



# Collaboration

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Representatives of European Auroville centers at a meeting held at Auroc, Bergerac, France, November 1981.

We conclude our eighth year of publication with another double issue (our fall and winter issues for 1982 will also be combined.) We continue our regular features, "Notes on the Way," and "Between Two Worlds." We would particularly like to draw our readers' attention to a passage taken from *Mother's Agenda*, "The End of the Reign of Money," since it deals with a fundamental problem and one that every society and every community has to deal with.

Readers, as always, are welcome to submit nonfiction suitable for *Collaboration* and poetry. We are especially interested in cultur-

al commentary and criticism: essays on cultural phenomena and social problems, book, movie, music reviews all from the point of view of the Integral Yoga and Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary perspective, and a literature (and art) of aspiration and vision.

Our feature articles in this issue, "The Sadhana of the Integral Yoga" by Sri Aurobindo and "Self-Perfection and Sadhana" by the Mother, have been selected by our guest editor, Larry Seidlitz, a new member of Matagiri from Wisconsin. Here are his prefatory remarks:

In this issue we are presenting the practical side of Sadhana. It seems that, because of the complexity of the yoga, its all-embracing nature that takes all life up in its sweep, there is the difficulty for the sadhak of finding a concrete discipline or direction in which he can turn his will and effort. This difficulty may be compounded by confusion regarding the place of personal effort in a yoga whose central principle is surrender to a higher Power or Being who takes up the charge of the sadhana, or discipline. It is these difficulties and confusions we are trying to clarify in this issue. We have collected passages from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Mother that clarify the respective places of surrender and personal effort in the yoga, and have gathered a large number of passages that deal with practical methods of sadhana and tangible directions that our personal effort can take. It is hoped that the passages will inspire our readers to decisive action. Rather than filing them away on dusty shelves in attic memories, throw them into the fire of your personal tapasya so that together, in union with the Divine Fire, we may conquer the Truth and make it effective in our lives and for the earth.

## THE SADHANA OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA

*Sri Aurobindo*

This yoga demands a total dedication of the life to the aspiration for the discovery and embodiment of the Divine Truth and to nothing else whatever. To divide your life between the Divine and some outward aim

### CONTENTS

The Sadhana of the Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo	2
Self-Perfection and Sadhana, The Mother	6
Disease and Medical Science, Sri Aurobindo	9
Notes on the Way (7), The Mother	9
The End of the Reign of Money, The Mother	11
The Fourth Dimension, The Mother	12
Sri Aurobindo and the Earth's Future, Satprem	13
Savitri: A Summary of Sri Aurobindo's Epic Poem, Dr. Judith Tyberg	15
Between Two Worlds (4), Dick Batstone	18
Expressions of Auroville Financial Guidelines	19
Guidelines for Newcomers	20
Greenwork in Auroville	20
News of Auroville	21
General and Center News	23
News of Matagiri	24

and activity that has nothing to do with the search for the Truth is inadmissible. The least thing of that kind would make success in the yoga impossible.

You must go inside yourself and enter into a complete dedication to the spiritual life. All clinging to mental preferences must fall away from you, all insistence on vital aims and interests and attachments must be put away, all egoistic clinging to family, friends, country must disappear if you want to succeed in yoga. Whatever has to come as outgoing energy or action, must proceed from the Truth once discovered and not from the lower vital or mental motives, from the Divine Will and not from personal choice or the preferences of the ego. [1]

\* \* \*

The Divine Grace and Power can do everything, but with the full consent of the sadhak. To learn to give that assent is the whole meaning of the sadhana. It may take time either because of ideas in the mind, desires in the vital or inertia in the physical consciousness, but these things have to be and can be removed with the aid or by calling in the action of the Divine Force. [2]

\* \* \*

One must rely on the Divine and yet do some enabling sadhana—the Divine gives the fruit not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul's sincerity and its aspiration. (I mean by soul's sincerity its yearning after the Divine and its aspiration towards the higher life.) [3]

\* \* \*

It [the idea that the sadhana is done by the Divine rather than by oneself] is a truth but a truth that does not become effective for the consciousness until or in proportion as it is realised. The people who stagnate because of it are those who accept the idea but do not realise—so they have neither the force of tapasya nor that of the Divine Grace. On the other hand those who can realise it feel even behind their tapasya and in it the action of the Divine Force. [4]

\* \* \*

Faith, reliance upon God, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable. But reliance upon God must not be made an excuse for indolence, weakness and surrender to the impulses of the lower Nature: it must go along with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of the Divine Truth. The surrender to the Divine must not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desires and lower movements or to one's ego or to some Force of the ignorance and darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine. [5]

\* \* \*

In the early part of the sadhana—and by early I do not mean a short part—effort is indispensable. Surrender of course, but surrender is not a thing that is done in a day. The mind has its ideas and it clings to them; the human vital resists surrender, for what it calls surrender in the early stages is a doubtful kind of self-giving with a demand in it; the physical consciousness is like a stone and what it calls surrender is often no more than inertia. It is only the psychic that knows how to surrender and the psychic is usually very much veiled in the beginning. When the psychic awakes, it can bring a sudden and true surrender of the whole being, for the difficulty of the rest is rapidly dealt with and disappears. But till then effort is indispensable. Or else it is necessary till the Force comes flooding down into the being from above and takes up the sadhana, does it for one more and more and leaves less and less to individual effort—but even then, if not effort, at least aspiration and vigilance are needed till the possession of mind, will, life and body by the Divine Power is complete. I have dealt with this subject, I think, in one of the chapters of *The Mother*. [6]

In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature.

In Yoga it is also the Divine who is the Sadhaka and the Sadhana; it is his Shakti with her light, power, knowledge, consciousness, Ananda, acting upon the Adhara and, when it is opened to her, pouring into it with these divine forces that makes the Sadhana possible. But so long as the lower na-

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ture is active the personal effort of the Sadhaka remains necessary.

The personal effort required is a triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender,—an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing—the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature; rejection of the movements of the lower nature—rejection of the mind's ideas, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind,—rejection of the vital nature's desires, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being,—rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, Tamas, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Ananda may establish itself in a body growing always more divine; surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement to the Divine and the Shakti.

In proportion as the surrender and self-consecration progress the Sadhaka becomes conscious of the Divine Shakti doing the Sadhana, pouring into him more and more of herself, founding in him the freedom and perfection of the Divine Nature. The more this conscious effort replaces his own effort, the more rapid and true becomes his progress. But it cannot completely replace the necessity of personal effort until the surrender and consecration are pure and complete from top to bottom.

Note that a tamasic surrender refusing to fulfill the conditions and calling on God to do everything and save one all the trouble and struggle is a deception and does not lead to freedom and perfection. [7]

There can be no firm foundation in sadhana without equality, samata. Whatever the unpleasantness of circumstances, however disagreeable the conduct of others, you must learn to receive them with a perfect calm and without any disturbing reaction. These things are the test of equality. It is easy to be calm and equal when things go well and people and circumstances are pleasant; it is when they are the opposite that the completeness of the calm, peace, equality can be tested, reinforced, made perfect. [8]

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

tends, even illicitly, a man's power of endurance and forbearance.

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

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

The first condition of inner progress is to recognise that whatever is or has been a wrong movement in any part of the nature,—wrong idea, wrong feeling, wrong speech, wrong action,—and by wrong is meant what departs from the truth, from the higher consciousness and higher self, from the way of the Divine. Once recognised, it is admitted, not glossed over or defended,—and it is offered to the Divine for the Light and Grace to descend and substitute for it the right movement of the true Consciousness. [9]

I have always said that work done as sadhana—done, that is to say, as an outflow of energy from the Divine and offered to the Divine or work done for the sake of the Divine or work done in a spirit of devotion

is a powerful means of sadhana and that such work is especially necessary in this yoga. Work, bhakti and meditation are the three supports of yoga. One can do with all three or two or one. There are people who can't meditate in the set way that one calls meditation, but they progress through work or through bhakti or through the two together. By work and bhakti one can develop a consciousness in which eventually a natural meditation and realisation becomes possible. [10]

All I can suggest to him is to practise some kind of Karmayoga — remembering the Supreme in all his actions from the smallest to the greatest, doing them with a quiet mind and without ego-sense or attachment and offering them to Him as a sacrifice. He may also try or aspire to feel the presence of the Divine Shakti behind the world and its forces, distinguish between the lower nature of the Ignorance and the higher divine nature whose character is absolute calm, peace, power, Light and Bliss and aspire to be raised and led gradually from the lower to the higher. [11]

The only work that spiritually purifies is that which is done without personal motives, without desire for fame or public recognition or worldly greatness, without insistence on one's own mental motives or vital lusts and demands or physical preferences, without vanity or crude self-assertion or claim for position or prestige, done for the sake of the Divine alone and at the command of the Divine. All work done in an egoistic spirit, however good for people in the world of the Ignorance, is of no avail to the seeker of the yoga. [12]

Self-dedication does not depend on the particular work you do, but on the spirit in which all work, of whatever kind it may be, is done. Any work done well and carefully as a sacrifice to the Divine, without desire or egoism, with equality of mind and calm tranquillity in good or bad fortune, for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of any personal gain, reward or result, with the consciousness that it is the Divine Power to which all work belongs, is a means of self-dedication through Karma. [13]

It is not that you have to do what you dislike, but that you have to cease to dislike. To do only what you like is to indulge the vital and maintain its domination over the nature—for that is the very principle of the untransformed nature, to be governed by its likes and dislikes. To be able to do anything with equanimity is the principle of Karmayoga and to do with joy because it is done for the Mother is the true psychic and vital condition in this yoga. [14]

All the difficulties you describe are quite natural things common to most people. It is easy for one, comparatively, to remember and be conscious when one sits quiet in meditation; it is difficult when one has to be busy with work. The remembrance and consciousness in work have to come by degrees, you must not expect to have it all at once; nobody can get it all at once. It comes in two ways,—first, if one practises remembering the Mother and offering the work to her each time one does something (not all the time one is doing, but at the beginning or when one can remember), then that slowly becomes easy and habitual to the nature. Secondly, by the meditation an inner consciousness begins to develop which, after a time, not at once or suddenly, becomes more and more automatically permanent. One feels this as a separate consciousness from that outer which works. At first this separate consciousness is not felt when one is working, but as soon as the work stops one feels it was there all the time watching from behind; afterwards it begins to be felt during the work itself, as if there were two parts to oneself—one watching and supporting from behind and remembering the Mother and offering to her and the other doing the work. When this happens, then to work with the true consciousness becomes more and more easy. [15]

You must learn to act always from within—from your inner being which is in contact with the Divine. The outer should be a mere instrument and should not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action. [16]

\* \* \*

[To be constantly governed by the Divine:] A constant aspiration for that is the first thing—next a sort of stillness within and a drawing back from the outward action into the stillness and a sort of listening expectancy, not for a sound but for the spiritual feeling or direction of the consciousness that comes through the psychic. [17]

Openness in work means the same thing as openness in the consciousness. The same Force that works in your consciousness in meditation and clears away the cloud and confusion whenever you open to it, can also take up your action and not only make you aware of the defects in it but keep you conscious of what is to be done and guide your mind and hands to do it. If you open to it in your work, you will begin to feel this guidance more and more until behind all your activities you will be aware of the Force of the Mother. [18]

\* \* \*

What happened to you shows what are the conditions of that state in which the Divine Power takes the place of the ego and directs the action, making the mind, life and body an instrument. A receptive silence of the mind, an effacement of the mental ego and a reduction of the mental being to the position of a witness, a close contact with the Divine Power and an openness of the being to that one Influence and no other are the conditions for becoming an instrument of the Divine, moved by that and that only. [19]

\* \* \*

It is as the love of the Divine grows that the other things cease to trouble the mind. [20]

\* \* \*

When you come to the Divine, lean inwardly on the Divine and do not let other things affect you. [21]

The love which is turned towards the Divine ought not to be the usual vital feeling which men call by that name; for that is not love, but only a vital desire, an instinct of appropriation, the impulse to possess and monopolise. Not only is this not the divine Love, but it ought not to be allowed to mix in the least degree in the yoga. The true love for the Divine is a self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger—for these things are not in its composition. In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely—and this represents itself in an inner giving—her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power re-creating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your being and directing them towards perfection and fulfillment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards. It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness. If one truly aspires, one does unflinchingly get it, more and more as the purification proceeds and the nature undergoes its needed change.

Keep your love pure of all selfish claim and desire; you will find that you are getting all the love that you can bear and absorb in answer.

Realise also that the Realisation must come first, the work to be done, not the satisfaction of claim and desire. It is only when the Divine Consciousness in the supramental Light and Power has descended and transformed the physical that other things can be given a prominent place—and then

too it will not be the satisfaction of desire, but the fulfillment of the Divine Truth in each and all and in the new life that is to express it. In the divine life all is for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of the ego.

I should perhaps add one or two things to avoid misapprehensions. First, the love for the Divine of which I speak is not a psychic love only; it is the love of all the being,—the vital and vital-physical included,—all are capable of the same self-giving. It is a mistake to believe that if the vital loves, it must be a love that demands and imposes the satisfaction of its desire; it is a mistake to think that it must be either that or else the vital, in order to escape from its “attachment,” must draw away altogether from the object of its love. The vital can be as absolute in its unquestioning self-giving as any other part of the nature; nothing can be more generous than its movement when it forgets self for the Beloved. The vital and physical should both give themselves in the true way—the way of true love, not of ego-desire. [22]

\* \* \*

When the love goes towards the Divine, there is still this ordinary human element in it. There is the call for a return and if the return does not seem to come, the love may sink; there is the self-interest, the demand for the Divine as a giver of all that the human being wants and, if the demands are not acceded to, abhimana against the Divine, loss of faith, loss of fervour, etc., etc. But the true love for the Divine is in its fundamental nature not of this kind, but psychic and spiritual. The psychic element is the need of the inmost being for self-giving, love, adoration, union which can only be fully satisfied by the Divine. The spiritual element is the need of the being for contact, merging, union with its own highest and whole self and source of being and consciousness and bliss, the Divine. These two are two sides of the same thing. The mind, vital, physical, can be the supports and recipients of this love, but they can be fully that only when they become remoulded in harmony with the psychic and spiritual elements of the being and no longer bring in the lower insistences of the ego. [23]

\* \* \*

The ideal of the yoga is that all should be centred in and around the Divine and the sadhaks must be founded on that firm foundation, their personal relations also should pass from the vital to the spiritual basis with the vital only as a form and instrument of the spiritual—this means that, from whatever relations they have with each other, all jealousy, strife, hatred, aversion, rancour and other evil vital feeling should be abandoned, for they can be no part of the spiri-

tual life. So, also, all egoistic love and attachment will have to disappear—the love that loves only for the ego's sake and, as soon as the ego is hurt and dissatisfied, ceases to love or even cherishes rancour and hate. There must be a real living and lasting unity behind the love. It is understood of course that such things as sexual impurity must disappear also.

