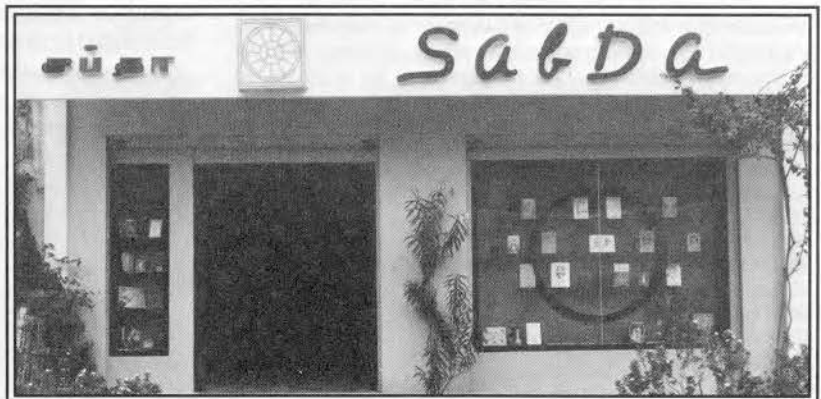
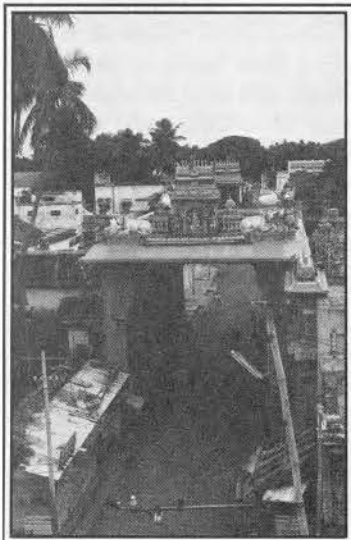
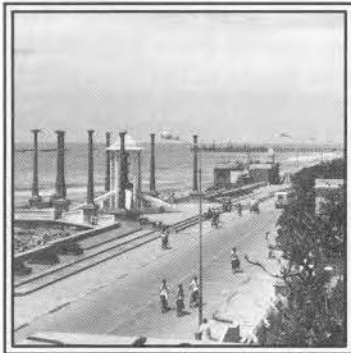
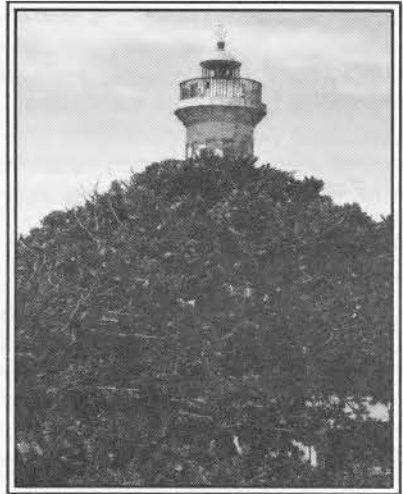
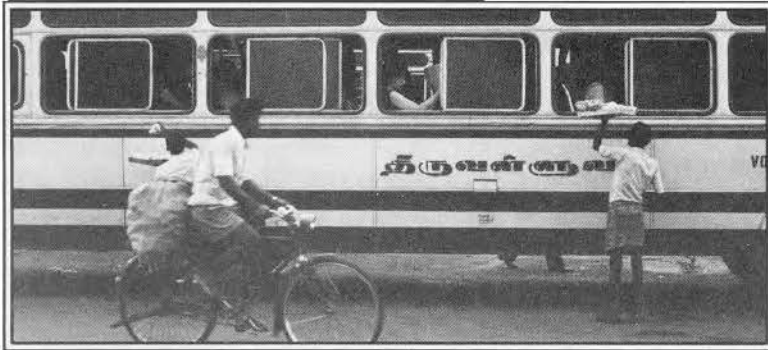


Collaboration

WINTER 1986

Vol. XII No. 2



*mothersriarobinso
is my refuge*

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Editor's Notes

Underlying every aspect of Indian culture is an implicit faith. The ways in which this faith expresses itself are as diverse as the number of people. There is no religious norm, no basic point of view, no common belief, yet faith is inherent in everything. In the contemporary West skepticism is the norm; we are taught to analyze and, through analysis, to learn. For the most part, people in Indian villages do not question; they believe.

Village India, Stephen P. Huyler, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., NY, 1985, p. 37.

There are always been the feeling, usually unspoken, that those who are drawn to the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother are a chosen people. This idea can be traced back to the many stories of how now-aged sadhaks found their way to the Ashram by the most unlikely ways—terrorism, for example. Mira Alfassa herself came to India to help her husband campaign for political office! Later there were people like the late John Kelly, catapulted out of the trenches of WWII and his Catholic Brooklyn life into the subtle physical, then actual, presence of two fantastic figures he had never seen before (see *Collaboration*, Spring-Summer, 1984, Vol. X No.2). Many Aurovilians also were drawn inexorably to a piece of semi-desert halfway around the world, cut off from family, culture, and material advantages.

There are varying degrees of chosenness. For some, Sri Aurobindo and Mother, along with others, are part of the new age of spirituality that has bloomed on earth since the middle class discovered marijuana in the 1960's. For others, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy resonates with the highest truths of Indian spirituality—or The Mother's Agenda and other writings touch deep chords within their being. And there are many who hail them as avatars, incarnations of the Divine on earth.

This feeling of having been selected, though difficult for many Americans to accept, still smolders under our democratic heritage and the refuse of modern mass culture. We have somehow been touched with a vision and presence that must be responded to in some way. We don't put on saffron. We haven't given any weekend workshops on supramentalization techniques. Most of us go about our seemingly ordinary lives and keep the secret to ourselves. Occasionally we get together in study groups, in centers, or at gatherings like the All-USA Meeting and ask ourselves why—why have we been chosen? The work is so vast and here we are, spending most of our time surviving. Then we look around at each other, hoping one of us has an answer that makes sense to the reason.

We in the Matagiri group had this experience again recently at a workshop given by Suzanne MacDonald and Warren Belows at the Merriam Hill Center. Its purpose was to use the five-element theory of Chinese acupuncture in order to analyze our group, "Organizational Energetics" they call it. It was a stimulating experience. We discovered, for instance, that we do not actively recruit new members. We welcome people into our group at any time, but the understanding is that they will stay involved if they feel the Connection, i.e. if they feel somehow inwardly chosen to do whatever it is MSAC is supposed to do. (We hope to find out one day!)

Another thing we could say clearly is that we like being with each other. Selling books and serving as a channel to the Ashram and Auroville give us purpose, but we began as East

Cover Photos from top left: (1) State bus to Pondy; (2) Pondy light-house; (3) Gandhi statue on beach road; (4) Entrance to Samadhi; (5) Ashram School buildings; (6) Ganesh temple near Ashram; (7) Sri Aurobindo Books Distributing Agency office. Photos by Gordon Korstange.

Coast Nexus, a group of loosely connected people who liked being together and could find in each other some of the sense of wonder and mystery that is at the basis of our relationships, beyond the labyrinth of personality.

Almost all of us in the group have been to Pondicherry and Auroville and have stayed for some time. That seems to be a major part of the feeling of chosenness—to have lived in the atmosphere established by Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Having been there creates a background upon which we interact, even if it's on the level of gossip, psychic or chic. If we want more people to feel chosen perhaps encouraging and even financing travel to Pondicherry is the way. The Learning Exchange of Merriam Hill was successful at this. Global Views in Wisconsin is also starting to sponsor tours of India.

Then there is The Work. Whether we are going Yoga or not; whether we are involved with a group or helping with some project that is connected with the establishment of the new consciousness on earth, The Work or The Yoga is the touchstone with which we measure our lives. Once you are chosen there are no other standards.

I fought this idea for years. Being chosen smacked of an arrogance that I disliked in the Calvinists I knew at college and in the superiority of many in Pondicherry and Auroville. Some people, it seemed, had a one-way ticket on the supramental boat simply by showing up. Begin chosen meant that whatever one did was Yoga. There were children who had slid down the golden water slide and were born with spiritual spoons in their mouths.

Yet there we were, Jeanne and I, plucked from obscure Midwest villages and set down a few miles from Pondicherry to ostensibly teach English (I first went to the Ashram and asked where I could find meat and beer). I finally gave in. Although I do not have the slightest notion of why I am involved with this thing, beyond the fleeting thought that I was a South Indian Brahmin in my last life—my own particular arrogance, I am here to stay, just as the members of Matagiri felt after the workshop. We too are here to stay, a group, still together and moving forward. I can even approach at times the faith in destiny of an Indian villager. Perhaps one day I will truly surrender and find the real meaning of being chosen.

Gordon



The Matagiri group at the Merriam Hill Center Workshop.

Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo

Editor's Note: This two volume set, published by the Ashram Press in 1983, and available through Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center is one of the first books to catch your eye on a shelf of Ashram publications because of its warm, colorful cover. The book is intimate and revealing. Like Nirod's earlier book, *Twelve Years With Sri Aurobindo*, the humorous and playful intelligence of Sri Aurobindo comes forth. In his introduction to this set of books Nirod explains why he published these letters:

"My intention is clear. For one thing, I wanted to show what kind of stuff we were that Mother and Sri Aurobindo had to fashion into a new race. People in general have a rosy view of the Ashram. Since it is a Yogashram, they believe a priori that it must be chock-full of big yogis, but their preconceptions do not take long to break into pieces. Most of us, in truth, were common people, and knew very little of yoga. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo took us as they found us. It is precisely one of the cardinal principles of their yoga to take up fresh and simple natures . . . and try to mold them in the image of their souls. When I exclaimed, 'What disciples we are of what a Master! I wish you had chosen or called better stuff,' Sri Aurobindo answered, 'As to the disciples I agree! Yes, but would the better stuff, supposing it to exist, be typical of humanity? To deal with a few exceptional types would hardly solve the problem.'"

Each one of us represents a type. On the one hand, our inner and outer difficulties, struggles, resistances in the peripeties of sadhana, the ups and downs, successes and failures, complexities of nature, all these coming to the surface as a result of the pressure of yoga. On the other hand the Mother and Sri Aurobindo treating each case with amazing love and patience in order to give each one the full chance of finding his soul.

I myself was a certain type so that my conversion would facilitate the conversion of many others like me. I believe that is what Sri Aurobindo meant when he said, 'you see, your difficulties are not yours alone. When they are conquered, others also will benefit by it. That is the meaning of one man doing yoga for all.'

It is really this dealing with ordinary stuff that makes this book so involving. Nirod looks at his dreams, his work, habits, and desires and questions Sri Aurobindo about them. The ups and downs of moods, the searching for perfection, the fleeting spiritual experiences and the growth of the being in the yoga are personal history until the reader runs across one which they always wondered about. How do we find our psychic being? How much time should we spend meditating? How does work become yoga? Ask any basic question and you'll probably find Nirod asking it on one of these pages. And so it is that we'd like to share some of these correspondences with

readers of Collaboration through a series of extracts from the books.

April 21, 1934

I had a very peculiar dream last night:

I was going away somewhere much dejected and disappointed. The road I took was most gorgeous, reminding me of that of the Luke districts of Scotland; I had proceeded far: suddenly J came up running and said- "The one whom you wanted has come and is waiting for you." I turned back but found nobody. More disappointed I was just going away when a woman's form with a child in her lap appeared as if from nowhere. I fell at her feet saying "O Mother, you have come then?" with such an ecstasy and fervor that words can't convey. "Are you going to leave me? Will you come often?" I asked. "I shall come nine or ten times a day." With this reply she vanished and the dream ended. Who is this form and what is the meaning of this? And why the child?

The child was your psychic being. It was the Mother you saw and she brought it to you-that is, put you in close contact with it.

April 23, 1934

I am happy, happy, but I am afraid at the same time lest it should disappear by some inadvertent action of mine. It is generally supposed that the Divine also deliberately leads us through alternating states of joy and despair to make us strong or to test us. Is it true? If so, I cannot pray to you to give me such an uninterrupted bliss!

It is not a law, but it happens because of the difficulty of human nature. If all were led by the psychic being with its faith, surrender, one-pointed will to the Divine, there would still be ups and downs of a slighter character, but no need for states of despair.

