

Collaboration

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Sex: In which the Editors Lay Bare and Throw up their Hidden Impulses

Now that we have your attention...there is nothing that represents the difficulty of doing Sri Aurobindo and Mother's Yoga in the USA more than that urge for the merging of cells. Many of us, especially children of the 60s, have struggled to throw off our Puritan clothes and search guiltlessly for delight of the body. A host of magazines, instructional books, films, and novels have aided us in our search. Good old American know-how, self-taught success.

If we are to believe the media, Americans are investigating sexual relationships with the same curiosity, naivete, and potential for destruction that sent us across the frontiers of the West and outer space. Women's Liberation, birth control, abortion, pornography, teenage pregnancy, Gay rights, AIDS, sexual harassment—the visible signs of this upheaval confront us wherever we turn. It has been said that the most enduring legacy of the wild winds that swept through the late 1960s is the sexual revolution and all its manifestations. The lid is coming off the bottle, and anyone who tries to keep it on is working against a cultural movement made for a generation that wants it all, from auras to orgasms.

Those of us trying to do Yoga, or trying to lead an ordinary life under the influence of Mother and Sri Aurobindo, have to be conscious that, to them, sex is a lower formation of the body; that human love is usually ego-dependency; and that single-pointed aspiration for the Divine demands a distancing and ultimate rejection of those movements, a "purification and transformation of the forces which these movements pervert and misuse," as Sri Aurobindo has put it.

Yet, faced with the atomization of modern American society and its attendant anxiety to couple that is instilled in us from grade school, we search for a partner to share the comforts of our loneliness. Under ordinary circumstances sexual love is the nearest the body comes to ecstatic experience. It can involve a surrender that has been used as a metaphor for love of God by mystics for centuries. The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (4.2.21) states that "Just as a man fully embraced by his beloved wife does not know anything at all, either external or internal, so does this man, embraced fully by the supremely knowing spiritual self (prajnatman), not know anything at all, either external or internal."

The *bhakti* poets of India have developed an entire tradition comparing the love of woman for man (usually the god Krishna) with the soul's longing for the lord. According to A.K. Ramanujan, *bhaji*, the root verb of *bhakti*, can mean "to share a body, to copulate, to unite." Here is Ramanujan's translation of a poem by Nammalvar, a tenth century Tamil saint (Both definition and poem are from *Hymns For The Drowning*, A.K. Ramanujan, Princeton U. Press, 1981.):

He grabbed me
lest I go astray.

Wax before an unspent fire,
mind melted,
body trembled.

I bowed, I wept,
danced, cried aloud,
I sang, and I praised him.

Unyielding, as they say,
as an elephant's jaw
or a woman's grasp,
was love's unrelenting
seizure.

Love pierced me
like a nail
driven into a green tree.

Overflowing, I tossed
 like a sea,
 heart growing tender,
 body shivering,
 while the world called me Demon!
 and laughed at me,
 I left shame behind,
 took as an ornament
 the mockery of the local folk.
 Unswerving, I lost my cleverness
 in the bewilderment of ecstasy.

Tiruvacakam: IV. 59-70

For westerners, possession of this nature is not as acceptable as it is in India, although it can happen, as Eleanor Montgom-

ery's letter to Sri Aurobindo makes clear (page 9). We struggle with our desires, searching in each other for the soul thread that has joined our lives and leads them on. Because Sri Aurobindo and Mother labored together in their Yoga in a complementary way, many devotees have imitated that union on a lesser level. Without an initial and continuing experience of the higher ecstasy, we often settle for the next best thing.

It may be a long struggle, for our response to sex is as multifarious as our individual aspiration at any one time. Mira Alfassa, despite her extraordinary experiences from an early age, still married twice and produced a son. Perhaps the key to the enigma is that, like Lynda Lester in her article, "Quitting Sex," we try to keep our longing for the Divine of such intensity that we will know with absolute certainty when the time comes for the final rejection, when the taste of the Divine forbids all other hungers.

Jeanne and Gordon Korstange

Sri Aurobindo on Human Relationships

Personal relation is not a part of the yoga. When one has the union with the divine, then only can there be a true spiritual relation with others.

Absence of love and fellow-feeling is not necessary for nearness to the Divine; on the contrary, a sense of closeness and oneness with others is a part of the divine consciousness into which the sadhak enters by nearness to the Divine. An entire rejection of all relations is indeed the final aim of the Mayavadin, and in the ascetic yoga, an entire loss of all relations of friendship and affection and attachment to the world and its living beings would be regarded as a promising sign of advance towards liberation, Moksha; but even there, I think, a feeling of oneness and unattached spiritual sympathy for all is at least a penultimate stage, like the compassion of the Buddhist, before the turning to Moksha or Nirvana. In this yoga the feeling of unity with others, love, universal joy and Ananda are an essential part of the liberation and perfection which are the aim of the sadhana.

On the other hand, human friendship, love, affection, fellow-feeling are mostly and usually—not entirely or in all cases—founded on a vital basis and are ego-held at their center. It is because of the pleasure of enlarging the ego by contact, mutual penetration of spirit, with another, the exhilaration of the vital interchange which feeds their personality, that men usually love—and there are also other and still more selfish motives that mix with this essential movement. There are of course higher spiritual, psychic, mental, vital elements that come in or can come in, but the whole thing is very mixed, even at its best. This is the reason why at a certain stage with or without apparent reason the world and life and human society and relations and philanthropy (which is as ego-ridden as the rest) begin to pall. There is sometimes an ostensible reason—a disappointment of the surface vital, the withdrawal of affection by others, the perception that those loved, or men, generally are not what one thought them to be and a host of other causes; but often the cause is a secret disappointment of some part of the inner being, not translated or not well translated into the mind, because it expected from these things something which they cannot give. It is the case with many who turn or are pushed to the spiritual life. For some it takes the form of a *vairagya* which drives them towards ascetic indifference and fires the urge towards Moksha. For us, what we hold to be necessary is that the mixture should disappear and that the consciousness should be estab-

lished on a purer level (not only spiritual and psychic, but a purer and higher mental, vital, physical consciousness) in which there is not this mixture. There one would feel the true Ananda of oneness and love and sympathy and fellowship, spiritual and self-existent in its basis but expressing itself through the other parts of the nature. If that is to happen, there must obviously be a change; the old form of these movements must drop off and leave room for a new and higher self to disclose its own way of these things—that is the inner truth of the matter.

I take it therefore that the condition you describe is a period of transition and change, negative in its beginning, as these movements often are at first, so as to create a vacant space for the new positive to appear and live in it and fill it. But the vital, not having a long continued or at all sufficient or complete experience even while another part of the being, another part even of the vital, is ready to let go what is disappearing and does not yearn to keep it. If it were not for this movement of the vital, which in appearance of these things would, at least after the first sense of void, bring only a feeling of peace, relief and a still expectation of greater things. What is intended in the first place to fill the void was indicated in the peace and joy which came to you as the touch of Shiva—naturally, this would not be all but a beginning, a basis for a new self, a new consciousness, an activity of a greater nature; as I told you, it is a deep spiritual calm and peace that is the only stable foundation for a lasting Bhakti and Ananda. In that new consciousness there would be a new basis for relations with others; for an ascetic dryness or isolated loneliness cannot be your spiritual destiny since it is not consonant with your Swabhava which is made for joy, largeness, expansion, a comprehensive movement of the life-force. Therefore do not be discouraged. Wait upon the purifying movement of Shiva.

It is not because of your nature or evil destiny that the vital cannot find the satisfaction it expected from relations with others. These relations can never give a full or permanent satisfaction; if they did, there would be no reason why the human being would ever seek the Divine. He would remain satisfied in the ordinary earth life. It is only when the Divine is found and the consciousness lifted up into the true consciousness that the true relations with others can come.

Regarding your question about a complementary soul and marriage, the answer is easy to give; the way of the spiritual life

lies for you in one direction and marriage lies in quite another and opposite. All talk about a complementary soul is a camouflage with which the mind tries to cover the sentimental, sensational and physical wants of the lower vital nature. It is that vital nature in you which puts the question and would like an answer reconciling its desires and demands with the call of the true soul in you. But it must not expect a sanction for any such incongruous reconciliation from here. The way of the supramental yoga is clear; it lies not through concession to these things—not, in your case, through satisfaction, under a spiritual cover if possible, of its craving for the comfort and gratifications of a domestic and conjugal life and the enjoyment of the ordinary emotional desires and physical passions—but through the purification and transformation of the forces which these movements pervert and misuse.

Not these human and animal demands, but the divine Ananda which is above and beyond them and which the indulgence of these degraded forms would prevent from descending, is the great thing that the aspiration of the vital being must demand in the sadhak.

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

Even in the world there have been relations between man and woman in which sex could not intervene—purely psychic relations. The consciousness of sex difference would be there no doubt, but without coming in as a source of desire or disturbance into the relation. But naturally it needs a certain psychic development before that is possible.

Our experience is that it is only when both are in the true consciousness centered round the Divine that there is some chance of a true meeting in the Divine. Otherwise, with the personal relation that forms there comes in either disappointment and alienation or else reactions that are not pure.

It is certainly easier to have friendship between man and man or between woman and woman than between man and woman, because there the sexual intrusion is normally absent. In a friendship between man and woman the sexual turn can at any moment come in subtle or in a direct way and produce perturbations. But there is no impossibility of friendship between man and woman pure of this element; such friendships can exist and have always existed. All that is needed is that the lower vital should not look in at the back door or be permitted to enter. There is often a harmony between a masculine and a feminine nature, an attraction or an affinity which rests on something other than any open or covert lower vital (sexual) basis—it depends sometimes predominantly on the mental or the psychic or on the higher vital, sometimes on a mixture of these for its substance. In such a case friendship is natural and there is little chance of other elements coming in to pull it downwards or break it.