That is the ideal, but as for the way of attainment, it may differ for different people. One way is that in which one leaves everything else to follow the Divine alone. This does not mean an aversion for anybody any more than it means aversion for the world and life. It only means an absorption in one's aim, with the idea that once that is attained it will be easy to found all relations on the true basis, to become truly united in the spiritual truth and in the Divine. The other way is to go forward from where one is, seeking the Divine centrally and subordinating all else to that, but not putting everything else aside, rather seeking to transform gradually and progressively whatever is capable of such transformation. All the things that are not wanted in the relation—sex impurity, jealousy, anger, egoistic demand—drop away as the inner being grows purer and is replaced by the unity of soul with soul and the binding together of the social life in the hoop of the Divine.

It is not that one cannot have relations with people outside the circle of the sadhaks, but there too if the spiritual life grows within, it must necessarily affect the relation and spiritualise it on the sadhak's side. And there must be no such attachment as would make the relation an obstacle or a rival to the Divine. Attachment to family etc. often is like that and, if so, it falls away from the sadhak. That is an exigence which, I think, should not be considered excessive. All that, however, can be progressively done; a severing of existing relations is necessary for some, it is not so for all. A transformation, however gradual, is indispensable,—severance where severance is the right thing to do.

P.S. I must repeat also that each case differs—one rule for all is not practical or practicable. What is needed by each for his spiritual progress is the one desideratum to be held in view. [24]

\* \* \*

There is a love in which the emotion is turned towards the Divine in an increasing receptivity and growing union. What it receives from the Divine it pours out on others, but freely without demanding a return—if you are capable of that, then that is the highest and most satisfying way to love. [25]

Your questions cover the whole of a very wide field. It is therefore necessary to reply to them with some brevity, touching only on some practical points.

1. What meditation exactly means.

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

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

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

Meditation is the easiest process for the human mind, but the narrowest in its results; contemplation more difficult, but greater; self-observation and liberation from the chains of Thought the most difficult of all, but the widest and greatest in its fruits. One can choose any of them according to one's bent and capacity. The perfect method is to use them all, each in its own place and for its own object; but this would need a fixed faith and firm patience and a great energy of Will in the self-application to the yoga. [26]

\* \* \*

Then as to concentration. Ordinarily the consciousness is spread out everywhere, dispersed, running in this or that direction, after this subject and that object in multitude. When anything has to be done of a sustained nature the first thing one does is to draw back all this dispersed consciousness and concentrate. It is then, if one looks

closely, bound to be concentrated in one place and on one occupation, subject or object. . . [In this yoga,] instead of concentrating on an object, you concentrate in the head in a will, a call for the descent for the peace above or, as some do, an opening of the unseen lid and an ascent of the consciousness above. In the heart centre one concentrates in an aspiration, for an opening, for the presence of the living image of the Divine there or whatever else is the object. There may be Japa of a name, but, if so, there must also be a concentration on it and the name must repeat itself there in the heart centre.

It may be asked what becomes of the rest of the consciousness when there is this local concentration? Well, it either falls silent as in any concentration or, if it does not, then thoughts or other things may move about, as if outside, but the concentrated part does not attend to them or notice. That is when the concentration is reasonably successful.

One has not to fatigue oneself at first by long concentration if one is not accustomed, for then in a jaded mind it loses its power and value. One can relax and meditate instead of concentrating. It is only as the concentration becomes normal that one can go on for a longer and longer time. [27]

\* \* \*

One can concentrate in any of the three centres which is easiest to the sadhak or gives most result. The power of the concentration in the heart-centre is to open that centre and by the power of aspiration, love, bhakti, surrender remove the veil which covers and conceals the soul and bring forward the soul or psychic being to govern the mind, life and body and turn and open them all fully to the Divine, removing all that is opposed to that turning and opening.

This is what is called in this yoga the psychic transformation. The power of concentration above the head is to bring peace, silence, liberation from the body sense, the identification with mind and life and open the way for the lower (mental, vital, physical) consciousness to rise up to the higher consciousness above and for the powers of the higher (spiritual nature) consciousness to descend into mind, life and body. This is what is called in this yoga the spiritual transformation. If one begins with this movement then the Power from above has in its descent to open all the centres (including the lowest centre) and to bring out the psychic being; for until that is done there is likely to be much difficulty and struggle of the lower consciousness obstructing, mixing with or even refusing the Divine Action from above. If the psychic being is once active this struggle and these difficulties can be greatly minimised.

The power of concentration in the eye-

brows is to open the centre there, liberate the inner mind and vision and the inner or yogic consciousness and its experiences and powers. From here also one can open upwards and act also in the lower centres; but the danger of this process is that one may get shut up in one's mental spiritual formations and not come out of them into the free and integral spiritual experience and knowledge and integral change of the being and nature. [28]

The best help for concentration is to receive the Mother's calm and peace into your mind. It is there above you—only the mind and its centres have to open to it. [29]

\* \* \*

It is not easy to get into the Silence. That is only possible by throwing out all mental-vital activities. It is easier to let the Silence descend into you, i.e., to open yourself and let it descend. The way to do this and the way to call down the higher powers is the same. It is to remain quiet at the time of meditation, not fighting with the mind or making mental efforts to pull down the Power or the Silence but keeping only a silent will and aspiration for them. If the mind is active one has to learn to look at it, drawn back and not giving sanction from within, until its habitual or mechanical activities begin to fall quiet for want of support from within. If it is too persistent, a steady rejection without strain or struggle is the one thing to be done. [30]

\* \* \*

Let us not exaggerate anything. It is not so much getting rid of mental activity as converting it into the right thing. . . . What has to be surpassed and changed is the intellectual reason which sees things from outside only, by analysis and inference—when it does not do it rather by taking a hasty look and saying “so it is” or “so it is not.” But you can't do that unless the old mental activity becomes a little quiet. A quiet mind does not involve itself in its thoughts or get run away with by them; it stands back, detaches itself, lets them pass, without identifying itself, without making them its own. It becomes the witness mind watching the thoughts when necessary, but able to turn away from them and receive from within and from above. Silence is good, but absolute silence is not indispensable, at least at this stage. I do not know that to wrestle with the mind to make it quiet is of much use, usually the mind gets the better at that game. It is this standing back, detaching oneself, getting the power to listen to something else, other than the thoughts of the external mind that is the easier way. At the same time one can look up as it were, imaging to oneself the Force as there just above and calling it down or quietly expecting

its help. That is how most people do it, till the mind falls gradually quiet or silent of itself, or else silence begins to descend from above. But it is important not to allow the depression or despair to come in because there is no immediate success; that can only make things difficult and stop any progress that is preparing. [31]

## Notes

1. *Letters on Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 2:519.
2. *Ibid.*, p.583.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 582.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 593.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 581.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 588.
7. *The Mother* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1979), pp.6-8
8. *Letters on Yoga*, 2:662.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 661-62.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 536.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 672.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 677.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 678.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 680.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 689-90.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 691-92.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 693-94.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 694.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 695.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 813.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 761.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 757-58.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 760.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 804-5.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 815.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 721-22.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 723-25.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 725.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 735.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 736.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 736-37.

## SELF-PERFECTION AND SADHANA

### *The Mother*

To work for your perfection the first step is to become conscious of yourself, of the different parts of your being and their respective activities. You must learn to distinguish these different parts one from the other, so that you may find out clearly the origin of the movements that occur in you, the many impulses, reactions and conflicting wills that drive you to action. It is an assiduous study which demands much perseverance and sincerity. For man's nature, specially his mental nature, has a spontaneous tendency to give a favourable explanation for whatever he thinks, feels, says and does. It is only by observing these movements with great care, by bringing them, as it were, before the tribunal of our highest ideal, with a sincere will to submit to its judgment, that we can hope to educate in us a discernment which does not err. For if we truly want to progress and acquire the capacity for knowing the truth of our being, that is to say, the one thing for which we

have been really created, that which we can call our mission upon earth, then we must, in a very constant and regular manner, reject from us or eliminate in us whatever contradicts the truth of our existence, whatever is in opposition to it. It is thus that little by little all the parts, all the elements of our being, could be organised into a homogeneous whole around our psychic centre. This work of unification demands a long time to be brought to some degree of perfection. Hence, to accomplish it, we must arm ourselves with patience and endurance, with a determination to prolong our life as far as it is necessary for the success of our endeavour.

As we pursue this labour of purification and unification, we must at the same time take great care to perfect the external and instrumental part of our being. When the higher truth will manifest, it must find in you a mental being supple and rich enough to be able to give to the idea seeking to express itself a form of thought which preserves its force and clarity. This thought, again, when it seeks to clothe itself in words must find in you a sufficient power of expression so that the words reveal the thought and not deform it. And this formula in which you embody the truth should be made articulate in all your sentiments, all your willings and acts, all the movements of your being. Finally, these movements themselves should, by constant effort, attain their highest perfection. [1]

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

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

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

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

take some time to rest before sleeping so that the mind's activities may be quieted and the brain not yield to disorderly movements while the physical limbs alone sleep. On the other hand, if you are given to meditation, you would do well to concentrate for a few minutes upon a high and restful idea, in an aspiration towards a greater and vaster consciousness. Your sleep will profit greatly by it and you will escape in a large measure the risk of falling into unconsciousness while asleep.

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

This brings us quite naturally to vital austerity, the austerity of the sensations, the Tapasya of power. The vital being is indeed the seat of power, of enthusiasms that realise. It is in the vital that thought changes into will and becomes a dynamism of action. It is also true that the vital is the seat of desires and passions, of violent impulses and equally violent reactions, of revolt and depression. . .

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

The senses should be able to bear everything without disgust or displeasure; at the same time they must acquire and develop more and more the power of discrimination with regard to the quality, origin and result of various vital vibrations and so

know whether they are favourable to the harmony, the beauty and the good health or are harmful to the poise and progress of the physical and vital being. Moreover, the senses would be utilised as instruments to approach and study the physical and vital worlds in all their complexities. Thus they will take their true place in the great endeavour towards transformation.

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

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

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

When we speak of mental austerity, the thing immediately suggested is long meditations leading to control of thought and finally to inner silence as the crown. This aspect of Yogic discipline is too well-known to need dwelling upon at length. But there is another aspect with which people are generally less concerned: it is the control of speech. . .

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, one must not believe that the value of the spoken word depends upon the nature of the subject of conversation. One can talk away on spiritual subjects as much as on any other: but this kind of talkativeness may be among the most dangerous. The new sadhak, for example, is always eager to share with others the little he has learnt. But as he advances on the path, he finds more and more that he does not know much and that before trying to instruct others, he must be sure of the value of his knowledge, until finally he becomes wise and realises that a good many hours of silent concentration are needed to be able to speak usefully for a few minutes. Besides, in the matter of inner life and spiritual effort, the use of speech should be put under a still more stringent rule: nothing should be spoken unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. [2]

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You say you want to get rid of falsehood, here is a way. Do not try to please yourself, do not try either to please others. Try only to please the Lord; because He alone is Truth. Every one of us, human beings, is a coat of falsehood put on the Lord and hiding Him. He alone is true; He is the Truth.

It is on Him that we must concentrate, and not on the coats of Falsehood. [3]

\* \* \*

Live within, in the depth of your heart, and nobody or nothing will have the power to disturb you. [4]

\* \* \*

Keep always present in your heart the remembrance of the Divine. And everything will become all right. [5]

For your heart to remain happy, keep it always filled with gratefulness. Gratefulness is the surest way to the Divine. [6]

Since we have decided to reserve love in its full splendour for our personal relation with the Divine, we shall, in our relation with others, replace it by a wholehearted, unchanging, constant and egoless kindness and goodwill. It shall not expect any reward or gratitude or even recognition. Whatever the way others treat you, you will not allow yourself to be carried away by resentment: and in your pure unmixed love for the Divine you shall leave him the sole judge as to how he is to protect you and defend you against the ununderstanding and ill will of others.

Your joys and your pleasures you will expect from the Divine alone. In him alone you will seek and find help and support. He will comfort you in all your pain, lead you on the path, lift you up if you stumble, and if there are moments of faintness and exhaustion, he will take you in his strong arms of love and wrap you in his soothing sweetness. . . .

In short, the austerity of feeling consists in rejecting all emotional attachment, of whatever kind it may be, whether for a person, for a family, for the country or any other object, and concentrating exclusively on the attachment for the Divine Reality. This concentration will culminate in the integral identification and serve as an instrument for the supramental realisation upon earth. [7]

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## Notes

1. *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1973), pp. 89-90.
2. *The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1954), pp. 3-16.
3. *White Roses* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1973), p. 58.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
7. *Four Austerities*, pp. 23-24.

Never [do] I sit in meditation—there is no time and no necessity for it because it is not through meditation that one gives oneself to the Divine, it is through consecration and surrender and it is through all activities of life that consecration and surrender are to be made. —*The Mother*, 26 November 1967.

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## Sri Aurobindo on DISEASE AND MEDICAL SCIENCE

Disease is needlessly prolonged and ends in death oftener than is inevitable, because the mind of the patient supports and dwells upon the disease of his body.

\* \* \*

Medical Science has been more a curse to mankind than a blessing. It has broken the force of epidemics and unveiled a marvellous surgery; but, also, it has weakened the natural health of man and multiplied individual diseases, it has implanted fear and dependence in the mind and body; it has taught our health to repose not on natural soundness but a rickety and distasteful crutch compact from the mineral and vegetable kingdom.

The doctor aims a drug at a disease; sometimes it hits, sometimes misses. The misses are left out of account, the hits treasured up, reckoned and systematised into a science.

We laugh at the savage for his faith in the medicine man; but how are the civilised less superstitious who have faith in the doctor? The savage finds that when a certain incantation is repeated, he often recovers from a certain disease; he believes. The civilised patient finds that when he doses himself according to a certain prescription, he often recovers from a certain disease; he believes. Where is the difference?

The north-country Indian herdsman, attacked by fever, sits in the chill of a river for an hour or more and rises up free and healthy. If the educated man did the same, he would perish, not because the same remedy in its nature kills one and cures another, but because our bodies have been fatally indoctrinated by the mind into false habits.

It is not the medicine that cures so much as the patient's faith in the doctor and the medicine. Both are a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power which they have themselves destroyed.

\* \* \*

The healthiest ages of mankind were those in which there were the fewest material remedies.

The most robust and healthy race left on earth were the African savages; but how long can they so remain after their physical

consciousness has been contaminated by the mental aberrations of the civilised?

\* \* \*

We ought to use the divine health in us to cure and prevent diseases; but Galen and Hippocrates and their tribe have given us instead an armoury of drugs and a barbarous Latin hocus-pocus as our physical gospel.

\* \* \*

Medical Science is well-meaning and its practitioners often benevolent and not seldom self-sacrificing; but when did the well-meaning of the ignorant save them from harm-doing?

\* \* \*

If all remedies were really and in themselves efficacious and all medical theories sound, how would that console us for our lost natural health and vitality? The upastree is sound in all its parts, but it is still an upastree.

\* \* \*

The spirit within us is the only all-efficient doctor and submission of the body to it the one true panacea.

\* \* \*

God within is infinite and self-fulfilling Will. Unappalled by the fear of death canst thou leave to Him, not as an experiment, with a calm and entire faith thy ailments? Thou shalt find that in the end He exceeds the skill of a million doctors.

\* \* \*

Health protected by twenty thousand precautions is the gospel of the doctor; but it is not God's evangel for the body, nor Nature's.

[From *Thoughts and Aphorisms* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971).]