May 10, 1934

I have been thinking whether I would not profit more by spending the time I use for writing in doing meditation instead. Has the writing work any spiritual value?

No present value spiritually-it may have a mental value. It is the same with the work-it has a value of moral training, discipline, obedience, acceptance of work for the Mother. The spiritual value and result come afterwards when the consciousness in the vital opens upward. So with the mental work. It is a preparation. If you cannot yet do it with the true spiritual consciousness, it, the work as well as the mental occupation, must be done with the right mental or vital will in it.

The Mother says in her Prayers and Meditations that experience is willed by the Divine. Am I then to suppose that dearth or abundance of experiences is, in any given case, willed by the Divine?

To say so has no value unless you realize all things as coming from the Divine. One who had realized as the Mother had realized in the midst of terrible sufferings and difficulties that even these came from the Divine and were preparing her for her work can make a spiritual use of such an attitude. For others it may lead to wrong conclusions.

***Last night I woke up suddenly
in condition of deep ecstasy. My room
seemed to be quite different; it was
pervaded by your-presence.
I felt I was lying in an
immense cradle of that presence.***

June 8, 1934

Last night I woke up suddenly in condition of deep ecstasy. My room seemed to be quite different; it was pervaded by your-presence. I felt I was lying in an immense cradle of that presence. I wonder if the condition was a stupefaction of the sense due to an interruption of sleep or a simple imagination.

What on earth is this nonsense: Do you mean that an experience of the prefacing Presence can only be due to a stupefaction of the sense, an interruption of sleep or a simple imagination? When you get experiences, especially such experiences, take them as they are. Why these mental mystifications?

If my Ananda was vital and mental, is there a psychic Ananda too?

I did not say it was vital and mental, but that it was Ananda manifesting itself in the mental and vital-a quite different thing; for the one ananda (the true thing) can manifest in any part of the being.

Is ananda a major experience?

Light, Peace, Force, Ananda constitute the spiritual consciousness; if they are not among the major experiences, what are?

August 17, 1934

During this Darshun, instead of Ananda, Force or Light I felt a great dryness.

It depends upon your condition whether the Ananda or Force or Light descends or whether the resistance rises. It is the resistance of the ordinary physical consciousness ignorant and obscure that seems to have risen in you. The period of the 15th is a period of great descents but also of great resistances. This 15th was not an exception.

It is exactly one and a half years since I have been here. Unfortunately I cannot detect any sign of progress, everything is status quo, so to say.

You have had some experiences which are signs of a future possibility. To have more within the first one and a half years, it would be necessary to have the complete attitude of the sadhak and give up that of man of the world. It is only then that progress can be rapid from the beginning.

September 8, 1934

I should be like to be a literary man. Do you approve?

It depends on what kind of literary man you want to be, ordinary or Yogic.

*What did you mean by a Yogic "Literary man?" I find here that **sadhaks** who have flourished as literary men have read a lot.*

A literary man is one who loves literature and literary activity for its sake. A Yogic "literary man" is not a literary man at all, but one who writes only what the inner will and Word wants to express. He is a channel and an instrument of something greater than his own literary personality.

*The Mother and Sri Aurobindo
took us as they found us.
It is precisely one of the cardinal
principles of their yoga to take up
fresh and simple natures. ..
and they try to mould them in the
image of their souls. "*

Of course the literary man and the intellectual love **reading**—it is their food. But this is quite apart from writing. There are plenty of people who never wrote a word in the literary way, but were enormous readers. One reads for ideas, for knowledge, for the stimulation of the mind by all that the world has thought or is thinking. I never read in order to create. As the Yoga increased I read very little, for when all the ideas in the world come crowding in one, there is not much need of food there. At most an utility for keeping oneself informed of what is happening in the world—but not as food for one's own seeing of the world and Truth and things.

*I have found that one's reading does not always help one in expressing the thoughts in the most **effective** way. So also with writing poetry, we have the ideas, words, thoughts, yet we can't write a poem as poets do.*

Poetry especially—even perfect expression of any kind comes by inspiration, not by reading. Reading helps only to acquire a

language or to get the technique of literary expression. Afterwards one develops one's own use of the language, one's own style, one's own technique. It is a decade or two since I stopped all but the most casual reading, but my power of poetical and

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of something greater than his
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perfect expression has increased tenfold. What I wrote with some difficulty, I now write with ease. I am supposed to be a philosopher, but I never studied philosophy—everything I wrote came from Yogic experience, Knowledge and inspiration. So too my greater power over poetry and perfect expression was acquired in these last days not by reading and seeing how other people wrote, but from the heightening of my consciousness and the greater inspiration that came from the heightening.

October 24, 1934

*You have shown two ways of sadhana: one of effort, another of reliance on the Divine with constant call. But aren't they really the same? How do they differ? Constant call and aspiration means the constant effort at rejection and acceptance since our mind being what it is, will always run **after physical things and its pleasure**. Is there any less **effort** in this method?*

Much less. The other is a constant effort to get things down and pull down what one wants. Acceptance and rejection are quite a different thing.

About five minutes before the end of evening meditation, I felt such a pressure on the head as if it would burst or I would tumble down. I was then forced to open my eyes to relieve the pressure. Was it because my capacity to contain the Force was limited?

Probably the accumulated Force became more than the physical being could receive. When that happens, the right thing to do is to widen oneself (one can learn to do it by a little practice). If the consciousness is in a state of wideness, then it can receive any amount of Force without inconvenience.

December 4, 1934

*During the evening meditation I was wondering why I was not able to **find** the rasa of life. Many have found it in poetry, some in **painting**, others in **physical** work through*

which they can offer themselves easily and joyously to the Divine. **The consecration becomes ever so much easier through works for which they have an affinity whereas to people like me who have no definite tendencies in any single pursuit, consecration becomes doubly difficult. I was thinking of praying to you to let me find rasa in work, when I had this experience.**

I felt that my mind was divided into two parts-the inner absolutely silent, not disturbed by anything; the surface mind (physical?) thinking at random of many things there were passing by like a cinema film. Previously the whole being was mixed up with all those thoughts with a resultant turmoil. But this time the inner mind seemed to be detached. As soon as the outer thoughts cropped up it tried to see if all this was a forced condition of mind, but no, the silence was really there and intact. This continued as long as the meditation lasted. I would like to have your corroboration on the matter. I wonder how these experiences suddenly drop in. I don't know that I opened myself today especially to such an experience.

The consciousness from which these experiences come is always there pressing to bring them in. The reason why they don't come in freely or stay is the activity of the mind and vital always rushing about, thinking this, wanting that, trying to perform mountaineering feats on all the hillocks of the lower nature instead of nourishing a stronger and simple aspiration and opening to the higher consciousness that it may come in and do its own work. Rasa of poetry, painting or physical work is not the thing to go after. What gives the interest in Yoga is the rasa of the Divine and of the divine consciousness which means the rasa of Peace, of Silence, of inner Light and Bliss, of growing inner Knowledge, of increasing inner Power, of the Divine Love, of all the infinite fields of experience that open to one with the opening of the inner consciousness. The true rasa of poetry, painting or any other activity is truly found when these things are part of the working of the Divine force in you and you feel it is that and it exists in the joy of that working.

Do you think the Mother has a rigid mind like you people and was laying down a hard and fast rule for all time and all people and conditions?

This condition you had of the inner being and its silence-separated from the surface consciousness and its little restless workings-is the first liberation, the liberation of Purusha from Prakriti, and it is a fundamental experience. The day when you can keep it, you can know what the **Yogic** consciousness had been founded in you. This time it had increased in intensity, but it must also increase in duration.

These things do not "drop"-what you have felt was there in you all the time, but you did not feel it because you were living on the surface altogether, and the surface is all crowd and clamour. But in all men there is this silent Purusha, base of the true mental being, the true vital being, the true physical being. It was by your prayer and aspiration that the thing came, to show you in what direction you must travel in order to have the true rasa of things, for it is only when one is liberated that one can get

the real rasa. For after this liberation come others and among them the liberation and Ananda in action as well as in the static inner silence.

December 15, 1934

My theory about work hampering one-pointed concentration finds some support, I think, from your own example. (I proceed very cautiously, though.)

You have said that 9/10 of your time is spent in doing correspondence, works, etc., whereas only 1/10 is devoted to concentration. One naturally asks, why should it not be possible for you to do concentration and work at the same time?

For me, correspondence alone. I have no time left for other "works etc." Concentration and meditation are not the same thing. One can be concentrated in work or bhakti as well as in meditation. For God's sake be careful about your vocabulary, or else you will tumble into many errors and looseness of thinking.

If I devoted 9/10 of my time to concentration and none to work-the result would be equally unsatisfactory. My concentration is for a particular work-it is not for meditation divorced from life. When I concentrate I work upon others, upon the world, upon the play of forces. What I say is that to spend all the time reading and writing letters is not sufficient for the purpose. I am not asking to become a meditative Sanyasi.

Did you not retire for five or six years for an exclusive and intensive meditation?

I am not aware that I did so. But my biographers probably know more about it than I do.

December 22, 1934

In her Prayers and Meditations, under 8th October, 1914 the Mother says: "The joy that is contained in activity is compensated and balanced by the perhaps still greater joy contained in withdrawal from all activity. . . ." This state of greater joy, Mother explains, is that state of Sachchidananda and the withdrawal is not an inner detachment during work. Does it not suggest then that there is a joy in non-activity superceding that of activity? If such be the case, one would naturally aspire for this far greater joy, which is the aim and purpose of our sadhana, isn't it so?

Do you think the Mother has a rigid mind like you people and was laying down a hard and fast rule for all time and all people and all conditions? It refers to a certain stage when the consciousness is sometimes in activity and when not in activity is withdrawn in itself. Afterwards comes a stage when the Sachchidananda condition is there in work also. There is a still farther stage when both are as it were one, but that is the supramental. The two states are the silent Brahman and the active Brahman and they can alternate (1st stage, coexist (2nd stage), fuse (3rd stage). If you reach even the first stage then you can think of applying Mother's dictum, but why misapply it now?

ATHEIST WAYS

by Lynda Lester

The quarrels of religious sects are like the disputing of pots, which shall be alone allowed to hold the immortalising nectar. Let them dispute, but the thing for us is to get at the nectar in whateverpot and obtain immortality.

We had a real corker of a discussion on religion one day in 9th grade guidance class. The rationalists were fighting the **theologians**. At stake were the issues of purgatory, afterlife, original sin, and angels with wings in their ears. Bob didn't believe that Moto, a savage who lived on a desert island and worshipped the Golden Parrot, would go to hell because he hadn't **been baptized** in Christ. Lincoln yelled at him. Kathy broke down in an emotional fit. The class rioted.

When the bell rang I went out into the hall, flushed and exalted. I had been immersed for months in a passionate search for religious truth-cross-examining my mom and friends, reading spiritual books, and making the circuit of churches and temples in Fargo, North Dakota.

But the more I heard about doctrines, the less they made sense. I could maybe admit the concept of God, the Christianity seemed somehow so weak-like an afterthought, or Jello for dessert. Finally I decided I wouldn't believe in Christ, but God was OK.

The next fall when JFK was assassinated, I decided God was a bad joke, and became an atheist.

I could maybe admit the concept of God, but Christianity seemed somehow so weak-like an afterthought, or Jello for dessert.

When I was 17 I went to camp as a 2nd year **counselor-in-training**. One day I was in the woods, communing in silence, when a psychic awareness took me. It was touched with emotion, pure and dense, visionary. I went back to the cabin where the rest of the **CITs** were, and started expounding a way of life based on love, sacrifice, and "living each moment to the fullest." They were moved. I was inspired. I vowed not to let the turkeys get me down when I went back to school in September-knowing the concrete and cars and the social pecking order could kill the fragile truth I held.

But senior year was harsh and gray. Nobody was concerned with the beauty of the woods or the development of human spirit. School was a bombed-out bunker, a dead zone. A dark bitterness was growing in my heart, and I generated an armor of cynicism to protect myself. I became an alien.

On Sunday morning Mom would come into my room to wake me up.

"Time to go to church, dear," she'd say sweetly.

"No, no!" I'd dive under the pillow. "Not today!"

She'd grab my foot and pull me out of bed onto the floor, covers and all. Now she was cross. "You spend the whole week on yourself-you can give one hour to God!"

So I'd get dressed and go.

