Aurobindo's birthday.

This beautiful, peaceful and unforgettable environment made an indelible impression on me. The days and evenings were full of stimulating talks, rituals, conferences and meditations. I feel it so appropriate and timely that the Center become a place for further collaboration on the future of the earth, on transformation, environmental health, education and other issues. The ground has been well-prepared and consecrated to enable the flowering of these and future endeavors.

Diane Thome is Professor of Music, University of Washington at Seattle.

Charging the Atmosphere

By Arvind Habbu

I HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR an appreciation of the Crestone/Baca area, where the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center (SALC) is domiciled. I have so far been there four times, twice for the Sri Aurobindo Birth Anniversary Conferences in 1991 and 1992 when I had the opportunity to address the attendees, and twice more with friends. It is a very pleasant drive from Denver or Colorado Springs to Crestone, particularly in late April or early June when there is still snow on the ground as you wind your way through the high passes.

It is definitely a beautiful place, and it reminds me of trekking pilgrimages into the deep Himalayas and Tibet. The Great Sand Dunes National Monument and the bison ranches are also added attractions.

For a while I did not comprehend how or why the same place, Crestone, could be called by two names, Baca and Crestone. Until from explanations was I able to extrapolate that the Baca is a particular designated zone within the Crestone precinct. Indeed, there is a difference between the types of construction found within the small Crestone township and the much more open "Baca area."

Many find this pristine place particularly holy. With all my antennae out, I pick out nothing but the natural calm of undisturbed altitudes (the Baca is at a height of approximately 8000 feet). And I do sleep very well, very quickly and am re-energized fully when I wake up there. If I were to speak my mind and were given a chance to exercise, I would make of this place a true retreat, a place of ingathering and meditation, embalmed in the serenity of Nature. This is not a place for talk or strenuous activity or hectic imaginative projects.

I would bring to Baca-SALC contemporary attitudes of functional management and architectural construction, and do away with the somewhat excessive stuffiness that comes from knowing too much about

Sri Aurobindo without being steeped in his humor, and from talking blithely about the Supermind, without the technical understanding of how it works spherically and simultaneously once subconsciousness has been transformed into superconsciousness. Such a technical knowledge of even the most preliminary operational mechanisms can be arrived at only after a great deal of consciousness-work, which alone can provide us with the right authority to such pronouncements.

Though a poet and lover of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in spite of having grown up in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram School and because of my intimate correspondence with the Mother, I feel disinclined to talk grandiosely about any of their visions, and would prefer to work them out in my own life within the confines of their consciousness-patch given me to cultivate. For this I would like to be able to retreat from time to time to more strongly intensify the will and carry forward the assault of light into darker regions.

I think we who love them must arrive at a much clearer mechanical understanding of the Way that they have prepared for us, in the same manner that we charge each of our daily actions with intensity of awareness, without fantasy, very technically, like when we are simply and purely aware of the movement of the arm and the sinews thereof as we write or type or cut logs. It is sufficient to have this unqualified and ever-penetrating awareness, to pierce into the knowledge of the mind-body cellular mechanism and access the karmic unknitting that takes place when desires thereupon super-imposed are dissolved by being perceived.

The Way is simple, the Way is true, the Way is clear. For to arrive at such preliminary understanding, physical and non-intellectual, and the beginning of unadulterated wisdom, it is first necessary to retreat, to observe with motionless Mind, with ever-present Consciousness. Where else better can this be done than in isolated and pristine Baca?

After a hundred of us have done this and charged the atmosphere with the peace of our spiritual-physical askesis, Baca, I believe, will tend to become

more the place it is already purported to be. There is much that can be made of the SALC in Baca, if we have the vision and the industry to put our shoulders to the yoke and do the Work that has been entrusted to us, simply, zenly, non-fantastically.

Arvind Habbu lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

A Birthday Gift

By Suzanne McGregor

I FIRST MET SEYRIL ON my birthday in Boulder almost five years ago, and the forces were brewing a magic that has carried me through to this day. The early February night was crisp and clear, and Seyril swept her hand across the star-studded heavens. "This, my dear, is your birthday gift!" With that gesture, I was given the greatest blessings I have ever received--open access to the wonders of the Universe, infinite possibilities in my life, the unconditional love of this vibrant sparkling woman. My love for Seyril welled up in me at that moment and endures deeply to this day. Our connection was secured in the twinkling of an eye, and a star.

I live now in the Baca, just up the winding dirt road and across the creek from Seyril and Savitri House, and have worked with her in the activities of the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center. But mostly I have been an eager student, and quite a frustrating one in memorable instances, trying to integrate the teachings and the visions of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother into my life--awestruck and comprehending at times, dragging my feet at others. I have witnessed Seyril living these teachings, giving me shopping lists with quotes from *Savitri* at the bottom, lest I lose my center in the grocery store. Calls from her in the late evening--reading my mind, I'm sure!--with the perfect words to transcend a

heaviness into a lightness of spirit, a gentle reminder of the presence of infinite Grace.