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## NOTES ON THE WAY (7) The Mother

30 September 1966

[This talk begins with Mother's comments on the following letter of Sri Aurobindo.]

"Although St. Paul had remarkable mystic experiences and, certainly, much profound spiritual knowledge (profound rather than wide, I think)—I would not swear to it that he is referring to the supramental body [physical body]. Perhaps to the supramental body or to some luminous body in its own space and substance, which he found sometimes as if enveloping him and abolishing this body of death which he felt the material envelope to be. This verse [I

Corinthians 16.53, 54: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"] like many others is capable of several interpretations and might refer to a quite supraphysical experience. The idea of a transformation in the body occurs in different traditions, but I have never been quite sure that it meant the change in this very matter. There was a yogi sometime ago in this region who taught it, but he hoped when the change was complete, to disappear in light. The Vaishnavas speak of a divine body which will replace this one when there is the complete siddhi. But, again, is this a divine physical or supraphysical body? At the same time there is no obstacle in the way of supposing that all these ideas, intuitions, experiences point to, if they do not exactly denote, the physical transformation." [24 December 1930. *Letters on Yoga*, 3: 1237.]

*Mother:* It is strange, this was the very subject of my meditations these days—not deliberate, they are imposed from above. Because through the entire passage from the plant to the animal and from the animal to man (especially from the animal to man), essentially the differences in form are minimal; the true transformation lies in the intervention of another agent of consciousness. All the differences between the life of the animal and the life of man come from the intervention of the Mind; but the substance is essentially the same and it obeys the same laws of formation and construction. For example, there is not much difference between a calf that is formed in the womb of the cow and the child that is formed in the womb of the mother. There is a difference, that of the intervention of the Mind; but if we look at a *physical* being, that is to say, visible as the physical is visible now and having the same density (for example, a body having no need of circulation, or of bones—particularly these two: the skeleton and blood circulation), it is difficult to conceive. And as long as it is like that, with this circulation of the blood, this action of the heart, one could imagine—one can imagine—by a power of the Spirit, the renewal of force, of energy, through means other than food; this is conceivable; but the rigidity, the solidity of the body—how is that possible without the skeleton? . . . In that case, this would be a transformation infinitely greater than that from the animal to man; this would be a passage from man to a being who would not be built in the same manner, who would no longer function in the same manner, who

would be like the condensation and concretisation of "something." . . . Up to now, that corresponds to nothing we have yet seen physically, unless the scientists have found something I do not know about.

*Disciple:* One can conceive of a light or a new force giving the cells a kind of spontaneous life and spontaneous force.

*Mother:* Yes, that is what I say, food can disappear; that one can conceive.

*Disciple:* But the whole body could be animated by this force. The body could remain supple, for instance. Even retaining its bone structure, it could remain supple, having the suppleness of a child.

*Mother:* But the child because of that cannot remain standing! He cannot exert himself. What will replace the bone structure, for instance?

*Disciple:* It could be the same elements, but having suppleness—elements whose firmness would not come from hardness but from the force of light, no?

*Mother:* Yes, that is possible. . . . Only, what I mean to say is that perhaps the thing will be done through a large number of new creations. For instance, the passage from man to this being will perhaps be accomplished through all kinds of other intermediaries. It is the leap, you understand, that seems to me tremendous.

I conceive very well a being who could, by spiritual power, the power of his inner being, absorb the necessary forces, renew himself and remain always young; that one conceives very well, even for giving a certain suppleness so as to be able to change the form, if need be. But the total disappearance of this system of construction immediately—immediately from the one to the other—that seems to be. . . that seems to require stages.

Evidently, unless something happens (which we are obliged to call a "miracle," because we cannot understand how) how can a body like ours become a body wholly built and moved by a higher force and without a material support? This [*Mother holds the skin of her hand between her fingers*], how can this change into this other thing? . . . That appears impossible.

*Disciple:* That appears miraculous, but. . .

*Mother:* Yes, in all my experiences I understand very well the possibility of no longer having the need for food, the disappearance of all this process (for example, changing the method of absorption, that is possible), but how to change the structure?

*Disciple:* But that does not seem impossible to me.

*Mother:* That does not seem impossible to you?

*Disciple:* No, perhaps it is imagination, but I imagine very well a spiritual power entering into it and producing a kind of luminous inflation and all this suddenly

would be like a flower. This body, shrivelled up on itself, opens out, becomes radiant, supple, luminous.

*Mother:* Supple, plastic, yes, that one can conceive, it can become plastic; that is to say, the form will not be fixed as now. All that one can conceive, but. . .

*Disciple:* But I see it very well like a luminous blooming: the Light must have this force. And it destroys in no way the present structure.

*Mother:* But visible? Which one would be able to touch?

*Disciple:* Yes, only, it is like an opening out. What was closed opens like a flower, that's all. But it is still the structure of the flower, only it is wholly opened and it is luminous, no?

*Mother* [*shakes her head and remains silent for a moment*]: I have not had the experience, I do not know.

I am absolutely convinced, because I have had experiences which proved it to me, that the life of this body—the life which makes it move and change—can be replaced by a force; that is to say, one can create a kind of immortality, and the wear and tear can also disappear. These two things are possible: the power of life can come and the wear and tear can disappear. And that can come psychologically, through a total obedience to the divine Impulsion, which enables one to have at each moment the force that is needed, to do the thing that is needed—all that, all that, these are certitudes. Well, one must educate and slowly transform, change one's habits. It is possible, all that is possible. But only, how long would it take to do away with the necessity (let us take this problem only) of the skeleton? That seems to me to be a matter still very far away. That is to say, many intermediary stages will be necessary. Sri Aurobindo said that life could be prolonged indefinitely. That yes, but we are not yet built with something that wholly escapes dissolution, the necessity of dissolution. The bones are very durable, they can even last a thousand years, if they are in favourable conditions, it is understood; but that does not mean immortality *in principle*. You understand what I mean?

*Disciple:* No. You believe that it must be a nonphysical substance?

*Mother:* I do not know if it is nonphysical, but it is a physical that I do not know! And it is not the substance as we know it now, particularly not the construction that we know now.

*Disciple:* I do not know, but if it must be a *physical* body, as Sri Aurobindo has said, it seemed to me (but perhaps it is day-dreaming) that it might be like a lotus bud, for example; our present body is like a lotus bud that is quite small, closed, hard; and it opens out, it becomes a flower.

*Mother:* Yes, but that, my child, that is. . .

*Disciple:* What cannot this Light do with the elements that it has? They are the same things, the same elements, but transfigured.

*Mother:* But vegetable things are not immortal.

*Disciple:* No, it was only a comparison.

*Mother:* Well, yes!

There is this question only. Perpetual change, that I conceive; I could even conceive of a flower that does not fade, but it is this principle of immortality. . . . That is to say, in essence, a life which escapes from the necessity of renewing itself: that it is the eternal Force which manifests itself directly and eternally, and yet it should be this, a physical body [*Mother touches her skin with her fingers*].

I understand very well a progressive change and that one could make of this substance something which might renew itself from within to the outside and eternally—and that, that would be immortality; but only, it seems to me that between what is now, as we are, and this other mode of life, there have to be many stages. Well, these cells, with all the consciousness and experience they have now, if you ask them, for example, "Is there anything that you cannot do?" they will answer in their sincerity, "No, what the Lord wills, I can do." This is their state of consciousness. But in appearance it is otherwise. The personal experience is this: whatever I do with the Presence of the Lord, I do without effort, without difficulty, without fatigue, without waste, like this [*Mother indicates a wide, harmonious rhythm*]; only it is still open to all the influences from outside and the body is obliged to do things that are not directly the expression of the supreme Impulsion; from there comes the fatigue, the friction. . . . So, a supramental body suspended in a world that is not the earth—it is not that!

*Disciple:* No.

*Mother:* Something is needed that has the power to resist the contagion. Man cannot resist the contagion of the animal, he cannot, he is in constant relation. Well, this being, how will he do it? . . . It would seem, for a long time—for a long time—he will still be subjected to the laws of contagion.

*Disciple:* I do not know, but it does not seem impossible to me. . . . I feel that this Power of Light being there, what can touch it?

*Mother:* But all the world will disappear! It is that, is it not?

When that comes, when the Lord is there, there is not one in a thousand who would not be frightened. And not in the reasoning, not in the thought: like that, in the substance. Then supposing, supposing that it is so, that a being becomes the condensation

and expression, a formula of the supreme Power, the supreme Light—what would happen!

*Disciple:* Well, that is the whole problem. . . .

Because I do not see the difficulty of transformation in itself. It seems to me rather the difficulty of the world.

*Mother:* If everything could be transformed at the same time, that would be all right, but it is not obviously like that. If one being was transformed all alone. . . .

*Disciple:* Yes, that would be unbearable, perhaps.

*Mother:* Yes.

My feeling (it is a kind of feeling-sensation) is that there should be intermediary stages.

And then, when you see how man had to fight against the whole of Nature in order to exist, you have the feeling that these beings—those who will understand them, who will help them—will have with them a relation of devotion, attachment, service, as animals have for men. But those who will not love them . . . they will be dangerous beings. I remember, once I had a very clear vision of the precarious situation of these new beings, and I had said (it was before 1956, before the descent of the supramental power), I had said, “The Supramental will first manifest itself in its aspect of Power, because it will be indispensable for the safety of the beings.” And indeed it is Power that descended first—Power and Light: Light that gives Knowledge and Power.

It is a thing that I am feeling more and more: the necessity of intermediate periods. . . . It is quite evident that something is in the process of happening, but it is not the “something” that has been seen and foreseen and which will be the culmination; it is *one* of the stages that is going to come about, it is not the culmination.

Sri Aurobindo also has said that first of all there will come the power to prolong life at will (it is much more subtle and wonderful than that), but that is a state of consciousness which is in the process of being established; it is a kind of relation, and of constant, established contact with the supreme Lord; and that abolishes the sense of wear and tear and replaces it by an extraordinary flexibility, an extraordinary plasticity. But the state of *spontaneous* immortality is not possible—not possible, at least for the present. This structure must change into something other than this; and in order to change into something other than this—in the way things are happening, it will take long. It may go faster than in the past, but even admitting that the movement rushes forward, even then it will take time (according to our notion of time). And what is, besides, quite worth noticing is that one must change one's sense of time if one is to

be in the state of consciousness where wearing out does not exist; one enters into a state where time no longer has the same reality. It is something else. It is very special, it is an uncountable present. Even this habit that one has, of thinking beforehand or of foreseeing what is going to happen is a stumbling block, is a clinging to the old manner of being.

So many, so many habits to change.\*

The integral realisation will come about only when one can be divine spontaneously. Oh, to be divine spontaneously, without turning to see that one is so, having passed beyond the stage when one wants to be so! [Mother's Collected Works (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1980), 11:45-53.]

## THE END OF THE REIGN OF MONEY

### *The Mother*

[The following is a portion of a conversation of 25 March 1970, taken from vol. 11 of *Mother's Agenda* (Paris: Institut de Recherches Evolutives, 1981). It is published here with the permission of the Institut; the translation is by the editor of *Collaboration*.]

*Mother:* It is still very difficult. Things are becoming more and more complicated, but simultaneously the power is becoming greater and greater, even astonishing.

But for people who like to be in peace [laughing], it's bothersome!

Do you have something? You haven't brought anything, nothing to say?

*Disciple:* There's a letter from the Marquis, that friend of mine. He asks for your help. . . .

*Mother:* To?

*Disciple:* To change his life and get rid of all his material and financial problems over there.

*Mother:* I thought he was very rich.

*Disciple:* Yes, but he wants to get rid of everything.

*Mother:* Well, let him give it to the Ashram! [Mother laughs.]

*Disciple:* He has a lot of capital invested in land, chateaux, etc., and he says he could leave it all in the hands of a financial organization and see what happens, or should he take care of it himself, liquidate everything, then come here?

*Mother [after a silence]:* If he comes, he has to come with money, because the situation here is critical. We spend three times more than we have, so . . . It's a sort of constant miracle. And the expenses go on increasing. D. [the disciple in charge of the dining room and supplies] told me this morning that he couldn't go on. And it's like that. And then the government increases the taxes tenfold—ten times more. Everything is like that. And in front of us there's

a vacuum. So I can't take any more people, except those who are capable not only of providing for their needs, but also of helping the Ashram a little.

It's very, very, very difficult. [long silence]

What could be called the “reign of money” is drawing to a close. But the transition period between the arrangement there has been in the world until now and the one there is going to be (in a few hundred years, say), that period is going to be very difficult. And it is.

Industries have been the great means of making money—now that's all over. The government takes all the profits. Or else, we had some small industries here and they were excused from taxes on condition they give 75% of their profits to the Ashram—now they've changed their rules and it's not 75% any more: it's the whole thing.

*Disciple:* To the Ashram? You mean to the State?

*Mother:* No, no! They give everything to the State: but before, we had gotten those here in the Ashram excused from taxes on condition they give 75% to the Ashram; now the 75% has been changed to all. That is, all the industries here have to give all their profits to the Ashram or they'll be taxed.

*Disciple:* Well, that's not so bad!

*Mother [laughs]:* Yes, but it's a sign of the times. For them it's not bad because with me [laughing] there can be some accommodations! But with other organizations . . . Most people start an industry to earn their livelihood—they can't now. They can't now because personal expenses are not permitted.

Although personal expenses “not permitted” has been since the beginning. I remember, a long time ago, my mother had started . . . I don't know if it was a henhouse or something like that, because she wanted to increase her income a little, and . . . (this was perhaps 50 or 60 years ago), she was very plain and uncomplicated; she had opened her business and was selling hens, eggs, etc.; she spent the money herself and took care of the whole business. . . . And one fine day [laughing], they asked her for her accounts! And they almost penalized her very severely because she had taken the money for her personal expenses—she never understood! . . . That really amused me. That goes back at least 50 years.

You see, it all seems a strange attitude to me. Why do you work? Normally you work to earn your livelihood—well, it's not legal. You should work, but the business isn't supposed to be personal! You don't have the right to take your expenses out of the business you've opened yourself!

The world is of an unequalled stupidity. So naturally things can't go on like this. . . .

Of course, the way they reckon is totally false (the government's): they're ruining the country more and more! And so they're really in a critical situation. In fact it has been clear for a long time that all these taxes, these duties, all that is simply the ruin of the country, nothing else. . . . Almost all the industries in the North [of India] are going to close down, almost all. So . . .

They do a lot of quite useless things. All that will disappear, but . . .

I'm a little in touch with all that: they come to see me; everyone comes complaining, telling me the miserable state things are in: governments, individuals and everyone. And I see it: it's getting . . . impossible. How to make a living? It's impossible. Because money had been put as the basis—money—so naturally people had tried to earn it. Now it's impossible. You can't earn money any more, and you can't have money all the time unless you earn some, so what can you do?—Everything has to be changed.

In Russia, they tried to make the government be responsible, but it . . . [laughing] it happened that all those who were in the government were lining their pockets and there was misery everywhere. So, since they don't have much imagination, they want to go back to the old way of doing. But that's not the way: we have to go a little further still.