I'd sit in the pew while the minister gave the sermon, and suffocate. My blood would get hotter and hotter, I'd sink down

lower and lower. I couldn't bear it-the prayers, the collection plate, the lace doily I had to wear on my head. Or the hymns, which everyone was embarrassed to sing.

After the service Mom and my brothers would pile into the car. I'd say, "I'll walk!", trying to keep from crying; then tear off down the sidewalk, shoes in hand, and run the nineteen blocks home. I ruined a pair of nylons every Sunday.

Then I met Judi.

*Judi was from California,
Virginia, and the desert-a 5' 9",
ash-blond, tawny-eyed, black-hearted
scoundrel of an atheist.*

Atheism is a necessary protest against the wickedness of the Churches and the narrowness of creeds. Cod uses it as a stone to smash these soiled card-houses.

By the time I was a freshman in college, the ashes of **lava**-blasted misery and nihilistic despair had blackened my mind. I'd read a ream of existentialists, each more dismal than the last—**Sartre, Camus, Albee**, Beckett, Ionesco, Kafka. I figured they were right on the mark: The universe was an accident. Life was absurd, devoid of meaning or purpose. But I could bear the bitter destiny, I told myself. I could face the facts.

My folks said I had to attend a local institution for my first year or two of college, so I had three alternatives: **NDSU (Moo U)**, traditionally a school for farmers and veterinarians; **MSTC**, a party school; and **Concordia**, a Lutheran college with a superior academic reputation, a wooded campus, and buildings that looked like German castles. I picked Concordia.

It took me about a week to realize I was going to be treated like I had leprosy. The girls on my floor all wanted to get married and have kids, and taught Sunday school for fun. Their idea of a good time was to get to chapel on weekday mornings and vespers in the hall every evening at 7.

"I admire your faith," I'd say, "but personally I don't believe in God." They'd back away from me like I was the monster from the deep.

I realized I'd never fit in.

Then I met Judi. Judi was from California, Virginia, and the desert-a 5' 9", ash-blond, tawny-eyed, black-hearted scoundrel of an atheist.

We ditched our roommates, to their relief, and moved in together.

While the rest of the dorm was reciting prayers, we were in our room playing "Who Are the Brain Police" by the Mothers of Invention.

We put fangs on our teeth, baited the Campus Crusaders for Christ, demolished several girls' entire belief systems, persecuted our religion professor, climbed on gravestones, smoked cigarettes (which was against the rules for women), snuck out after hours, called Concordia the Cabbage, and all the students Cabbagers, and got off on subverting the whole place.

I stuck it out for two years. The second year during spring break, I took a trip with the ski club to Vail, Colorado. Flashy guys with little wool caps and Kneissl skis were telling me they were from CU in Boulder, and that it was a great school.

I had nothing to lose. I sent my transcripts, got accepted, and flew the coop.

That which men term a hallucination is the reflection in the mind and senses of that which is beyond our ordinary mental and sensory perceptions. . .

In fall 1968 I enrolled at the University of Colorado.

It took me a few months to ease in, but I knew home when I saw it: **hippie** land. Wall-to-wall bell bottoms, long hair, **wire-rim** glasses, leather fringe jackets, and the ubiquitous scent of **patchouli** .

In the radical counterculture the streets were drenched with the fervor of social change. Conceptual love was in the haze, floating in the airwaves. All givens were questioned, the staid old grumbling ways rent up and torn over. Everyone's mission was the search for relevance.

*Till one night the whole heaven
of love burst through and came flooding
down on my head and shoulders,
washing me away in golden rivers of love,
love in the stars and atoms, love in my
eyeballs and shoelaces. ..and after that
the doors slammed shut, and tripping
became extremely unpleasant.*

In the interests of that mission, I did a lot of drugs. Drugs every day! Like **m&m's**. And so, for the first time, I became aware of consciousness.

I discovered tones of a reality more brilliant and true than the one I'd always known. The first time my ego fell off I thought I'd been maimed, and would be forever insane; but when I realized I was still alive-in a fearsome state, where linear cause and effect were meaningless-I tunneled in further: beyond fear, through death, into a state of witness transcendence.

I wanted to exceed all frontiers. I explored crevices and corridors of the subliminal, opening door after serial door-scientific, unassuageable, determined to find out what was at the end.

Till one night the whole heaven of love burst through and came flooding down on my head and shoulders, washing me away in golden rivers of love, love in the stars and atoms, love in my eyeballs and shoelaces. . .and after that the doors slammed shut, and tripping became extremely unpleasant.

The agnostic was in me, the atheist was me, the sceptic was in me....

By the spring of 1970 I was a deep-dyed, dispassionate intellectual. My idea of a good time was to analyze, clarify, and articulate.

I was looking for the Perfect, but nothing made the grade.

I was mental in excess, mental to the edge of exhaustion; critiquing every issue and act, reaching futile conclusions, weaving webs around myself till I couldn't move. I was scarred with no illusions. One night I nearly killed myself with cynicism.

But when I read Tom Wolfe's hip, sarcastic *The Electric Koolade Acid Test*, I realized that nothing was perfect, or immune from ridicule; and that even if the human condition were hopeless, blind hope might be more practical than paralyzing, realistic despair.

And so, amid the upheaval of Kent State, campus revolution, and SDS strike seminars, I recanted my bitterness and eased into a mental truce.

Then one day, galled severely at the concept of God, but liberally conceding I could not prove His nonexistence, I became an agnostic.

One midsummer evening I sat down to listen to Jefferson Airplane. I turned it on good and loud, because I was alone. I lost my footing, and slipped-into ego death, universality, and homogenous union with the Real. I went to the laundromat, gaping, while my clothes spun through the wash cycle. I was blown away.

A month later an experience attacked me on the street. I didn't understand the sensations sweeping through me, there was no explicable cause-as if my heart were breaking, as if it were leaping in happiness at seeing my only true love, as if I would cry; an ache inside too beautiful and intense to bear.

I wondered if it were a hormone.

Late one September night I cranked up the stereo and settled onto the Victorian couch to explore inner space. The music was "Dark Star" by the Grateful Dead-a song of fugue and counterpoint, filigree and delicate innuendo; a breaking of old forms in the search for new, an exploration of chaos and light.

The moment was right, the mind was lost. I was past the point of no return.

Suddenly I was Beauty. Suddenly I saw Truth. Suddenly I saw my soul, and was forever changed.

... I did not love God, it was He who loved me and sought me out and forced me to belong to Him.

In the fall of 1970, edging toward graduation and aiming for an "A" in speech path, I did an independent study on **alternative** education.

I made the rounds of freeschools in town, and read the new educational romantics-Kozol, Kohl, Holt, Neill, **Ashton-Warner**, Postman, Weingartner. It was a short hop into Carl Rogers and humanistic psychology.

After three weeks I realized I was onto something bigger than a grade.

By now I could understand George Leonard (*Education and Ecstasy*) when he said the limits of human ability were beyond imagination, and the realization of human potential could transform the world.

Overnight, I took fever. Vision burned in me like a flame: to be teaching for self fulfillment, teaching for a new humanity, teaching for a new world.

*... as if my heart were breaking,
as if it were leaping in happiness at seeing
my only true love, as if I would cry;
an ache inside too beautiful and
intense to bear.*

The day I met God I was sitting at a table in the student union with Sylvia.

Sylvia was in my language arts class. Her skin was alabaster white, almost translucent, and she teased and sprayed her dark hair into a lacquered bouffant. She wore false eyelashed, thick eyeliner, heavy makeup, polyester dresses, and spike heels. I'd never met anyone so shamelessly unliberated.

"You know, of the two millionaires in Mexico City," she was saying, "one of them is seriously interested in me. Yes, really. Down there men treat you like goddesses. Our white skin, you know-excites the hell out of them. Also I'm a student in Russian, and that excites the hell out of them. ..."

"Last week I bought a \$70 lounging outfit. Pale pink silk, rhinestone buttons. . . I wanted something sweet and demure."

She sighed, looking at her language arts text. "Elementary education is so mediocre. "

I wondered how I could even talk to Sylvia, we were so far apart. But I felt an affection toward her, and listened. She seemed to need reassurance.

"I love your earrings," I said.

Sylvia's face lit up. "Do you really? I bought them in Mexico." Then she had an idea. She rummaged through her purse, and pulled out a packet of tissue paper. She held it out to me with her slim hand.

*"You know, of the two millionaires
in Mexico City," she was saying, "one of
them is seriously interested in me.
Yes really. "*

"For you," she said.

"What---?" I unfolded the tissue. There was a silver bracelet inlaid with abalone. It matched her earrings. It was mystical, elvish, enchanted.

"That's because I love you," she said. "And I'm sure everyone else **does** too." She leaned forward and kissed me on the cheek.

I was knocked out. Blasted. I put on the bracelet, blushed, stammered, and thanked Sylvia eight million times. Sylvia smiled and looked pleased.

When I left to go to the library, subversive, scary revelations on love and the touching of souls were sweeping through me. I was getting speed rushes in my body, and my heart was filled with a bursting ache. I felt like dancing and singing.

In a great stunning flash, it hit me. This was natural **drugless ecstasy** . I'd never thought it possible, but it was. Instantly I saw that with right training and environment, bliss could be a proper state of humankind.

In the library, I gazed at the bracelet on my wrist. Glowing warmth went through me like alcohol in the blood. I felt so happy. Argh, I couldn't stand it.

When I walked home, still enveloped by an intoxicating vibrancy, I followed insight to implication. How could people be so beautiful? How could there be so much inside us? What was this strange feeling, this powerful force of love and joy?

Was this the psychic energy spiritual freaks were referring to?

Was this the unity mystics were talking about?

Was this. . . God?

I guessed it was.

And then, like a bird lighting on a wave, a breeze passing by, a sigh in the wind, a moment's surrender. . .I gave up all the years of atheism and denial, taking it in at once, easily, as the truth shone before my eyes and saturated my being.

So that's how it is, I thought, bemused, incredulous. How about that.

I walked home with a big, simply smile on my face. Shaking my head. Eating crow. OK, so I was wrong.

They proved to me by convincing reasons that God does not exist, and I believed them. Afterwards I saw God, for He came and embraced me. And now which am I to believe, the reasonings of others or my own experience?

Editor's Note: This article was written in response to our request for people's first experiences of Sri Aurobindo and Mother. We invite other responses.

As if a sign from God
The comet will come
To cleave asunder the darkness
And enlighten the skies.
So let us now clear out
All falsehoods and lies.
For it is time to gather together

East and West
North and South
He and She
You and Me
They and We

Each in his or her own way to pray for
The Peace of the Ages
The Messianic Glory
The Life Divine
The Way of Compassion

To wed our fragile globe and uplift
Us to be the best we can fashion.
Then we can reach so high
As to humbly touch the ground
And see with truth the world around.
O Holy Light of Redemption
Manifest Your Splendorous Grace of the Mother.
For beyond all death, atomic cloud and
Thought-no matter how **smart**—
Is the magnificent conquering energy that one
Sees in even the smallest of babes and
Feels in the very body's cells and heart

LOVE.
Miriam Belov

Fall 1985
New York City



The Wonderland

Editors' note: Harikrishna and Selvaraj, two students from Auroville, are studying at The Meeting School for one year. What follows is some of the writing they have done during the first semester and a collage of their photos.

There stood a maple tree like the tamarind tree in summer when it drops its leaves like yellow butterflies flying about. Like the tamarind tree waits for rain, the maple waits for Spring. The twigs lying on the ground take my memories back to the past when I was with my friends, collecting those sticks for firewood. The bark of the maple tree is almost like the bark on the tamarind tree. It is hard to peel. There were some pieces of bark on the ground. I picked one and felt it. It was brittle.

—E. Harikrishna

In the evening when everything was quiet I was walking on a path by the pond. Everything was still. The trees did not move their shady branches. I could see the birds on top of the trees sitting with their families. Only some insects were continuously making sounds like planes above the clouds. At times, the owls swooped down trying to catch their prey by the deadly claws which nature has provided.

I suddenly heard a sound behind me and turned back to see my cat searching for rats. The poor creature did not get much to eat in the house. I think she followed me to show that she didn't have to depend on me. Or maybe she followed me to keep dangers out of my path, because there are deadly snakes and insects in that lonely place.