It is also a mistake to think that the vital alone has warmth and the psychic is something frigid without any flame in it. A clear limpid good-will is a very good and desirable thing. But that is not what is meant by psychic love. Love is love and not merely and more intense than the vital, only it is a pure fire, not dependent on the satisfaction of ego-desire or on the eating up of the fuel it embraces. It is a white flame, not a red one; but white heat is not inferior to the red variety in its ardour. It is true that the psychic love does not usually get its full play in human relations and human nature; it finds the fullness of its fire and



ecstasy more easily when it is lifted towards the Divine. In the human relation the psychic love gets mixed up with other elements which seek at once to use it and overshadow it. It gets an outlet for its own full intensities only at rare moments. Otherwise it comes in only as an element, but even so it contributes all the higher things in a love fundamentally vital—all the finer sweetness, tenderness, fidelity, self-giving, self-sacrifice, reachings of soul to soul, idealising sublimations that lift up human love beyond itself, come from the psychic. If it could dominate and govern and transmute the other elements—mental, vital, physical—of human love, then love could be on the earth some reflection or preparation of the real thing, an integral union of the soul and its instruments in a dual life. But even some imperfect appearance of that is rare.

Our view is that the normal thing is, in yoga, for the entire flame of the nature to turn towards the Divine and the rest must wait for the true basis: to build higher things on the sand and mire of the ordinary consciousness is not safe. That does not necessarily exclude friendships or comradeships, but these must be subordinate altogether to the central fire. If anyone makes, meanwhile, the relation with the Divine his one absorbing aim, that is quite natural and gives the full force to the sadhana. Psychic love finds itself wholly when it is the radiation of the diviner consciousness for which we are seeking; till then it is difficult for it to put out its undimmed integral self and figure.

On Yoga II Letters on Yoga-Tome One, Sri Aurobindo (S.A.A.p., Pondicherry, 1969) Part II, Chapt. vii, pp 739-777.

Quitting Sex

by Lynda Lester

In which the sadhika finds herself in a most harrowing and ridiculous situation, and is given an offer she can't refuse.

I put a hold on sexual activity about a year and a half before I was introduced to Sri Aurobindo in 1974.

I'd tried to be liberated, had given it my best shot—after all, it was the period of Free Love and it was mandatory to seek as much experience as possible. Besides, I had to prove I was worldly wise—not just a twink who'd made it to sweet-16-and-never-been-kissed and missed being a 22-year-old virgin by two weeks.

But after a few years of amorous adventures and a crash course in loose morals that lasted seven months, I decided I'd rather meditate. I put up force fields at my door so midnight ramblers would be intimidated and pretty soon I moved into a place alone. I decided the more I didn't have sex, the more I didn't want to and one by one, my old friends drifted away.

When I started the Yoga, I found out right off the whole thing about brahmacharya and it sounded OK to me.

But, in a pie-in-the-face reversal, within a few weeks I was having an affair with A, a co-disciple. A was a highwayman and a romantic, and there I was, a normal female of 26. Icing on the cake, I figured—the Divine's last lovely present to me before I surrendered all. I felt like the cat that swallowed the canary: no regrets, no remorse—just a big Cheshire grin.

In a few more weeks the affair concluded nicely—but it resurrected three months later. This time, having read a good part of the Sri Aurobindo library and done sadhana til it was coming out my ears, I was detached and offered. Calling on the Divine, watching the consciousness, surrendering the activity as sacred (a ubiquitous western approach), I found out just what Sri Aurobindo had said: Sex is inimical to spirituality. What starts out pure becomes mixed and degraded, the nether force appropriates, the dog's tail is crooked.

Once more A and I broke off relations.

A month or two later I noticed that that old black magic had a hold on me. How weird. I'd never had this problem before. I snorted and banished it with a wave of the hand. However, it was a devilishly persistent suggestion and, worst of all, it had invaded both the vital and the physical.

I managed to ignore it, with mediocre success.

But by the next month, when A and I set out on a nonstop journey from North Dakota to California, I was seriously uncomfortable—realizing I was no more among the blessed for whom sex would not be a problem in the Yoga and that there would likely be a tooth-and-dagger fight for mastery.

The fight began on a Colorado interstate. I was in trouble: The sex impulse was flaring and I was ready to explode—not wanting to mention it, which would only make it worse, and knowing it was a contagious difficulty—especially between disciples who'd once passed the point of no return.

I clammed up and tried to endure.

In the high country near Gallup, New Mexico, a late winter snowstorm engulfed the road. After three hours we made it through and I gave A the wheel. I crawled into the back of the Peugeot station wagon to sleep.

"Be sure and stay on the interstate," I said, knowing A was about as map-conscious as a tumbleweed. "Whatever you do, don't take any other way to Phoenix!"

A promised. I burrowed into my sleeping bag.

When I woke up we were on a narrow, two-lane road winding through desolate sagebrush hills. It was snowing again.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"There was a giant sign back there that said Phoenix, this way," said A.

Nuts! I thought.

And, lying there sabotaged by the physical-vital, I nearly told A that taking the wrong highway wasn't our only problem, but I decided to wait. I fell back to sleep, bothered.

Next thing I knew we were stopped on the road high in the mountains, surrounded by grey-white forest. It was snowing like mad. Just ahead, three cars were stalled on an incline, unable to get traction on the ice. A truck had skidded and was angled across both lanes.

Men were huddled together out in the cold, assessing the situation. The snow, already a foot deep on the highway, was falling faster and thicker by the minute.

I consulted our map—a regional of the western United States, short on detail, vague on scale. A had left the freeway at Winslow, Arizona to take a state highway that wound through the mountains on its way south to Phoenix. The interstate we should have taken ran north and south some distance to the west, and a tiny road linked the two at their closest points—about 30 miles apart, I guessed.

I figured the turnoff should be pretty near. A decided to find it and cut over to the interstate.

He put the Peugeot in gear. Surprisingly, we began to move, passing immobilized autos one by one. We almost slid into a snowbank as we nosed by the truck, but the Peugeot churned on and a mantle of white swallowed up the caravan behind us.

We'd gone 500 feet when a Ford met us coming the other way. "It's bad!" they shouted. "We've been driving for seven hours, ever since Phoenix. There's no way off and it's no better farther on!"

Having lived through enough North Dakota winters to know that blizzards kill and being about as adventurous as Chicken Little, I was ready to stop right there. We could wait for the end of the storm with the other cars and sooner or later a plow would find us. Or we could forge on a few more miles to a settlement that looked on the map as if it might be a gas station or a grocery store—safe harbor.

Suddenly a half-buried sign loomed up on the right:

///ERDE

///3 MILES

"I think that's it," I said. Unmarked powder blanketed a road stretching into the woods.

A cranked the wheel and drove over a two-foot drift. Bursting through, we found ourselves up to the hubcaps in snow, tracking along at 25 mph, leaving civilization behind.

I hoped it was the right road. I hoped it would take us to Camp Verde and the interstate. What did that "3" on the sign mean? 13, 23, 33 miles? Was the road curving too sharply?



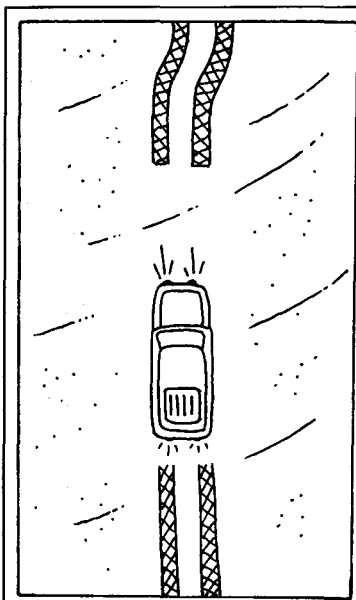
Suddenly a half-buried sign loomed up on the right.

The ground climbed. Snow was falling furiously and the wind was blowing in huge, lashing gusts. The road twisted and straightened, and in places the shoulders fell steeply away. Soon the storm was so dense we could no longer see the edge of the road. Everything was a homogenous, blinding white.

The Peugeot chugged forward in first gear, crashing through drifts like a ship through waves. Snow spume dashed over the hood and buried the windshield, and the wind plastered a heavy layer of snow on the side windows. A stuck his head out to see. The engine was overheating.

I was scared spitless. Was this the end of the line? Doom is the passage of the soul, I thought. Ah, yes! This was doom all right. This was Edge City, lost tomorrows, tenebrous zero. This was the dialogue with death.

I was calling the Mother in earnest, praying for divine intercession and grace, but the more I called, the deeper the snow got. And I began to realize the grace only acts in conditions of light and truth, not in conditions of falsehood. For the grace to act, I had to be under the Mother's influence, in the circle of her guidance and protection. If I put myself outside by refusing to reject what was undivine, I might as well kiss the grace goodbye.



*There in the road ahead,
a set of tire tracks
materialized.*

And after all, I was holding an unsundered chit for vital indulgence. Only an hour before I'd been skidding helter skelter into sexual relapse.

The more I considered, the more this blizzard looked like a setup. How could we be here? We'd just driven through a storm near Gallup, so we'd known about snow in the mountains. I'd told A not to get off the interstate. I hadn't wanted to leave the cars on the highway. I'd thought we should stop at the settlement. And I had a healthy respect for blizzards.