To divide the earth into a lot of little pieces, and set each piece against the other, or else . . . A world organization is needed. And through whom? It would take at least people with a world consciousness! [Mother laughs.] Otherwise it won't work. So . . . there's going to be a hundred very difficult years, very difficult. Perhaps afterwards we'll come to something. . . . [silence]

What that man [the Marquis] wrote you, there are many like that! Many have written the same thing: people from every country. They're weary of the way things are. They say, "No more personal property!" But they don't have much imagination, so they haven't yet found what to do. [silence]

*Disciple:* A system of "coupons for hours of work," with a scale for the quality or degree of the work you do.

*Mother:* Where is that practiced?

*Disciple:* I don't know, in my imagination! [In fact, such a system has been employed for a number of years in various American intentional communities, most notably those inspired by the teachings of the behaviorist B.F. Skinner. Translator.]

*Mother:* Oh, it's you! Indeed, that's very good!

*Disciple:* Something based on work.

*Mother:* Yes.

*Disciple:* Coupons for hours of work. So you can say that the coupon of a coolie is worth one, and the coupon of an engineer is worth five, for example, that's all.

*Mother:* A whole organization would have to be developed. There would have to be . . . There has to be something like that in Auroville.

*Disciple:* Based on work.

*Mother:* Yes, an activity. You can define work as an activity that has a collective utility, not egoistic. [silence]

The difficulty is the appraisal of the value of the work. You see, you have to have a very broad vision for that. The nice thing about money is that it was mechanical. . . . But that other system can't quite become like that, so . . . But for example, the idea is that those who live in Auroville won't have money—there's no circulation of money—but as for eating, for example, everyone has the right naturally to eat. . . . From a practical standpoint, we had conceived of the possibility of every possible food according to the taste or need of each one (for example, with vegetarian kitchens, nonvegetarian kitchens, diet kitchens, etc.), and those who want to receive food from them should do something in exchange. In other words, to work, or . . . it's difficult to organize practically, quite practically. . . . You see, we had envisioned a lot of land around the city so as to be able to do large-scale agriculture for the consumption of the city. But for the cultivation of those lands at the moment we need money, or else materials. I have to face the problem in every detail now, and it's not easy!

There are some who understand.

You see, the idea is that in Auroville there won't be any customs or taxes and that Aurovilians won't have any personal property. On paper, that's all very well, but when it comes to doing it practically . . .

And the problem is always the same: the responsibility should be given to those who have a . . . universal consciousness, it means someone incapable of governing—we see what governments are like, it's dreadful! [long silence]

There is also a psychological point: something very interesting is that material needs diminish in proportion to the spiritual consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo said, not as a result of asceticism, but the attention, the focus of the being changes its domain. . . . It's quite clear that only material things please the purely material being; and the interest of all who live in the emotional being and the outer mind is turned towards . . . things of beauty, for example: they need to be surrounded by beautiful things and want to use lovely things. That now seems to be the human summit, but it's quite . . . what you could call a "middle region" [gesture barely above the ground], it's not at all a higher region. Because of the way the world is organized, people who don't need esthetics return to a very primitive life—that's no good. The place of living . . . where life un-

folds should be to be an individual thing, but a surrounding beauty stemming naturally from a certain degree of development.

Now, the way things are organized, you have to be rich to be able to be surrounded by beautiful things, and that's a source of imbalance because wealth generally goes with a quite average degree of consciousness, sometimes even mediocre. So everywhere there is imbalance and disorder. There should be . . . a place of beauty—a place of beauty where you can live only if you're at a certain level of consciousness. And it should not be other people who decide it, but it should be decided very spontaneously, naturally. But how can this be done? . . .

This sort of question is starting to arise in Auroville, so things are getting very interesting. Naturally the material means are very limited, but that too is part of the problem to be solved. [long silence]

The conditions for organizing—for being an organizer (it's not "governing," it's *organizing*)—the conditions for being an organizer should be these: no desires, no preferences, no attractions, no repulsions—a perfect equality for everything. And sincerity, of course, but that goes without saying: whenever insincerity comes in, poison comes in at the same time. And only those who are themselves in that condition are capable of discerning if someone else is or not.

Whereas, now, all human organizations are based on the visible fact, which is falsehood, public opinion, which is another falsehood, and the moral sense, which is a third falsehood! [Mother laughs.]

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## THE FOURTH DIMENSION

### *The Mother*

[The following conversation took place on 8 February 1973 between the Mother and several teachers in the Ashram school. We reproduce it here as it deals with an important key for the aspirant. The conversation has been published in Mother's Collected Works (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1978), 12: 430-33.]

*Disciple:* What is the best way of preparing ourselves, until we can establish a new system?

*Mother:* Naturally, it is to widen and illumine your consciousness—but how to do it? Your own consciousness . . . to widen and illumine it. And if you could find, each one of you, your psychic and unite with it, all the problems would be solved.

The psychic being is the representative of the Divine in the human being. That's it, you see—the Divine is not something remote and inaccessible. The Divine is in you but you are not fully conscious of it. Rather you have . . . it acts now as an influence

rather than as a Presence. It should be a conscious Presence, you should be able at each moment to ask yourself what is . . . how . . . how the Divine sees. It is like that: first, how the Divine sees, and then how the Divine wills, and then how the Divine acts. And it is not to go away into inaccessible regions, it is right here. Only, for the moment, all the habits and the general unconsciousness put a kind of covering which prevents us from seeing and feeling. You must . . . you must lift, you must lift that up.

In fact, you must become conscious instruments . . . conscious . . . conscious of the Divine.

Usually this takes a whole lifetime, or sometimes, for some people, it is several lifetimes. Here, in the present conditions, you can do it in a few months. For those who are . . . who have an ardent aspiration, in a few months they can do it. [*Mother concentrates for a few minutes in silence.*]

Did you feel anything?

Be completely sincere. Say whether you felt anything, or whether there was no difference for you. Completely sincere. Well? Nobody is answering. [*Mother asks each person in turn and each gives his or her reaction.*]

*Disciple:* Sweet Mother, may I ask you whether there was a special descent?

*Mother:* There is no "descent." That is another wrong idea: there is no descent. It is something that is always there, but which you do not feel. There is no descent: that is a completely wrong idea.

Do you know what the fourth dimension is? Do you know what it is?

*Disciple:* We have heard about it.

*Mother:* Do you have the experience [of it]?

*Disciple:* No, Sweet Mother.

*Mother:* Oh, but in fact that is the best approach of modern science: the fourth dimension. The Divine, for us, is the fourth dimension . . . within the fourth dimension. It is everywhere, you see, everywhere, always. It does not come and go, it is there, always, everywhere. It is we, our stupidity which prevents us from feeling [it]. There is no need to go away [i.e., to go off into "other regions" in order to find the Divine], not at all, not at all, not at all.

To be conscious of your psychic being, you must once be capable of feeling the fourth dimension, otherwise you cannot know what it is.

My God! For 70 years I have known what the fourth dimension is . . . more than 70 years! [*silence*]

Indispensable, indispensable! Life begins with that. Otherwise one is in falsehood, in a muddle and in confusion and in darkness. The mind, mind, mind, mind! Otherwise, to be conscious of your own consciousness, you have to mentalise it. It is dreadful!

dreadful! There.

*Disciple:* The new life, Mother, is not the continuation of the old, is it? It springs up from within.

*Mother:* Yes, yes . . .

*Disciple:* There is nothing in common between . . .

*Mother:* There is, there is, but you are not conscious of it. But you must, you must . . . It is the mind which prevents you from feeling it. You must be . . . You mentalise everything, everything. . . . What you call consciousness is thinking things, that is what you call consciousness. The consciousness must be capable of being totally lucid and *without words*. [*silence*]

There, everything becomes luminous and warm . . . *strong!* And peace, the true peace, which is not inertia and which is not immobility.

*Disciple:* And, Mother, can this be given as an aim to all the children?

*Mother:* All . . . no. They are not all of the same age, even when they are of the same age physically. There are children who . . . who are at an elementary stage. You should . . . If you were fully conscious of your psychic, you would know the children who have a developed psychic. There are children in whom the psychic is only embryonic. The age of the psychic is not the same, far from it. Normally the psychic takes several lives to be formed completely, and it is that which passes from one body to another and that is why we are not conscious of our past lives: it is because we are not conscious of our psychic. But sometimes, there is a moment when the psychic has participated in an event; it has become conscious, and that makes a memory. One sometimes has . . . sometimes has a fragmentary recollection, the memory of a circumstance or an event, or of a thought or even an act, like that: this is because the psychic was conscious.

You see how it is, now I am nearing a hundred, it's only five years away now. I started making an effort to become conscious at five years old, my child. This is to let you know. . . . And I go on, and it goes on. Only. . . . Of course, I have come to the point where I am doing the work for the cells of the body, but still, the work began a long time ago.

This is not to discourage you, but . . . it is to let you know that it does not happen just like that!

The body . . . the body is made of a substance which is still very heavy, and it is the substance itself which has to change for the Supermind to be able to manifest.

There you are.

Whenever things become difficult we must remain quiet and silent.

—The Mother

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## SRI AUROBINDO AND THE EARTH'S FUTURE

*Satprem*

[The following article was written for All India Radio and broadcast on 1 February 1972, on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary. We thought readers would find it both interesting and inspiring. It was published in pamphlet form, in a joint English-French edition, by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1973.]

Sometimes a great wandering Thought sees the yet unaccomplished ages, seizes the force in its eternal flow and precipitates on earth the powerful vision which is like a power able to materialize that which it sees. The world is a vision coming into its truth. Its past and its present are perhaps not really the result of an obscure impulse which goes back to the depths of time, of a slow accumulation of sediments which little by little fashion us only to stifle us and hem in. It is the powerful golden attraction of the future which draws us in spite of ourselves, as the sun draws the lotus from the mud, and drives us to a glory greater than any of our mud or our efforts or our present triumphs could have foreseen or created.

Sri Aurobindo is this vision and this power of precipitating the future into the present. What he saw in an instant the ages and millions of men will unwittingly accomplish. They will unknowingly set out in quest of that new imperceptible quiver which has penetrated the earth's atmosphere. From age to age great beings come amongst us to hew a great opening of Truth in the sepulchre of the past. They come with the sword of Knowledge and crumble our fragile empires.

This year [1972], we are celebrating Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary. He is known to barely a handful of men and yet his name will resound when the great men of today or yesterday are buried under their own debris. His work is discussed by philosophers, praised by poets. His sociological vision and his yoga are acclaimed. But Sri Aurobindo is a living *action*, a Word made manifest which is even now being realised. And through the thousand circumstances which seem to rend the earth and smash its structures we daily witness the first reflex of the force which he has set in motion. At the beginning of this century, when India was still struggling against British domination, Sri Aurobindo declared: "It is not a revolt against the British Government [which is needed] . . . , it is in fact, a revolt against the whole universal Nature" (*Evening Talks*).

For the problem is fundamental. It is not a question of bringing a new philosophy to the world, nor of so-called illuminations. It is not a question of rendering the Prison of our lives more habitable, nor of endowing man with ever more fantastic powers. Armed with his microscopes and telescopes, the human gnome remains nonetheless a gnome, wretched and powerless. We send rockets to the moon, but we know nothing of our own hearts. "It is a question," says Sri Aurobindo (in *On Himself*), "of creating a new physical nature which is to be the habitation of the Supramental being in a new evolution." For indeed, he says, "the imperfection of Man is not the last word of Nature, but his perfection too is not the last peak of the Spirit" (*The Life Divine*). Beyond mental man, which is what we are, there opens the possibility of the emergence of another being who will be the spearhead of evolution as man was once the spearhead of evolution among the great apes. "If," says Sri Aurobindo, "the animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man, man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom *and with whose conscious cooperation* she wills to work out the superman, the god" (*The Life Divine*). Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us how to create this other being, this supramental being, and not only to tell us but actually to create this other being. He has come to open the path of the future, to hasten upon earth the rhythm of evolution, the new vibration which will replace the mental vibration—as a thought came one day and disturbed the slow routine of the beasts—and which will give us the power to shatter the walls of our human prison.

Indeed the prison is already crumbling. "The end of a stage of evolution," announced Sri Aurobindo, "is usually marked by a powerful recrudescence of all that has to go out of the evolution" (*The Ideal of the Karmayogin*). Everywhere about us we see this paroxysmal exploding of all the old forms: our frontiers, our churches, our laws. Our morals crumble on all sides. They do not crumble because we are bad, immoral, irreligious, nor because we are not sufficiently rational, scientific, human, but precisely because we have come to the end of being human! To the end of the old mechanism—because we are in a state of transition toward *something else*. it is not a moral crisis that the world is going through, it is an "evolutionary crisis." We are not moving towards a better world, nor for that matter, towards a worse one. We are right in the midst of *mutating* into a radically different world, as different as the world of man was different from the

ape-world of the Tertiary Age. We are entering a new era, a supramental quinquennium. We leave our countries, become itinerants. We go in quest of drugs, in quest of adventure. We go on strike here, enact reforms there, start revolutions and counter-revolutions. But this is only an appearance; in fact this is not at all what we are doing. We are in the midst of human revolution.

And Sri Aurobindo gives us the key. It may be that the meaning of our own revolution escapes us because we seek to prolong that which is already in existence, to refine it, improve it, sublimate it. But the ape, in the midst of his revolution which produced man, may have made the same mistake and perhaps sought to become merely a super-ape, a better climber of trees, a better hunter, a better runner, in short an ape with great agility and increased capacity for malice. With Nietzsche we also wanted a "superman" who was nothing more than a colossalization of man. The spiritually minded want a super-saint more richly endowed with virtue and wisdom. But we want nothing of human virtue and wisdom! Even when carried to their extremest heights these are no more than the old poverties gilded over, the obverse of our tenacious misery. "Supermanhood," says Sri Aurobindo, "is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not a superior degree of human greatness, knowledge, power, intelligence, will,... genius,... saintliness, love, purity or perfection" (*The Hour of God*). It is *something else*, another vibration of being, another consciousness.

But if this new consciousness is not to be found on the peaks of the human, where are we to find it? Perhaps, quite simply, it is to be found in that which we have most neglected since we entered the mental cycle, it is to be found in the body. The body is our base, our evolutionary foundation, the old stock to which we must always return, and which painfully compels our attention by making us suffer, age and die. "In that imperfection," Sri Aurobindo assures us, "is the urge towards a higher and more many-sided perfection. It contains the last finite which yet yearns to the Supreme Infinite. God is pent in the mire..., but the very fact imposes a necessity to break through that prison" (*Sri Aurobindo Came to Me*). The old Ill is still there never cured; the root has never changed, the dark matrix of our misery is hardly different now from what it was in the time of Lemuria. It is this physical substance which must be changed, transformed, otherwise it will pull down, one after another, all the human and superhuman artifices which we try to impose upon it. This body, this physical cellular substance shuts in "almighty powers" (*Savitri*), a dumb

consciousness which harbours all the lights and all the infinitudes just as well as all the mental and spiritual immensities. For in truth, all is Divine and unless the Lord of all the universe resides in a single little cell, he resides nowhere. It is this original, dark cellular prison which we must shatter, and as long as we have not shattered it, we will continue to turn in vain in our golden circles or our iron circles of our mental prison. "These laws of Nature," says Sri Aurobindo, "that you call absolute...merely mean an equilibrium established by Nature.... It is merely a groove in which Nature is accustomed to work in order to produce certain results. But, if you change the consciousness, then the groove is also bound to change" (*Evening Talks*).