—E. Harikrishna



One afternoon I was sitting under a shady tree. All at once I noticed it was a warm and nice day. Birds singing over my head and the smell of flowers not planted by humans drove my thoughts to a wonderland where people were not fighting for land or the whole planet; where people lived in peace and loved each other; where humans and animals were dwelling free.

“Hey! What are you doing there under the tree?”

The noise bounced off my eardrums. I was dropped down back to the cruel world from the wonderland. It was my friend, and he was in a jolly mood. He asked me to come with him to fish. The memories of the wonderland came in my mind like the waves of the ocean, coming and disappearing as I followed him.

—E. Harikrishna

When I thought about getting up from my bed and didn't want to, I heard a dripping whisper calling out to have a fresh bath. It was the water, from the joyful tears of the god which was sent to make love and harmony in the world. I could hear the wind sing while it made the trees and plants dance with happiness. I felt like jumping through the window, but I walked out the door and stood quietly. I could feel the warm weather, the hidden birds that had stopped singing, and the refreshing air which came along with the rain. I felt that I was in a new world. What a way to make people happy! What could I do in return for what he has done? I think if we all, on the earth, were friendly and loved everyone that would make him happy.

—D. Selvaraj

There Was A Time

Editor's Note: This fall the Matagiri Center hosted Muriel and Jeffrey Brannigan upon their return from Auroville. They had spent about six months there working with the community on Land Stewardship Trust. For many of us that is a new concept but it actually originated on this continent and these two Canadians gave it to Auroville. The Auroville Resource Center now has a group working on Land Stewardship Trust and we will hear more about that through the Auroville International Newsletter.

Like many of us Muriel and Jeffrey went to Auroville as visitors and ended up becoming involved in the community and giving their expertise and love to the people there. The following article by Muriel gives us an idea of how she went from being an outsider to an insider, one who offers herself to the Yoga of Auroville.

There was a time when the land was almost desert, the people were hungrier, poorer than you see them now. There was a time when the land was rich with fertile fields and forests, wild animals roamed and the people tilled and built, they were a proud and healthy race. There was a time when nature ruled with absolute authority. There were no people then to willfully destroy the balance, but out of mineral, water, air, the forms beginning, people must emerge, for they were promised somewhere deep within those evolving forms—that constant change within the space provided for the perpetual motion of time, the tireless master of matter always driving it towards the goal.

We stepped out of the car onto the red soil of Auroville. The building in front of us was unfinished, it was severe but held promise of becoming quite pleasant. We were all new to Auroville and didn't know where to begin. We had begun at the Bharat Nivas. We peered into the efficient looking space of the Secretariat. Everyone was very busy. We left, grumbling about the "unwelcoming" we had received, but nevertheless because we had lived in community for many years, found ourselves making excuses for it. We soon came upon the Matrimandir, a silent cement giant whose secret we couldn't even guess, the amphitheater, a pool of unrelenting heat waves, the cool green oasis of the banyan tree. Surely this was the center of Auroville, but what did these symbols represent?

Behind the shadow of the giant we found the office where we were received with a friendly greeting, a tour of the nursery and gardens, a delicious lunch at Puchandikulam with friends and a warm welcome at the Center Guest House. This was the first day in what we thought was going to be a four day visit, though somehow the place seemed too familiar. I wondered, perhaps, if destiny planned a longer stay for us, for the future is prophesied in these small things that hint at events to come.

One year before, on May 10th, I had celebrated Mother's Day in North America with a friend from Scotland. She told me that I really must visit Auroville, though she wouldn't tell me why. India seemed much too far away in my mind (and pocket book). I knew almost nothing of the Mother or Sri Aurobindo. Auroville was only the hint of a dark rumour circulated by the press. Now here we were, magically transported (or so it seemed) to Pondicherry for Mother's darshan (a new word, a new experience) and then to Mother's Auroville... one day to be the city the earth needs, but why?

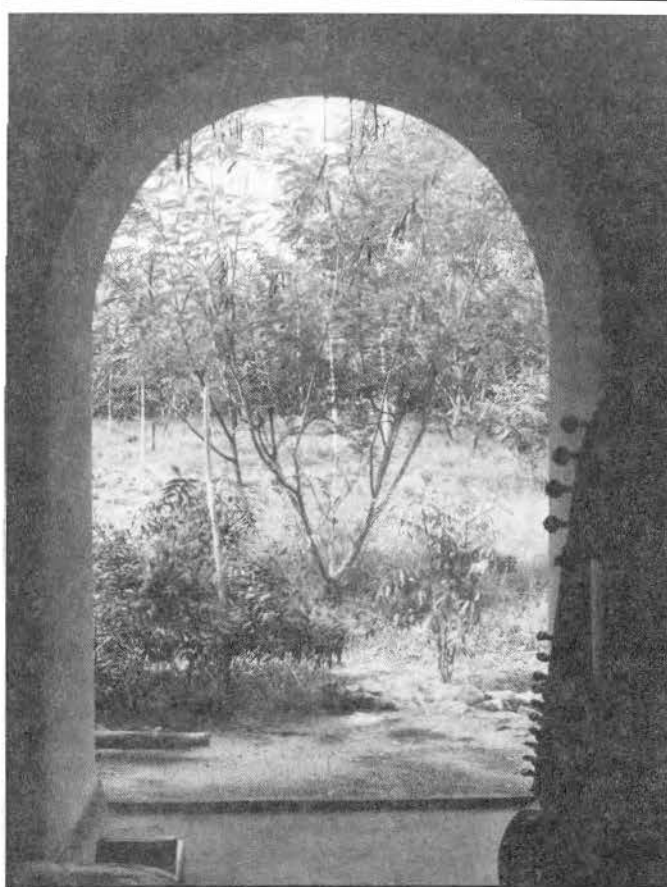
There at the Matrimandir office was the charter. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular... humanity as a whole... one must be a willing servitor of the Divine... a place of unending education... progress... a bridge between past... the future... taking advantage of all discoveries from without and within... future realizations... and "Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity." It awakened an old hope—could there ever be such a place? Once I had believed there could be, must be, for unless humanity cared enough to evolve beyond its primordial fears, what was the purpose? We humans seemed to be caught in a whirlpool of our own behaviour, a passion of reaction hidden behind the fancy grillwork wall of intellectual rationale and guarded jealously by an imaginary image of oneself, always at war with the images of others and the reality of nature. Forever stuck upon our own petard. I yearned to see all these fears overruled by the tender vision of a real human unity, so deep within each one that they could build a city together. A city of peace and harmony—even with nature!

As the days passed we met people, visited different homes, attended meetings, shared food at Center Kitchen and exchanged experiences. Here was pleasure and pain. Here lived hope and futility, kindness and cruelty, fulfillment and frustrations. A kaleidoscope of behaviour and interpretations. The world reflected in this small mirror. These were ordinary people except for one common seed held deep within each of them. A belief in a vision, a hope for the future and the courage to try.

Auroville, a teenager. At 17 years of age it has already experienced great joy and pain. In childhood it worked co-operatively (even though it's parts were at many different levels of maturity), its aim was clear because all were held in faith by a compassionate Mother with a dream whose love was there in human form to wonder at. When the form changed the shock came. The step-parent crushed the child's fragile trust. Fear was manifest, sometimes in brutal ways. Then Mother India casually extended one of her myriad parliamentary arms to let the child grow in safety and give it time to look within and heal itself. The child, united in fear, had been weakened with disease, but not defeated. We arrived as the teenager struggled with the reality of impending adulthood, teetering on the edge of change.



Jeffrey Brannigan at the land office in Auroville.



The Aurodam forest from Nadika's house.

Auroville was at an age we understood well. Our job had been for some years working with youth groups. The actual body of this most unusual youth was the land itself (not yet transformed into flesh). Many years before we had helped to create a legal vehicle that would free the land and promise it human stewardship. When Mother was asked who would own the lands and buildings of Auroville she replied, "the Supreme Lord." Since she had also said that one of its aspirations was to be in harmony (and to cooperate) with Nature, then the idea of a Land Stewardship Trust seemed to reflect her views. It might give Auroville a focus in which to bring all its parts together in a united effort free of fear, and so we were asked to write a proposal.

As we worked in the little cottage, or under the Guest House banyan tree (always hoping for enlightenment!) creating a proposal that might indeed procure the lands so that legally they could not be bought or sold or owned or misused—a statement so strong that the PEOPLES of the world could believe in Auroville's sincerity, be moved by its actions, and given hope—while we put our minds to this, I felt a new understanding of the power that is within Auroville. The power of Mother.

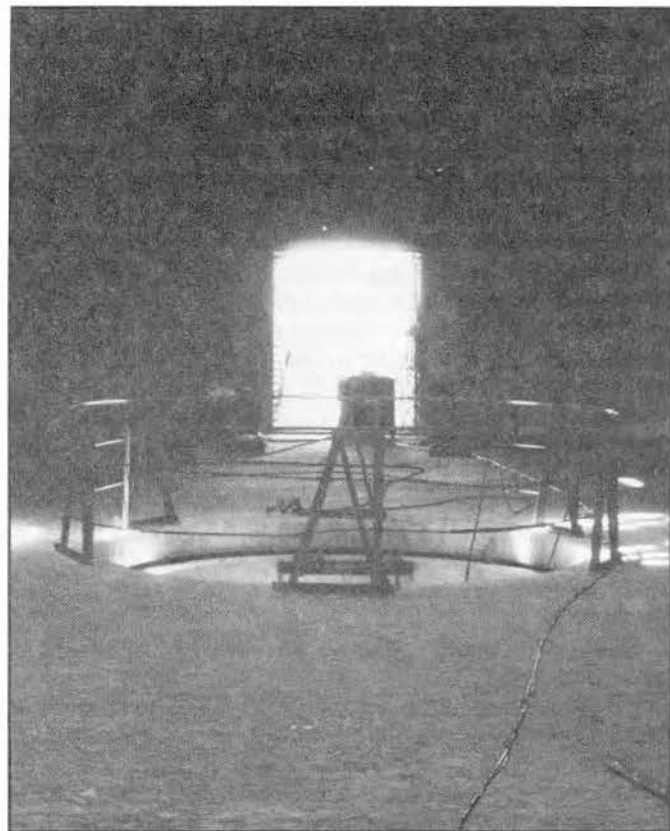
These days became weeks and we both sensed a whittling away of our protective prejudices, our criticisms. I noticed the same process happen to other visitors who stayed longer than they had planned. It was as if Auroville had its own substance that subtly penetrated the guard, the fancy grillwork and released the whirlpool for all to see, including oneself. Behind all that must lie truth. It is a frightening proposition to think that one lives in a place that is the home of a living consciousness dedicated to the removal of falsehood, for to remove it, it must first be exposed. We tried to escape to Pondy occasionally for

an indulgent release from the substance of Auroville and our own inevitable awakening. We could feel ourselves giving in to it, opening our hearts to others and each other, otherwise we might become the opposite, a great swing in the other direction. We must stop judgment and criticism of other people and the inevitable situations they created, instead we turned towards ourselves in a gentle self observation—anything more would have been too harsh, for we were very fragile. One day I noticed an inner strength I had never know before. It was like a light touch that had slipped in and made itself secure.

Everyone who comes to Auroville is surrounded by a consciousness that pushes them toward the Divine will. Those who live here will live within it. They often build walls against it, and yet they desire to let it enter and do its work, but whether they desire it or not it influences them.

The reason for people to gather in Auroville is to build a different city; one in harmony, peace, truth, one that aspires for human unity. Not to create followers or leaders but individuals recognizing each other in mutual respect. Building this vision together is the yoga. That substance, the consciousness that is within Auroville is the catalyst. The evolution of the people is the hope.

There was a time when the land was almost desert, the people were hungrier, poorer than you see them now. Today the villagers are just a little healthier. The land has been replanted, the soil is becoming renourished, the water returns, the air is full of bird songs and refreshed by the new forests still too young to reproduce, but growing strong. Now the experiment's in place, the stage is set, and time unfailingly moves matter into consciousness that in humanity creates the will to speed their own evolving form towards the goal.



The inner room of the Matrimandir.