Odds down, in any normal circumstance I never would have let us get into this mess. But it had happened and it had happened for a reason.

The problem wasn't the blizzard. The problem was sex.

I'd been telling myself I'd be able to get hold of it in my own time; leave a little latitude for fun, save some maneuvering room for emergencies—compromise just once more, a few times more, only when it couldn't be helped.

But the days of innocence were over. From here on in, indulgence would mean disaster.

The Mother was wise to my weakness, of course. She was giving me a slight nudge to help, offering the right incentive: liberty or death. Cold storage or cold turkey.

Did I want us to die in the blizzard, freeze in the snow, be buried in a mountain forest miles from nowhere on some back road no one would check for a week?

Or would I stop answering vital subpoenas and consorting with the adverse force? Sri Aurobindo had written it all in *Letters on Yoga*. It was no different for me than for the rest. I was no exception to the rule, some new kind of human allowed to skinny through or slide by.

I didn't want to concede. The vital was whimpering and I knew this would be a permanent step—a truth-contract with the Divine with no appeal, no reversal.

I wasn't very gracious, but I handed over the goods.

Swallowing hard, I promised never again to energize sex with A, encourage it, participate, or entertain the idea.

That last had been the killer—the thought in the back of the mind that if conditions were irresistible enough, I could give in, a possibility remained. The vital knew all the weak

points, how to send in the root and split the granite; it had its wily safecracking, lock-picking devices, and could enter through the tiniest opening, storm the sentries, and take the fortress.

I didn't promise never to have sex with anyone ever again—only never again with A. But it was a moot point, since it was a fair bet I'd be with A for a long, long time.

And so, the deed was done.

We were afraid that if the Peugeot once stopped, we'd be stuck in the deep snow, unable to move. But by some assault on the laws of physics, the car kept going. A couldn't understand how. We didn't even have snow tires.

Then miraculously, the blizzard quit. The snowfall abated and stopped completely, the wind became a breeze and died with a murmur.

The ground, which had been rising steadily, leveled off and sloped downhill.

And there in the road ahead—appearing from nowhere, as if a vehicle had landed from the sky and driven away—a set of tire tracks materialized. Imposssible, but we weren't going to argue. A coaxed the Peugeot into the ruts for easier navigating.

A little farther on we realized that a truck coming in our direction had stopped, then backed up on its own trail. We could see where it had turned around and headed back down the other way.

As we cruised along, the snow on the ground disappeared, the clouds receded and the sun came out in a blue sky. A meandering brook cut through a valley dotted with grazing horses, ranches, and windmills. Soon we came to the main street of a western town where cowboys were loading tackle into Chevy trucks: Camp Verde at last!

In a few minutes we drove up the entrance ramp onto the interstate. Looking back we saw that high in the mountains from which we'd come, the sky was dark with blizzard round the peaks.

Rising in me I felt an exhilarating sense of liberation. I'd escaped from more than a snowstorm, I thought. I'd ditched a cat burglar, a terrorist saboteur, a hunger that was death. There was no more anguish, no more red hound snapping at my heels.

A burden had been lifted, a great weight removed, the sexual disturbance was gone.

I was free. Free! Giving thanks to the Divine who, with such mercy, had sent me through a hundred-to-one escape clause blizzard fiasco to get me out of distress.

I could breathe again and the air was clean. I could aspire once more with my whole being—at peace, serene, unharassed by the errant vital.

It was a day for daisies and cactuses, arroyos and jack-

rabbits, a secret smile on the freeway.

The operation had been a success.

Once that year and once the next, I broke the contract.

That last time, the psychic consciousness in me was ready and waiting. Watching from the witness self, awake to Divine Love, I saw that sex was ridiculous, demeaning, and painful to the soul; that it was at utter cross purposes to the transformation; that I hated it; and that I never wanted to have the experience again.

With all my heart I sent an injunction to the Divine, a demand that things change forever: This time—no sex with anyone ever again, ever. Never. Finito.

And so it ended.

The Mother on Sex and Love

I did not understand this passage from the text: "Continence is therefore the rule for all those who aspire for progress. But especially for those who want to prepare themselves for the supramental manifestation, this continence must be replaced by a total abstinence, achieved not by coercion and suppression, but by a kind of inner alchemy, as a result of which the energies that are normally used in the act of procreation are transmuted into energies for progress and integral transformation."

This is quite well known in yogic disciplines in India, when one begins to become conscious of one's energies and have control over them. You know, don't you, the theory of the different "centres" where the energies are concentrated? Generally, it is said that there are five. But the true number is seven or even twelve. Anyway, these centres are centres of accumulation of energy, energies which control certain activities. Thus, there is an accumulation of energy at the sex-centre, a great accumulation of energy, and those who have control over these energies succeed in mastering them and raising them up, and they place them here (*Mother points to the centre of the chest*). And here is the centre of the energies of progress. This is what is called the seat of *Agni*, but it is the energies of progress, the will to progress, that are here. So the energies concentrated in the sex-centre are pulled upwards and placed here. And they increase considerably, so that the sex-centre becomes absolutely calm, peaceful, immobile.

The ordinary practice for controlling these energies is to manage to "uncoil" the Kundalini which is coiled up at the base of the spine and raise the energies through the spinal column to the different centres, and awaken the centres, open them, wake them up and set them in motion one after another right up to the top of the head, and then, go out from up there. And when one has succeeded in doing this (this is the first practice), when one has uncoiled the Kundalini, next to master it, guide and develop it, to guide it to all the centres, awaken all these centres. Once that has been done, one is master of the functioning. Once one is master of the functioning, instead of leaving the energies in places where they are not wanted, one pulls them up and puts them in places where they are useful, and uses them in this way for progress, for transformation.

All this is the result of enlightened, assiduous, very patient practice; this is not done *just like that*, while thinking of other things or playing about. These are disciplines. Naturally,

once one is master of the working, it becomes very interesting. But this is not done in a flash without one's doing what is necessary.

Once you said that human love was distorted and disfigured by men. What was love in its origin?

What?

Human love.

Human? Why, haven't I said it? It is Love. When it becomes human love, it is as I have described it. Love in its origin is Divine Love. Love in man, that is, love grown human, is distorted, deformed; it is only Divine Love which is pure.

There is another danger; it is in connection with the sex impulses. Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you. And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them. The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free, they rush up and invade the being. So long as this mental control has not been replaced by the Divine control, there is a period of transition when your sincerity and surrender will be put to test. The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them; they protest too vehemently and endeavour to control them by coercion, hold them within and sit upon them. But the more you think of a thing and say, "I don't want it, I don't want it," the more you are bound to it. What you should do is to keep the thing away from you, to dissociate from it, take as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, remain indifferent and unconcerned.

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world. They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them.

If you have once opened yourself to the Divine, if the power of the Divine has once come down into you and yet you try to keep to the old forces, you prepare troubles and difficulties and dangers for yourself. You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires. There are many self-appointed Masters, who do nothing but that. And then when you are off the straight path and when you have a little knowledge and not much power, it happens that you

are seized by beings or entities of a certain type, you become blind instruments in their hands and are devoured by them in the end. Wherever there is pretense, there is danger; you cannot deceive God. Do you come to God saying, "I want union with you" and in your heart meaning "I want powers and enjoyments"? Beware! You are heading straight towards the brink of the precipice. And yet it is so easy to avoid all catastrophe. Become like a child, give yourself up to the Mother, let her carry you, and there is no more danger for you.

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

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

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

It is one of the most convincing examples.

To become conscious of the Divine Love, all other love must be abandoned.

The need for human love, to the extent that it is not merely in obedience to the instinct of Nature or to a vital attraction, is the need to have a Divine for oneself alone, at one's entire and exclusive disposal, a Divine who is one's personal property and to whom one gives oneself totally only if the gift is reciprocated.

Instead of enlarging oneself to the size of the Divine and having a love as vast as the universe, one tries to reduce the Divine to one's own size and have His love for oneself alone. Therefore, human love is not a need of the soul, but rather a concession it makes for a time to the ego.

If there is, somewhere in some part of your being, still the need for human affection and love, it is better to go through the experience of life; it is the best preparation for Yoga.

There is a thirst for Love which no human relation can quench. It is only the Divine's love that can satisfy that thirst.



Savitri and Satyavan

He bent to her and took into his own
 Their married yearning joined like folded hopes;
 As if a whole rich world suddenly possessed,
 Wedded to all he had been, became himself,
 An inexhaustible joy made his alone,
 He gathered all Savitri into his clasp.
 Around her his embrace became the sign
 Of a locked closeness through slow intimate years,
 A first sweet summary of delight to come,
 One brevity intense of all long life.
 In a wide moment of two souls that meet
 She felt her being flow into him as in waves
 As river pours into a mighty sea.
 As when a soul is merging into God
 To live in Him for ever and know His joy,
 Her consciousness was a wave of him alone
 And all her separate self was lost in his.
 As a starry heaven encircles happy earth,
 he shut her into himself in a circle of bliss
 And shut the world into himself and her.
 A boundless isolation made them one;
 he was aware of her enveloping him
 And let her penetrate his very soul,
 As is a world by the world's spirit filled,
 As the mortal wakes into Eternity,
 As the finite opens to the Infinite.
 Thus were they in each other lost awhile,
 Then drawing back from their long ecstasy's trance
 Came into a new self and a new world.

