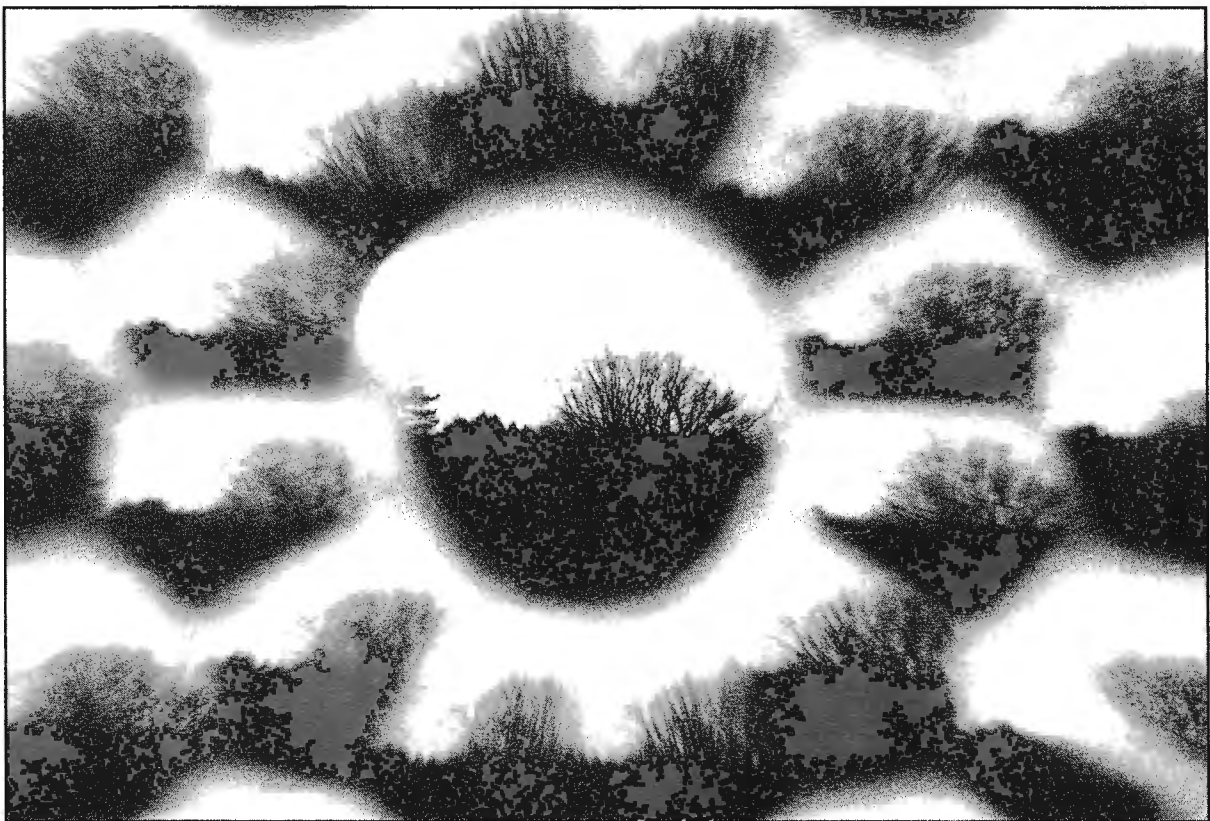


Collaboration

Winter/Spring 1991

Vol. XVII No. 1



Up from the earth—they
Filigree the winter sky—
Black coral branches

Photo By Paul Lisseck

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A one-year subscription is \$12; airmail outside the USA and North America is \$22. All foreign subscription must be paid with a US dollar draft on a New York bank or an International Money Order.

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

Subscriptions should be sent to Sri Aurobindo Association, Inc., 2550 9th Street, Suite 206, Berkeley, CA 94710 . Any editorial material should be sent to Jean Korstange, P.O. Box 297, Saxtons River, VT 05154.

Printed in the United States of America.

The expressed opinions of the authors are not necessarily those of The Sri Aurobindo Association or the editors.

The War

By Gordon Korstange

WHEN AN ANGRY Egyptian, fleeing the bombs of Baghdad, sputtered that he wanted to drink the blood of American pilots, I wasn't surprised. It was a tribal statement in keeping with the tribal nature of Saddam Hussain's Iraq. While American techno-warriors talked dryly of "target-rich environments," Hussain roared about "rivers of blood" and the "mother of battles." How long would it be before some American general vowed to break the enemy leader's thigh with a club?

Mahabharata

Saddam as Duryodana. George Bush as a wimpish Yudisthira ready to play dice in the desert. The armies drawn up and facing each other during long months of fruitless diplomacy and much soul-searching about whether the coming carnage was necessary. Then the sense of war's inevitability, the feeling that these two men and the tribes they led were following their dharma in the only way they could.

Finally the first battles. The terrible weapons of Arjuna and Karna. Missiles that could slice a radio antenna in two or find their way down a Baghdad street, whistling past a reporter's window, to reach the department of defense. Like the blind king Dhritarastra and his blindfolded queen, Gandhari, we listened to our Vyasas from TVs in our living rooms, telling us every detail we didn't want to know but couldn't turn away from, explaining every possible ploy and strategy that the players could use.

Do I overstate? Perhaps. But I had seen Peter Brook's movie version of the *Mahabharata* two days before the conch shell blew in the Gulf and couldn't shake the comparison. And though I detested the way Bush had manipulated the 62% of Americans who were opposed to war and converted them into an 80% who supported it, I felt as caught as Arjuna—or perhaps as confused as many Ashramites when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother backed Britain against Hitler.

The One Who Confronts

For Saddam ("the one who confronts" in Arabic) looked to me like a man in the clutches of an asura or rakshasa, ready to blow up his country in a blaze of glory. He was once asked if he dreamed of becoming another Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king of Babylon, and he replied, "By God, I do indeed dream and wish for this. It is an honor for any human being to dream of such a role."

**Like the blind king
Dhritarastra and his
blindfolded queen,
Gandhari we listened
to our Vyasas
from TVs in our living
rooms, telling us every
detail we didn't want to
know but couldn't
turn away from . .**

Here is Mother on Hitler's possession by the Lord of Nations: *He (the Lord of Nations) used to tell Hitler everything that had to be done—he played with him as with a monkey or a mouse. He had decided clearly to make Hitler commit all possible extravagances till the day he would break his neck, which did happen. But cases like this are frequent, though on a smaller scale, of course. Hitler was a very good medium, he had great mediumistic capacities, but he lacked intelligence and discrimination. This being could tell him anything whatever and he swallowed it all. It was he who pushed Hitler little by little. (Centenary Volume 4, p. 186)*

I can claim no special insight into the occult forces behind Saddam Hussain and this confrontation. His opponent, George Bush, seems equally vulnerable to possession for opposite reasons—he has no ideas and few convictions. I have a hard enough time living in a USA that is still wounded from the Viet Nam war and trying to remember the words of Krishna in the *Gita*:

The bodies are said to have an end,

but the Soul, the Inhabitant of the bodies, is eternal, indestructible, illimitable. Therefore, fight, O Bharata.

Is This a Just War?

Both sides would say so and make strong cases for it from very different perspectives. Yet the huge oil slick spreading over the Persian Gulf is like the shadow behind all the rhetoric about justice for the Palestinians and standing up to aggression. The USA has got to have its oil fix.

But then, there's Saddam with his nuclear weapons potential and his documented readiness to use chemical weapons. His invasion of Kuwait was obviously an act of aggression, as brutal as his war against the Kurds of Iraq. I think of how Sri Aurobindo was ready to support his country's oppressor in World War II when he thought the stakes were high enough. Are the stakes high enough today in the Middle East where any number of governments, including Israel, can be fairly accused of oppressing people who live within their borders?