Peace and Transformation

By Wayne E. Bloomquist

We are in a period of the earth's history that is crucial for our survival. It is difficult to comprehend the immediacy involved here in 1985 when the earth is billions of years old. It is like setting a dentist's appointment months in advance and forgetting about it. Then one day we are amazed to find ourselves in the dentist's chair staring up at him.

Many of us are staring now face to face at our destiny. Some of us are looking at the peace issues as more and more organizations get involved in peace efforts. It may at first impression seem to be a hopeful sign. It appears to me however to be one of desperation. The more concerned we are about peace, the less we have. It is indeed an indication of shaky ground.

How does one go about attaining peace? Let me ask a more personal question. How does one go about attaining peace within oneself? I have known many people, including myself, who have professed to want inner peace. But I have never known anyone to start a personal peace program. There are so many other related issues, including innumerable conflicts, that have to be resolved. When the issues are resolved, peace or some measure of peace, is often the result.

When we talk about external peace and transformation, we usually focus on positive, external issues. It is interesting though to look at an ancient model before us. Suffering has been a convenient tool for the Divine to use in moving us forward in our growth. At least we often attribute the source of suffering to Him. We have a good basis for this through the biblical figure, Job. The theory is that if life gets too overwhelming for us eventually we will have to turn to God. The forces are too much for us to handle by ourselves.

*The more concerned we are about peace,
the less we have.*

I see this suffering going on today and it is still effective. A few months ago I was in a drugstore in Berkeley and happened to meet a former tenant of mine. I might add that she had been one of the most chronic complainers I have ever known. The building she had been living in was for sale and she had been given only a 3-month lease. Even so, the demands she made were incomprehensible and she was relentless. Needless to say I was grateful when this unhappy person decided to move. When I casually met her again after a few years, I was astounded. Here was a woman bubbling over with joy! What happened? Well, she had developed a lung cancer in which 4 out of 5 people do not survive and she has had no remission for 1 1/2 years. Confronting her death and suffering has certainly been effective for her.

Another case in point. This weekend (November 1984) I am spending at a coastal town in Northern Oregon visiting someone in a drug residential treatment for alcoholism and drug abuse. The patients and visitors had a group therapy session yesterday. There had obviously been a great deal of suffering among the patients and their families. I was surprised to find, however, that they used many principles one would find in yoga, such as, unconditional love, non-attachment, balance or equality, and

giving up your life to God (without having to go through a religious institution). From what I heard and observed the results have been spectacular. Of course there have been failures but with sincerity and perseverance, the results can be quite positive. Again we find that suffering is paying off.

Is this the answer? Do we need more suffering in the world today? I for one have had enough and I suspect others feel the same. We are in extraordinary times. As we move closer to a revolution in consciousness, in mind-life-body, we are also moving closer to catastrophic destruction. Has the Divine found a new tool to use? It is not so farfetched when we see cancer, alcohol and drugs used as an avenue to the Divine? Those who were at one moment so forlorn and in despair had, unknowingly, all of a sudden, found a shortcut to inner peace, or certainly a beginning in that direction. What a strange yoga!

*The theory is that if life gets
too overwhelming, we will have to turn
to God. The forces are too much
for us to handle by ourselves.*

Now we are on a more global scale. We are moving at a tremendous pace in science as well as in self-actualization. Unfortunately the movement towards realization is also accelerating the movement towards nuclear destruction. Could it be that the Divine has added another weapon to his arsenal? He no longer is content with bringing us into the fold piecemeal with his meager forms of individual suffering. No, He now has a massive global campaign of impending disaster!

We have all heard that the Divine never gives us more than we can handle. Whatever the adversity, we have the ability to cope. If this is true, what do we do about the nuclear threat! It is clear that we need to have some measure of world peace. But this peace has to emanate from a significant number of individuals. How can this possibly happen within the next 10 or so years? Perhaps we need a different vision.

Let me digress for a moment. A few weeks ago I was walking along a rural road near the Russian River, about 75 minutes drive north of San Francisco. I saw a caterpillar who had just risked its life (without knowing it!) to cross the road and was now on the shoulder making its way through the gravel. My first inclination was to help it but I saw it was doing quite well on its own. It had no vision even for one inch beyond its head but had to feel each bump as it came to it. I thought how much easier it would be if it could see a few feet ahead. These questions could just have easily been asked of us. We have more vision than the caterpillar but we seldom use it effectively. Later on I thought of the vision of a cat or dog and how it can see ahead and plan its route. What an advance we humans have! And then we introduce technology. Our vision from a plane is tremendous, although we lose the detail and the personal involvement. But we do develop a sense of awe. I can imagine to some extent the vision the astronauts had gazing at the earth from the moon. At once the national boundaries disappear, and we are simply a globe-one indivisible unit of matter. As I recall, this vision had quite an impact on the astronauts. But what happened when they returned to earth? I can imagine again that although they are changed and have a memory of that vision, the more they become engrossed in world activity, the more the memory of that vision recedes into unconsciousness. Is there not a parallel

here with mystics and yogis and cosmic and/or stronger force than the transformation but we should develop the most effective process possible.

This vision of matter too has been changed or rather it has been enlarged. Sri Aurobindo came here on earth not only to tell us about an added dimension he called the supramental but primarily to make its existence a reality. And with the help of the Mother, she has told us that this new consciousness has manifested. It is here!

Many of us can only see more destruction and violence where we often become nervous just going out for a walk at night (or day!). Is this the old game of more suffering? I think not. Rather I think we are at the brink of something momentous in the formulation of a new consciousness, not merely the extension of the old mental being.

The peace movements today will never succeed in establishing peace as long as they are immersed in the mental consciousness. The peace movements are not ineffective, however, since they help to combat the adverse forces in order to maintain a status quo to avoid catastrophic destruction.

What can we do? Many, many people, but still too few, are groping for some kind of answer, especially those not intimately familiar with Sri Aurobindo's work. Many of these people are more active, however, than Sri Aurobindo's disciples and followers who seem to be waiting, and waiting. . . My impression is that they think they should continue with their sadhana as before and the true will (or may) manifest of its own accord.

We have then those who are seeking peace through local, regional, national and international organizations at one level and the followers, for example, of Sri Aurobindo who remain in the background but continue their sadhana, and are waiting. Those organizations for peace per se are usually not concerned with a transformation of mind, life, and body but are seeking some kind of harmony or at least a mutual accord that will eliminate war. Transformation seems more comprehensible than this peace concept!

*Could it be that the Divine has added
another weapon to his arsenal?
He no longer is content with bringing us
into the fold piecemeal with his meager
forms of individual suffering.*

If we are for peace through transformation, what can we do? There may indeed be a positive seed in the nuclear threat. By having to pursue the immediate goal of peace, we are pressed to achieve the beginning of a transformation-in spite of ourselves. Man is a lazy creature. He **needs** a prodding to move forward, not unlike a donkey. At the residential treatment center mentioned previously, a mother of two had one son who had been an addict and was forced to seek help. She remarked that she wished her daughter, who had such a bad attitude, had had a similar problem so that she would be forced into such a program.

If we feel that urge for peace/transformation, what can we do towards that end? Are we to have the astronaut's vision of the earth from the moon but proceed at the **speed** of the caterpillar in an attempt to realize the earth's unity and harmony by the Truth consciousness? Who is to say that some of the peace movements are not closer to the solution than we (followers of Sri Aurobindo) are. The sincerity of these groups' actions may be a

stronger force than the transformation but we should develop the most effective process possible.

A number of possibilities occur to me along with the typical yoga practice (**Sadhana**) .

There seems to be more power in a group activity than by an individual action. Therefore, more activity should revolve around small groups with a common vision and aspiration for peace/transformation. It would be up to the group to decide upon their process. My experience with the creative process has been that maximum thought and effort should be focused upon the problem/goal for a period of time. The extended intensity seems to create an opening in the intuitive consciousness. But in order to receive the response, the recipient must then become passive to receive. The process may have to be repeated a number of times.

A part of this whole process must involve others outside of the yoga. I believe there are thousands of people who would readily respond to such a calling. The teaching or indoctrination should not focus on a strictly mental process, i.e., giving out a lot of information about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, the yoga, etc. I would see it as one involving more of the heart, weaving together poetry (Savitri etc.), music, speaking spontaneously from the heart, personal revelations, experience, etc. so that the audience is moved and opens up to the supramental force and to the message.

The ways and means of the transformative process are countless but some action must be taken. Some physical act must come from us for the Force to be effective. Otherwise, the resistance in the earth's atmosphere and in matter itself is too formidable. There is tremendous opposition to change.

Above all, we must approach the entire process with the right attitude, certainly not out of fear from destruction. I am reminded of the story in the Vedas where the Gods were convening and all were known to one another except one-Gratitude. I would like to include a poem I wrote this past spring.

Gratitude

As I sit here and ponder my fate
Many thoughts flow through my mind
Can I catch one or two or three
and know thy mystery.
As I stand back let the
thoughts disappear
A presence comes over me
I feel a movement of boundless energy
It moves silently and swiftly and sweeps
me up in its current
Is this the mystery?
My heart becomes filled with gratitude
For what I know not
I feel unbounded love for no one
but thee.
Are thou loving thyself!
What is this game?
Can thou know thyself better now?
Or is this only the beginning of greater
things that thou may do
I wait in the silence and the mystery continues
But somehow I know that I have been some-
where and that I am going somewhere
I am in the middle of a grand journey and
I call this the present.

A decision has to be made in this approach for peace. Should it be met head on? Can we achieve peace by striving for it? I addressed this question earlier but I would like to add the following. There may be another alternative to either striving for peace through some form of an out-reach program and/or an individual program to bring forth an inner peace. We live in a material world—one that has a play of forces and brings about fulfillment through work and action. If we could transform a group, an institution, an event, a simple act to its highest perfection—one that manifests the Truth—and that is the embodiment of beauty, the good and the true—then we have grounded the transformation in the most material sense. Grounded in the sense that it embraces the supramental force. Peace will always be a by-product of this transformation. It will be a visible, tangible statement of the transformation.

*Some physical act must come from us
for the force to be effective.
Otherwise, the resistance in the earth's
atmosphere and in matter itself
is too formidable.*

Obviously, this kind of perfection has been attempted before and in some individual instances has no doubt succeeded. But we are at a point in evolution where we have access to a consciousness-force (supramental) that was not previously available. We can tap into that force with the right intent. The knowledge, intent and receptivity will serve as a catalyst to the manifestation of the new consciousness in matter (spirit in matter) through man who then becomes a conscious co-creator.

Recently, I was thinking of making an offer to purchase an interest in an independent school that was about to close permanently unless something drastic could be done. It so happened that I was away for three days near the Russian River and during this period I thought about little except this school and what could be done with it. It soon occurred to me this school could serve as an excellent vehicle for developing the principles I have mentioned here. Although the purchase will not materialize, I was forced to think through the transformative process. Transformation has no relevance unless it is grounded in a physical act—that act must be perfected to its utmost as an expression of the Truth. This manifestation will radiate and influence countless others. The concept of the one hundredth monkey put forth by Rupert Sheldrake in *The Science of Being* is appropriate here. If a critical mass of people can influence matter through the receptivity of a new consciousness-force, the essence of this act will be automatically instilled in the consciousness of mankind and will become part of the creative evolutionary process that can be not only the antidote to the threat of nuclear destruction but the avenue to a divine life on earth.

More importantly, the process of transformation itself, if done with the right attitude and receptivity, will provide a focus for the supramental force to manifest through the individuals involved. This consciousness-force will have a tremendous impact if only a handful of people can facilitate its dissemination. A movement could soon be created that would move thousands, and perhaps millions, to join in a global collective to break down the walls of resistance rooted in the mind and create a movement towards the supramental light.

At first glance this may seem like a grandiose scheme. But I cannot tell you how many times I have heard the phrase this year, "It is so simple." Our mind continually creates complications and our vital dramatizes the complications. If we could put the verbiage aside for a moment and look directly at the process, we could say "It is so simple."

One of major impediments to a transformation of any type is our ego which is fed by our mind and vital. It always assumes an importance out of all proportion to the facts at hand. All members of a collective have to constantly put their egos aside and let that higher power act. A constant reminder for the Mother was her repeating "What thy will. What thy will."

I would like to close with this passage by Sri Aurobindo.