An American's Spiritual Search and Sri Aurobindo's Response

The Search

New York, 24th April, 1947

Five years ago this spring I had a mystic experience, or psychic opening, or "vision"—I don't know what to call it. In a curious way that moment in my life marks the year 0, for ever since it I have been a different person. I am writing to ask you the meaning of it all.

Though it is now some time since that moment out of this world, it was such a moment as to make all life in this world pale. I still think about it, wondering how to recreate it. However pleasant, successful and well-coordinated my surface life is (and it is all of these), there is always with me a substratum of questioning and longing. Often I am vague and absent-minded like a person who has lost something and who goes about constantly wishing he could find it.

Have I attached too much importance to a tiny moment? Or is the light that I saw the real world and, if so, is there a way for me to return to it? A revolutionary at heart, I could drop my life, give up everything I have carefully built over the years, and do whatever it is necessary to do—come to you pleading for instruction, for example.

*I wonder if the particular path which
led me up into the light in the first place
is of any importance as a link in my story.
Certainly it is one which baffles me in
view of all that I have since read.
I went "through the shutter
in the top of the mind" while
making love with my husband.*

I wonder if the particular path which led me up into the light in the first place is of any importance as a link in my story. Certainly it is one which baffles me in view of all that I have since read. I went "through the shutter in the top of the mind" while making love with my husband. I would say that the period of preparation leading up to this covered approximately two years, though the renunciation spoken of in mystical literature is foreign to me. I gave myself because it is the woman's role to do so. It just happened that I asked nothing in return. Is that so unusual? Why should a miracle, if it is a miracle, come to me and not to others? Who am I? What is my status on the evolutionary ladder? Where lies duty?

If the purpose of human life is spiritual evolution, then I am inclined to want to get on with the main business of living now, and with proper help. To stay in the hit-or-miss world with its

stumbling, delay, diluted experience, fickle satisfactions, questionable and retroactive prizes seems to me to be wasting time. If there is a battle to be fought, what am I doing sitting around eating cream puffs that I don't like the taste of, anyway?

Often I am bored with the repetition of it all. There is a feeling of ineptness, isolation; I am weighed down and hemmed in by the shell that I know sooner or later will be shed. Must I wait? Certainly there is a goal, even for the human being on the mundane level. Why cannot I take even the first steps on the way to it? Surely a little progress is better than no progress at all; and wandering around in the maze hardly seems appropriate for one who at least feels that a goal exists.

It seems to me that the rhythm of life is a dynamic thrust from a relaxed centre of gravity. Ideally this is a rhythm of all activity, yet how can the thrusts be dynamic if the centre of gravity is not consistently calm? How can one be efficient at

*If there is a battle to be fought,
what am I doing sitting around
eating cream puffs that I don't
like the taste of anyway?*

anything if one is not in and of this basic rhythm? From a ruffled centre the thrusts become petty jabs missing their mark, stirring up confusion, accomplishing nothing.

I see this and feel it in my present state in a dim sort of way. I should like to feel it again intensely. I would like to find that centre from which action springs—efficient action, with a minimum of effort and a maximum of result. And I feel that I could, if only I might go off quietly away from all the noise and business and just concentrate ardently on one thing—a person, or an idea, or I don't know what. But I need help, or I need to get out of the West, probably both.

When I ask myself what single thing I want out of life I have but one answer: I want to return to the light. It's like an inward cry with me, and pathetic because I realize how slim are my chances at my present tempo and temperature. Life is a struggle, especially in energetic and competitive New York. It takes a great deal of energy just to go along with the current. Is it worth it? Cannot that same quantum of energy be directed into a more fruitful, more lasting, more fundamental effort? I don't like waste, and I feel I am dissipating my will, frittering it out in little bits that don't add up to anything but the perpetration of the general confusion in the world. Where is my place? Where should I set my sight? What seeds of resolution can I sow now that I may one day re-enter the light, or if that is not to be given, that in the world I may live in the great pulse?

Thank you, Great Sir, for any help that you are willing to send my way. Thank you for your books and for your work in the world. Thank you for what you are.

With deep respect and the longing that brings tears.

Eleanor Moore Montgomery

The Response through a Disciple

It is no longer necessary to answer Mrs. X's original question about the occasion for her experience and the circumstances under which it came, since she has received a complete answer

from the passage in the *Words of the Mother* and has understood its meaning. But I may say that the opening upwards, the ascent into the Light and the subsequent descent into the ordinary consciousness and normal human life is very common as the first decisive experience in the practice of Yoga and may very well happen even without the practice of Yoga in those who are destined for the spiritual change, especially if there is a dissatisfaction somewhere with the ordinary life and a seeking for something more, greater or better. It comes often exactly in the way that she describes and the cessation of the experience and the descent also come in the same way. This first experience may be followed by a very long time during which there is no repetition of it or any subsequent experience. If there is a constant practice of Yoga, the interval need not be so long; but even so it is often long enough. The descent is inevitable because it is not the whole being that has risen up but only something within, and all the rest of the nature is unprepared, absorbed in or attached to ordinary life and governed by movements that are not in consonance with the Light. Still the something within is something central in the being and therefore the experience is in a way definitive and decisive. For it comes as a decisive intimation of the spiritual destiny and an indication of what must be reached some time in the life. Once it has been there, something is bound to happen which will open the way, determine the right knowledge and the right attitude enabling one to proceed on the way and bring a helping influence. After that, the work of clearing away the obstacles that prevent the return to the Light and the ascension of the whole being and, what is equally important, the descent of the Light into the whole being can be begun and progress towards completion. It may take long or be rapid, that depends on the inner push and

... the ascent into the Light and the subsequent descent into the ordinary consciousness and normal human life is very common as the first decisive experience in the practice of yoga. . . It comes often exactly in the way that she describes . . .

also on outer circumstances but the inner aspiration and endeavour count more than the circumstances which can accommodate themselves to the inner need if that is very strong. The moment has come for her and the necessary aspiration and knowledge and the influence that can help her. It is not absolutely necessary to abandon the ordinary life in order to seek after the Light or to practice Yoga. This is usually done by those who want to make a clean cut, to live a purely religious or exclusively inner and spiritual life, to renounce the world entirely and to depart from the cosmic existence by cessation of the human birth and passing away into some higher state or into the transcendental Reality. Otherwise it is only necessary when the pressure of the inner urge becomes so great that the pursuit of the ordinary life is no longer compatible with the pursuit of the dominant spiritual objective. Till then what is necessary is a power to practice an inner isolation, to be able to retire within oneself and concentrate at any time on the necessary spiritual purpose. There must

also be a power to deal with the ordinary outer life from a new inner attitude and one can then make the happenings of that life itself a means for the inner change of nature and the growth in spiritual experience.

The Ashram has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit. There is no general rule as to the stage at which one may leave the ordinary life and enter here; in each case it depends on the personal need and impulsion and the possibility or the advisability for one to take the step, the decision resting with the Mother.

Sri Aurobindo

Editor's Note: A second letter was written to Sri Aurobindo before the receipt of his reply to the first, and there a reference was made to the *Words of The Mother*.

Extracts from: *Mother India*, July 1976 [Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry].

INTERIOR NAVIGATION

I've tied my fate to the tail of a kite
And however I flap in the gusty gale
Or whip-lash the wind, with a bright
Air-worthy lead I sail.

When I come into port in the thick of the night
I'll hurl the umbilical rope afar,
Tether somehow by some singular sight
This battered bark to a star!

Though I wake in the caves of the troglodyte
Or the underground vault of the safely dead,
Like a vapor I'll rise, or a flaming sprite,
To moor my ship overhead,

Then anchor (by some secret sleight
Of mind) up in the midnight sea
And wait on the deep for the marvelous light
That guides solitarily.

Eleanor Moore Montgomery

Golden Notes

by Jane Cole

In 1959 my life was a dream come true. I had married a man that I dearly loved. We had two robust children and a third on the way. Then on Thanksgiving night my whole world suddenly changed. My husband became ill and a few days later died, a blood clot from an old injury struck his heart. With his death, my life was thrust into total blackness. I did not have the one thing that other grieving people have. I was an atheist, or so I thought. Thus I withdrew into a cold, dark world of my own. My parents persuaded me to come and live with them for the sake of the children, and the new one on the way. It seemed the wisest thing to do, even though my relationship with my mother and stepfather was far from ideal. Also, I would leave all my dear friends. But that didn't matter, I didn't want anyone. I wanted only my cold, bitter despair.

*I had no idea
that this was a powerful prayer,
but I sent it out,
and there was a listening.*

At my parent's home, my routine became helping with the housework, child-care, and then with chores done, sitting in cold, quiet despair. No one could intrude upon my world, although many tried. When people said that what had happened was God's will, it was like a bitter medicine. As I became more and more uncommunicative, people stopped talking to me and I preferred it that way.

My only thought was to raise the children and then go someplace and die. It was in this frame of mind that I made my first prayer. I prayed:

*"God, if there is a God, show me, don't expect me
to believe on faith, I won't! I must have proof, if
there is a God, show me!"*

I had no idea that this was a powerful prayer, but I sent it out, and there was a listening.

Finally, I had my third child, a beautiful baby girl. Yet, even after the birth, I rarely left the house. I found that going to the supermarket was too painful an experience. I seldom cried, I just sat there on my mother's porch like a statue. I have no idea how many hours or days were spent in that cold, dark place of despair.