This is the new adventure to which Sri Aurobindo calls us, an adventure into man's unknown. Whether we like it or not the whole earth is passing into a new groove, but why shouldn't we like it? Why shouldn't we collaborate in this great, unprecedented adventure? Why shouldn't we collaborate in our own evolution instead of repeating the same old story a thousand times, instead of chasing hallucinatory heavens which will never quench our thirst for otherworldly paradises which leave the earth to rot along with our bodies? "Why should life have begun at all if it is only to be climbed out of?" exclaims the Mother, She who continues Sri Aurobindo's work. "What is the use of having struggled so much, suffered so much, of having created something which, in its outer appearance at least is so tragic, so dramatic, if it is only to learn how to climb out of it—it would have been better if it had not been started at all.... Evolution is not a tortuous path which brings us back, somewhat battered, to the starting-point. It exists," says Mother, "quite on the contrary, in order to teach the whole of creation the joy of being, the beauty of being, the grandeur of being, the majesty of a sublime life and the perpetual development, perpetually progressive, of this joy, this beauty, this grandeur. Then everything has meaning" (*Questions and Answers*, 1957-58).

This body, this obscure beast of burden which we inhabit, is the experimental field of Sri Aurobindo's yoga, which is a yoga of the whole earth. One can readily understand that if a single being amidst our millions of sufferings manages to negotiate the evolutionary step, the mutation of the next age, the face of the earth will be radically changed. Then all the so-called powers with which we glorify ourselves today will seem childish games before the radiance of this all-mighty spirit incarnated in the body. Sri Aurobindo tells us that it is possible, not only that it is possible but

that it will be done. It is being done now and all depends not so much perhaps on a sublime effort of humanity to transcend its limitations—for it means still using our own human strength to free ourselves from human strength—as on a call, a conscious cry of the earth to this new being which the earth already carries within itself. All is there, already within our hearts, the supreme Source which is the Supreme Power, but we must call it into our concrete forest. We must understand the meaning of man, the meaning of ourselves. The multi-voiced cry of the earth, of its millions of men who cannot bear the human condition any longer, who no longer accept

## SAVITRI: A Summary of Sri Aurobindo's Epic Poem

Dr. Judith M. Tyberg (*Jyotiprya*)

[Because of the importance of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri* among his works, and because of the numerous references the Mother makes to it especially in *Mother's Agenda*, ("Everything is in *Savitri*," she says), we thought readers would find it helpful to have a summary of the poem. Dr. Tyberg, who prepared what

their prison, must create a crack through which will surge in the new vibration. Then all the apparently ineluctable laws which close us into our hereditary and scientific groove will crumble before the Joy of the "sun-eyed children" (*Savitri*). "Expect nothing of death," says Mother, "life is your salvation. It is in life that we must transform ourselves. It is on earth that we progress. It is on earth that we can accomplish. It is in the body that the Victory is won" (*Questions and Answers 1957-58*). And Sri Aurobindo says: "Nor let worldly prudence whisper too closely in thy ear; for it is the hour of the unexpected" (*The Hour of God*).

follows several years ago, was the founder of the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles and its guiding light for years until her death in 1980. She is the author of several articles and two books on Sanskrit, *First Lessons in Sanskrit and Language of the Gods*.]

### *The Drama of Integral Self-Realization*

(*The Spiritual Message of Savitri*)

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is an epic poem of high spiritual challenge in the Yoga or Divine Union or Goal of Self-Realization it presents. Its spiritual conception is so all-embracing, so integral that it gives birth to a power which transforms life on earth to a life of divine activity rather than leading to an escape from life. The epic is a mantric expression of this great Seer-sage's inner findings and conquests, leading to his vision of an age of truth-consciousness and immortality. It portrays in living drama the daring climb within of a king-soul through progressive states of consciousness to Nirvanic heights and beyond to summits never reached before. The poet reveals how at meditation's peaks at one with God, where many cease their search, he becomes aware of a Presence, God's Consciousness, Power and Bliss, which he calls the Divine Mother. He relates how this Creatrix of boundless Love and Wisdom-Splendor comes down to transform Darkness into Light, the Unreal into the Real and Death into Immortality.

The famous Mahabharata (from the *Padma Parva* in chapters 291-297 of the *Aranyaka Parva*) legend of "Savitri and Satyavan," the story of "Love Conquers Death" is made the basic symbol of this mystic scripture of "Divine Life on Earth." The legend tells of the noble and virtuous King Aswapati performing all kinds

of austerities in order that God might be pleased and grant him a child to uphold his kingdom. After 18 years the goddess Savitri, wife of the Divine Creator, issues forth from the sacrificial flames and promises the king a radiantly spiritual daughter to spring from her own being.

The child is born and is named Savitri. She grows up "like unto the Goddess of Beauty" herself in embodied form and is blessed with godlike qualities. When she reaches maturity, kings and princes, overwhelmed by her divine character, dare not ask her hand. So her father sends her forth to seek her own lord. Her heart finds Satyavan, the faithful son of Raja Dyumatsena, a blind and exiled king who lives in a forest hermitage.

When Savitri comes to declare her love to her father, she finds him in a conversation with Narada, the great heavenly sage. When Narada hears Savitri's words, he warns that Satyavan, though endowed with all high qualities and honor constant as the Pole Star, is destined to die in a year. The parents try to persuade their daughter to choose another, but in vain. Narada advises the father, however, to allow Savitri to marry Satyavan. So the princess is married and lives a simple, quiet life in the forest. She pleases all with her tender service, self-denial, evenness of temper, her skill and gen-

tle speech and her love for Satyavan.

But night and day Narada's prophetic words are present in her mind, but she speaks of them to no one. When the appointed day for Satyavan's death approaches, Savitri fasts and prays, and on the fated day she begs permission to follow her husband into the forest in order to see the blossoming woods through which he passed daily. Never having petitioned anything previous to this day, she is granted her request and soon comes to where he stops to cut wood for the home fire.

After a few strokes, Satyavan falls smitten with pain and Savitri, stricken with grief, sits and holds his head in her lap. Suddenly she beholds Yama, the God of Death, standing before her with noose in hand. She rises and asks why he had come himself instead of sending one of his emissaries as was his custom. Yama tells her that this prince is endowed with such a sea of virtue and accomplishment and beauty that he is too worthy to be borne away by anyone but the God of Death himself. Then Yama takes the soul of Satyavan and proceeds southward. Savitri, undaunted, follows him. Time and again Yama turns to stop her, but with wise and appealing words, she moves him to grant one boon after another, save the life within his hand. Still she continues to follow him, right into his dark cave, until finally her devotion and unparalleled love and wisdom move Yama to return the soul of Satyavan. Savitri hastens to the woods where her lord's body lay and woos the soul back into consciousness, and together they return to their home, and all the boons promised by Yama are fulfilled.

Adapting this legend as a symbol for a great living spiritual experience, Sri Aurobindo changes King Aswapathy's sacrificial asceticism into the Tapasya, or conscious spiritualization, of an aspiring soul of humanity. Savitri is not only the incarnation of a goddess, but Divine Grace born in answer to Aswapathy's longing for help in bringing some living form of God on earth to relieve it of its burden of inconscience. The marriage of Savitri and Satyavan is the divine linking of their lives for the raising of the world and man to God and the bringing of God to earth to transform it into an abode of Divine Delight.

Sri Aurobindo first gives a panoramic vision of the character and mighty events of the momentous day of Divine Conquest (book 1, canto 1). Dramatically he opens the epic with a description of the dawn of the day destined for Satyavan's death and makes it the symbol of the dawn of the spiritual tomorrow which is to usher in an age of Truth-Consciousness and immortality. How this wondrous dawn appears to

humans with "time-born eyes" and how it affects Savitri awaiting her mighty struggle with Death is compared. Telling verses give the key to the source of Savitri's power to rise above her lone grief and the thoughts oppressing her mind. Her godlike character and sensitive nature are set forth and reveal the source of her power and will in the battle of Death.

As the significant day of death arrives (canto 2), Savitri is pictured preparing within, struggling with the burdens of her karmic past, seeking the aid of her will born of Self to help her disown the trials and legacy of past selves which were "a block on the immortal road." As she reviews her past, we hear the radiant prologue to this day, her twelve months' life in the secluded beauty of the woodlands where there was "deep room for thoughts of God."

Striking verses tell of how, when faced with the death of Satyavan, her heart stood "in the way of the driving wheels" of the "engines of the universe," how she kindled her divine strength, how pain assailed her divinest elements, and how the truth of her divinity within "broke in a triumph of fire" and empowered her to smite "Death's dumb absolute" and "burst the bounds of consciousness and Time."

After this survey of the mighty moments of the epic, the poet takes up the sequence of events (canto 3) in accordance with the original legend, commencing with a description of the spiritual steps taken by Aswapathy for his soul's release. We learn how through inner concentration and a steady will he kept his consciousness in his supernature and is helped in turning "his frail mud-engine to heaven-use." To free himself from ego and its finiteness, from mind's limits and "the lines of safety reason draws" are his task. What a conscious sleep brings once one is no more drugged by Matter, what powers develop are part of the spiritual romance related.

Then we are told how "these wide-poised upliftings" whose peace the "restless nether members tire of" are made to endure, how the spirit's power gradually transforms the darker parts of man's being, even the body's cells, and makes them feel the need and will to change in order that "this immense creation's purpose may not fail." What he must check crowding through mind's gates under "forged signatures of the gods," what the silences of his being reveal, and what priceless riches he finds in the deep subconscious as his being becomes transfigured are all here described.

The secret knowledge (canto 4) follows, giving out the grandiose meaning of our lives, the story of the climb of the god-spark through the kingdom of the earth to

Godhood, how the Spirit-guardians of the Silence of the Truth work in the vicissitudes of our lives, what the true sources of our beings are, who the cosmic managers are, and how the secret God within makes himself felt in our lives. But still unexplained problems made Aswapathy plunge into "unplumbed infinitudes" in order to find the key to what could join Spirit and Matter, join "what is now parted, opposed and twain" and fulfill the Oneness that was the stamp of Being.

So Aswapathy moves (canto 5) into the freedom and greatness of his Spirit, dares "to live when breath and thought were still" and steps into that magic place where all is self-known, where the riddle of the world grew plain and "lost its catch obscure." In magnificent poetry we follow him as he rises, leaving earth-nature's summits below his feet. We are made to feel the ecstasy, might and sweetness of God's mystic power, as he is drawn from his loneliness into God's embrace.

As he climbs, his sealless eye uncovers a series of graded kingdoms twixt life's poles through whose "organ scale of consciousness" souls move. Up this stairway of worlds he starts and enters into another space and time. With Aswapathy, we travel (book 2, canto 1) and become acquainted with the nature of these spheres and their godheads. Here Sri Aurobindo unveils occult cosmogony in grandiose and vibrant detail in a clarity of language that only direct experience can utter. To read of these inner states of ourselves, also the pattern of the universe to be seen within, below, without, above, is to understand ourselves more fully.

Aswapathy crosses out of this gross material world into a subtle material existence where the patterns of our forms are found: then into planes of pure life-force, where in the lower regions, "an unhappy corner of eternity," the little cravings of earth's beings and a motley mass of lower vital creatures abound; while in its higher regions live the higher emotions, desires, and aspirations, where unattained ideas are beings and kings. Then lower into the dangerous nether regions of nescience with its brood of hate and selfishness along with this explorer we go to find the causes of the failure of the desire-worlds to fulfill themselves. There we see the twists of Nature. Further below into Hell we penetrate with this warrior-adventurer who keeps "a prayer upon his lips" and the great "Name" to protect him from its terrors and demoniacal creatures. What scenes of horror and yet grim majesty are portrayed! Even to the hidden heart of Night, the absolute denial of Truth and Being, this spirit-soul dives, where the "hypocrite blooms," a

"spiritless hollow," a home of the dark Powers, "a studio of creative Death" and a dire place to torture. Passing through the suffering of its blackest pit, while "treasuring between his hands his flickering soul," Aswapathy discovers that the highest secrets are locked in these abysmal depths.

Then up into the paradises of the Gods of Life and Hope we are made to feel the sweetness and joys of this state. But this too he quickly leaves, journeying on to find something higher, that which makes all One; for to remain within the limits of Desire's satisfactions delays the discoveries of that Immortal One who gives all one could desire and more. The kingdoms and godheads of the little Mind show him their ceaseless analytical workings, and we are introduced to the three dwarfs of mind: habit, desire, and reason. Then into the more luminous planes of Greater Mind, where few are guests, he enters and finds there a plane which God uses as a bridge to send his forms of Truth to man. Inspiring are the lines outlining what could be ours if we opened the gates leading to this shining corridor of Mind.

Next Aswapathy ascends to the blissful heavens of the Ideal, the home of the source of our spiritual longings where from we hear "the flutings of the Infinite" which rouse the soul from its depths. From this beautiful realm where mind's radiant flower-children dwell, he enters into the Silence where the Self of Mind, the witness-Lord of Nature has his secret base. Aswapathy watches the motive-thoughts of this Thinker, but this firmament of abstract thought he observes is a Finder only, but not a Knower or a Lover.

Seeking for an escape from these limits, the King-soul goes through a brilliant opening carried by a mysterious sound into the Soul of the World. Here the poet describes the universal harmonies, sympathies, and wisdom of this Cosmic Consciousness, home of souls in spiritual sleep between lives on earth. We learn how souls plan there in this "fashioning chamber of the Worlds" the adventures of their new lives. The watching eye of this spiritual traveler sees there his own soul, and now, soul-conscious, becomes aware of the "Two-in-One," the Cosmic Father-Mother absorbed in deep creative joy, and learns of their works and powers. In awe, he falls before this unveiled Goddess, knowing he is nearing the heart of things. Now our hero-soul steps into a realm of boundless silence "where all are different and all are one." The plentitudes of Wisdom found there are spread before us.

Next (book 3) on creation's heights this tireless seeker arrives where only a formless Form of Self is left. There appears the

head of the whole with "his feet firm-based on Life's stupendous wings." the utter aloneness, stillness, and inscrutability of this God with diamond gaze rejecting from itself world and soul is powerfully set forth. Still, this "Consciousness of unheard bliss" did not satisfy him. He sought in this absolute silence "the Absolute Power," for he knew that a huge extinction is not the crown of the Self's mission or the Self's power, or the meaning of this great mysterious world. Verses of challenge ring forth to the soul who might seek the end of his being in Nirvana.

Passages pregnant with deep meaning then flow forth from the poet as he narrates the drawing near of the Divine Presence behind the Godhead, that luminous heart which Aswapathy has been yearning for with the passion of his soul. Here was the Glory of God, the Divine Mother of all. Soul-stirring is his prayer to the Mighty Mother after having torn up "desire from its bleeding roots and offered to the gods the vacant place." The poet depicts the transformation that comes over Aswapathy as his heart meets the Divine Mother and describes the vision that comes to him of the New Creation to dawn on earth, bringing with it a harmony of all contraries. Splendid and prophetic passages! Suddenly the Divine Mother rises in him and speaks in his hearts' chambers, warning him not to awake too soon the immeasurable descent, and revealing her miraculous powers. But Aswapathy, who has now beheld this wondrous Mother, pleads with a heart grown vibrant with love for all: "Incarnate the white passion of thy Force" (book 4). The beauteous Immortal's consent and her promise to come down to earth is one of the lofty mantric passages of the epic. So to change Nature's doom Savitri is born. Exquisite poetry recounts her childhood, the gradual growth of the Flame within her, the call to her divine quest and the meeting of the two young lovers (book 9).