He must enter the eternity of Night
And know God's darkness as he knows his sun.
For this he must go down into the pit,
For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.
Imperishable and wise and infinite,
He still must ravel Hell the world to save.
Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
On borders of the meetings of all worlds;
There on the verge of Nature's summit steps
The secret Law of each thing is fulfilled,
All contraries heal their long dissidence.
There meet and clasp the eternal opposites,
There pain becomes a violent fiery joy;
Evil turns back to its original good,
And sorrow lies upon the breast of Bliss:
She has learnt to weep glad tears of happiness;
Her gaze is charged with a wistful ecstasy.
Then shall be ended here the Law of Pain.
Earth shall be made a home of Heaven's light,
A seer heaven-born shall lodge in human breast;
The superconscious beam shall touch men's eyes
And the truth-conscious world come down to earth
Invading Matter with the Spirit's ray,
Awaking its silence to immortal thoughts,
Awaking the dumb heart to the living world.
This mortal life shall house Eternity's bliss,
The body's self taste immortality.
Then shall the world-redeemer's task be done.

Savitri Book Six Canto Two



Jitendra the Protector

By Maggi Lidchi

Jitendra had a powerful physique, an enormously strong arm and the arrogance of one who is sure that the world has been made to please him. Moreover he had the sort of ambition and energy which guaranteed some sort of success. He wore the presumptuous curled-up mustaches to be seen on the demons of temples and comic books. And his eyes were scornful. They had begun to be so when as a school boy he realized that the other boys were afraid to cross him. They were of course afraid of his breadth and height and those mighty arms which he had done nothing to develop but which were a god-given gift or curse. One day a boy, hounded by a bully came to him and said simply with full trust, “*Udavi seiungo*” – “Help me” – and he did. The other weaker boys similarly threatened followed suit. And at first he would dispense help with a certain purity of reaction, that is according to his like and dislike, and fed off the look of gratitude in the eyes of the protected. But when in time some of the better-off protectees humbly brought him offerings of gratitude he found that, if it was sweet to see the light of gratitude in the eyes of the weak who had been saved, it was doubly sweet to see, below the eyes, a pair of hands filled with sweets or flowers or fruits or some precious marbles. Then one day a boy, a rich boy, brought him a discarded electric train. He realized for the first time the extent of his power and exactly how it could be put to use. His father was a mattress-maker but not a very hard working one. And while there was enough to eat there was certainly nothing for luxuries and the finer things of life like the electric train. Jitendra who had never been particularly insecure now knew exactly in what direction his future lay. By the age of thirteen he had found his vocation and his avocation, and was known at first in his class and then in the whole school as *Padukappavan* which in Tamil means one who protects. At first, but for no more than a few months, it had a benevolent ring but then it began to be used laughingly, then knowingly, so that the word offering, or gift, had to be replaced by the word gifts and later on by the word bribe. By the time Jitendra left school he had acquired a sinister reputation and the teachers, many of whom were afraid of him and greeted him politely, were glad to see him go.

Other boys had either to go on studying or to choose a new profession but Jitendra merely stayed at home and waited, much as he had waited in school, for people to come to him. And come they did. His first client was an S.S.L.C. student whose business he had not quite finished. For when the second biggest bully in school had seen the last of Jitendra, he had threatened to tear his Brahmin victim's tuft out of his scalp. So Jitendra waited on a corner one afternoon after school and tore a handful of hair out of his understudy's scalp and next day the Brahmin boy brought Jitendra a shiny new Hercules bicycle which is what Jitendra had hinted that he needed. The handlebars of the Hercules were decorated with garlands of scented flowers and sweet marjoram, like the horns of a favorite cow. The village had heard of Jitendra's exploits and the reports were not always favorable, especially when they came from a victim, but when it saw a well-groomed Brahmin, a handsome if somewhat skinny boy, come bearing gifts to one of its sons the village glowed with a sense of reflected pride and security. It felt that it had now, as well as a carpenter, cobbler, tailor, dhobi, blacksmith,

goldsmith, munshi, sorcerer, barber, masseur, *siddha* doctor, priest of the temple and marriage broker, its own protector. . . Many villages had their own thug or thugs but somehow Jitendra, partly because his name was so well established as *Padukappavan*, and partly because he was careful never to overstep an undefined border line, was not considered a thug. Besides, he had never entirely lost the pleasure, that first sweet pleasure, of seeing the light of gratitude in the eyes of his **protectee**. And while he had on occasions noticed a certain contempt in those who brought him his reward, most people were wise enough to keep their expressions blank and neutral when they could manage nothing better. It was with this fine sense of what Jitendra wanted that the Brahmin boy had slung garlands upon garland of sweetness over the handlebars of the Hercules.

One day a boy, hounded by a bully came to him and said simply with full trust, ‘ ‘Udavi seiungo’ ’ – ‘ ‘Help me’ ’ – and he did.

Village people are quick to sense the way the wind blows. When a teacher from Jitendra's old school came to him for help against the second biggest bully in the school who was making his life in the class a misery, he rid the teacher of the bully's attentions, but when the teacher, who had never thought much of him, sent a fifty rupee note without an accompanying letter and failed to pay a courtesy visit himself, Jitendra remarked in the hearing of the goldsmith who had come to pierce the ears of his little sister that some people had no sense of *mariyathai* : no etiquette. And again in the presence of the goldsmith he called for his admirer who was also the village constable and instructed him to return the fifty rupees to his old teacher with the message that he should not come to him for help again. The message was repeated all around the village and the lesson was not lost on it.

The first client from Jitendra's own village was the goldsmith who had been much impressed with the ease with which Jitendra, not a rich man and living in a simple mud hut, could refuse fifty rupees for a lack of *mariyathai* . He himself was an honest man but had never sent back a single paisa in his life no matter how it was thrown at him. He could recognize style when he saw it. And Jitendra's eyes burning with scorn and the disdainful movement of his arms had impressed themselves on him.

One day the goldsmith had gone out to a house not a furlong away to deliver a pair of silver anklets for a little girl in one of his customers' houses. When he returned and went to his underground safe to take out the gold which had been given to him for the fashioning of jewelry for a girl who was to get married the following month he found it gone. This knocked the breath out of him completely for it was the gold of the village *Pannaiyar* . He owned three hundred acres of land, rich with cashew *topes* , mango *topes* , jack fruits, groundnuts, coconut and tamarind and was a miser and a cruel one to boot. The goldsmith had never been entrusted with so much gold in his life. He gave a great cry, told his wife to sit on top of the safe and not to move until he returned. He called his son to guard the house, ran out in the direction of the sorcerer's house and fell breathless at his feet which he started banging with his forehead

and bathing in his tears. “ ‘Aiyah! Aiyah! You are my savior.” He gasped and panted, “You are my god.” The sorcerer who was used to having his feet grabbed stood impassive and waited patiently for an explanation. Village people are slow to come to the point and he had been obliged to develop patience and equanimity. ‘ ‘Aiyah! Aiyah! You know it is true. Not only in this village is it true but in all villages it is true. And an honest goldsmith is a poor man and I am a poor man.” He gasped and panted some more while the sorcerer, that kind lanky man who knew both these facts to be true, wagged his head. “Speak out,” he said.

“I would never have stolen that gold. How could I? That is not the way to get rich. It is not the way to be dishonest. The police would come. Am I a fool to do such a thing? No. If I had wanted to be dishonest I would have taken a quarter of a *tola* of gold here and a *tola* of gold there. And a little from a finger ring or *arambili*, but would I have stolen it? I ask you.”

“What gold?” asked the sorcerer who despite his patience was anxious to get back to his tea.

“The gold of Swaminathan Panaiyar.”

The sorcerer gasped; taking this gasp as confirmation of the enormity of his misfortune the goldsmith started banging his head again.

“How many *tolas*?”

“Twenty-two.”

Gasp. The sorcerer withdrew one of his feet and rubbed it against the ankle of the other.

“Do you suspect anybody?”

“Everybody,” wailed the goldsmith, “you know I have a safe in a secret place which everybody knows.”

“Come. Let me finish my tea.” The sorcerer sat down on the mat again and started sipping tea out of his aluminum tumbler. He offered some to the goldsmith who had no wish to put anything in his churning stomach. After the sorcerer whose name was Muniandi (his professional name chosen to hold people in awe of him), had washed his hand and rinsed his mouth out at the garden well he went to work; he belched, took a betel leaf and smeared a black paste into the middle of the betel leaf, then, flicking the fingers of his right hand against the thumb he looked intently at the leaf lying in the palm of his left hand, reciting mantras the while. When the mantras and the flicking had stopped he gazed a little longer and then pointing to a corner of the room he cried with satisfaction, “Caught the rascal. “ The goldsmith looked into the corner and could see no one.

“**Aiyah!**” he said timidly, “I **see** no one.”

“It is the Pannaiyar.”

“Excuse me, Aiyah. There is only one Swaminatha Pannaiyar and he gave the gold.” Hope and excitement which had risen with the sound of Sanskrit now sank. The sorcerer must have failed this time. He was too humble a man to think him incompetent; something must have gone wrong. He was about to ask him to repeat the Sanskrit syllables and look again when the sorcerer declared once more that the thief had been caught; and the goldsmith understood at last who it was that had stolen the gold. The Pannaiyar had stolen the gold. The Pannaiyar had stolen his own gold.

The goldsmith now gasped. His mind immediately flew to Jitendra. There was only one man in the whole world who could possibly deal with the Pannaiyar. He recognized in Jitendra a match for the great, omnipotent Swaminatha Pannaiyar, before whom everybody stood with crossed arms and bowed heads and on whom everybody in the village in some way depended. The

humble house of the sorcerer Muniyandi stood on the Pannaiyar land and so did the well that the goldsmith used, for the well was on the land of his brother who had sold it to the Pannaiyar. The goldsmith, even as he took from his waist two rupees, was thinking of how to approach Jitendra. Again he dropped to his knees and banged his forehead on the feet of the sorcerer Muniyandi and then he ran to Jitendra’s house and in no time he was banging his head against the huge feet of Jitendra, who was sitting, western-style, in a chair. Again he began the story,

*And the goldsmith understood at last
who it was that had stolen the gold.*

The Pannaiyar had stolen the gold.

The Pannaiyar had stolen his own gold.

“Aiyah! Aiyah! You are my savior.” Jitendra’s eyes, today brooding as though aware of a turn in his fate, looked down sombrely at the goldsmith. ‘ ‘Aiyah! Aiyah! You know it is true. Not only in this village it is true but in all villages it is true. An honest goldsmith is a poor man and I am a poor man.” From Jitendra he got no encouragement. Only brooding and somber looks.

“I would never have stolen that gold. How could I? That is not the way to get rich. It is not the way to be dishonest. The police would come. Am I a fool to do such a thing? No. If I had wanted to be dishonest I would have taken a quarter of a *tola* of gold here and a quarter of *tola* of gold there. And a little silver from this anklet and a little silver from that toe ring and a little from some finger ring or *arambili*, but would I have stolen it? I ask you.”

“What is the matter?” snapped Jitendra. The goldsmith who was by now **kneeling** in front of him rubbed his forehead into his feet as though to induce kindness in him. “The gold of **Swaminatha** Pannaiyar,” he cried.

Jitendra did not gasp and from this the goldsmith knew that Jitendra was a greater man than the sorcerer and he was confirmed in his knowledge that Jitendra was the right man to deal with the Pannaiyar.

“And who has taken it?”

“Swaminatha Pannaiyar.” The mountain that was Jitendra stirred in his chair.

“Sorcerer Muniyandi saw that it was Swaminatha Pannaiyar himself.”

Jitendra now brooded in earnest. It was not that he had not seen himself in fantasy dealing with the most powerful and feared man in the village, the man who could render almost anybody homeless, but this had come too early. His brooding which so far had been somewhat formless now took shape. Had this fool of a goldsmith come to cut his career short by tempting him to do things prematurely? Or had he come to hasten a meteoric rise to the top? His brooding took such a violent turn that his eyes rolled right around in his head and he tapped the arm of his chair with all five fingers slowly and rhythmically.

“Well! What do you want me to do?,” he asked irritably.

“I would never have stolen that gold. How could I? That is not the way.” He was about to tell his story again but Jitendra stopped him by an irritable pulling away of his foot.

“And what if that sorcerer of yours is wrong?”