One day, one of my mother's friends stopped in to see her while on the way to visit a grieving friend. She was bringing this friend a book to read. Long after the woman left, I noticed the book on the table next to my chair. It had an oil-cloth cover, the kind we would put on books in school to keep them clean. This made me curious, so I picked up the book and opened it. The book said, **Words of the Mother**. Still curious, I turned the page and the strangest thing happened.

The page became illuminated as if a very bright light was shining on it. On that page were the words that started my new life:

*"The world is a symphony and we are but one note,
and our only duty is to make this one note as pure
as possible."*

I don't know if these words were part of the book or handprinted in it, as I have tried to find this phrase again in Mother's books, but I haven't been able to.

I was overwhelmed. These words struck me so powerfully. I had thought of myself as the whole symphony. All the weight of the world was on me, poor me. I had taken on so much responsibility. But to be one note, how joyous! Each one of us was one note and I lived in a world of golden notes. What a sour clunker I was! I knew from that moment that I would devote the rest of my life to making my golden note harmonious with those around me. If another note around me needed tuning, I would help where I could without intruding on their space.

Page by page, I read this book, My Book. How jealously I guarded it. I constantly wrote passages down in case that woman, she was a French woman, Madam Hudon, came back for the book. I am sure that she never realised how dramatically she had changed by life by leaving that book.

*I had thought of myself
as the whole symphony. All the
weight of the world was on me, poor me.
I had taken so much responsibility.
But to be one note, how joyous!*

The next momentous thing I remember was meditation. Mother said, "Prayer is asking, meditation is listening." Well, I had certainly done a lot of ranting and raving, but very little listening. I had such trust in this book that I was determined to do anything it said, and it said so many wonderful things! Well, in 1959, I certainly didn't know what meditating was. But not to worry, in a few pages Mother explained exactly what to do. The hardest part was to find a quiet time. This solved itself when I realised that after my baby's early morning feeding, the house was dark and quiet, and I was not disturbed. At first, meditation gave me terrible headaches and I learned again from my book that I was still exerting my will. I learned in time to quiet my very busy mind. In the first few months, my meditations were soothing, quiet times. The first of many visions occurred after about three months. I had multiple problems to solve and was churning with questions. I took the questions into my meditation. One day an answer came as a vision. I was shown a peaceful scene with a pond where three ducklings were swimming and I was feeding them. My answer was simple: Take care of what can be taken care of now with beauty and grace, and let the rest take care of itself. The answer from Mother in one way or another is so often simplicity. I feel that simplicity means to take one day at a time, one thought at a time, and make it as beautiful as possible.

Through this book my entire life changed. There was an opening in my sky and the light poured in, but I didn't know where it came from. I had never heard of the Mother, or Yoga, and yet here it was becoming the strongest part of my life. It came before everything else. I searched for books on Yoga, but found only exercises which never interested me and still don't. I then started reading Indian philosophers and found the strongest desire to find others of like feelings. I was always happy in ashrams, it didn't matter who the guru was. Kirpal Singh, Muktananda, they all had messages for me. Before leaving for a trip to India, a friend and I meditated and I saw a white rose. Another friend gave me a white coral rose she had kept for years. She said something had told her to do so. I still had not heard of where to find Mother, other than in this one book. So, I went to Ganespuri instead of Auroville.

Although I had many wonderful experiences, I knew that I had never met the guru who would be my personal guide. I simply did not experience what the other ashramites seemed to feel towards the person who was held before me as the guru. But this did not seem important because one of the things I learned from that book was that I could experience the Divine Presence anywhere and even more so in a group dedicated to finding the path that is right for them. The wisdom of Mother seems to be that she knew that not everyone would be drawn to the same person or the same place. But the joy that filled my heart was always growing, always comprehending more. I knew I would be given knowledge only when I was ready to receive it. I stopped looking for a personal guru, being happy instead with all that had been given me. It was then that the most unexpected thing happened.

Two years ago, while attending a Spiritual Frontiers Meeting in Sarasota, I met a woman, Rose Kupperman. We became friendly and she invited me to her apartment for tea. The first thing I saw on entering her rooms was a photo of a woman. I started to shake and cry, then sobbed, "Who is that?" Rose said, "That is the Mother." Needless to say it was like finding my own true home. Through Rose I met Dr. Aurobindo Jani and his wife Mala, who have opened a center for Mother in Tampa, Florida. And now, through *Collaboration*, I look forward to meeting more of my own family of "golden notes."

*There is a purpose in
life — and it is the only
true and lasting one —
The Divine
Turn to Him and the
emptiness will go.
Blessings*

There is a purpose in life — and it is the only true and lasting one — the Divine. Turn to Him and the emptiness will go. Blessings.

What on Earth?

by David Hutchinson

Some say that Sri Aurobindo retreated from the world in 1926—that he never had much of an influence afterwards—that he was lost to all but a few special disciples.

Which Aurobindo would that have been? With the passing of time it gets more difficult to place him in any set category, such as poet, teacher, yogi, man. As he says of himself, "I is a pronoun only = the Multifarious One."

Nirodbaran was a young man when he came to Sri Aurobindo's Ashram in 1933, fresh from an English medical school. He didn't take up doctoring at the Ashram right away, but instead began to work in other areas. Yoga was new to him and he did not have many experiences at first, but he had a plodding sort of effort that kept him at Sri Aurobindo's side when many others dropped away. During this period disciples kept in contact with the Guru through correspondence; the *Letters on Yoga* attest to the volume of letters that flowed back and forth.

In the extensive writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother there are works that tax the understanding, others that call you to begin in earnest. There are some, like Savitri, which embody a vision and make it palpable to the sense. Nirodbaran's Correspondence, among other things will bring you squarely down to earth.

For his response to a letter, Sri Aurobindo frequently used the same sheets on which it was written. He would answer a point in the margin and move on down the page. In Nirodbaran's *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* (2 volumes, 1221 pages) there is given the portion of Nirod's letter, then the "marginal" answer, then the next part of the letter, and so on. The whole takes on the character of a protracted dialogue. As Nirod didn't have the bhakta's awe, at least in the beginning, he wrote letters to the teacher in a familiar tone and the answers returned in kind. Thanks to the semi-illegibility of the answers, there are places where the message turns back on itself.

- (N) "When you said yesterday, 'I am simply busy trying to get out of the mind' etc., etc. I sighed, 'What a happy ignorance! Will it be folly to get wise?'"
- (A) "Not mind, sir. I have gone out of my mind long ago. I wrote 'mud,' mud, mud, mud of the subconscious."

In the extensive writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother there are works that tax the understanding, others that call you to begin in earnest. There are some, like *Savitri*, which embody a vision and make it palpable to the sense. Nirodbaran's *Correspondence*, among other things, will bring you squarely down to earth.

- (N) "Suddenly to drop into an underground cell is, I don't know what."
- (A) "Everybody drops. I have dropped myself thousands of times during the sadhana. What rose-leaf princess sadhaks you all are!"

The first years of practising yoga can be the most uncertain. You enter the path, however gradually, and bumble along in some fashion until suddenly the bottom drops out of your aspiration. Everything returns to the old habits—ideas, feelings, experience—and you ask, what is going on?

- (N) “I have lost all faith, confidence, hope, and if all that is gone, what else remains for me to do here?”
- (A) “Good God! What a shipwreck in a teacup! Kindly cultivate a sense of proportion. Learn the lessons of experience, ponder them in silence and do better next time—that would be more sensible.”

In the *Letters on Yoga* are Sri Aurobindo's statements on a number of subjects, from science to the Supermind. But they are edited and arranged, with the small details and personal matters mostly left out; the impression that we get is of a man who from his supreme heights dropped pearls of wisdom to the ragged crowd below. It appears that many of the sadhaks at the Ashram in the 1930s had the same impression: the vast Impersonal, impossibly distant, an Avatar of incomprehensible stature...

- (A) “While there is life, there is hope, even if there are also mosquitoes.”

It is fortunate that Nirod was so obstinate in his conceptions, for it gives us the opportunity to see Sri Aurobindo respond time and again to certain key questions. Why do some sadhaks turn away from yoga? Is Sri Aurobindo really an Avatar? (What is an Avatar?) What is the yogic Force, and where and how can it act? How does one open to intuitive levels in writing poetry or prose? Can illness be brought about by pressure of a Divine descent? How did Sri Aurobindo write poetry? What kind of people were the Ashram disciples?

- (A) “But it is the fashion here to shout and despair and say we have got nothing and nobody can get anything in this Yoga. I believe the pretensions of the Pondicherry sadhaks to have an easy and jolly canter to the goal or else think themselves baffled martyrs would be stared at with surprise in any other Ashram.”

Due in part to Nirodbaran's status as the Ashram physician during the greater part of the period (1933-1938) which the *Correspondence* covers, the questions and answers range over a wide variety of human affairs. Along with his personal queries, Nirod sent in regular medical reports to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. They in turn gave specific instructions in many cases and often commented on the inner, non-physical processes involved. Here we see the complex interplay between the physical body, the surface personality, inner receptivity, one's fixed habits of response, and the application of Force by Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. It was a common belief in the Ashram that most illnesses were due to action of adverse forces or a pressure of descent; in truth, the majority were characteristics of the individual instrument, and both self-created and self-perpetuated.

- (N) “Krishna Ayyar has a cold and slight fever. Given aspirin. Requires Divine help.”
- (A) “One tablet of aspirin and another of aspiration might do.”

And what is a Guru for, if not guidance? Here there is direction in all directions, one might say. Every aspect of sadhana was followed with the utmost of care...