Then we hear Narada (book 6), the heavenly sage, not only announcing to Aswapathy, Savitri's father, the fated death of Satyavan, but giving out with singular force the laws and ways of Karma, fate, pain, and the mystery of why great souls suffer. Like the despondency of Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, the ordeal of the foreknowledge of Satyavan's death and her heart's grief are shown to be the beginning of Savitri's yoga (book 7), her union with God. With the poet we watch her struggles with forces of indifference and inertia, and with the senses, desire and the restless brain, against truth mixed with poison, and against weakness of heart. The strong charge of her soul in response to her command—"Speak to my depths, O great and deathless Voice, for I am here to do thy will"—is the spiri-

tual charge for every soul seeking to serve the Divine and conquer Darkness.

Next we are given a picture of what Savitri sees when she looks into herself and seeks her soul. Closing the door to the God within are serpents of temptations of all kinds, limitations luring to the easier paths of the all-negating absolute, to escape from the battle with life and to Nirvana. How she answers these and pushes them away is told. On seeking the occult Fire within, three Soul-Forces appear: the Mother of Divine Pity, the Mother of Might, and the Mother of her Secret Soul. Each relates her various forms and work in the world. Finally the poet chants Savitri's finding of her Secret Deity.

But soon the portentous yet promising day of Satyavan's death (book 8) arrives, and it is portrayed in verses of poetic pathos. At the moment of death (book 9), Savitri enters the mystic lotus in her head, "a thousand-petalled home of power and light," and rises to meet the dreadful God, the limitless denial of all being. The two oppose each other, Woman and Universal God of Death. The poem shows Satyavan moving with Death into the silence beyond and Savitri casting off her sheaths and entering into the trance of her soul in order to stay with Satyavan. At the brink of the shadow world, Death peals forth his abysmal cry ordering her to go back. But silent, she dares enter into the Eternal Night with them. Death warns her to go no further and depicts his home of dark immensity and the helplessness of all in his power. After his ruthless speech, Savitri answers what to her is a black lie of Night and declares her spirit's power can resist him and then demands and challenges Death to give what Satyavan desired in his life for his parents. Death smilingly yields, but demands she return to earth lest she be destroyed. But Savitri boldly states her powers, which, like fire, can destroy him. Death in mocking verses cries out that he is the Originator and Destroyer of all. Savitri then meets scorn with scorn and in dynamic poetry proclaims the wondrous might of her God's Will and Love. Death refutes all her statements, claiming his Power can deny them all, make all things vain.

Savitri's soul continues to wrestle with Death and to ridicule his words of Reason. Death challenges her to seek to *know*, for knowledge kills love. Quickly comes her response that Nature of Love gives birth to knowledge. Drifting along with them as they move into the Land of Nought (book 10), we hear the debate continue, hear them pit all the contraries of life against each other, and we hear from Savitri the very reason of Death's existence. Death peals forth a long proclamation of how he

cancels all life's golden truths. To his dangerous music this warrior-maiden gives a picture of what her God of Love has done and will yet accomplish, and dares Death to produce a greater God to captivate her soul. Death sneeringly interprets her words as hallucinations of the mind and gives an oration on the deceptions of mind and raises Unconsciousness as the pinnacle of all. Savitri answers in Death's own words, calling him the dark-browed sophist of the universe masking divinity with his dance of death. She sings forth in glorious poetry the occult spiritual miracle of God's wonders from a tiny seed; and then again in lines of majestic power speaks of her assured triumph, of her love as stronger than his bonds of death.

The Dark King still trying to discourage her, ironically speaks of her fantasy of Truth, says that Truth is hard as stone. Back and forth sparkle the words of the debate. Death uses subtle reason and arms himself with all man's faltering searches, his limiting spiritual goals, and exaggerated and imperfect understanding of Truth to prove the futility of God's power, but Savitri, delivered of all twilight thoughts, with a heart of Truth, answers his lures. Here Savitri chants lyrics of Nature's miracles, of the wonders of the Infinite and of the limitless powers of a soul integrally surrendered to God.

Death, suspecting her to be the Mother of the Gods embodied, challenges her to show a body of living Truth, for has matter ever been able to hold Truth? Savitri tells Death who he really is and warns him he will cease to be when he touches the embodied Truth Supreme, and then reveals her being all one with God. Death, still unconvinced, makes his last stand in support of his blind force and dares Savitri to reveal the Power of the Divine, for many have Truth, but who has the Power to radiate it? Then is given a picture of Savitri as she becomes transformed into a divine being with all her chakras or lotuses of Power scintillating. The most powerful speech of all follows, and Savitri exhibits her living Power of Truth and proves that death is needed no more. Death is shown gradually vanishing and finally defeated, eaten by light.

In the silences of the beyond (book 11), Savitri and Satyavan were alone. Into the avenues of the Spirit they roam happily. But even there voices rise enticing them to come to a blissful home away from the battles of life, but Savitri again meets the test of strength. With sun-words she replies that she was born on earth to dare the impossible, that imperfect is the joy not shared by all. Then God, knowing Savitri now to be absolutely at one with his diamond Heart, rings forth the final joyous pean of

the divine transformation that shall be on earth and sends Savitri as his Power and Satyavan as his Soul back to earth to change this earthly life into a life divine.

Savitri falls to earth like a star (book 12) and Satyavan invisibly drawn, soars past her. They reunite on earth and the epic closes unveiling the age-long secret

deep-guarded in the stillness—the promise of a greater dawn.

*Iti maya srutam*—Thus have I heard.

Thus have I heard the revelation of *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, truly an apocalypse of the treasures of spiritual experience and of the Perfect Divine Existence.

## BETWEEN TWO WORLDS (4)

Dick Batstone

[This is the fourth installment in the series taken from the diary kept by an English disciple of Sri Aurobindo and Mother during his visit to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1959-60.]

20 August 1960: Today I saw Mother [again], for a short interview. I had thought this would result in my leaving, but no, I am to stay until December, when again Mother will see if I have a clearer understanding of where I should be.

We talked a little about the nature of sleep and "being conscious in sleep." Sri Aurobindo writes in *Bases of Yoga*, "Sleep, because of its subconscious basis, usually brings a falling down to a lower level, unless it is a conscious sleep." Many people, I think, can change the course of a dream they do not like, or wake themselves up, and this is because they know they are dreaming. It is this inner awareness and detachment even in sleep that is developed in yoga, it seems.

N. was very happy for me when I told him of my reprieve until December.

We went swimming together. On the beach we talked to an elderly Ashramite, who told us how, once, soon after he had come here, he saw a white lady apparently drowning. Before coming here, he had been a strict Brahmin, and Brahmins must never touch strange women. He had had quite a conflict of conscience as he stood on the beach and watched; but at last the teaching of Sri Aurobindo overcame his conservative habits, and he went into the sea and pulled the poor woman out.

11 September 1960: The still courtyard is lit by a few electric bulbs at the centre. Overhead the Service tree is dark and huge, its trunk rising at a slope at the head of the Samadhi, a simple massive flower-covered rectangular solid. Girls and men come and go, shedding their sandals by the side of the court and moving into the light to kneel or stand by the Samadhi. Some take a flower from the tomb before going home for the night. Others touch the blossoms with their hands and silently carry the contact to head or heart before leaving. Near the edge of the circle of light a few sit cross-legged on the paving, meditating with closed eyes.

I see P., the white of his hair and shirt and dhoti showing up in the dark entrance to his room, and I go over to talk with him. He turns back before I reach him, and I follow him into his office. He is pacing slowly up and down, declaiming some Sanskrit verses. I greet him; we sit down, and he starts telling me of the past and of the future.

"The manifestation of the Supermind in the subtle physical took place in 1956, but it has still not emerged. Changes are already happening—you will see—the political situation will change, great alterations will take place. After all, only a few years have passed since it came down. But it will begin to manifest more fully on the earth plane in 1967. Then even those outside will see, and a great many people will come to Pondicherry. Mother has said that my eyes [P. is nearly blind] will be cured when the supramental power is manifested in the physical—she told me so herself."

"Will she supramentalise her own body suddenly, or will it change gradually?"

"Gradually. You see, Mr. Dick, the process will take time, and we may see nothing at first, until the cells on the surface of the body and the nerve endings become affected." He paused, and then continued, "Did I tell you the vision I had one morning at Balcony Darshan?..."

"I was standing there—my mind was not particularly quiet, but what had to come made its way—and I saw a rosy light, shot through with gold, and it enveloped me right up to the neck. And then in this light I saw Mother like a young girl, but full of the experience of age. She was so wonderfully beautiful, like no one I could have imagined: like a girl, but at the same time so pure that no bad thought could have lived for a moment in her presence, and yet although there was this power she was also radiating love and happiness. And this vision stayed with me for 7 or 8 minutes, until the crowd began to disperse.... I asked Mother about it and she said it was a true vision of a spiritual reality that was be-

ing realised. Also a girl in the Ashram saw a vision of many stars coming together, breaking up and then coalescing into one large radiant body. Mother said this represented the new action of Supermind on matter that was taking place, and that such visions appeared only when the actual manifestation was near at hand."

P. also told me how, 3 days before the passing of Sri Aurobindo, he had appeared to him and said, "P., I am going down, but I will come again in a more glorious form." He said this vision came as a dream. He seemed to receive a page of typewritten explanation from Sri Aurobindo, in which he had read with excitement and understanding why it was necessary for Sri Aurobindo to leave the body, and what work he was doing, but that on waking, he could not remember anything of this—perhaps he was not meant to—except for the beginning, which said he was to continue his work and trust always in the Mother, and the final phrase, "I am going down, but will come again."

P. told the Mother, and she said how glad she was that he had had this vision, and that she had had the same experience. He said this was her kind way of saying things—she had surely some far more intimate message.

I asked P. if he thought we should live to see these things. He replied that for himself he was not sure, but that I would surely live long enough.

### God Has Cared

The brown dog, seen for so many months  
Sleeping with the naked street-boys on the  
path,

Has been run over—still now in the gutter.  
Children are tormenting a crow that cannot fly.

"Ma, Ma"—Mother—the beggars cry.

Pass by, traveller, pass along there,  
There's not enough for everyone,  
So keep your own fat share.

A child is lying outside on a dirty cloth,  
Its legs and arms like yellow chicken bones.  
Old crab-fingered women sit plucking each  
other's hair,  
And the man on another's shoulders shouts  
"No legs"  
Waving the stumps.

But all these hearts are bitter,  
All these minds closed up.  
One cannot help the truly poor  
But only wish them luck.

Does God care? Or is life too short to be  
seen?  
Alone in his room, with no money to help  
another,

One man pledges his life to change the nature of things.  
His fulcrum in other worlds, he works to perfect mankind,  
His will given to the Divine.

The growing-point of evolution  
Breaks the habits of the past.  
Poverty, sickness and the mass inertia  
Slowly give way at last.

Do men care? Little known the leader  
passes,  
Near his 80th year. Oh his body radiant.  
Do men see the work accomplished? None  
can take up his gift;  
But God has cared. The true revolution has begun.

For something new  
From behind the sun  
Has broken the repetition  
Of suffering, sleeping man.

Can you not see the dawn's annunciation?  
Have you not heard the music of the earth  
reply?

17 September 1960: Why am I not shocked by the "idolatry" of the people here in the Ashram who worship the Mother and

uniquely revealed this universal truth, demonstrating the holiness of man's psychic Sri Aurobindo?

"I am not a God. I am only some much hammered and refined iron," wrote Sri Aurobindo to his brother Barin in 1920. "No one is God, but in each man there is a God, and to make him manifest is the aim of divine life. That we can all do."

He has also written, "It is far from my purpose to propagate any religion, new or old, for humanity in the future. A way to be opened that is still blocked, not a religion to be founded, is my conception of the matter."

How then can I accept all that I see of the devotion to the Mother? There is, I think, this main difference between the Indian and the Western, Christian approach, that, for the Indian, God, Grace and Guru are all synonymous, as Sri Ramana Maharshi says, and the Guru is the Self. For the Christian, on the other hand, there is the very strong feeling that any such attitude to the immanent Divine in all men takes away from the uniqueness of Christ, and is therefore dangerous.

The reconciling doctrine is the pre-Athenasian one, that the incarnation is true, not of Christ only, but of God and man everywhere and always, and that Christ

being and the light it sheds on our life of thought, feeling and the body itself.

If I responded to certain qualities in Christ with reverence and devotion as if to the Divine, then I must also revere them if I meet them again elsewhere. I should not limit the presence or power and love of God to one manifestation, according to an a priori theory. And if a person has genuinely surrendered herself totally to the Divine—then it must be the Divine who acts and speaks through her.

I do not see the Mother as the Goddess of certain qualities, but rather as a woman manifesting the qualities of God.

Not everyone may see the situation in these terms. Some simple people may see the particular person as God. I am not sure I do not envy their capacity for worship, for who can say it does them harm? Some of us, it is said, need images, and may go through a state of development when a visual aid is a great help to progress, a focus as it were.

But who is the Mother?

Sri Aurobindo writes, "If you follow your mind, it will not recognise the Mother even when she is manifest before you. Follow your soul and not your mind, your soul that answers to the Truth, not your mind that leaps at appearances."

## EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE

### *Financial Guidelines*

In an attempt to develop greater clarity on finances and see that Auroville's growth proceeds as smoothly as possible, Auroville has issued a new set of guidelines:

**Trust Declaration:** "I hereby declare that I will not claim any right of ownership over any asset (land, building, equipment) created by me or with my help in Auroville. All lands and assets in Auroville are to be held in trust by the whole of Auroville for the sake of attaining and realizing the ideals expressed in the Charter of Auroville." (To be signed by all Aurovilians.)

**Personal Funds:** Any amount of money received in Auroville by individuals should be declared monthly to the collective through the community envelope representative on the forms which are provided. Such a disclosure will help us have more awareness of Auroville's finances, including personal funds actually entering and circulating in Auroville. A minimum of 10% of all personal and collective funds should be offered to the envelopes as unspecified donations.

**Project Funds:** All funds collected for or in the name of Auroville are to be received through the recognized and authorized channels, which are:

1. Auroville Fund, for Indian currency.
2. Auroville Pour Tous Fund, for foreign currency.
3. Auromitra, for rural development projects.
4. Artisana Trust, for commercial receipts.

10% of these funds will be contributed to the unspecified envelope. Anyone willing to fund specific projects, and Aurovilians who have projects to present for funding should coordinate their interests through the Auroville Cooperative. The Auroville Cooperative will coordinate all project proposals and funds collected in the name of Auroville for specific purposes.

**Funds Generated in Auroville:** Profits from all Auroville commercial units should be directed toward the collective realization of Auroville's self-sufficiency.

1. All commercial units should come under one legal entity: Artisana Trust.
2. All profits will be made available to Auroville for maintenance and development as may be decided upon collectively

in the Envelope Meeting.