If I can grudgingly grant this war a measure of justness, (not easy to do when the "allies" are not fighting for anything except oil and the return of despotic rulers to their thrones) then I can still agree with Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* that it is not a wise one. The oil slick also seems a portent of the blood that will soon flow into the desert sand, leaving it as littered as Kurukshetra. Perhaps Truth and Light have triumphed at the end of the *Mahabharata*, but the translations I've read and seen have left me with a strong sense of horror and desolation. The victors, the five Pandavas, trudge off to claim their kingdom out of a sense of dharma, not delight.

I have that same feeling with this war. Things have happened already that surprise and appall, and it is just the beginning. Perhaps the Mideast could no longer stand the tensions between Arab, Palestinian, and Jew, Islamic fundamentalism, democracy, and oil wealth (of which Kuwait was the most obvious symbol). The goddess Kali, with her skull necklace, is circling the gulf war, impatient with calls for compromise and negotiation, ready to "shatter every limit and obstacle."

☆

New York City Meditation January 1991

By Miriam Belov

WE HAVE MONTHLY meetings in New York City. Most recently the group has been reading from *Prayers and Meditations* written by The Mother. We met January 29th and everyone was reeling from the war in the Gulf. After much conversation about it, we had a moment of silence and then settled in for the reading and meditation. As is our custom, each one of us opened to a page and read from it. All the choices were very powerful but two resonated quite strongly and spoke directly to the problem at hand. They follow:

October 7, 1914

Oh, let Light be poured on all the earth and Peace inhabit every heart...Almost all know only the material life heavy, inert, conservative, obscure; their vital forces are so tied to this physical form of existence that, even when left to themselves and outside the body, they are still solely occupied with these material contingencies that are yet so harassing and painful...Those in whom the mental life is awakened are restless, tormented, agitated, despotic. Caught altogether in the whirl of the renewals and transformations of which they dream, they are ready to destroy everything without knowledge of any foundation on which to construct, and with their light made only of blinding flashes they increase yet more the confusion rather than help it to cease.

In all there lacks the unchanging peace of Thy sovereign contemplation and the calm vision of Thy immutable eternity.

And with the infinite gratitude of the individual being to whom Thou hast accorded this surpassing grace, I implore Thee, O Lord, that under cover of the present turmoil, in the very heart of this extreme confusion the miracle may be accomplished and Thy law of supreme serenity and pure unchanging light become visible to the perception of all and govern the earth in a humanity at last awakened to Thy divine consciousness.

August 4, 1914

Men, driven by the conflict of forces, are performing a sublime sacrifice, they are offering their lives in a bloodstained holocaust...

O Lord, O eternal Master, grant that all this may not be in vain, grant that the inexhaustible torrent of Thy divine Force may spread over the earth and penetrate its troubled atmosphere, the struggling energies, the violent chaos of battling elements; grant that the love of Thy Benediction may fill men's hearts, penetrate their soul, illumine their consciousness and, out of this obscurity, out of this sombre, terrible and potent darkness, bring forth the splendour of Thy majestic Presence!

O sweet Master, Thou hast heard my prayer, Thou wilt reply to my call.

November 15, 1914

The one important thing is the goal to be reached; the road matters little, and often it is preferable not to know it beforehand. But what we need to know is whether the time for the divine action upon earth has really come, and whether the work conceived in the depths can be realised.

Of this, O Lord, Thou hast given us the assurance, an assurance which has been accompanied by the most powerful promise that Nature, the universal Consciousness can possibly make... Thus we have the certitude that what must be done will be done and that our present individual beings are in reality called upon to collaborate in this glorious victory, this new manifestation. What more do we need to know? Nothing. So it is with the greatest confidence that we can witness the formidable fight, the onslaught of the adverse forces, which, unknowingly, finally serve in the realisation of Thy plan. We would be wrong to feel anxious because it is not given to us to know how it serves Thy plan and by what means Thou wilt triumph over all resistance; for Thy triumph is so perfect that every obstacle, every ill-will, every hatred raised up against Thee is a promise of a still vaster and more complete victory.

From the sum of resistances, one can gauge the scope Thou wouldst give to the action of that among Thy pure forces which is coming to manifest upon earth. What opposes is just that upon which it is the mission of these forces to act; it is the darkest hatred which must be touched and transformed into luminous peace.

If the human individual Thou has chosen as Thy centre of action and Thy intermediary meets with few obstacles, few misunderstandings and little hatred, it means that Thou hast entrusted to him a limited mission without any intensity. It is in the narrow circle of already prepared men of goodwill that he will act and not upon the chaotic and confused mass of terrestrial substance.

O divine Master, this knowledge which Thou hast given me, let all of us share, so that the peace of conviction may reign in our hearts and we may, in the calm of Thy sovereign certitude, confront with head high all that, unconsciously attracted to the transfiguration, plunges headlong into blind ignorance, believing it will be able to destroy the Transfiguring Love.

After reading these passages we had a most remarkable meditation during which we sent white light to the embattled areas of the world. We hope these passages will be of help to everyone at this time. They certainly were to us.

Devotion

By Bhaga

(Editors' Note: The following is the text of a talk given by Bhaga at the All-USA-Meeting last July. For a tape of that talk, write to Ron Jorgensen at the address given under Center News.)

AFTER THE PATH OF WORK and the path of Knowledge, we need to look together now at the third path we can start with on this triple path proposed to us by Sri Aurobindo and Mother's Integral Yoga: the path of Devotion.

When our specific focus and goal is "Finding the Flame Behind the Heart," Devotion is certainly the most powerful means we can give ourselves—or be given by the Divine—for finding that Flame, as Devotion itself, and its sister-emotions awe, wonder, adoration, and gratitude, come straight from that very Psychic Being which we mean by "the Flame Behind the Heart."

We can say that the path of Devotion is the most appropriate for finding that Flame as rapidly as possible; by concentrating as permanently and as intensely as we can on these various psychic-born emotions in our own heart, we will automatically, sooner or later, reach back to their origin deep within us: our Psychic Being itself.

We could say then that Devotion is the path everyone interested in finding their Psychic Being should follow; which is well and good for those of us in whom devotion is spontaneous and natural from the start; but what about the others, those of us who don't have any devotion at all to start with? Are they condemned to ignore forever what true Devotion is, and so to remain cut off from their Psychic Being, unable to practice and live the Integral Yoga?

Falling in Love With the Divine

That would be quite sad indeed; but luckily it is not so, for the Divine loves us, loves us all, and in each single one of us the lover of the Divine, the Psychic Being, will in the end come forward and take the lead. Sri Aurobindo has explained how, when the aim is integral, and when one guards

oneself against the self-limiting but usual contempt of those following one path for those following either of the two other paths, each path naturally tends to merge with the two other ones towards the end, so that Devotion will appear finally in all those who aspire sincerely for an integral realization.

And it may even happen to us sooner than we think, and most unexpectedly—for the Divine does know some good tricks to make us fall in love with Her/Him, whether we like it or not. I happen to be myself a good example of this, for today I am here speaking happily to you to my heart's content about this topic of Devotion, which is so dear and blissful to me, but eighteen years ago, when I arrived in Auroville, it was to live permanently there and to practice seriously this Yoga—yes—but I had not the slightest intention to have a devotional attitude toward anything or anybody, not even the Mother, let alone Sri Aurobindo.

**"Of course you
can live
without
the Divine—
but so much
less well!"**

My aim in doing the Yoga was first of all to realize the Self: to be again consciously the Divine that all and everything is secretly and unconsciously. Yoga was for me essentially the only thing you could do with your life which would give you the true power needed to change life itself, and this whole world we live in. I was not interested in any paradise or nirvana beyond, but simply in making life livable; and for me "livable" meant nothing short of "divine" in the terms explained by *The Life Divine*. And for that you had to do Yoga.