- (A) “Good Lord! What mantra? OM Tut a tut to to whit tuwhoo? Man! But it is to be recited only when you are taking tea in the company of four Brahmins pure of all sex ideas and 5 ft. 7 inches tall, with a stomach in proportion. Otherwise it can't be effective.”
- (N) “Waiting patiently for the blue moon, should I all the while cry out ‘damn it, damn it!’?”
- (A) “But that's another mantra. One for which the blue moon has a special dislike.”

It was a common belief in the Ashram that most illnesses were due to action of adverse forces or a pressure of descent; in truth, the majority were characteristics of the individual instrument, and both self-created and self-perpetuated.

The man who never smiles... perhaps the greatest utility the *Correspondence* will have is to loosen up our view of the path—to let a few chuckles break through during those persistent years of effort. The pen dances across the page, leaving trails of wild exclamations (“Jehosaphat! Woogh! Great Muggins, man!”), neologisms (“overheadache,” “teified cells”), and puns beyond counting.

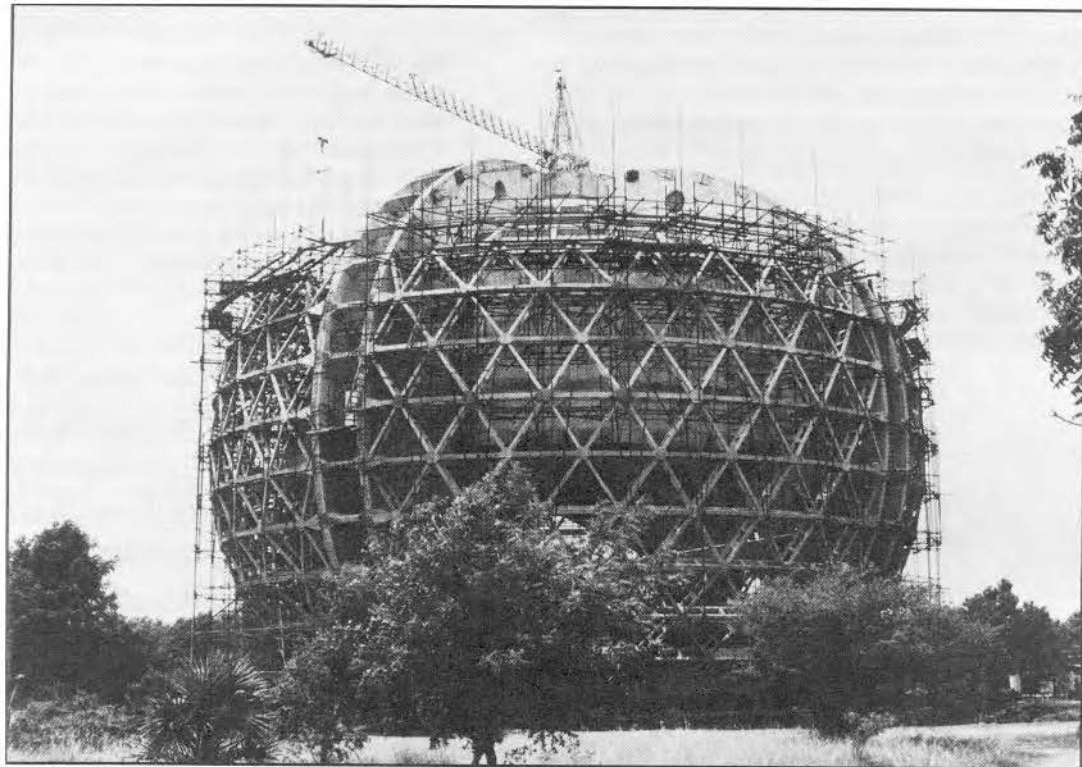
- (N) “What thinkest thou of this anapest poem, Sir, Written by my humble self? Pray does it stir Any soft feelings in the deep within Or touches not even thy Supramental skin?”
- (A) “So soft, so soft, I almost coughed, then went aloft To supramental regions, where rainbow-breasted pigeons Coo in their sacred legions.”

Nirod was not devoid of ailments himself—and the teacher would diagnose with impunity—

- (N) “Self: Nose boil seems to be boiling down slowly; but at noon I had a terrible headache, fever too. Feeling fed up, really!”
- (A) “Cellular bolshevism, probably.”

On the other hand, Sri Aurobindo would speak plainly when the occasion called for it. “He seems to be a well-intentioned fellow but rather a bit of an empty sort of goose. The twaddle he talks is simply awful.” And when the talk turned to yoga, the message was as clear as always...

“Everything once gained is there and can be regained. Yoga is not a thing that goes by one decisive rush one way or the other—it is a building up of a new consciousness and is full of ups and downs. But if one keeps to it the ups have a habit of resulting by accumulation in a decisive change—therefore the one thing to do is to keep at it. After a fall don't wail and say I'm done for, but get up, dust yourself and proceed farther on the right path.”



The Pilgrim at the Matrimandir

“The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine’s answer to man’s aspiration.” (Message from Mother on the occasion of the placing of the first stone of the Matrimandir, 21 February 1971.)

The center of Auroville, the center of Force, the Matrimandir embodies the spirit of Auroville. It is a symbol of the inner pilgrimage which each Aurovillian must make to discover his inner being. It is a symbol of the ideal of beauty and harmony which must preside over the collective life of all those who desire to participate in this adventure toward a new consciousness which Auroville represents.

The architectural conception of the Matrimandir further underlines the symbolic significance. It represents the emergence out of the crater of the earth, of the golden sphere of consciousness. It recounts the history of life and of its multiple changing aspects, of its innumerable mobile facets, represented by the similar movements of golden discs which constitute the outer appearance of the sphere. But this outer appearance is only the surface of things. Immediately beneath, there is another layer, the inner shell of the Matrimandir, still earth-hued but much more tranquil.

To discover the secret of the Matrimandir, one must not be content with its outer aspect. There are roadways to its inmost life. They lead you across high pyramidal masses of compact earth, making the marble paths that lead to the structure appear much narrower. They lead you far below the sphere, close to the open crater where streams of water unite and disappear. They oblige you to ascend slowly the steep slopes toward the sphere of light.

In the interior of the sphere where one then arrives, there are tunnels which the pilgrim must now pass through in his new ascent. He advances over a spiral roadway which leads to an

elevated inner chamber. How amazed he will no doubt be on seeing this dazzling place for the first time.

It is a 12-sided room, divided into four meditation sections, as there were four paths leading to the Matrimandir. Each section opens onto the most radiant of spheres, in which all the sunlight from an opening at the apex of the Matrimandir has been concentrated by a focusing device.

Now at rest, face to face with his innermost heart, the pilgrim discovers the secret of the transformation of his energies. Far below, the waters rush together in the crater and gleam with the Light from above (a second opening under the Matrimandir, symmetrical with the first, permits the light of the radiant globe to illumine the depths.)

Leaving the Matrimandir after this immersion in light within his being, the pilgrim discovers eight exits. Two of them are the most interesting. One leads directly to the Garden of Unity with the banyan tree in the center surrounded by all the flowers of the 12 gardens of the Matrimandir. These flowers grow in the Garden of Unity in a rich combination of colors and symbolize the integration of the 12 aspects of the Mother: Existence, Joy, Light, Life, Power, Prosperity, Utility, Progress, Youth, Harmony, Perfection, Consciousness.

The second way leads to the urn in the form of a lotus which contains a little soil from numerous nations of the world. A direct route connects the Lotus with the Banyan Tree.

In contemplating the site of the Matrimandir, the Aurovillian will discover what has awaited his search. Each day he can renew there his meditation and progress in the discovery of his own light in order to be near the planetary action: an action which guides man, pointing him now in his true direction, toward human unity.

From Auroville . . . Lien, No. 12 (July 1971), published by the Association pour Auroville, Paris, France.

The Mother Of The World

A Hymn by Auroluigi

Augustest! intensest! sweetest! profoundest! delightfulest
Mother Of Mothers. Womb of the world—its soul, its sap, its
substance!

Infinite Consciousness! Infinite Force, Brahman's Brahmani!
Eternal Feminine, Lightnight drawing us upward forever,
Turn the kaleidoscope of destiny, turn on the spiral of fate,
Turn in the book of the Earth to the page of divine evolution!
O Golden Sun, whose glory is shrouded by the cloudy mind,
Dawn in the night of humanity our superhuman day!
Grant us your grace, O immaculate Goddess with four gold
faces,
Twelve arms that are a dozenfold prism out-fanning white light
Rainbowlike endlessly, and millions of flamboyant flower-feet:
On a single rosy stem countless colourful blossoms.
Four are the great queen-powers that prop and propell the
cosmos,
Four personalities of one Person, four beats of one Heart:
Wide wisdom, swift strength, beatific beauty, precisest
perfection.

Splendid, majestic, compassionate love-ocean, vast
Maheshwari,
Star-crowned empress who here upon earth light's kingdom
establish,
Truth is your throne and your rule is enlightenment; your
ministers of knowledge:
Clear thought's intricate net of abstractions to catch
understanding;
Inspiration's brilliant showers, a riot of hues amaranthine;
Intuition flashes straight to the core of its target;
Vision, a silver-eyed eagle is soaring on wide-spread
flame-wings;
Revelation's massed gold-sight sinks to timeless deeps below
time's foaming;
Illumination meets and embraces itself in all faces.
O Golden Glory, the cosmic idea is your stupendous
scheming—
All began with love compressing light to a fireball:
Cosmic miracle chip, imprinted with the code of evolution.