3. The Handicraft Cooperative will evolve more specific guidelines as needed.

**Funds Circulating in Auroville:** As a first step toward more clarity in the functioning of the Auroville services, these services should present their monthly accounts of receipts and payments to the Envelope Meeting. Units and services will not pay salaries to Aurovilians.

**Funds Generated Outside of Auroville by Aurovilians:**

1. Any activities generating funds for Auroville outside of Auroville should first be presented to the Cooperative and the General Meeting and be accepted as an Auroville project.

2. Funds generated by such activities should be channeled through the recognized legal channels.

**Toward Self-Sufficiency:** A group of interested individuals, Auroville Cooperative members, Envelope representatives, Handicrafts Cooperative members, etc., will begin to consider the problem of increasing Auroville's fund-generating possibilities, so

that concrete proposals can be made for achieving real self-sufficiency. (September 1981)

## *Guidelines for Newcomers to Auroville*

### **Probationary Period:**

1. A newcomer's first year in Auroville is considered to be probationary. During this year the individual is expected to engage in meaningful work in the community and to support him or herself materially. Specifically this means contribution to Auroville the amount of Rs 600 [about \$75] per month to cover the cost of his/her food and basic maintenance. This should be done through the Envelopes, Auroville's financial organization. It should be noted that Auroville's financial situation does not permit as generous a maintenance allowance for its residents as is wished. Consequently, newcomers should expect to incur additional expenses over and above this amount to cover such items as a bicycle, clothing, and other personal items.

2. Persons new to Auroville are considered visitors for the first three months. At the end of this period—which corresponds to the period of a normal tourist visa—those who want to stay longer may apply for a visa extension if necessary, and for acceptance by the community as “newcomers” for a further nine months.

3. Persons who have come to stay for at least a year in Auroville must provide either:

a. the monetary equivalent necessary to cover the cost of a return ticket, to be permanently deposited with the Envelopes.

b. or a return ticket valid for at least one year (which if not easily refundable might constitute a loss and would be inadvisable).

c. or a bank statement indicating that the necessary amount for a return ticket is being held for that purpose in the country of origin.

d. or “repatriation insurance” is available at a reasonable cost in most countries.

4. Newcomers are asked to wait for at least one year before beginning any permanent independent housing project or development scheme. At the same time, it must be mentioned that there is an acute shortage of accommodations in Auroville. Newcomers are advised to be prepared to contribute financially toward the cost of constructing a temporary shelter (Rs 1,500 [about \$190] for a rudimentary structure). All construction projects, whether of a temporary or more permanent nature, should be carried out in collaboration with the Auroville Development Group.

### **Conditions for Stay:**

1. The newcomer, as any Aurovilian, should be committed to the principles of Auroville and participate in the community process.

2. The laws of India must be respected. All persons in Auroville are expected to have the necessary identification papers, including passport and visa, and to process these papers through the Auroville Visa Service.

3. The newcomer is expected to follow the financial guidelines which apply to all members of Auroville. (These guidelines are given above.)

4. Activities that violate the ideal of Auroville or that are detrimental to the community's unity are unacceptable. There is to be no collusion with those who claim proprietary and managerial rights over Auroville.

5. Drugs are not permitted in Auroville.

### **Procedures:**

1. Upon arrival in Auroville, visitors must fill in an “arrival form.” This form is available in all guesthouses and/or with the local Visa Service representative. The form is filed with the Auroville Visa Service.

2. Visitors wishing to stay past the 3-month period should meet their visa representative at least two weeks before the period expires in order to initiate the necessary procedures.

3. Before a visa extension application is processed or an individual request for permanent residence is accepted, the newcomer is introduced to the community through the Auroville Cooperative by a member of the settlement where he/she is staying, and must be officially recognized by the community.

### **A Final Note:**

These guidelines are intended to provide a helpful framework for persons new to Auroville. If exceptions or difficulties arise in reference to the guidelines, the problem may be discussed with the Auroville Cooperative, the Envelopes, or the community as a whole through the weekly community meeting.

Further information may be obtained by writing:

Auroville Cooperative  
Information Service, Auroville  
Kottakuppam, Tamil Nadu 605 104  
INDIA

### *Greenwork in Auroville*

[Following is an extract from the latest (revised 1981) report on Greenwork in Auroville. The full report may be seen in Matagiri's library. Anyone interested in helping in any way with this aspect of Auroville may write directly to Auroville Greenwork, c/o Resources Center, Auroville, Tamil Nadu 605101, India.]

Greenwork has taken a considerable investment, but two essential elements have been human: the presence of Aurovilians determined to create a healthy place to live, and the presence of local villagers eagerly looking for an opportunity to work. Most of the work is labor-intensive; regular employment is given to watchmen and cart drivers; seasonal labor is needed for bunding, hole digging, and planting during the monsoon. Capital equipment consists of wells, pumps, windmills, and bullock carts: an average of 20 to 25 acres of afforestation needs a well; full-time watchmen; a bullock cart and driver for watering during summer, at least for 2 or 3 years until all the trees are established; extra labor during the monsoon for planting and beforehand for nursery work preparing seedlings. Funds have come from Aurovilians themselves, friends, and Auroville centers abroad and substantial grants for afforestation have been given by a German rural development agency. Some cash return comes within five years, such as cashew and casuarina; hardwoods take much longer to mature, so for the moment the main benefit is the improved health of the environment.

Greenwork has also provided motivation to other areas of research, notably wind energy. With the water level at 60 feet or more, electrical connection often impossible, and diesel scarce, Auroville has been building water-pumping windmills for several years and has now embarked on a program funded by Tata Energy Research Institute to build a series of high-yield windmills based on a prototype design incorporating a hydraulic pumping system which has been developed in an Auroville workshop. Also under construction is a bullock pump designed for use on borewells.

There is a future prospect for Auroville to become a model of rural development through afforestation and soil and water conservation works integrated with rain-fed crops. It is because the land is given almost exclusively to the latter, combined with overgrazing, that the process of desertification has begun. Auroville lands can be used as the experimental base where species can be tested for their viability in this environment: they can become the first examples of forest farms, with all the power of a living example. Seedlings of the species that would be most attractive to villagers to plant can be raised and distributed, and villagers can begin to cooperate in the practice of bunding fields to prevent runoff. Already many villagers are planting cashews, and some mango and jackfruit, but the thing is to integrate the work, to use trees as windbreaks along the bunds where they can also soak up the water—one of

the main reasons that excessive runoff is allowed is that otherwise the crops get flooded in heavy rains. More area under trees means more fodder (many species can provide good forage), more pasture and hence more compost; also better economic conditions can reduce the dependence on large herds, and so reduce the herds.

There are ways in which the present spiral of entropy can be reversed: the barren plateau of Auroville can become a fertile landscape of forest stands, hedges, and windbreaks, fruit trees and fields. This can be a powerful example for vast arid tracts of rural India.

## NEWS OF AUROVILLE

- For the first time since the beginning of the Matrimandir construction, Aurovilians have been able to open a bank account at the State Bank of India, (Auroville branch). The name of the account is "Matrimandir" and the account number is 490002.

All donations are welcomed. Letters can be addressed to

The Auroville Cooperative  
Aspiration, Auroville  
Kottakuppam, Tamil Nadu 605 104  
INDIA

- The Matrimandir received a long-awaited shipment of cement on August 25. This accelerated the working situation for pre-cast beam production; the beams are the structural units for the outer shell of the Matrimandir. Another team, using the crane, is putting the beams in place and building the scaffolding structure to support each beam until it is concreted into the geodesic triangles that will support the skin. As of mid-September 1981 some 58 beams were in place. Still another team is putting the ferrocement coating on the ramps. One ramp was about half finished by September 1981, but all the techniques have been perfected so that the work is going smoothly. Adjacent to the Workers' camp, a special rose garden to keep the collection given by Bulgaria has the first steps complete: water and a fence.

The Matrimandir Land Fund received some funds, but a complication arose because the purchase of lands around the Matrimandir by a dissident group at double the normal price disrupted plans. Auroville appealed to the Government Administrator of Auroville to end the speculation of lands designated as "city area."

- After a series of meetings in which the Matrimandir working situation was discussed, the community responded with a new full working schedule in which many more Aurovilians are now working at Matrimandir both in the morning and the afternoon.

Naturally this has increased the construction speed and created a sense of a new era, a fresh energy and forecasts a bright future. One definitely feels there is a victory that will manifest in the courts as well as in the flow of the community process.

- In the Envelopes in October:

Budget required: Rs 148,548

Budget covered: Rs 120,892 (81%)

Without the Unspecified donations, only 46% of the budget is covered. Some envelopes are regularly rich: Cash Food, 99.5%; Children: 99%; Milk, 76%.

Other envelopes are only half filled: Food Coop, 47%; Maintenance, 52%; Services, 46%; Market, 44%.

And for others the situation remains very critical: Green Work, 16%; Matrimandir, 33%; Personal (pocket money), 32%; Co-operative, 15%; Expression, 4%; Free Store, 2%.

With the Unspecified donations, we have been able to cover 35% of the budget required, plus other specific needs.

Total Unspecified in Oct.: Rs 72,343.  
Agenda envelope, Rs 1,531.

- A note on donations by check. There are only two accounts for receiving money from abroad: Auroville Pour Tous Fund and the new account, Matrimandir. The check must be written accurately with either one of these two names. The banks are adamant in refusing to cash checks that are not written exactly, for they claim it could be another account. If one wishes to specify any project or "envelope," please include a note separate from the check.

For Indian currency (rupees), there are two accounts: Matrimandir and Auroville Fund. Please take care to use only these names.

- Anyone interested in helping with the financial development of Auroville should write directly to

Financial Development Group  
c/o Alain Bernard  
Aspiration, Kottakuppam  
Tamil Nadu 605 104  
India

- The "Free Store" and maintenance system have renovated and expanded facilities in both Center and Aspiration. While the Free Store was always open to all, there had been a basic maintenance reserved for people without money. Now all systems are open for everyone with the expectation that those people with money will channel some of it to cover what they take, plus any extra they can give to meet the expenses of those who have no means. The budget from the envelope for maintenance theoretically makes up the deficits and so far it's working even though the envelopes can't always meet the budget. Everyone is asked to re-

cord their "receipts and payments" on a monthly form that can be done individually or on a community basis.

- A new episode in the Supreme Court: the dissident group led by Shyamsunder along with their paid workers from the village and some German tourists filed two applications "to be added as party-respondent in the writ petitions" and to clarify/modify the order dated 5/8/81 in the following terms:

1. that the term of Aurovilians in the order dated 8/5/81 is not restricted only to Respondents "6 to 238" and it covers all Aurovilians including the applicants.

2. that the parties to the writ petition shall insure to the applicants free access to the Matrimandir and enable them to participate in the construction of the work there.

3. that it shall be open to all interested and willing Aurovilians to donate funds for the construction of the Matrimandir and enjoy the same right and be subject to the same obligations as any other Aurovillian without any discrimination whatsoever.

4. revive the arrangement made by the Mother for the administration of the Matrimandir."

In their applications the Shyamsunder group rejected the Government takeover and tried to revive the old committees, including Shyamsunder (administration), Navajata (finance), and others.

Most of the petitioners are, in fact, receiving their food and maintenance allowance from the Sri Aurobindo Society.

On 7 August the Supreme Court turned down these applications, refused the Shyamsunder group being impleaded; they will only be allowed to submit a written submission in the main cause, which means on the main question: Does Sri Aurobindo's teaching constitute a religion or not? Up to now, they have always tried to manage not to take a stand on the question.

The Matrimandir has again been put in the charge of Auroville (Respondents N1. 6 to 238) and more administrative powers have been given to the government-appointed administrator.

As of *Collaboration* press time, the case had not yet been heard in the Supreme Court.

- The scene in New Delhi, with the Supreme Court Case still waiting to be heard, is one of preparation and information work. The International Trade Fair became an opportunity for a display of Auroville handicraft and information. About 6 Aurovilians are in Delhi handling the case and the exhibition. One cannot predict when the case will come, but the messages are "soon" and "don't worry."

• A new police station has opened, in Edayanchavadi village, and is referred to as the "Auroville police station." Following Mother's advice of no police in Auroville, we had done all we could to resist this development and at least succeeded in having it located in the village. Local officials could not understand our resistance and took it badly. S.A.S. pushed for the police station very much and even served tea at the "inauguration" in the village.

• The old "watchmen" menace that has plagued Auroville for so long flared up again, at Aurodam on 30 October 1981. A group of these "thugs" paid by the S.A.S. ripped out a planting along the top of a bund that was to grow into a live fence. This was on land that the Aurodam community was doing erosion control and planting work on. Many had to go to confront this vandalism and attempted takeover of the land in order to contain the violence and prevent trouble. Later a police constable came and dispersed the "watchmen," but now no one is able to tend that land until the "dispute" is settled.

• The Auroville ambassadors to Bulgaria, Aurokali and Aolk, returned from the adventure of the World Children's Assembly "Banner of Peace" held in Sofia. Aurokali won a prize for her "painting on the wall," but forgot to collect it. Aolk commented on the abundance of meat and chocolate cake. They want to return next year when the conference will be even "bigger."

Auroville's participation in the assembly came through Madame Lyudmilla Zhivkova, one of the 4 members of the International Advisory Council for Auroville and minister of culture for Bulgaria. She won the hearts of all Aurovilians by her dynamic enthusiasm for the ideals of Auroville. Her visit to Auroville early in 1981, the many gifts she brought, including 1,300 rose plants, established a strong link with this remarkable woman that has not been broken by her sudden death in July.

• Utilite is gradually emerging out of its old karma of a "one-man show" operated by a group of village workers. It became impossible to have guest facilities there because the incidents of theft grew too much. The workers could not cooperate with Aurovilians or the guests and had to be given alternate employment elsewhere. Utilite now has a chance to become a community fully in touch with the life of Auroville.

• Center School has a new building (one room). Called "Concentration," it is intended as a place for quieter study. The architecture drew some comments, as Concen-

tration had 7 doors and triangular windows. The final compromise was 4 doors and triangular windows.

• Among recent visitors to Auroville have been Mr. Haldipur, Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry; Gobind Narain, Governor of Karnataka; Sadik Ali, Governor of Tamil Nadu; Mr. Venkatasudhaia, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs; C.N. Stephen, Union Minister for Telecommunications. Aurovilians also met twice in Pondicherry with Zail Singh, Union Minister for Home Affairs to discuss the latest development of Auroville.

These visits marked a new period for Auroville, after years of bad propaganda by the S.A.S. in the media and at government offices in Delhi, Madras and the district, which totally stopped the flow of visitors to Auroville. A number of officials are again interested in the Auroville project.

Since the act of Parliament and the subsequent takeover by the government, many people have come to visit Auroville and have been very surprised by the great progress in the fields of afforestation, alternative energy research, agriculture and the Matrimandir.

• Welcome to the many people who have come to Auroville in the last month and decided to remain: From France: At Fraternity, Serge, Gil, Zaya. At the Farm, Michele; Maurice at Revelation. Pascal (from Paris Association) at Douceur and Yvette from the Far Beach. Jacques (photographer) about to leave but returning. Elisabeth with Adam (from Cornwall) at the Far Beach, and Jacques, our dentist, who stays there now. Gilbert at Djaima.