I had no idea that Yoga can mean also a direct, personal contact with the Divine, a real and utterly blissful relationship with the Divine as a Person, a Being one loves and is loved by in such a wonderful manner that that itself has been considered by many as the absolute and total aim of life.

Divine Sweetness

Luckily for me the Divine introduced itself to me without even waiting to be invited, and I discovered why Ramakrishna compared the Divine's utterly delightful sweetness to sugar and exclaimed, "I don't want to be the sugar, I want to eat the sugar."

I was even reminded suddenly of an ad on the TV which said, "Of course you can live without tomato sauce—but so much less well!" In the ecstasy of my newly discovered "taste" of the Divine, this became immediately for me, "Of course you can live without the Divine—but so much less well!"

This is, very briefly, how I have entered the way of Devotion—without even wanting it! That should reassure everyone who feels it cannot happen to them to fall in love with the Divine. I can now say along with so many others, using Sri Aurobindo's own words:

*Others boast of their love for God.
My boast is that I did not love God;
it was He who loved me and sought
me out and forced me to belong to
Him.*

*My soul is the captive of God, taken
by Him in battle; it still remembers
the war, though so far from it, with
delight and alarm and wonder.*

I hope that by now you have all realized that what we mean by spirituality is nothing ethereal, philosophical or abstract, but something concrete and enjoyable—and more and more so as one grows into it—the sense of the presence of the Divine and the relation we have with it:

*The philosophers who reject the
world as Maya are very wise and
austere and holy; but I cannot help
thinking sometimes that they are also
just a little stupid and allow God to
cheat them too easily.*

*For my part, I think I have a right to
insist on God giving Himself to me in
the world as well as out of it. Why did
He make it at all if He wanted to
escape that obligation?*

*Life, Life, Life, I hear the passions
cry; God, God, God, is the soul's
answer. Unless thou seest and lovest*

Life as God only, then is Life itself a sealed joy to thee.

"He loves her," the senses say; but the souls say "God, God, God." That is the all-embracing formula of existence.

And let's not imagine any monotony in that relation to the Divine; in its growing intensity, it can take all the nuances that love takes in human relationships, in turn, according to our lead of the moment.

Discipleship to God the Teacher, sonship to God the Father, tenderness of God the Mother, clasp of the hand of the divine Friend, laughter and sport with our Comrade and boy Playfellow, blissful servitude to God the Master, rapturous love of our divine Paramour, these are the seven beatitudes of life in the human body. Canst thou unite all these in a single supreme and rainbow-hued relation? Then hast thou no need of any heaven and thou exceedest the emancipation of the Advaitin.

In fact, it is only when we have the experience of Divine love that we realize what we had been looking for all the time in our various relationships; and then only do we also become free. Finally able to truly love one-another and everything.

To love God, excluding the work, is to give Him an intense but imperfect adoration.

Love of man, love of woman, love of things, love of thy neighbor, love of thy country, love of animals, love of humanity are all the love of God reflected in these living images. So love and grow mighty to enjoy all, to help all and to love forever.

Canst thou see God as the bodiless Infinite and yet love Him as a man loves his mistress? Then has the highest truth of the Infinite been revealed to thee. Canst thou also clothe the Infinite in one secret embraceable body and see Him seated in each and all of these bodies that are visible and sensible? Then has its widest and profoundest truth come also into thy possession.

The next greatest rapture to the love of God, is the love of God in men; there, too, one has the joy of multiplicity.

For monogamy may be the best for the body, but the soul that loves God in men dwells here always as the boundless and ecstatic polygamist; yet all the time—that is the secret—it is in love with only one being.

The Eternal Child

We all are secretly that One Being, and one of the two faces of the realization (the reality which can become REAL again for us) which Sri Aurobindo and Mother's Yoga guides us to, is to be conscious again of being that One Being; and, as that One Being happens to be total Consciousness—Force, and total Delight, what the yoga has in store for us is in the wonderfully simple words of Sri Aurobindo, "To recover the lost habit of happiness."

But that one Being happens to manifest Itself as the Many; so the happiness we'll enjoy, to be complete, will have to be also the second face of the realization; the joy, the delight of experiencing our relation to all and everything. For, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, *What is God after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden.*

Devotion in the Cells

What then was the commencement of the whole matter? Existence that multiplied itself for sheer delight of being and plunged into numberless trillions of forms so that it might find itself innumerable ... And what is the end of the whole matter? As if honey could taste itself and all its drops together and all its drops could taste each other and each the whole honeycomb as itself, so should the end be with God and the soul of man and the universe.

Isn't that a wonderful program? Doesn't life become truly worth living, when this is what it can become for each of us?

And not only for each of us as the central consciousness inhabiting our body, but also for each one of our body's very cells; in our cells too can Devotion work its miracles, in our cells too, when our Psychic Being has

started exerting its irresistible influence, can the wonder of love for the Divine awaken at last and transform their life too, and make it divine bliss.

In Mother's body has the work been done which now makes it possible for all other human bodies, and for the body of the Earth, to experience that wonder and delight. Forever thanks, Mother.

Whether that "psychic contagion" will start in our own body sooner, or later, will depend on the receptivity in that part of our being; the only thing we can maybe do to increase that receptivity would be to consciously include our body and all its cells in our movement of total self-offering to the Divine. Little by little, our body will start having its own relation with the Divine, and discover the bliss of it.

As if honey could taste itself and all its drops together and all its drops could taste each other and each the whole honeycomb as itself ...

How, our mind will ask, can one feel that one is the Divine (through the realization of the Self) ...and at the same time love the Divine? This may be a mystery and a paradox for our limited mind, but when our consciousness will have come to discover both these experiences, we will know that not only is it possible, but that it is utterly enjoyable; Mother herself explained it all so wonderfully: "For the joy of that THEE..."

In that "rainbow-hued" relation we can develop with the Divine, we might know some nuances already, even without having done a Yoga.

Escape from Religion

"Sonship to god the Father, blissful servitude to God the Master, discipleship to God the teacher, clasp of the hand of the Divine Friend," were all things which I knew of to some extent in my childhood, in the context of Catholic Christianity—because I somehow escaped being affected by

any of the terrible concepts of "hell," not even noticing that they were part of the picture presented to me by the church, until I grew big ... But I know plenty of people whose idea of God has inspired fear in them; to all those I would like to introduce God in a different way, the way I have myself discovered consciously and fully, thanks to Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms*.

O fool of thy weakness, cover not God's face from thyself by a veil of awe, approach Him not with a suppliant weakness. Look! thou wilt see on His face not the solemnity of the King and Judge, but the smile of the Lover.

O the wonderful and a million times wonderful discovery that God is also fun and laughter!

A God who cannot smile could not have created this humorous universe.

To listen to some devout people, one would imagine that God never laughs; Heine was nearer the mark when he found in Him the divine Aristophanes.

God's laughter is sometimes very coarse and unfit for polite ears. He is not satisfied with being Moliere. He must needs also be Aristophanes and Rabelais.

If men took life less seriously, they could very soon make it more perfect. God never takes His works seriously; therefore one looks out on this wonderful Universe.

And what about "sin", the nagging and self-defeating and downright terrorizing concept of "Sin"? It vanishes in the tenderness of the Divine Mother for us, in the incessant and all knowing care of the Divine for us, for our progress which is after all our own growth into our own forgotten divinity.

Do thy lower members still suffer the shock of sin and sorrow? But above, seen of thee or unseen, thy soul sits royal, calm, free and triumphant. Believe that the Mother will ere the end have done her work and made the very earth of thy being a joy and a purity.

If thy heart is troubled within thee, if for long seasons thou makest no progress, if thy strength faint and repine, remember always the eternal work of our Lover and Master, "I will free thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve."