And the wonderful friends I have had the honor, and the absolute pleasure, to encounter through the contacts of the Learning Center! Dearest Devan Nair, with his gentle and inspirational telephone conversations, and his active fax machine, sending along messages that transport me to my star-dusted heavens. And the gift of laughter, always and foremost, the laughter! And the absolutely infatigable Arvind Habbu, who coached me through a hard climb upwards and who was there at the top, seemingly apart from my struggle, but, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the absolute vigilance, and the love. And the immediately apparent past, present and future sister-connection with my beloved Dee DeCew, in whom I witnessed firsthand the dedication, devotion and tireless service to Auroville, her mission and her love. And the visitors brought to Baca in the embodiment of the Sri Aurobindo Association and friends--Wayne Bloomquist, Bill Moss, Martha Orton, Ariel and David Browne. What an inspirational and conscious group they were, full of vision and of heart, of enthusiasm and strength.

It is an inner journey, to be sure, and the travels can often be along quite bumpy roads and unfamiliar territory. It is said of the Baca that if you come with personal issues unresolved, your demons to wrestle will be delivered to you on a silver chain, then unleashed--and thus begins the emergence of Truth as it has been, and can be, for you. It is definitely worth the confrontation, for the gains are immeasurable. The wondrous mountains fortify us all, and the forests nestle us in their powerful boughs--and we are invited by the march of the stars and planets across our endless sky to join in this joyous Dance of all dances.

Suzanne McGregor lives in Crestone, Colorado and has done much of the work on this issue.



Cradle for a New American Species

By John Robert Cornell

THE TV IN THE WAITING area is flashing images of models showing off new fashions. To the right of the screen the tram whines, rushing travelers from one gate to another. Heels click as wave after wave of people wash past on the tile walkway. A blurred message on the public address system competes with the drone of the CNN announcer, who repeats the same selected stories over and over. Outside the land is flat. The wind blows tirelessly.

I am sitting in the huge Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport in early evening. Ten hours ago I awoke to the mountains at Savitri House in south central Colorado.

Karen and I were on a three-day visit to the Baca to see Seyril and help plan the next Global Village Network Conference. There is a presence in this Savitri House where Seyril lives, dedicated to the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Their pictures on the walls everywhere arrest the attention, as if the photographs are really windows opening into the inner foundations of the building. Or the foundation of something more than a building that is taking shape here.

There is silence here, too. You wake in the morning to the sound of the birds borne effortlessly on the looming silence of the mountains. You can see snowy peaks 40 or 50 miles away. The nervous energy of the monkey-mind can spread out in the clear air and come to rest. The mental pollution that precipitates physical pollution into the air is absent here or dwarfed by the 14,000 peaks and the great open space that is the San Luis Valley. You can breathe.

Less than four years ago I was driving toward Baca for the first time in the rich light of late afternoon. All day Colorado had been opening up valley after wider, greener valley as I drove east. Over the last 10,000 foot pass, and the San Luis Valley spread out before me like a great sigh. After I

unloaded my car at my lodging in Crestone, I walked up the main road toward the campground. It was pitch black by then. The nearest town is 50 miles to the south. The night sky was punctured by a million tiny points of light. The milky way poured across it overhead. Then three shooting stars flashed by just ahead and seemed to dive into the trees on the left side of the road. Three travelers from beyond our limited range of sight. I walked back to my lodging listening to the night sounds.

A story on the TV jerks my attention back to the sounds of the airport. Some transcendental meditators are holding group meditations in Washington in hopes of bringing the benefits of calm to the operations of the federal government. To my left in the waiting area two boys are roughhousing giddily. The little one falls back, cracking his head against the hard chair. His mouth works silently for a few seconds before the cry comes out. In sudden, controlled fury, the father clips the older boy, then the younger one too. More cries, tears of humiliation. The air is dense, nervous. People sitting nearby are watching. Super 80 American Airlines aircraft roar into the sky behind me.

I first met Seyril in an airport like this in New York. I remember a wide-brimmed hat, white hair and a radiant smile offered to anyone who happened to be around. She had come from Boulder with Philip Tabb, architect of a dream--Savitri Solar Village. Together they presented the dream to the AUM conference in 1989: a solar village dedicated to the work of transformation on undeveloped land overlooking the San Luis Valley in Colorado.

How had this dream come to her, I wanted to know. What drew her to the Baca? I had asked her this last night. Her answer:

Its secludedness--the difficulty of getting to it, its inaccessibility, its sheer beauty. I kept thinking of that line from the Bible: "Lift up thine eyes to the

mountains from which all guidance comes;" together they presented the dream to the AUM conference in 1989: a solar village dedicated to the work of transformation on undeveloped land overlooking the San Luis Valley in Colorado.