"Oh no. How can it be?" asked the goldsmith. "Do you know that he said all the mantras flicking his fingers just like this and then do you know what he said?" He snapped his fingers and pointed to the corner of Jitendra's room and said, "Caught the fellow." He then tried to recite some of the mantric syllables, "Reem.. .shreem.. .**No**, I can't remember how it goes. But I am not a sorcerer. Like this he did." And he stared into the palm of his hand, snapped his fingers, pointed to the corner of the room again, and said, "Caught the fellow!"

"You have a talent for repetition." But in fact the goldsmith had a talent for dramatics and he had been able to infuse his performance with so much enthusiasm and true mimicry that the repetition of it only served to heighten Jitendra's conflict. "Go and come," he said with a sort of brooding kindness as if he was speaking to the instrument of his ascent.

"I will go and come." Jitendra's feet were drawn right back, so the goldsmith had to take the dust from the floor instead of the feet and then he quickly backed out of the room.

As soon as he was gone Jitendra's agitation burst powerfully into action. He went to the clay pots piled one on top of the other. He took down the top ones filled with grain, dhal and rice, and then the ones filled with clothes and finally came to the second last one from the bottom in which the family documents were kept. He took out the big envelope in which were the family's horoscopes, found his own and started piling the pots up again. When he came to the fourth one he pulled out a clean crumpled shirt and put it on. Having re-ordered the pyramid of clay pots he strolled out. He was not the man to run but his strides were enormous and carried him swiftly to the astrologer Muniyandi. Without observing any etiquette himself he pushed his horoscope under the nose of Muniyandi who had been dozing after his tea and shouted, "Tell me if it is a propitious time for me to start a new and daring venture which will take me leaping forward or send me crashing down."

Muniyandi put on the glasses which he used for the non-clairvoyant side of his profession. Then he took a heavy book from a pile on the floor, turned the pages with a wet forefinger, made his calculations on a scrap of paper and pronounced, "Most propitious. "Not waiting to listen to how exactly his stars stood and throwing two single rupees on to the floor, Jitendra strode out. Then considering that this might bring him bad luck, he went back, picked them up and pressed them into the hand of the astrologer.

That night, sharp at midnight, he knocked on the door of Swaminatha **Pannaiyar**.

The door opened. And when he saw that it was the Pannaiyar himself who stood before him, he realized that his stars were indeed favorable to his venture. The **Pannaiyar** was a short broad man but Jitendra was massive, like a mountain. The Pannaiyar looked up and the insults died on his lips. He began trembling. Jitendra had since an early age seen boys and then adolescents beginning to tremble thus at the sight of him before them.

"What do. . .?"

"By tomorrow you take that gold that you stole from the goldsmith out of your safe. Otherwise I will cram you into your own safe and lose the key. "Then he went home to pray.

The next day after lunch the goldsmith appeared heavy-eyed but wreathed in smiles. His arms were full of garlands and he placed at the feet of Jitendra, observing every possible gesture and word of *mariyathai*, a tray with a coconut, a lemon, an auspicious number of **areca** nuts and a good wad of new ten rupee notes. The goldsmith was a sweet and simple man and

tears of gratitude welled from his eyes. "You are my savior. I would never have stolen that gold. How could I? That is not the way to get rich. It is not the way to be dishonest." Jitendra allowed him to tell his piece from beginning to end. It did not irritate him now. A deep calm and contentment had **settled** in. He had arrived and he was grateful to the goldsmith, so he waited until the last words, "and a little from a finger-ring or *arambili*," and finally came the narrative which was not necessary to make Jitendra's contentment complete. He was already fully content. But it made him smile. The goldsmith and his family had as usual **awoken** early that morning, for he was a hard-working man and his wife had served them all with the *iddlies* and rice water, and after breakfast they had felt very sleepy and woken up at midday. When the poor goldsmith had run to the safe to see if anything further had been taken he saw that the Pannaiyar's gold was there. He would have believed it all a dream if the temporary disappearance had not been confirmed by his wife and children.

*The months passed; the years passed.
He became a Pannaiyar and more than
ever he was the Protector, walking
and sitting with that brooding
or scornful look.*

And it was with this very first client in the village that Jitendra became its most powerful man though everybody still continued to cross their arms and hunch their shoulders for Swaminatha Pannaiyar.

The next client was a marriage broker. He himself was a power in the land. He had mistakenly, he assured Jitendra, given the bridegroom's father some misinformation about the father-in-law's acreage in the next village.

"Aiyah! How can I go on my knees and count each acre of land. If I am an honest man then I must believe that others are honest men, otherwise how are we to live in this world. Does the Gita not say. . ." "Never mind that," said Jitendra. "**Excuse me. If we do not mind the Gita. . .**"

If you do not mind the **Gita** we would be better informed of the extent of a father-in-law's fortune"-for this is how he had taken to speaking. "Just give me the facts."

"Well, Aiyah! The father-in-law had only one third of the land he said he had. He has not more than thirty acres. I inquired from his neighbors but he had bribed them all. What is one to do in a case like that?"

"One is to go and knock his head against the wall," and Jitendra gave a big hard laugh.

"How will that help me, Aiyah? the bride's father wants to knock me against the wall, and if I lose my reputation how will I feed my family? No one will come to me. I'll be a destitute. "

Swamikannu started weeping. He was a silent weeper, for which Jitendra was grateful.

"How much of the thirty acres did the boy's father settle on the son?"

"None."

"How many children are there?"

"One daughter, Aiyah,"

"Then what is the problem?" said Jitendra. "Make the father buy more land now. "

‘Aiyah! How am I to do that?’ Swamikannu’s tears stopped coursing. He looked around in agitation.

‘This is not your business. You are a marriage broker, and a very bad one. Leave it to me. If it were not for someone like me people would never follow their *dhurma*. Society would crumble. It is through people like you and that boy’s father that the whole structure of life is attacked at the base while you quote the Gita.’ Swamikannu agreed with a movement of his head.

‘Then you may go and come.’ Swamikamm, a fat man with a bare torso, struggled to his feet. He inclined his shaven head respectfully and as he did so, Jitendra caught the flash of the gold studded earrings he wore.

‘These are very nice earrings you are wearing, **Swamikan-nu**.’ Within three days Swamikamm came back with fruits and a coconut and, in a handsome sandalwood casket, his gold earrings.

It was not many months before Jitendra was sitting in a new chair in a new cement house with a red tiled roof, and three separate rooms, one of which bore a signboard: Jitendra, General Consultant. If he had to rely on his own village for economic progress he would probably have remained in his old house much longer, for apart from the Pannaiyar, the priest, the chief of the village council and the marriage broker nobody owned more than sixty acres of land, but Jitendra’s fame had spread far and wide in the district and from all comers those who were wronged came to him for justice. He was still known as the Protector and came to think of himself as an exceptionally righteous man.

One day he was approached by a man as large and scornful as himself, who offered him a wrist watch with a gold case for pushing the priest into the temple-well after the puja.

‘What harm has he done you?’

‘He has done me no harm. If you want your wrist watch don’t ask too many questions, just push.’

‘I tell you what,’ said Jitendra. ‘You put the gold watch on your own arm and I’ll push you and it into the well at the same time. With one stone, two mangoes.’ So that when Jitendra examined his conscience, which was seldom, he did not find much to reprove himself with and yet he was aware of an uneasiness, something missing, the pain of which was temporarily stifled when he bought the sarees and jewels for his mother, and when Swamikanuu had arranged for his little sister’s marriage (he did not even bother to check on the boy’s father’s veracity, for by now nobody would have dared to cheat him), and when on festival days-Pongal and Deepavali-he helped the poor of the village.

The months passed; the years passed. He became a **Pannaiyar** and more than ever he was the Protector, walking and sitting with that brooding or scornful look. By now there was nobody who did not know what it was that Jitendra expected of him when his help was asked. He certainly expected handsome remuneration and as often as not, in some way or other, made it clear what might prove acceptable. It became part of the etiquette of the Protector that the offering be made before Jitendra started his work, though this was never openly stated. He might say to a prospective client even before he started wailing or even opened his mouth to explain, ‘That fellow left me five hundred rupees and money is very important I grant you. I do not spurn the goddess Lakshmi, otherwise she would be within her rights to withdraw blessings but *mariyathai* should also be observed.’

So it was that everyone that came to him was humble and polite, bearing fruits and wealth in currency notes or gold. In

short they treated him as one treated a minister. But the more respected he was, the richer he became and the more righteous he felt the greater the area of emptiness. The priest of the temple advised him to read the Gita but that did not help. He did not like pujas either.

One day Jitendra saw a young man enter his consultation room and prostrate himself before him. After a prolonged prostration the young man looked up into Jitendra’s eyes. ‘I have come for initiation,’ Jitendra gave out a hard laugh. But the boy seemed completely at his ease and sat back on his haunches, waiting.

‘What did you say you wanted?’

‘I want you to initiate me, Aiyah.’

Jitendra looked into the distance. He was silent for a long time and became unaware of the boy’s presence. When he became conscious of it he did not know where his mind had been wandering. He felt a jerk of anger. Did anybody else think that you could become a Protector for the asking? He was about to give the boy a tongue-lashing, but then seeing how young he was and simple-looking he merely smiled ironically. ‘So you want initiation.’

‘Yes, Guruve.’

At the word Jitendra felt a tremor. Nobody had ever called him that in jest or in earnest. He looked at the boy suspiciously. ‘What are you after?’ he asked.

‘A Guru.’

‘Do I look like a Guru? Don’t you know our proverb *Vatcha kudumi, aditchu mottai-a* GUN is long haired and unshaven or his head and face are completely shaven? Look! Neither do I have long hair and...’ He twirled his mustache.

‘That matters not at all,’ said the boy. ‘I don’t believe in that.’ Jitendra looked down at his stomach. He lived well and his stomach had grown. His massive chest which he kept bare had grown fleshy and he wore gold earrings and chains with a tiger-tooth locket as a devil repellent. Was the boy absolutely simple-minded?

‘Who told you to come here?’

‘I have heard of you in my village and have been waiting to come for a long time. And last night I saw you in dream.’

Jitendra felt a strange sensation in his ribs but did not yet recognize it for what it was.

He said at last, ‘And what do you think the initiation will bring you?’

‘O I do not worry about that, Guruve. Men say that you are just and that you help people. So if you initiate me, it will be all right.’ He looked up with eyes full of trust. And Jitendra remembered for the first time in many years the dusty patch in front of the school which had served as playground. He remembered the first boy who had come for help. ‘Please help me,’ this boy had asked in a sweet voice. Exactly the same words as the first boy who had ever asked for help had used; so many, many years ago without bringing him anything. Jitendra’s great frame began to shake. Tears choked his throat. He sobbed and sobbed and did not know why.

An Open Invitation to the All-USA Meeting

After last years closing circle in the Merriam Hill barn there was one thing certain: There would have to be another AUM in 1986. We hope that you have been thinking about attending the next one. It is the most direct way we have to be connected, and it proved to be a springboard for starting to build more communication between study groups, centers, Auroville and the Ashram.

Yet it was just a beginning and there is much more to do. AVI-USA, Matagiri, Global View, East-West Center, The Foundation for World Education, all of these organizations and many study groups are beginning to move and expand. AUM can provide the vehicle for our aspiration and energy to join and begin to act, as Wayne Bloomquist suggests in his article, *Peace and Transformation*.

This year AUM will take place on August 15-18th at Merriam Hill Center/Another Place, and the Matagiri group will be



Group photo at the 1985 All-USA Meeting.

coordinating the meeting. If you would like further information, plan to attend, or have suggestions for the agenda of AUM, call Jeanne Korstange at (603)-899-6689.

Center News

MATAGIRI SRI AUROBINDO CENTER HIGH FALLS, NY

We are approaching the close of our first full year operating from the High Falls Center under a new board of directors and are still finding our way as a new organization. The financial difficulties faced earlier were met with a generous response to our recent appeal in which we raised \$6500. This has enabled us to meet our expenses for the year and we would like to thank those who contributed. However, since this contribution dramatically exceeds donations generally received, continued support is vital to sustain us in the upcoming year.

Many dear friends, along with a grant from the Foundation for World Education, helped us surpass our goal of \$10,000 and thus we have been able to continue our work in High Falls and the publication of *Collaboration*. We hope the pledges of help in 1986 along with those who did not have the opportunity this past year will support our efforts to provide books and information related to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In 1985 we channeled many donations to Matrimandir and other programs in Auroville, as well as generous contributions to the Ashram.