Sri Krishna

In this second quote, Sri Aurobindo refers to Sri Krishna, "our lover and Master," and the words He quotes are from the *Bhagavad Gita*. Many of us in the West have heard of that Indian scripture, or have even read it; but I don't think many people realize what the very title of the book reveals to us about the nature of God: *Bhagavad Gita* means "The Song of the Blissful One."

It is India too which has made me discover fully God as the Divine Mother; those of us who have not known and met physically the one who embodied Her among us till November 1973 or who, like I was in the beginning, are not immediately receptive to Her Presence and Action, should read the book which compiles all that Sri Aurobindo has written about Her, the title of which is simply *The Mother*. It will, I hope, be for them the same devotion-inspiring and soul-nourishing treasure it has been and still is for me. And in *Savitri*, they will find both descriptions of the Divine Mother, and of what true Devotion for Her may be, throughout the poem and particularly in Book III; I'm trying to Keep this presentation short, so I will refrain from quoting here all the inexpressibly beautiful lines which are there, and let you discover them at leisure yourself, if it is not yet done. But I want to dedicate the rest of this presentation to the Divine as Sri Krishna, our lover and playfellow, for this is the aspect of the Divine our Western mentality ignores most of all and maybe needs most of all at this point.

I hope some day to have the time to make an exhaustive compilation of all that Sri Aurobindo and Mother have said about "Krishna". Today, I will restrict myself to presenting to you, in a composition of my own, some passages from Sri Aurobindo's writings which tell us about that most wonderful aspect of the One and explain why our soul, the psychic being in us, is so



attracted to It and its flute calling us, sometimes at the most unexpected moments of our life, because the relation of Love is the Secret.

The relation of fatherhood is always less close, intense, passionate, intimate, and therefore it is less resorted to in the Yoga which seeks for the closest union. That of the divine Friend is a thing sweeter and more intimate, admits of an equality and intimacy even in inequality and the beginning of natural self-giving; at its closest when all idea of other giving and taking disappears, when this relation becomes motiveless except for the one sole all-sufficing motive of love, it turns into the free and happy relation of the playmate in the Lila of existence. But closer and more intimate still is the relation of the Mother and the child, and that therefore plays a very large part wherever the religious impulse is most richly fervent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles, and the Divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

But the highest and the greatest relation is that which starts from none of the ordinary religious motives, but is

rather of the very essence of yoga, springs from the very nature of love itself; it is the passion of the Lover and the Beloved. Wherever there is the desire of the soul for its utter union with God, this form of the divine yearning makes its way even into religions which seem to do without it and give it no place in their ordinary system. Here the one thing asked for is love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is the sorrow of separation of love; for all other things either do not exist for the lover or come in only as incidents or as results and not as objects or conditions of love. All love is indeed in its nature self-existent because it springs from a secret oneness in being and a sense of that oneness or desire of oneness in the heart between souls that are yet able to conceive of themselves as different from each other and divided. Therefore all these other relations too can arrive at their self-existent start from and to the end they, to some extent, find a satisfaction of their play in other motives. But here the beginning is love and the end is love and the whole aim is love. There is indeed the desire of possession, but even this is overcome in the fullness of the self-existent love and the final demand of the Bhakta is simply that his bhakti may never cease nor diminish. He does not ask for heaven or for liberation from birth or for any other object, but only that his love may be eternal and absolute.

Love is a passion and it seeks for two things, eternity and intensity, and in the relation of the Lover and Beloved the seeking for eternity and for intensity is instinctive and self-born. Love is a seeking for mutual possession, and it is here that the demand for mutual possession becomes absolute. Passing beyond desire of possession which means a difference, it is a seeking for oneness, and it is here that the idea of oneness, of two souls merging into each other and becoming one finds the acme of its longing and the utterness of its satisfaction. Love, too, is a yearning for beauty, and it is here that the yearning is eternally satisfied in the vision and the touch and the you of the All-beautiful. Love is a child and a seeker of Delight, and it is here that it finds the highest possible ecstasy both of the heart-consciousness and of every fibre of the

being. Moreover, this relation is that which as between human being and human being demands the most and, even while reaching the greatest intensities, is till the least satisfied, because only in the Divine can it find its real and its utter satisfaction. Therefore it is here most that the turning of human emotion Godwards finds its full meaning and discovers all the truth of which love is the human symbol, all its essential instincts divinised, raised, satisfied in the bliss from which our life was born and towards which by oneness it returns in the Ananda of the divine existence where love is absolute, eternal and unalloyed."

The joy of God is secret and wonderful; it is a mystery and a rapture at which common sense makes mockery; but the soul that has once tasted it, can never renounce, whatever worldly drepanes, torture and affliction it may bring. To the soul that has hold of that beatitude life cannot be an evil or a sorrowful illusion; rather, all life becomes the rippling love and laughter of a divine Lover and Playfellow: When one has the vision in the heart, everything, Nature and Thought and Action, ideas and occupations and tastes and objects become the Beloved and are a source of ecstasy.

Although countless mystics and saints in other countries too have had, throughout the ages, that same experience of God—whatever name they gave to it—it is more particularly in India that this wonderful, irresistible aspect of the Divine Person has been known and revered and sought after, under the name of Krishna. Such a relation of love with the Divine is called in

India "Bhakti", and "Bhaktia" the one who experiences it.

Therefore some religions invented the god-fearing man, with the conception of a God who is a stern and dignified king, and solemn judge, and knows not mirth; India invented the god-knower and god-lover: "We who have seen Krishna," says the bhakta, "know him for a god fond of play and a child full of mischief and happy laughter."



Love for God comes to us in many ways; it may come as an awakening to the beauty of the Lover, by the sight of an ideal face and image of Him, by his mysterious hints to us of himself behind the thousand faces of things in the world, by a slow or sudden need of the heart, by a vague thirst in the soul, by the sense of someone near us drawing us or pursuing us with love, or someone blissful and beautiful whom we must discover.

We may seek after him passionately and pursue the unseen Beloved; But also the Lover whom we think not of, may pursue us, may come upon us in the midst of the world and seize on us for his own, whether at first we will or not.

When I first met Krishna I loved Him as a friend and playmate till He deceived me; then I was indignant and could not forgive Him. Afterwards I loved Him as a lover and He still deceived me; I was again and much more indignant, but this time I had to pardon.

After offending, He forced me to pardon Him not by reparation, but by committing fresh offences.

So long as God tried to repair His offences against me, we went on periodically quarrelling; but when He found out His mistake, the quarrelling stopped, for I had to submit to Him entirely.

When I suffer from pain or grief or mischance, I say "So, my old Playfellow, thou hast taken again to bullying

me." and I sit down to possess the pleasure of the pain, the joy of the grief, the good fortune of the mischance; then He sees He is found out and takes His ghosts and bugbears away from me.

I was much plagued by Satan, until I found that it was God who was tempting me; then the anguish of him passed out of my soul forever.

I hated the devil and was sick with his temptations and tortures; and I could not tell why the voice in his departing worlds was so sweet that when he returned often and offered himself to me, it was with sorrow I refused him. Then I discovered it was Krishna at His tricks and my hate was changed into laughter.

When will the world change into the model of heaven? When all mankind becomes boys and girls together with God revealed as Krishna and Kali the happiest boy and strongest girl of the crowd, playing together in the gardens of Paradise. The Semitic Eden was well enough, but Adam and Eve were too grown up and its God himself too old and stern and solemn for the offer of the Serpent to be resisted.

Whether or not Krishna the herdboys did live, an incarnation of God, in an earthly Brindavan, entrancing the gopis with the magic sound of his flute, in the happy forests on the banks of the Yamuna, is not what matters. The seeker after divine knowledge finds in the description of Krishna stealing the robes of the gopis one of the deepest parables of God's ways with the soul, the devotee a perfect rendering in divine act of his heart's mystic experiences, the prurient and the puritan (two faces of one temperament) only a lustful story. Men bring what they have in themselves and see it reflected in the scripture.