Dancing destroyer, intensest enjoyer, high **Mahakali**,
Whirlwind-warrior, suffering's fire, death's chill you
demolish;

Progress as watchword, rider on restless winds of tomorrow,
Onward ever you press, upward ever ascend;
Pure must one be to bear your company, lava-erupting
Out of the soul: truth's volcano blazes falsehood to cinder.
O Gold Glare, your hurricane-dancing is making and breaking
the cosmos.

Clang! one sole blow: the original fireball shattered and
scattered
Countlessly stars in a dynamite-dance of bizzare constellations;
Light turned into its shadow, night; One scintillated as Many—
You but lifted your fire-foot and thundered its
lightning-explosion.
Woe! when your ice-foot rises to trample the world to
extinction!

Opulently beautiful, harmoniously intimate **Mahalakshmi**,
Freer of spirit's inexhaustible fountain of wealth hid in matter!
When you surge through the being, an aureate ocean of music,
Swirling anklets of the dancing heart tinkle a silvery laughter.
Rapt rosy pulsations of fluttering flamingos sweep through the
blood;

Leaping in joy, pirouetting, ecstatic, the soul is a flaring
ballerina;

Touched by your magical Wand, O Gold Glamour, from
Tohuwabohu

Order emerged; cacophonic torrents of grinding star-dust
Patterned the pearling cadences of symphonic celestial
spheres;

Space's conflagrations shone as the score-sheets sung by time's
cycles;

Earth was composed: each mineral repeated its tremolo's
stone-note;

Life was enacted: dramatical choruses, duets and arias.

Alchemist ever mutating the world, deep **Mahasaraswati**,
Architect planning immortal man, engineer building the life
divine,

Flawless perfection's meticulous, minute, miraculous master!
You make the spirit grow through its material metamorphosis—
Only on bodily branches can blossom the root of the soul;
You make the limitless grow through its own self-limitation—
Only through finite becoming can infinite being find itself;
You make the timeless grow through the temporal beats of its
heart—

Only on entropy's collapse-course can syntropy run on and on.
O Golden Glitter, propulse on the engines of evolution faster
Till life accelerates to deathless speed of light
And from ashes of man, an immortalised phoenix, flames
superman!

Center News

Sri Aurobindo Study Group Tucson, AZ

Our group has been meeting since February, 1986. It has remained small and several people have come and gone. For most of the group, Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is relatively new. They had not heard of Mother or Auroville and there is still much exploring of basic truths and experiences. We are just finishing the "Yoga of Works", and beginning the "Yoga of Knowledge" in *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Our weekly meetings consist of a meditation, reading, and discussion. Enthusiasm runs high as the Integral Yoga reveals itself through the incomparable prose of Sri Aurobindo.

David Hutchinson

Sri Aurobindo Center London, U.K.

The International Centre for Future Education is organizing a Children's Peace Council. For the last three New Year's Days we have sponsored a *Candles for Peace* ceremony in countries around the world. Every year more children have taken part in creating a belt of light for Peace on New Year's Day. Out of this has come the foundation of the Children's Peace Council which aims at harnessing the marvellous ideas, enthusiasm, action, and potential power of children for world peace and human unity.

If you have, or know of, a child or children of any age who would like to participate by making drawings, paintings, or writings on the theme of peace, or form groups to meet at regular intervals to light *Candles for Peace* and meditate or wish for world peace, please contact us. We hope to compile an attractive and moving dossier from the children's work. This would also include collecting as many children's signatures as possible for a plea for Action for Peace to all world leaders. The art work and creative writing, along with any other attractive submissions will make a moving appeal.

We want to make this project as widely known as possible. If you send us material we advise registering it to ensure safe delivery. Please write or call for further information: The Children's Peace Council, c/o Sri Aurobindo Centre, 82 Bell St., London NW1 6sp. Tel: 01-258 3656

Matagiri Mt. Tremper, NY

Some 30 people braved ice and cold to attend the observance of Mother's birthday, which was held on Saturday, February 22. There was a meditation with a tape of Mother in English, drawn from the Agenda recordings, and Aurobindo read a poem on the Mother he had written for the occasion. People came from Boston and New York as well as the local area.

Recent visitors include Seyril Schochen's niece, Dena Deckel, from Israel, and her friend Gail Slotwinski from New Paltz; Margo Macleod from New Haven; two young women from Philadelphia; and Miliana Kelly, who lived in the Ashram for several years in the 1960s and now lives in Texas.

Sam Spanier, the founder of Matagiri, had a one-man exhibition of his paintings at the Unison Gallery in New Paltz, which received wide press coverage in the area.

Anyone wishing to spend time at Matagiri or use the extensive Sri Aurobindo library of books and tape recordings, please call Sam or Eric at (914) 679-8322 or write Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

Sri Aurobindo Center Boston, MA

The Sri Aurobindo Center of Boston Open House on April 27 was a great success. We thank each of you who came for helping to make it so. Please note the following revisions to study/meditation sessions and drop-in times:

Monday 8:00 PM: Meditation accompanied by reading of Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

Wednesday 7:00 PM: Meditation accompanied by reading of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, "Savitri." This takes place at Eugene Finn's home. For directions call (617) 262-6390.

Sunday 12:00-6:00 PM: Drop-in time. Someone will be manning the Center at this time. Please drop in to read, write, meditate, or drink tea and talk.

Other times: If you call ahead you are welcome to stop in by appointment. Please take advantage of the rapidly growing selection of books we carry. We also have a number of back issues of journals published by the Ashram and Auroville. We are located at 72½ Inman Street, Cambridge. Tel: (617) 354-4237.

Vincent Massa will give a slideshow of the Pondicherry Ashram and Auroville on Monday, June 9 at 8:00pm. He lived at the Ashram for seven years and has a number of slides of both communities and their surroundings, including some rare slides of the Samadhi where Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are buried. Please come.

Our aim in opening this Center is to allow people who know nothing of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga a chance to learn about it and, at the same time, allow people who are already involved in the Yoga a chance to broaden and deepen their experience through contact with other seekers. The principle of our "study" groups is that the texts act as a gateway to meditation and the discovery of our inner truth. We hope that this space will benefit those from any tradition who sincerely seek the deeper Self.

Sri Aurobindo Center of Boston
72½ Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Tel: (617) 354-4237; (617) 262-6390

Global View Spring Green, WI

Global View is now putting out a newsletter to keep friends and customers informed about new products, upcoming trips being offered, festivals, and activities of interest. Customers are finding new designs and higher quality handicrafts available, as well as information and stories of the cultural heritage of the crafts and craftspeople. With the first Himalayan Trip organized by Global View, 15 travelers were given a personal view of the craftspeople of Nepal, Darjeeling, and Northeast India. The effort to link globally is continued this summer at the Willow Gold Farm. The five festival weekends began on May

24th-26th with an Indonesian Festival. People were invited to spend the day and many did as the audio-visual presentations, performances, and demonstrations of crafts went from 10 AM to 6 PM.

The opportunity to explore the world at Global View continues with the following schedule:

Festival of India: July 19-20

Celebration of Thailand: August 9-10

Our Global Family: August 30-September 1

Himalayan Holiday: October 4-5

Sri Aurobindo Center High Falls, NY

An India Festival of New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology highlighted recent Center activities. Selling books, handmade paper from the Ashram and handicrafts from Auroville, numerous sales and contacts occurred between old and new friends. Jonathan Breslow, an earnest student of homeopathy now living in Ojai, California, described his work teaching at a school for acupuncture and taking cases at the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

Amrit Inamdar, a visitor to the former Center on West 58th St., greeted us as did a number of friends who had visited the Ashram and Auroville. Helping us staff the booth were Anie Nunnally, Vijay, Auroluigi, Ilana, Connie Budkley, and Miriam Belov.

Near us was the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan which is directed by Dr. Jayaraman whose wife sang so beautifully at the Sanskrit Conference organized by the late Professor Gopal Bhat-tacharyya.

The Fair featured many handicrafts and performers familiar to us from the Smithsonian Institute's "Aditi" part of the India Festival in America. Special thanks go to Edgar Neogy-Tezak who designed the layout and invited us to participate.

A new incense display is being produced. The square is made out of wood and revolves on a ball-bearing turntable. It will hold two bundles each of the six fragrances of the Ashram incense we carry: Sandalwood, Rose, Musk, Jasmine, Amber, and Ketaki and will come free with each order of twelve bundles. Please refer to us the name of any stores you feel should carry our incense or books. We need and appreciate your help.

In an effort to run our office more efficiently, we have included the purchase of a computer in our budget. Expertise in software, hardware, and small business applications is most welcome, as well as contributions towards the purchase of this equipment.

One of the most satisfying aspects of our ongoing work is to forward your tax-deductible contributions to our projects in India. Currently we are forwarding funds to a special Crystal Account for the sphere being constructed in Germany by the Carl Zeiss Foundation. This crystal sphere will be placed in the center of the Matrimandir in Auroville and at 70 cm in diameter and 450 kg. would be the largest ever attempted. We also forward money from a group who send in regular contributions to Matrimandir's general needs. A \$12 minimum allows them to receive the Matrimandir Newsletter mailed directly from Auroville. Donations to Auroville come in on a regular basis as do some for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Checks may be made payable to Matagiri, Sri Aurobindo Center (MSAC) and designated to one or more categories in India, and/or to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center itself for our work in America.