From Germany: Petra at Utilite. Ellen, who builds her house at Fertile Windmill. Peter (sculptor) and Birgit, with their newborn Aurovilian son, Satya. Kudo at Djaima.

From Italy: Luisa at the Matrimandir, who lives at Fraternity, and Giovanni (John) at Aurodam.

From Switzerland: Diego at Existence. Ann at the Matrimandir.

From Canada: Denis, Antoinette and their daughter, Angelique, at Samriti.

From America: Christine at the Nursery.

From Israel: Pinina and her daughter, Gali, at the Centre Guest House.

From Iran: Afranch, who wishes to settle here.

From India: Sri Ram, who has returned with his sons Giri Dev and Himadri accompanied by his wife, daughter, and grandson from Darjeeling. They stay at Samriti. And to Muthu of Sanjeevenar Village from Bel-laura Crafts, who printed the Banyanberry Bulletin.

A rough estimate [as of summer 1981]

of Auroville's present population on register: from India (including integrated families): 84 adults and 47 children. From other countries: 244 adults and 74 children.

• On August 15, 1981, the Aurolympic got off to an early start with a dawn bonfire in the amphitheater. The first event, a relay race, moved everyone quickly from the amphitheater to breakfast and the rest of the day's activities at Certitude: a full day of games and sports. The tennis and Ping-Pong finals drew large crowds. After an exciting dinner on banana leaves (ever try to balance a hot runny porridge on a banana leaf?), a classical dancer from Orissa gave a beautiful performance to conclude the evening. Almost all Auroville participated in this play day; in fact, there were so many in the tug of war that the rope snapped in the middle twice!

### *Aurolympics: A Kid's-Eye View*

It was more like a carnival than an olympic.

The day started out with 5:15 bonfire. Kathrin woke me at 5, but I nearly went to sleep again.

A big pointed fire ready to be burned.

Every few seconds you could hear another motorbike arrive. You could just make out who were sitting beside you.

The tractor arrived and the fire was lit. Everyone cheered when it fell over. I don't think it really did what it was meant to, but it gave everyone a laugh.

Frederic called everyone together for a relay race. Nilauro told me, "It's only for Adults!"

At this remark, I felt happier. Tashi and I didn't join because we thought it was a long distance. Rajavani was in a sari, and said, "If I could wear a pair of shorts, I would run."

The best thing was the running. Frederic handed me a ribbon and said, "Tie it where you can see it!" Breakfast was 5" slices of fluffy white bread that tasted like cake.

The first person who was serving the tea, always served everyone but me. It was better this year because there were more people and things to do. The races made me depressed because I'm a terribly slow runner. I enjoyed the long jump because I came second. I jumped 3 m. 45 cm.

After that everyone watched the tennis. There was too much tennis! The tennis was really good because they were really trying hard. They were serious.

There weren't enough things for kids to enter. What happened to the obstacle course and the high jump?

Mainly it was a grown-up affair, they

graphs of his furniture and building designs. The book is \$52.00 from the distributor Harper and Row, from local bookstores, or from Mr. Nakashima's studio at Aquetung Road, New Hope, PA 18938.

Lunch consisted of idlies, chutney and papaya. They could have had David or Larry or someone good doing all the food. I went to sniff in one of the pots and one of the workers told me to get lost!

They should have each event in stages of different ages.

There could be archery and chess and Go maybe, and more sort of party games. Like egg-and-spoon and 3-legged [races].

There were a few attempts at New Games, but was soon over.

There was a motorbike race and Andy won.

Taddy reckoned he could beat them all walking.

I liked the Aurolympics.

I didn't so much, because it gave me a fever.

It was lots of fun.



## GENERAL AND CENTER NEWS

• **East West Cultural Center** (2865 W. 9 St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; 213-480-8325) has held a number of interesting special programs over the past few months. Of particular note: Loretta Shartsis, an artist, gave a four-part slide show and talk of her paintings illustrating Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri*. Dr. Hilary Anderson, associate professor at the California Institute of Asian Studies in San Francisco, gave a talk on "The Way of the Heart for Total Transformation."

Regular classes at the center include Sanskrit (by Kaivalya), Bhagavad Gita (Michael Dave), Transcendental Dancing (Joy Philipou), Hatha Yoga (Maithreya) as well as the Spiritual Inquiry Group on Saturday afternoons led by Fredric Ross and the discussion of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's yoga on Thursday evenings, and group meditation Sundays 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. Call the center for details on these and other activities.

• **Paradise Tau** has a new mailing address: P. O. Box 31908, Phoenix, AZ 85046. Write or call (602) 279-0116 for information on activities.

• **George Nakashima**, the well-known designer and woodworker, who was given the name Sundarananda (One who delights in beauty) by Sri Aurobindo when he spent some time in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, has written a book about his work and life, *The Soul of a Tree*. It is a large, lavishly illustrated book, giving an account of Nakashima's eventful life and his work, including his methods for choosing and cutting trees for his furniture. There are many photo-

graphs of his furniture and building designs. The book is \$52.00 from the distributor Harper and Row, from local bookstores, or from Mr. Nakashima's studio at Aquetung Road, New Hope, PA 18938.

• A group has begun to meet once a week in **San Francisco**, on Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. at the home of Rita Walsh and Alexander Burke (1374 Jackson St., San Francisco, CA 94109) for a short reading from the works of Sri Aurobindo and Mother followed by a meditation. Anyone interested in participating, please call (415) 775-8137.

• "Pour Tous Meeting" at Auroc in France was held starting 15 November with special activities 20-22 November. This initiative for more coordination and communication among the European centers is expected to be very helpful for fundraising, handicrafts distribution, and as a force to stop the fraudulent use of Auroville's name and purpose that has caused confusion especially in Germany.

• **The Auroville group in England** is now publishing the *Auroville International-U.K. Newsletter* once again. Information may be obtained (on either the newsletter, the Auroville group's activities, or on Auroville) by writing to Malcolm Richards, 26A Ferme Park Road, London N.4, England.

People interested in "living in a greater community than the cells of their own bodies, nuclear families, or unclear families," were invited to participate in a meeting at Boytons, Hempstead, in October. Some 16 people attended and set January 1982 for a second meeting.

The following statement was issued by Auroville International-U.K. in their newsletter no. 24:

"We have been asked to explain in what way the views of the U.K. branch of Auroville International, regarding Auroville, differ from those now held at the [Sri Aurobindo] Centre in Bell Street [London].

In a News Letter of March 1981, the position of the Bell Street Centre is expressed as follows:

'First, everyone knows that there are two main contenders for jurisdiction in Auroville, and the majority of people tend to give their sympathy more to one side than another for various reasons. Supporting one side rather than another always leads to friction and misunderstandings, and it is very easy to offend people quite innocently. We take the view that it is best to be absolutely neutral. We have good friends on both sides of "the fence." So for the time being, and until both contenders come together in harmony which we feel must inevitably happen at some time, we remain neu-

tral and loyal to all our friends, looking with admiration at all the undoubted miracles that have happened in Auroville because of the hard work and courage of many people in both Pour Tous and the Sri Aurobindo Society. On each side there has been achievement and human error. Let us only talk about positive things. In the meantime whatever financial help we can give will be given to minority communities who, because they will not be drawn into the mistake of taking sides, receive no help from either Pour Tous or the Society.'

We can understand the feeling behind this statement, and would confirm that the fact that the [London] Centre no longer supports Pour Tous does not mean that it is working for the [Sri Aurobindo] Society. It is making a genuine effort not to judge anyone or take sides. We, nevertheless, continue to support Auroville, as we did before there were "sides," because in spite of failures, it is a progressive, living experiment standing for all those things mentioned in its Charter.

When the Mother urged people not to take sides ["As long as you are *for* some and *against* others, you are necessarily outside the Truth. You should constantly keep good will and love in your heart and let them pour out on all with tranquillity and equality" —the Mother], it seems to us, when seen in context, that what was meant was "Avoid the narrowness that comes from identification with partial views, and don't be self-righteous, or smug or censorious, because you too have a capacity for living in the old consciousness." It did not mean, "Do not discriminate, do not take a stand, do not choose one line of action rather than another in case you find good men against you."

There are many reasons why we find the policy of the [Sri Aurobindo] Society has not been conducive to the free growth of Auroville. But let us, too, be positive and say we will continue to support Auroville, the ideal of which remains untouched by any temporary vicissitudes, and which has its adherents all over the world.

As to helping the small nonaligned groups, we feel this is a matter for individual conscience, but not for our collective action.

Because the [London] Centre does not, at present, see its way to supporting Auroville, Auroville International—U.K. will function from the private address of Malcolm Richards until further notice.

Signed: Dick and M.E. Batstone, Joy Calvert, Margaret Fletcher, Robert Orton, Malcolm Richards, Edith Schnapper."

• We have received the following letter from **Casa Sri Aurobindo**, the Sri Aurobindo group in Brazil:

"Today a very special opportunity has been given me by Rolf [Gelewski, a dancer and teacher who helped establish the group], and this consists in writing you a few lines and tell you about us, the Casa Sri Aurobindo, in order to take up again the contact between Matagiri and Casa.

Let us tell you a little about what has been happening lately. The Casa is still an active group but no longer working as a community in the strict sense of the word. There is a new structure, I mean an outside structure. There are now groups of volunteers helping with the functioning of the Casa, each one giving some of his free time, and some working even full time. The headquarters being now in Sao Paulo and several centers spread over Brazil.

*Ananda* [the group's beautiful magazine] is steadily going on, and very soon no. 53 must be in your hands. . . .

Here in Sao Paulo we have regular courses given by Rolf; sometimes after the preparatory physical training, indoors, Rolf reads and explains words of Sri Aurobindo or *The Mother*; after that we are given creative exercises based upon music and movements. It is a very personal work, from inside we try to express whatever rises in us: feelings, thoughts and suggestions received by the music and the words we have just heard a few moments before. All kinds of resources are used to help us, such as pictures, slides, drawings, sometimes a piece of paper or even a piece of cloth. Every fortnight there is an evening lecture; presently this semester we are going through some parts of [Sri Aurobindo's] *Life Divine*. Besides these regular courses, there are two big seminars, with people belonging to the Casa and friends that like to join us. One of these seminars takes place in January and we call it "Encontros Casa" ["house-meeting"]. There will be one now from January 6th to 16th [1982]. And in July we have the "Semana Sri Aurobindo" [Sri Aurobindo week].

There are also several celebrations (February 21, August 15, November 17, and December 5). On these days Rolf generally dances for a group of people who believe in our work. He dances "spiritual spontaneous dances" [we might point out that Mr. Gelewski has danced for the Mother; editor], and besides several composers there is always music by Sunil Bhattacharyya [a musician disciple living in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram whose music Mother praised].

Alternatively, Rolf works one week here in Sao Paulo and the other he travels all over Brazil giving courses, lectures and recitals, organized by our centers or collaborators. . . .

These words are just the beginning of further contacts and exchange of ideas; we hope that we can send you more things

later on. . . . Our address is now:

Casa Sri Aurobindo  
rua Heitor Penteado 2.009/205  
Sumarezinho  
05437 Sao Paulo / SP  
BRAZIL

Let Light, peace and joy be with all of us. United in the same aspiration.

[Signed] Leni Erica Gut

[Anyone interested may contact the Brazilian group directly and ask for their literature (which is in Portuguese).]

• Mr. Jayantibhai Patel, a disciple in England, has written and published a booklet on Hatha Yoga. Entitled *Integral Yoga*, it is fully illustrated, with an indication of postures for specific ailments and problems. The price (not including postage) is \$2.00 and may be obtained by writing to the author at 139 St. John's Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 4JH, England.

• Gli Amici d'Auroville has a new address: **Auroville-Internationale Italia**, Via Rio d'Orzo 8, 41056 Savignano s/P, Modena, Italy. Anyone interested in the activities of this new group or its publication *Auroville* should write directly to them.

## NEWS OF MATAGIRI

A word about Matagiri. People regularly ask where exactly Matagiri is located and what we do here. Matagiri is located on woodland 8 miles from the center of Woodstock, N.Y., in the Catskill Mountains. At present there are 6 permanent residents (and we welcome back Timothy Jacob, who has rejoined us after an absence of three years). Matagiri has an extensive Sri Aurobindo Library, with some 2,000 volumes (and an additional 2,000 volumes of other works, on philosophy, sociology, health care, science and literature), including a nearly complete set of the *Arya* and some rare editions of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's works, a collection of some 200 tape recordings of Mother's talks, Ashram music, and talks by various disciples; a large collection of photographs of Sri Aurobindo and Mother (more than 4 large albums); a collection of periodicals from both the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and many Sri Aurobindo centers around the world; an extensive collection of papers, publications, slides and photographs of Auroville.

Our time is spent very simply, largely in work activities. Matagiri distributes the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and sells various products made in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville, including handmade paper products, incense, and marbled silks.

No classes are given in the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but occasion-

ally a informal talk is arranged when there is a special visitor. However, one resident, Gopal, does give classes in Indian philosophy, Sanskrit and Hindi. The residents meet three times weekly, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday after dinner, for a reading from *Mother's Agenda*.

Since Matagiri is not a retreat, visitors are asked to participate in work here for a part of each day (except Sunday, which is a free day for everyone). There is a charge of \$15.00 per day for room and board.

Some 50 people attended Matagiri's observance of Sri Aurobindo's birthday last August 15. There was a change in the manner of observance. There was no set program. Instead, as people arrived, they were given a sheet of paper saying that there was no program, no meditation, etc., but they would be free to use the day as they liked. The meditation room was open if they chose to meditate or read, or they could spend the time out of doors. It was requested that silence be maintained until noon, when a picnic lunch was served. After lunch Jean and Gordon Korstange gave an Indian flute recital. Everyone expressed great satisfaction with this way of observing the day.

Among visitors to Matagiri during the last few months were Miriam Belov, Dr. and Maya Sarkar, Louise Forest, Anie Nunnally, Connie Buckley from New York; Luci Barbera and Julian Lines, Charles (Arya) and Marlenka Maloney, Tom O'Brien (a former Matagirian now managing a residential motel across the road); Mark & Zoe Sinkin and Marc Salvas from Canada; Dr. Lakshmi Vadapalli, Mr. & Mrs. Dwivedi, Ken Schachat, Lucille Massa, Navaja Mitchell, Margo MacLeod; Mr. & Mrs. Bianchi from Italy; Maryse Don, Georges Dandrimont and Micheline Aiguier from France; Richard Rickerts from St. Louis; Dorothy Jolson, Rick Thomas, Lalit Stewart, Helen Lee, Kevin Krause, Don Southerton, Shashi and Shishila Desai, Luce Klein, Chitta Goswami; Kalaya from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram; David Voremberg.

In December Robert Sampson visited and gave a slide presentation and talk on "The Consciousness of Healing," which dealt with the order and symmetry present in the human being, consideration of alternative models of the human being, and exercises intended to tap the healing potential within the human being. (Anyone interested in having Dr. Sampson give this interesting presentation should write directly to him at 118 Central St., Waltham, MA 02154. Dr. Sampson is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, with training in psychiatry at the University of Michigan. He is currently staff psychiatrist at the Beaverbrook Guidance Center in Waltham, Mass., and in private practice.)