What matters is that, through Krishna's story, its images and its symbols, is revealed the mystery of the possible intimacy of the soul with God: the miracle for which every soul was made from eternity, and is being secretly prepared, until, at one point of one's inner journey, the moment comes for our soul to meet its divine Lover.

Poems and songs innumerable have been composed, attempts to describe the wonder of that moment; here are a few lines from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, which may communicate to the reader some feeling of it:

*As one, drawn to his lost spiritual home,
Feels now the closeness of a waiting Love
He travelled, led by a mysterious sound,
A murmur, multitudinous and lone,
all sounds it was in turn, yet still the same.
A hidden call to unforeseen delight
In the summoning voice of one long-known and loved,
But nameless to the unremembering mind,
It led to rapture back the truant heart...
It seemed the yearning of a lonely flute
That roamed along the shores of memory
And filled the eyes with tears of longing joy.
An old forgotten sweetness sobbing came,
A mystic happiness trembled in the breast
As if the invisible Beloved had come
Assuming the sudden loveliness of a face ...
Symbol of all the beauty eyes see not,
Crowned as with peacock plumes of gorgeous hue
Framing a sapphire, whose heart-disturbing smile
Insatiably attracted to delight,
Voluptuous to the embraces of his soul....
All grace and glory and all divinity were here collected in a single form;
The bliss that made the world in his body lived.*

The divine Lover reveals Himself; He takes possession of our soul, and then of our whole life:

How that presence is felt, it may better be known by experience than by any writing, for it is the life and the love, the might and the light, the joy and the rest of a chosen soul. He cometh privily sometimes when thou

art least aware of him, but thou shalt well know Him or He go; for wonderfully He striveth and mightily He turneth thy heart into beholding of His goodness, and doth thine heart melt delectably as wax against the fire into softness of His love. (An account from Walter Hilton, an English mystic of the 14th Century.)

And here is one of the songs of Mirabai, the Rajasthani Princess of the 16th Century, who left everything to become a bhakta of Krishna:

*Having beheld Thy beauty
I am caught and enmeshed.
My family members repeatedly try to restrain me,
But attachment to the Dancer with the Peacock Plume
Has now sunk deep.
My mind is drowned in the beauty of Krishna
And the world says I have gone astray.
Mira has taken refuge with the Lord
Who knows the contents of every heart.*

A perfect and complete delight in the Divine, perfect because pure and self-existent, complete because all-embracing as well as all-absorbing, is the meaning of the way of Bhakti for the seeker of the integral Yoga.

Once it is active in us, all other ways of Yoga convert themselves, as it were, to its law and find by it their own richest significance. This integral devotion of our being to God does not turn away from knowledge; the Bhakta of this path is the God-lover who is also the God-knower, because by knowledge of his being comes the whole delight of his being; but it is in delight that knowledge fulfils itself, the knowledge of the transcendent in the delight of the Transcendent, the knowledge of the universal in the delight of the universal Godhead, the knowledge of the individual manifestation in the delight of God in the individual, the knowledge of the impersonal in the pure delight of his impersonal being, the knowledge of the personal in the full delight of his personality, the knowledge of his qualities and their play in the delight of the manifestation, the knowledge of the qualityless in the delight of his colourless existence and non-manifestation.

So too this God-lover will be the divine worker, not for the sake of works or for a self-regarding pleasure in action, but because in this way God expends the power of his being and in his powers and their signs we find him, because the divine Will in works is the outflowing of the Godhead in the delight of its power, of divine Being in the delight of divine Force. He will feel perfect joy in the works and acts of the Beloved, because in them too he finds the Beloved; he will himself do all works because through those works too the Lord of his being expresses his divine you in him: when he works, he feels that he is expressing in act and power his oneness with that which he love and adores; he feels that rapture of the will which he obeys and with which all the force of his being is blissfully identified. So too, again, this God-lover will seek after perfection, because perfection is the nature of the Divine and the more he grows into perfection, the more he feels the Beloved manifest in his natural being. Or he will simply grow in perfection like the blossoming of a flower because the Divine is in him and the you of the Divine, and as that you expands in him, soul and mind and life too expand naturally into their godhead. At the same time, because he feels the Divine in all, perfect within every limiting appearance, he will not have the sorrow of his imperfection.

Nor will the seeking of the Divine through life and the meeting of him in all the activities of his being and of the universal being be absent from the scope of his worship. All Nature and all life will be to him at once a revelation and a fine trysting-place. Intellectual and aesthetic and dynamic activities, science and philosophy and life, thought and art and action will assume for him a diviner sanction and a greater meaning. He will seek them because of his clear sight of the Divine through them and because of the delight of the Divine in them. He will not be indeed attached to their appearances, for attachment is an obstacle to the Ananda; but because he possesses that pure, powerful and perfect Ananda which obtains everything but is dependent on nothing, and because he finds in them the ways and acts and signs, the becomings and the symbols and images of the Beloved, he draws

from them a rapture which the normal mind that pursues them for themselves cannot attain or even dream. All this and more becomes part of the integral way and its consummation.

The general power of Delight is love and the special mould which the joy of love takes is the vision of beauty. The god-lover is the universal lover and he embraces the All-blissful and All-beautiful. When universal love has seized on his heart, it is the decisive sign that the Divine has taken possession of him; and when he has the vision of the All-beautiful everywhere and can feel at all times the bliss of his embrace, that is the decisive sign that he has taken possession of the Divine. Union is the consummation of love, but it is this mutual possession that gives it at once the acme and the largest reach of its intensity. It is the foundation of Oneness in ecstasy.

If we want all this to be ours, if our soul's longing has taken hold of our life, if our psychic being yearns for Krishna, here is the way:

Limit not sacrifice to the giving up of earthly goods or the denial of some desires and yearnings, but let every thought and every work and every enjoyment be an offering to God within thee. Let thy steps walk in thy Lord, let thy sleep and waking be a sacrifice to Krishna.

Krishna himself then will be our guide and companion in life and we will go faster towards our goal, in all safety, like Arjuna in the battle of Kurukshetra, for "Who shall hinder or hedge in his course the wonderful, the charioteer, the swift?" Let us follow Sri Aurobindo's advice:

See God everywhere and be not frightened by masks. Believe that all falsehood is truth in the making or truth in the breaking, all failure and effectuality concealed, all weakness strength hiding itself from its own vision, all pain a secret and violent ecstasy. If thou believest firmly and unweariedly, in the end thou wilt see and experience the All-true, Almighty and All-blissful.

Here is and it will be the best and crowning gem of the treasure I have

attempted to share with you today - Sri Aurobindo's own rendering of that moment:

Krishna

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth
Into this universe terrible and sweet,
I who have felt the hungry heart of
earth
Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's
feet.

I have seen the beauty of immortal
eyes,
And heard the passion of the Lover's
flute,
And known a deathless ecstasy's
surprise
And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.

Nearer and nearer now the music
draws,
Life shudders with a strange felicity;
All Nature is a wide enamoured pause
Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to
be.

For this one moment lived the ages
past;
The world now throbs fulfilled in me at
last.

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Note: the quotations of Sri Aurobindo in this presentation are from *The Synthesis of Yoga, Thoughts and Aphorisms, Thoughts and Glimpses, Sonnets and Savitri*. The list of precise references can be had from Bhaga upon request.

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The Mother on Aspiration

Compiled by Wayne Bloomquist

Progression of Will to Aspiration to Consciousness

I F WE ARE NOT CONSCIOUS
of all that the Divine is
doing for us, do we not progress?

You progress, but you are not conscious of your progress; and so it is not a willed progress. That is, it is a progress that the Divine brings about in you without your collaboration. That takes much more time. It does occur, but it takes much more time. When you are conscious and collaborate and indeed do consciously what you should do, it is done much more quickly.