Every week some special checks arrive, mostly for modest amounts, each giving on a regular basis to Matrimandir. That "good habit" of sending in little bits have added up to nearly \$5,000 of much need help to continue the physical work on the "Soul of Auroville".

In return, participants receive a monthly newsletter

from India usually written by Ruud Lohman in an inimitable style which is anecdotal, serious, light and always informative and friendly. It keeps the extended family or "team" attuned and in touch with the progress of this special work.

One may join at any time by simply sending a check (\$12 per year in order to receive the newsletter) payable to MSAC with a note specifying "Matrimandir". Most send theirs in monthly, but quarterly or spontaneously is acceptable and welcome.

Matagiri welcomes Trudi King who, with Julian Lines, now handles day to day work at the Center. Actually Trudy is an old hand at Center work since she was actively involved with the East-West Cultural Center for 15 years. She first helped Jyoti Priya with a day school that helped support the Center in the early days. Over the years her responsibilities have included office work, teaching Hatha Yoga, and periodically teaching beginning Sanskrit. After Jyoti's passing in 1979 Trudi was largely responsible for the daily functioning of the Center. Last summer she decided for reasons of health to leave the smog of Los Angeles for the fresh Catskill air of High Falls and the work of distributing Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's books.

Another important influx of energy has come from Suzanne McDonald and Warren Bellows of the Merriam Hill Center. They graciously offered us a free one-day workshop on group dynamics called "Organizational Energetics." It was an enjoyable intense day of theoretical lecture and discussion, personal sharing, games, group analysis, and expert diagnosis. We learned a great deal from this experience, and it seems to have opened up a horizon of possibilities for future growth and develop-

ment . We are only now taking our first conscious steps in this journey of inner group exploration. We thank them dearly.

Gita and Vinay Varma hosted the Matagiri group to an enjoyable dinner party at their home in New York City on October 12. Evening dress provided a welcome change of atmosphere as we enjoyed a superb Indian feast. Music by Gordon and Jeanne Korstange and Mother's letters to Vinay filled the Manhattan night with a sweet and magical charge.

On the last Sunday of the month at 3 pm, everyone is invited to the High Falls **office** for reading, sharing and meditation. Our first meeting included a visitor from Dilip Kumar Roy's Ashram in Poona who spoke of their collection of some 4,000 letters from Sri Aurobindo written to Dilip over the years.

MOTHER'S HILL STATION/MATAGIRI MT. TREMPER, NY

Nestled on the slopes of a mountain in Woodstock, NY, in the heart of the Catskills, is Matagiri, which for so many years served as a kind of family home for many of Mother's children in America and a seed ground for seekers just discovering the new world of Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Matagiri is still there and still serving (although the office work and book and incense distribution, under the aegis of Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc. , is now located in nearby High Falls). Visitors are welcome, whether it is old friends wishing a "retreat" from their customary routines in the quiet of Matagiri's forest or those seeking an opportunity to browse in the extensive library or discuss the integral yoga and Mother's work of transformation. Anyone interested in a stay, of an hour or a week, should call or write Sam or Eric at Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457; telephone 914-679-8322.

AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL-USA *(Excerpts from AVZ Newsletter)*

AVI has moved into a new office, located in Sacramento, California, with a new mailing address and phone number: PO Box 162489, Sacramento, CA, 95816; Tel (916) 4524013. Theresa Boschert, Diane **Kiser**, and Jack and Mary Alexander, who all live in Sacramento, have worked in getting the new office established and are involved in its daily operation. This is the first time since the inception of Auroville Association over 15 years ago that the activities have not been in June **Maher's** home. It is a big change, a necessary expansion as a result of all the activity and interest in Auroville in the US. June is very happy with the growth, and is, of course, still a very hard-working member of the AVI board.

The Auroville Resource Center has emerged from the necessity of planning the township of Auroville. It includes: (1) Land Stewardship Trust (environmental plan-

ning) and (2) Urban Planning. The original plan for the city of Auroville, back in the sixties, was a model of an ideal city. We placed this model on a plot of land and tried to make it fit that land. After nearly twenty years of work and hindsight, we understand the necessity for the model to be intrinsic to the nature of its environment.

From this point of view, the Auroville Resource Center is a reversal of the way we have been working towards the development of Auroville. The work of the Center will include environmental planning as part of urban planning, guidelines for the further development of Auroville, and the study of the ecological environment of Auroville, including soil, water and climatic conditions.

It is hoped that we will have the participation of architects, town planners, and environmental specialists from outside Auroville to contribute to the work of planning the city.

The Center represents a new unity among the various groups in Auroville who are all working in different ways toward the same goal-the development of Auroville. In this broader context of the Center, the groups can see how their own project contributes to the whole.

Constance Walker and Daniel Brewer are coordinating the effort in the US through AVI. Contact either of them directly if you are interested in contributing to this work:

Constance Walker	Daniel Brewer
735 Seaside	2081 Ocean St. Extension
Santa Cruz, CA 95060	Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(408) 427-3478	(408) 427-2679

June informs us from Auroville that Auroville has just been given a grant from the Indian Government to make a children's park. Further details will be available through the AVI office. If anyone with experience in playground construction or planning is interested in helping with this project, please get in touch.

AUROVILLE: A DOCUMENTARY TALE

In 1984, a one hour documentary film was made by residents of Auroville about the community to serve as an information tool both within India and abroad. The medium of film as a graphic form of communication helps to effectively take Auroville out of the abstract. The land, the activities, the people, the architecture, and the context of rural South India become visible.

An attempt has been made in this **first** Auroville film venture to create a fiction story line to draw out the information rather than to rely on more journalistic techniques of documentation. The story is built on the visit of a newcomer through whose eyes we encounter the community. A fantasy prologue as the opening scene carries a sense of wonder and discovery into the film.

Available through Auroville International USA
PO Box 162489
Sacramento, CA 95816
\$75 .00 per copy VHS

Announcements

"NISHTA" A HUGE SUCCESS

(from the World Peace University Newsletter)

Saturday and Sunday, the 17th and 18th at the University retreat in Elsie, Seyril Schochen presented her workshop, "Adventures in Consciousness" and a reading, "NISHTA: The Strange Disappearance of Margaret Woodrow Wilson."

The workshop was well attended and was a refreshing review of meditation basics with effective guided imagery, given in a very loving, soothing way.

With musical interludes and background by Sue Petersen, Seyril did an inspiring and beautiful reading of her screenplay, "Nishta." The story reveals the drama of World War II India during the Wilson administration and how Sri Aurobindo was intimately connected with the turning of the Nazis from England, while all the time being persecuted by the English rule in India. Nishta, Woodrow Wilson's daughter, Margaret, left her secure society power position to study and work under Aurobindo, much to the chagrin of her family and friends in the States.

The screenplay is in the process of becoming a movie under the award-winning direction of William Greaves.

Philip McCarthy was invaluable in putting on the staging of the reading with professional lighting experience.

The entire weekend was given in an ambiance of Indian culture, with cuisine (served by a sari-clad WPU staff), incense, and pillows replacing chairs.

Ms. Schochen stayed in Portland for a few days following the weekend to do an interview with KBOO radio and to attend some WPU classes. She seemed to thoroughly enjoy herself.

DR. V.M. REDDY TOURS U.S.

Dr. Lloyd Fellows, Director of the Institute of Integral Psychology at Ojai, California, sponsored a recent lecture by Prof. V.M. Reddy of Hyderabad. Besides giving a number of lectures at the Institute on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, Dr. Reddy gave a day-long workshop on 'Education for the 21st Century.'

During November, Dr. Reddy spoke at a number of colleges and universities including Sarah Lawrence, SUNY at Stonybrook and the University of Ohio at Athens. He also conducted a number of group lectures and discussions in Wichita, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Chapel Hill, Charlottesville and Houston.

Dr. Reddy concluded his tour of the states with day-long conferences and workshops at the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles and the Cultureal Integration Fellowship in San Francisco on "Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future," at the end of January.

Passing

•Dane Rudhyar (March 23, 1895–September 13, 1985), beloved husband, teacher, exemplar, and friend, died consciously and comfortably at his new home in San Francisco on Friday, September 13, 1985, shortly after 11:00 am. His last days were surrounded with love and peace. He accepted death, indeed was impatient for it, and met it with the same courage, dignity, and integrity with which he had lived each of his 90 years.

In accordance with Rudhyar's wishes, his body remained undisturbed at home for three days. The traditional Tibetan Buddhist chants and invocations were performed at his bedside by lamas under the supervision of His Eminence T'ai Situ, Rimpoche, with whom Rudhyar felt a special connection. On Saturday, September 13, at 2:00 pm, those who had been close to Rudhyar in the last years, months, and days gathered in silence in his rooms and sat in meditation for about an hour. At noon on Monday, also in accordance with his wishes, his body was entrusted to the Neptune Society for cremation, which took place during the night on Tuesday.

During the last days of Rudhyar's life, an inexorable process of physical deterioration played itself out in counterpoint to an equally palpable process meshing synchronistic revelation, reconciliation, and release. The latter continued strongly throughout the three days of continuing withdrawal after death. Those 72 hours especially held great blessings and teachings for all who participated in them, and this process continues still.

In his final talk, at the RITA conference celebrating his 90th birthday in March, Rudhyar said, "The power that held my whole being as a lens to bring ideas to a focus, will be released when I go. Perhaps when the person I appear to be is gone, it may be easier to tune up to that mind-power and what is beyond it—the holiness of spirit, the freed seed."

Thus, as Rudhyar strongly urged, we here have tried to "keep steady and above all open"—I believe successfully. The wrenching grief that usually accompanies the loss of so cherished and central a loved one is absent here. There is instead a peaceful yet definite sense of *It is done*. For in Rudhyar, person and destiny met, accepted one another totally, and did their mutual work. Now, having parted again, each rightly pursues its own course. Person goes the way of all flesh, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." But destiny lives on and on and on, ever reverberating echoes and resonances resounding in each of us.

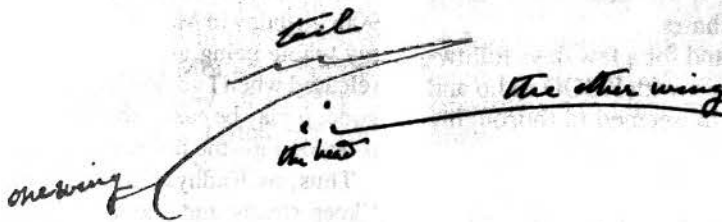
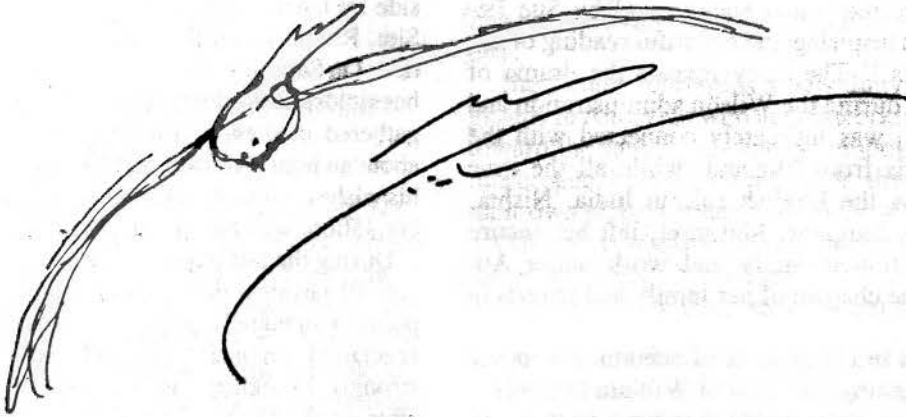
Again from Rudhyar's final talk: "Faith, courage, patience, and endurance: may they be everyday companions for you, as will still be my love and sustainment in whatever state of being I shall be."

In Companionship,
Leyla Rael

Editor's Note: Dane Rudhyar was an admirer of Sri Aurobindo and mentioned him in his books. He was also interested in the progress of Auroville.

MOTHER'S SIGNATURE

MARA.



The bird of Grace messenger from the
Supreme