How had this dream come to her, I wanted to know. What drew her to the

inspiration for Savitri Solar Village had come to her and why it has not yet manifested.

"Well, I was always interested in deepening the yearning for that special energy that I felt in Auroville—the collective effort to do the yoga. How could you do it on a larger scale? You couldn't really, not when there was

land and self-sustaining with greenhouses and a frugal, simple way of living. That only when there come together two or three or four who are united and dedicated to that goal...

"It's almost as if this were a cradle of the new American species (laughing). And this is not to say that this is going to be another Auroville. There is only one Auroville and one Matrimandir. But there can be other small forces. When I was last in Auroville three years ago I heard from a fellow who had just come from Italy and was telling me about a group of three Sri Aurobindonians who had a little tiny community outside of the city and they were doing intensively—the three of them—the yoga of transformation. You don't need numbers! You need that spark which will continue to grow as it is more and more purified, cleansed and aspiring with every fiber of our being.

"So it's not a question of hastening the process. It's got to be organic."

This airport seems anything but organic! Another burst from the loudspeaker jerks my attention back to the present moment. What is the purpose of all this hurrying energy? My body tightens but a reservoir of space remains inside, a space that was fed by the Baca. Nearby a couple holds hands. He moves his finger tips over her left hand as he watches the stream of people. She stares at the TV monitor. In the seat beside me the little black boy, recovered from the earlier family incident, and a blonde girl, both about 5, are talking and moving together in the dance of childhood. Then it is time to board. The little girl looks back wistfully as mom pulls her toward the gate.

Now we are packed into the plane. The man beside me pores over his spreadsheet and taps his pencil on his shoe. Giant planes are stacked in a great tense traffic jam waiting restlessly to unleash their power. Something is directing this mighty swirl of energy but it is not clear to what purpose. The go-ahead comes. The cabin tilts back. We are hurtling up toward the stars.

The city comes into entirely new perspective from this distance. Regu-



Seyril placing earth from Matrimandir and symbols on center stone of Savitri Village.

Auroville?

Seyril had lived in Auroville for a number of years, working on the Matrimandir. I wondered how she had resolved for herself whether to return to Auroville or settle in the Baca. Hanne Strong had invited her to the Baca when she was living in Boulder, Colorado. She had visited all the ashrams and religious centers in the Baca and felt that she was being led to do something that had to be done: make an opening for the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo and Mother among all the other spiritual disciplines that had settled there. She continued...

"My parents had disinherited me when I went to Auroville and left my husband. But when I came back and saw them through their last days, I discovered upon reading the will that I had been reinstated. That gave me the wherewithal to buy Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's building here."

As we talked, I wondered how the

only one house here, with the wild lands around it. There was no place for a community. We're in an inaccessible place. There are not enough of us who are consecrated and concentrated and ready to do the yoga of transformation.

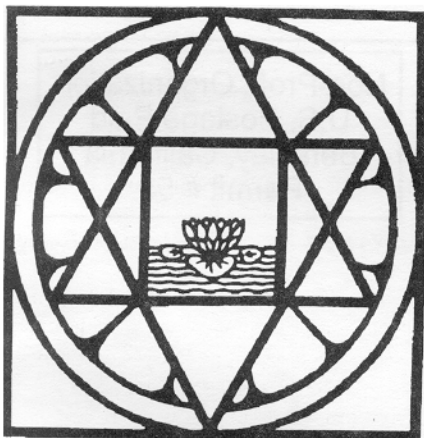
"Just to have a land-based community for collective living there—it's not enough. It's too demanding. The land is too demanding—the altitude, the rigorous winters. There has to be such a core that's pure... and pure in intention... and committed—that just to see it as a place to raise a family or to live inexpensively... It's not enough.

"That's why when Wayne came here and gave his workshop on the search for the soul in everyday living and on the soul and its powers... Suddenly it occurred to us that to do the collective yoga we would have to have a starting place where there could become a union—a unity of intention and purpose—a place based on the

larly spaced street lights cast perfect pools of soft light in marvelous shapes. Specks of white and orange gleam against a black background like a field of stars. Freeways become gracefully curving, arching nerve paths carrying moving packets of light. Feathery circles of light barely touching soften the interchanges. In places the lights seem to coalesce into something more intense, ready to burst into some fiery revelation. In other places they are less dense, and the eye keeps drawing the outlines of Virgo or Libra. As we gain altitude, another, larger pattern emerges. Like the sweeping arms or a spiral galaxy, the lights below radiate out from some central point. The earth's inhabitants, so fitfully hurrying on vacation or business, are unconsciously mirroring the microcosm and the macrocosm.

I settle back in my seat and dose. We are almost home.

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