There are many people who are not even conscious, the immense majority of people are not even conscious of the action of the divine Force in them. If you speak to them about it, they look at you in round-eyed wonder, they think you are half mad, they don't know what you are talking about. That is the majority of human beings. And yet the Consciousness is at work, working all the time. It moulds them from within whether they want it or not. But then, when they become conscious of this, there are people who are shocked by it, who are so stupid as to revolt and say: "Ah! no, I want to be myself!" Myself, that is, an imbecile who knows nothing. And then, that stage too passes. At last there comes a moment when one collaborates and says: "Oh! What joy!" And you give yourself, you want to be as passive and receptive as possible so as not to stand in the way of this divine Will, this divine Consciousness that is acting. You become more and more attentive, and exactly to the extent you become more attentive and more sincere, you feel in what direction, in what movement this divine Consciousness is working, and you give yourself to it wholly. The thing ripens more quickly. And in this way you are truly

able to do in a few minutes the work that would otherwise take years. And that is the moral of yoga: one can do



the work in a few hours, in a concentrated, shortened time; one can do in any other way what Nature is doing—Nature will do it, Nature will succeed in transforming all this, but when one sees the time she has taken to do what she has done till now, if one wants to do all that in another way... Evidently, for the divine Consciousness time means very little, but for the consciousness here, it is very long. There is a point of view from which you say: "Bah! that will be done, it is sure to come about, so it is all right, one has only to let things go on." But then it is not the external human consciousness, it does not take part, for

this tiny consciousness which has been formed by the body (this body that's at present made in this way), well, it will have gone away long before the thing is done. Because after all the progress of Nature is not accomplished from one century to another. If we look back, we do not see that there has been really much progress in comparison with what man was some three thousand years ago -- just a little, something; something that happens particularly in the head which understands a little better; and then a kind of control over what nature does, an understanding of her processes; one begins to understand her tricks. Then as one begins to learn her tricks, one begins to intervene. But as one does not have the true knowledge, when one intervenes one may very easily make a lot of blunders... Indeed, I do not know what will happen when men will know all the secrets of the formation of matter, for example. They have already invented a very fine way of destroying themselves. We shall see what is going to happen. But this is just a very small step; it happens particularly here (pointing to the head), with very relative material results.

How should one practise this consciousness?

You must establish this will to be conscious constantly and then change the mental will into an aspiration. You must have this movement. And then never to forget. You must look, look at yourself, and look at your life with the sincerity not to make a mistake, never to deceive yourself. Oh! How difficult it is!

Did you ever have spontaneously—spontaneously without effort—the perception that you had made a mistake? I am not speaking of an external reaction that gives you a knock, wakes you up suddenly and you say: "Ah! damn it, what have I done?" I am not speaking of that. When you do a thing, feel a thing, when you say a thing—take simply the petty quarrels like those I hear about at least a dozen of them a day (at least), idiotic, (I wonder how, having one's reason, one can quarrel about such things), well, at

the time you utter those words that should not be uttered, that are simply silly, do you see that you are truly stupid—no to say anything worse—spontaneously? . . . You always give an excuse. You have always the feeling that the other person is wrong, and that you are right and that, indeed, he must be told that he is wrong, yes? Otherwise he would never know it! Isn't that so? I am putting the thing rather glaringly, as though under a small microscope, so that it may look a little bigger. But it is like that. And so long as it is like that, you are a million miles away from the true consciousness. When you are unable immediately, instantaneously to step back, put yourself in the place of the other person, understand why he has this feeling, have a glimpse of your own weakness, compare the two and come to the conclusion: "Well, it is that, that's the true thing", it means that you are still very far behind. When you are able to do it spontaneously, instantaneously, when it does not take time, when it is a natural movement, then you may feel satisfied that you have made a little progress . . . How many times do you have the experience during the day? Even if you do not come to an open quarrel, how many times is the reaction there in the head, there, something that leaps up in the head instead of this wisdom of equanimity which, at the very moment things are happening and it is observing them, understands how they are happening and why all this occurs—and that impersonally enough to be able to smile always and never have a violent reaction, never.

And even if you perceive the Truth, which is far beyond and far above, and the Truth that is not realized and you want to realize, if you have its clear vision and can see constantly the difference between what is true and what should be and what is false and deformed and must give place to the other, see it so clearly, there is no reaction any longer, and even things that seem to you most stupid, most idiotic, most obscure . . . (*Mother's Centenary Edition*, Vol. 5 pp. 62-65. All following references are from the *Questions and Answers* volumes of *Mother's Centenary Edition*.)

The Process of Aspiration

The first movement of aspiration is this: you have a kind of vague sensation that behind the universe there is something which is worth knowing, which is probably (for you do not yet know it) the only thing worth living for, which can connect you with the Truth; something on which the universe, something which still escapes your comprehension but which seems

"Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down."

to you to be behind all things . . . I have said here much more than the majority of people feel about the thing, but this is the beginning of the first aspiration -- to know that, not to live in this perpetual falsehood where things are so perverted and artificial, this would be something pleasant; to find something that is worth living for.

The next thing you have to do is to tend this aspiration, to keep it always alert and awake and living. (*Questions and Answers* 1929 7 April)

Instead of telling yourself once in a while, "Oh, yes! I am thinking of finding the Divine", just when there is something unpleasant, when you are a little disgusted because you feel tired—indeed, there are very many flimsy reasons—all of a sudden you remember that there is such a thing as yoga, something like the Divine to know who can get you out of this flatness of life. This is the second step. That is to say, you begin wanting to find and know the Divine and live it. You must feel at the same time that the thing is so precious, so important that your entire life is not sufficient for acquiring it. Then,

the first movement is a self-giving; you tell yourself, "I do not want any longer to belong to myself, for the sake of my little personal satisfaction, I wish to belong to this marvellous thing which one must find, must know, must live and for which I aspire." (Vol. 4 p. 67)

Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down. (Ibid.)

Naturally, when I speak of the heart, I do not mean the physical organ, the viscera, but the psychological or psychic centre of the being. (Vol. 4, p. 68)

Four Kinds of Aspiration

A mental aspiration means that the thought-power aspires to have knowledge, for instance, or else to have the power to express itself well or have clear ideas, a logical reasoning. One may aspire for many things; that all the faculties and capacities of the mind may be developed and placed at the service of the Divine. This is a mental aspiration.

Or you may have an aspiration in the vital; if you have desires or troubles, storms, inner difficulties, you may aspire for peace, to be quite impartial, without desire or preference, to be a good docile instrument without any personal whims, always at the Divine's disposal. This is a vital aspiration.

You may have a physical aspiration also; that the body may feel the need to acquire a kind of equipoise in which all the parts of the being will be well balanced, and that you may have the power to hold off illness at a distance or overcome it fast when it enters trickily, and that the body may always function normally, harmoniously, in perfect health. That is a physical aspiration.

A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite with the Divine. (Vol. 5, pp. 293-4.)

Development of Aspiration

Should not one be born with a great aspiration ?