Announcements

THE HEALING VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO & THE MOTHER

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, two great saints of modern India, envisioned healing as the development of consciousness where one gradually perceives the interrelatedness of reality and, consequently, is able to place the various parts of his/her being and the universe in a harmonious relationship within the whole.

During the week of July 21-25, Arya Maloney, a resident of Auroville, South India, will lead a workshop entitled *The Healing Vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother* at the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, Rhinebeck, NY, 1-800-342-2240. The aim of this workshop is to awaken the healing power of images (positive and negative) in the mind, emotions, and physical body by removing blockages in the body's energy fields, healing via the waking dream, talking to the cells of the body, and collective imagery in group healing.

LEARNING ARTS PRE-SCHOOL

Arya Maloney and Lucy Barbera are working on an educational project designed to study images and myths in young children. Among the various vehicles which will be employed to facilitate the non-verbal manifestation of imagery in children is sandplay. Sandplay was developed in the 1930s by Margaret Lowenfeld, a child psychologist residing in London, and was expanded by Dora Kalff, a Jungian analyst from Zurich, Switzerland. The materials needed for sandplay are a tray filled with sand and enough miniature forms to construct "many worlds." These include people of various cultures and functions, animals (domestic and wild), houses, mythical creatures, trees, shells, stones, gods, goddesses, etc. Dora Kalff describes sandplay as a vehicle to bridge the inner and outer worlds, a western form of meditation, and an instrument for individuation.

Lucy, who created the Learning Arts Pre-School, and Arya, who is a therapist using imagery as a vehicle for healing, will use sandplay in an educational rather than a therapeutic context. This will be a project of Child Light, Inc., an educational non-profit organization. The central objective will be to create an environment, a free and protected space, which will encourage children to express their inner worlds in a spontaneous way.

Anyone having access to materials which could be used for this project, who want to know more, or have ideas for funding, please contact: Lucy Barbera and Arya Maloney, R.D. 1 Box 190A, Accord, NY 12404. Phone (914) 687-9658

AUROMESSAGER

Auromessenger (Auromessenger in English) is a new spiritual journal dedicated to the Ideal of Human Brotherhood, as expressed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and its manifestation all over the world.

One of the central aims of this journal is to remind us of the ideal of Unity in diversity. In the words of the Mother: "Unity through uniformity is an absurdity. Unity must be realized

through the union of the many. Each one is part of the unity; each one is indispensable to the whole."

Auromessenger wishes to encourage the perception of oneness in multiplicity—firstly in the individual, secondly in and among groups, and last but not least, in the whole human race—based, in an ascending order, on tolerance, respect, and love for one another. The emphasis in *Auromessenger* will be on what unites us, keeping an open heart and door to everyone, with the confidence and knowledge that "in its essence, in its origin, love is like a white flame which overcomes all resistences."

The first issue has come out and contains quotations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Yoga, Evolution, and Human Unity. There is also a Unity Consciousness Section reporting on groups and individuals who experiment in Unity Consciousness, as this seems now of crucial importance for the survival of our planet.

By Unity Consciousness we mean the Consciousness which is above the dualities (good and evil, beautiful and ugly, likes and dislikes, etc.) and whose main attribute is Love, a Love with the power to transform everything. It is this Love we are all striving for and whose instruments enlightened beings wanted us always to be. For it is this Love that can change ourselves and the world and solve our problems within and without, including those of community life, because it will also give us the key to universal brotherhood by actually perceiving the Divine in the other person.

Contributions and suggestions for this and other sections of *Auromessenger* are, of course, most welcome.

About Books

Builders of the Dawn by Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson (Stillpoint Publishing, 1985). Former members of Findhorn, Corinne and David have compiled a diverse, thorough, readable, attractive survey of the particulars of many major communities including Auroville. Through the use of numerous photos and thematic chapters (i.e., economic systems, governance, relationships) the authors manage to profile individual communities while emphasizing a particular aspect. Their mix of philosophy, anecdotes and summaries is a wonderful distillation. The final chapter summarizes the 30 featured communities as well as an additional 57 mentioned, including Matagiri, as well as Networks, Bibliographies and notes. *Builders of the Dawn* is a good effort, a retrospective on the typical aspirations and difficulties and an affirmation of our yearning to keep trying to live a healthier more conscious life.

Mother's Chronicles (Book One): Mirra, 166 pages, by Sujata Nahar. Having joined the Ashram at the age of 12, Sujata worked under Pavitra, the French mathematician, chemist, and engineer who was for many years the Ashram's Director of Education. After Satprem arrived in 1954, he was asked to help with the French translation of Sri Aurobindo's books along with Sujata. Sujata typed Mother's conversations with Satprem and from 1965 regularly accompanied Satprem to his meetings with Her. In her forward, Sujata tells of her effort to try to "let Mother herself speak for her own life. All I have done was to put these events in as chronological an order as possible." Besides a number of biographical details concerning Mother's parents and early life, are many anecdotes and reminiscences of this life

We trust that *Auromessenger* has your good-will and support.

Subscription rates for 4 issues are as follows:

India: Rs. 15.00

Abroad Sea Mail, U.S. \$9 or SFr. 19.00

Air Mail, \$14 or SFr. 29.00

Contributing Subscribers: India: RS. 40.00

Air Mail, \$30 or SFr. 60.00.

Foreign subscribers: please send cheques or Money Orders to:

SABDA

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

605 002 Pondicherry

India

It may be interesting to note that from 1972 to 1982 I was editor and publisher of a similar journal which was financially self-supporting.

Yours in Peace and Love,

Oscar Laesser, Editor

CULTURAL INTEGRATION FELLOWSHIP SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Memorial Concert—Music and Dance. On Sunday, June 22, 1986 at 11:00am there will be a concert of Indian Music and Dance dedicated in loving memory of Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, the founder President of Cultural Integration Fellowship and California Institute of Integral (Asian) Studies. Refreshments will be served and a Free Will Offering will be taken. All are welcome.

and past lives. *Mirra* contains a number of charming illustrations by the author, photos of Mother and a facsimile of her birth certificate. The type is in a large format, reminiscent of a child's reader, and while the book reflects that childlike spirit, the vocabulary and content is fairly sophisticated. "Its story covers Mother's background, from her maternal grandmother, her parents and brother, to her birth and childhood, mostly narrated in her own words, including her many extraordinary experiences. This book brings the reader up to the time of her marriage, when she was nineteen."

The rest of the series will include Book Two: *Mirra The Artist*, Book Three: *Mirra the Occultist*, Book Four: *Mirra and Sri Aurobindo*, Book Five: *Mirra in Japan*, and Book Six: *Mirra The Mother*.

Julian Lines

Make Love With Me

Make with me—Love
and we shall raise
an army of Lovers

in battle—Free!

Make Love—with me
and it shall raise us
an army of Lovers'

fierce—Harmony

Make with me—Love
and our army of Lovers
shall sweep us—vanquished
to—Ecstasy

Make Love—with me
and an army of Lovers
shall raise us—higher
than—Victory!

Seyril Schochen

All USA Meeting—August 15, 1986

Dear Friends,

This is our final invitation to join us in creating the second AUM at Merriam Hill in New Hampshire. When we chant A-U-M the sound moves from the depths of our diaphragm, to our chest, and into our heads. We have planned an agenda that attempts to move us from the depths of our individual lives and personalities to the heart of cooperative experience and into the presence of Sri Aurobindo and Mother. Our goal is set for the heights! We offer you an agenda and believe that your presence and participation will be the partnership for success.

Agenda

Friday, August 15th

Noon-6:00 PM.	Arrival	8:00 PM.-9:00 PM.	Meditation and Chanting
6:00 PM.-7:30 PM.	Supper and Clean-up	9:00 PM.	Prasad

Saturday, August 16th

6:30-7:30 AM.	Meditation and Chanting	Noon-1:30 PM.	Lunch and Clean-up
7:00-8:30 AM.	Breakfast and Clean-up	1:30-5:30 PM.	Affinity Groups (Working groups as in last year's AUM)
9:00-9:30 AM.	Opening & Welcome	6:00-7:30 PM.	Supper and Clean-up
9:30-11:30 AM.	Adventures	8:00-9:00 PM.	Dancing in the Barn

Sunday, August 17th

6:30-7:30 AM.	Meditation and Chanting	11:30-1:00 PM.	Closing Circle
7:00-9:00 AM.	Breakfast and Clean-up	1:00-2:00 PM.	Lunch and Clean-up
10:00-11:30 AM.	Affinity Group Presentations		

Please try to leave by 6 PM. If you need special arrangements for Sunday night, let us know.

There will be limited funds available to assist with travel and meeting costs. We want as many people as possible to attend. So, we are asking that everyone cover as much of their own expenses as possible and apply only for that portion that they cannot handle. If anyone would like to contribute to the AUM fund, please send a check to the High Falls Center specially marked for AUM.

Registration forms and travel information were included in the last issue of *Collaboration*. If you don't have that form or information, please write to Julian Lines, Sri Aurobindo Center, Box 372, High Falls, NY 12440, Tel: (914) 687-9222.

We look forward to this gathering and hope that you will join us in chanting the Mantra:

OM

*Open my mind, my heart, my life,
To your light, your love, your power,
In all things may I see the Divine.*



Words of the Mother

Love is not sexual intercourse
Love is not vital attraction and
interchange.

Love is not the heart's hunger
for affection.

Love is a mighty vibration coming
straight from the One, and only
the very pure and very strong are
capable of receiving and manifesting
it.

To be pure is to be open only to
the Supreme's influence and to no
other.