No, aspiration is a thing to be developed, educated, like all activities of the being. One may be born with a very slight aspiration and develop it so much that it becomes very great. One may be born with a very small will and develop it and make it strong. It is a ridiculous idea to believe that things come to you like that, through a sort of grace, that if you are not given aspiration, you don't have it—this is not true. It is precisely upon this that Sri Aurobindo has insisted in his letter and in the passage I am going to read to you in a minute. He says you must choose, and the choice is constantly put before you and constantly you must choose, and if you do not choose, well, you will not be able to advance. You must choose; there is no "force like that" which chooses for you, or chance or luck or fate—this is not true. Your will is free, it is deliberately left free and you have to choose. It is you who decide whether to seek the Light or not, whether to be the servitor of the Truth or not—it is you. Or whether to have an aspiration or not, it is you who choose. And even when you are told, "Make you surrender total and the work will be done for you", it is quite all right, but to make your surrender total, every day and at every moment you must choose to make your surrender total, otherwise you will not do it, it will not get done by itself. It is you who must want to do it. When it is done, all goes well, when you have the Knowledge also, all goes well, and when you are identified with the Divine, all goes even better, but till then you must will, choose and decide. Don't go to sleep lazily, saying, "Oh! the work will be done for me, I have nothing to do but let myself glide along with the stream." Besides, it is not true, the work is not done by itself, because if the least little thing thwarts your little will, it says, "No, not that!" Then? (Vol. 4, pp. 343-4

Aspiration and Receptivity

I did not understand very well the Answer to this question: "Does the power of Aspiration vary in different sadhaks according to their natures?"

Ah ! yes.

You see, I think the question has been put badly. I believe the one who asked the question wanted to say "the effect of aspiration" and he put "power". that is, aspiration is in everyone, no matter who it is, has the same power. But the effect of this aspiration is different. For aspiration is aspiration: if you have aspiration, in itself it has a power. Only this aspiration calls down an answer, and this answer, the effect, which is the result of the aspiration, depends upon each one, for it depends upon his receptivity. I know many people of this kind: They say, "Oh! but I aspire all the time and still I receive nothing." It is impossible that they should receive nothing, in the sense that the answer is sure to come. But it is they who do not receive. The answer comes but they are not receptive, so they receive nothing.

There are people, you know, who have a lot of aspiration. They call the force. The force comes to them -- even enters deeply into them -- and they are so unconscious that they don't know it! (Vol. 6, pp. 115-6)

Prayers and Aspiration

Do prayers and aspirations also take a form like thoughts?

Yes. At times they take even the form of the person who has the aspiration or makes the prayer—often. That depends. Aspirations sometimes take the form of that to which one aspires, but most often, and specially prayers, clearly take the form of the one who prays.

What is the difference between prayer and aspiration?

I have written this somewhere. There are several kinds of prayers.

There is the purely mechanical, material prayer, with words which

have been learnt and are mechanically repeated. That does not signify anything much. And that has usually only one single result, that of quietening the person who prays, for if a prayer is repeated several times, the words end up by making you calm.

There is a prayer which is a spontaneous formula for expressing something precise which one wants to ask for: one prays for this thing or that, one prays for one thing or another, one can pray for somebody, for a circumstance, for oneself.

There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers who are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for the experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration. But aspiration is not necessarily formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation. You aspire for a certain state; for instance, you have found something in yourself that is not in keeping with your ideal, a movement of darkness and ignorance, perhaps even of ill-will, something that's not in harmony with what you want to realise; then that is not going to be like an offering made of a living experience, asking to grow larger, be magnified and ever more and more clear and precise. All that may be put into words later, if one tries to remember and note down one's experience. But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word "desire", but truly it is here that the word "aspire" should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

For instance, if you have done something you regret having done, if that has unhappy consequences which disturb things, and several people are implicated, you do not know the reactions of the others, but you yourself wish that what has been done may take a turn for the best, and that if there is a mistake, it may be understood, and that no matter what the

mistake, this may be for you an opportunity for a greater progress, a greater discipline, a new ascent towards the Divine, a door open on a future that you want to be more clear and true and intense; so all this is gathered here (pointing to the heart) like a force, and then it surges up and rises in a great movement of ascent, and at times without the shadow of a formulation, without words, without expression, but like aspiring flame.

That indeed is true aspiration. That may happen a hundred, a thousand times daily if one is in that state in which one constantly wants to progress and be more true and more fully in harmony with what the Divine Will wants of us.

Prayer is a much more external thing, generally about a precise fact, and always formulated for it is the formula that makes the prayer. One may have an aspiration and transcribe it as a prayer, but aspiration goes beyond prayer in every way. It is much closer and much more as it were self-forgetful, living only in the thing one wants to be or do, and the offering of all that one wants to do to the Divine. You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer.

Certainly, one may have an aspiration in all the domains, but the very centre of aspiration is in the psychic being, whilst one may pray in all the domains, and the prayer belongs to the domain in which one prays. One may make purely material, physical prayers, vital prayers, mental prayers, psychic prayers spiritual prayers and each one has its special character, its special value.

There is a kind of prayer at once spontaneous and unselfish which is like a great call, usually not for one's own self personally, but like something that may be called an intercession with the Divine. It is extremely powerful. I

have had countless instances of things which have been realized almost instantaneously due to prayers of this kind. It implies a great faith, a great ardor, a great sincerity, and a great simplicity of heart also, something that does not calculate, does not plan, does not bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving in exchange. For, the majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle, and these are very good.

There you are. I don't know if I have made myself clear, but this is how it is.

To be clearer, we may say that prayer is always formulated in words; but the words may have different values according to the state in which they are formulated. Prayer is a formulated thing and one may aspire. But it is difficult to pray without praying to someone. For instance, those who have a conception of the universe from which they have more or less driven out the idea of the Divine (there are many people of this kind; this idea troubles them—the idea that there is someone who knows all, can do everything and who is so formidably greater than they that there can be no comparison; that's a bit troublesome for their *amour-propre*; so they try to make a world without the Divine), these people evidently cannot pray, for to whom would they pray? Unless they pray to themselves, which is not the custom! But one can aspire for something without having any faith in the Divine. There are people who do not believe in the existence of a God, but who have faith in progress. They have the idea that the world is in constant progress and that this progress will go on indefinitely without stopping, towards an ever greater betterment. Well, these people can have a very great aspiration for progress, and they don't even need

any idea of a divine existence for that. Aspiration necessarily implies a faith but not necessarily faith in a divine being; whilst prayer cannot exist if it is not addressed to a divine being. And pray to what? One does not pray to something that has no personality! One prays to someone who can hear us. If there is nobody to hear us, how



could one pray? Hence, if one prays, this means that, even when one doesn't acknowledge it, one has faith in somebody infinitely higher than us, infinitely more powerful, who can change our destiny and change us also, if one prays so as to be heard. That is the essential difference.

So the more intellectual people admit aspiration and say that prayer is something inferior, the mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: "I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material need), well, I ask

You for it, give it to me." Or else: "You have given me what I asked of You; You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention." It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realization, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional.

Prayer is a personal thing, addressed to a personal being, that is, to something—a force or a being—who can hear you and answer you. Otherwise you can't ask for anything. Do you understand? (Vol. 5 pp. 141-45.)

From a Passive to an Active Will

You say, 'I give my will to the Divine . . . Let the divine Will work it out for me.' Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. (Questions and Answers 1929, 21 April.)

And it is there we have the solution of the problem. You can at every minute make the gift of your will in an aspiration—and an aspiration which formulates itself very simply, not just "Lord, Thy will be done", but "Grant that I may do as well as I can the best thing to do."

You may not know at every moment what is the best thing to do nor how to do it, but you can place your will at the disposal of the Divine to do the best possible, the best thing possible. You will see it will have marvellous results. Do this with consciousness, sincerity and perseverance, and you will find yourself getting along with gigantic strides. It is like that, isn't it? One must do things with all the ardor of one's soul, with all the strength of one's will; do at every moment the best possible, the best thing possible. What others do is not your concern—this is

something I shall never be able to repeat to you often enough. (Vol. 4 p. 117.)

Aspiration for the Descent into our Being of the Truth Consciousness

The supramental world has to be formed or created in us by the Divine Will as the result of a constant expansion and self-perfecting.²

That is to say, to hope to receive, use and form in oneself a supramental being, and consequently a supramental world, there must first of all be an expansion of consciousness and a constant personal progress: not to have sudden flights, a little aspiration, a little effort, and then fall back into somnolence. This must be the constant idea of the being, the constant will of the being, the constant effort of the being, the constant preoccupation of the being.

If for five minutes in the day you happen to remember that there is something in the universe like the supramental Force, and that, after all, "it would be nice if it manifested in me", and then all the rest of the time you are thinking of something else and are busy with other things, there is not much chance that it would come and do any serious work in you. (Vol. 8 p. 205.)



¹Sri Aurobindo's answer: "No. Aspiration is the same power in all; it differs only in purity, intensity and object."

²This note occurs in Sri Aurobindo's commentary on the fourth hymn to Agni in the fifth Mandala of the *Rig Veda*, "The Divine Will, Priest, Warrior and Leader of Our Journey": *O Knower of the Births, the man perfect in his works for whom thou createst that other blissful world, reaches a felicity that is peopled happily with his life's swiftesses, his herds of light, the children of his soul, the armies of his energy.*

Search For the Soul in Everyday Living

The previous compilation on Aspiration by Wayne Bloomquist, a long time devotee and presently board member of the Sri Aurobindo Association, was done with the intention of making it a chapter in the third volume of a series he has entitled *Search For the Soul in Everyday Living*.

The first volume has just been published by Lotus Light Publications. Here is part of Wayne's Introduction to this first volume:

"It is amazing the number of gems we often have on our own bookshelves just waiting to be discovered. Over the past twenty years I have read many segments of the *Question and Answer* series... But it was only in 1986 that I began to read them all systematically when I kept seeing passage after passage that I had to note, mainly, about various exercises, i.e. something that one could practice either alone or as part of a group. Participants in a study group could take an exercise and each would practice in his/her own way and then share this experience at the next meeting. It would be a way of not only promoting self-growth but also getting to know other participants. I have been in too many groups which were either no or all personal interaction. This interaction may not be necessary in an Ashram where there are numerous support systems... but it is much more difficult in our society to have any sustained continuity in higher consciousness.

"... It is my hope that one can get a sense of the purpose of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother through her conversations. The Mother has few peers in expressing succinctly in simple English (translated from the French) the most profound truths."

Search For the Soul in Everyday Life is available from Lotus Light, P.O. Box 2, Wilmot, WI 53192 or the Sri Aurobindo Association, 2550 9th St., Suite 206, Berkeley, CA 94710.

Dining With Sri Aurobindo

By Arvind Habbu

ACCORDING TO RECENT habit, I had retired early in the morning, or too late at night as the more conservative members of my family would have it . . . but they know not the necessity for sustained work required to get a solid understanding of a computer system (as heterogeneous as my own). The functioning of a PC AT and the discovery of Bulletin Board Services contactable for uploading and downloading very interesting software programs via modem, are something as absorbing as they are time-consuming. And then I do prefer to work at night, given a choice, for those are for me the most productive hours, even if more reproductive for others.

It had been an interesting night of work, where I had learned the intricacies of concocting Batch Command Files for rapid execution of chains of operating system instructions to the computer's operating system. To top it off I had downloaded several compressed files from local BBS's by modem over telephone lines, and used both by resident programs for their extraction and expansion.

Of course, it wouldn't be me if life were just intense, so I had by now complicated it by registering for a conference to be held more than a thousand miles away in the city of New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, though within the USA. I am leaving for it tomorrow, and half the preparations yet to be done . . . and of course, I must write this account before I leave.

The Family

I awoke this morning from a deep slumber, bringing back into the sunny world a freshness almost forgotten . . . But I hadn't dined with Sri Aurobindo before either. The last time that I had concretely interacted with Auro-da was ages ago, though we have met in between. I was a teenager in the Ashram then, and had found myself outside my body one night in his upstairs chambers sitting at his feet as he read *Savitri* to me as a sort of instruction in poetry and yoga. I had sat

still, hardly listening, mesmerized by the greatness and presence of the Rishi.

But it had been different this time. We were a small if diverse family, with the Mother attending to us all in the just sufficiently roomy home. It was a very quiet life, for Sri Aurobindo hardly ever spoke, and upheld everything with loving benignity. He would most often be found sitting still, thinking perhaps, radiating a peace and a tranquillity that set him in vast isolation amidst our liveliness. I would sit around too, watching him, obliquely at first, then more openly with reverence, not yet free of the impulses of egoism and stupidity that characterize such a large portion of ourselves.

The Joke

One such day, he had stood up from his chair, turned his bright ageless face to glance at me and cut a joke about me, so insightfully humorous and penetratingly intelligent that I couldn't but help appreciate that superb irony of his, and join him and the others in celestial laughter. I had been piqued for a moment, but how could I grudge him the scintillation of it all, and the moment I chimed in with a guffaw, I felt that carapace of ignorance and self-indulgent egoism loosen and slough away from my innerness. And much more than with laughter, my heart surged with gratitude at the painlessness of this deft surgery, and felt the forever impact of a compassion and patience that had awaited the right instant and made it so mercilessly quick. I was left a deeper sweetness and knew a more plastic receptivity to the grandeur and depth of him. As if I had not known it before, there arose a love and a fealty that bound my soul more fast to him who freed.

In all the variety of everyday living and chores, the Mother's presence was not lost on us, for indeed we were well



Photo by Paul Lisseck

cared for and that same unshakeable compassion that in Sri Aurobindo was motionless radiance, poured into us with every touch of her and hands and lilt of her voice, for young as we were, she drew us to herself and held us within the infinite confines of her eternal motherhood.

It so happened one evening that when it was time for me to eat, the Mother had set Auro-da's plate at the head of the wooden table. We ate together, he more slowly than I, and far more beautifully, savoring every morsel in divine equanimity. He spoke not a word, yet to be near him was bliss, was plenitude and unutterable grace. It was after dinner when he had finally risen that I stepped out of the door to return to a body asleep on earth, but participating in the events of living with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in complete meditative stillness. When I awoke into this world, a breeze of brightness was freshness in the eyes, and peace broke through the screen of difficult everyday circumstance. The financial quandaries facing me now seem remote and insignificant before the infinite presence and calm of Sri Aurobindo; and the profound freshness of his self-evidence are all that I need to carry me through and eventually transcend mortality.

(Written on October 15, 1990)

Arvind Habbu lives and works in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. His modem number is 717-732-6817.

On the Night

By David Hutchinson

WALKING IN THE RAIN .
 . . . sitting, thought-less . . .
 . . . visiting an unknown land .
 . . . passing the hours of night, awake,
 alone.

Not the night of drunken lurching
 talk at the end of a long party; not the
 night of lighted halls, with people,
 faces, voices; not the dim night of a
 half-empty bus station, anxiously
 searching for sleep.

No . . . the night of silence, darkness,
 the rustle of quiet leaves past parked
 cars, where stars glisten with a warm
 light, and the moon leans over to caress
 the trees, where your friends are all
 asleep in the room next door, breathing

lightly, slowly, dreaming daytime, of
 people, of everything that is not the
 night.

How many of us know this Time
 outside of time, have explored its
 moods, entered into its recesses, felt its
 silence and sheer Otherness? Only a
 few; we wear society's blinder, the
 craving for talk, news, even a friend
 visiting for an hour. We shrink from
 the inevitable solitude of the deep
 shadows, and miss the time when all
 things are withdrawn, alone.

In that lacuna of human affairs is a
 warmth, an infrared glow from the
 marrow of the earth, impossible to
 perceive in the glare of noon. It calls
 to us, it lives in the absence of talk and
 relation, work and doing; it slips past
 the portals of watchfulness, into the
 rarer reaches of Singularity, and settles
 there, a mist obscure, translucent,

hiding the details of time-place-person,
 enlarging the boundaries of what is
 possible/not-possible. The steadfast
 vault of heaven approaches, its eternal
 Silence, where tomorrow is not to be
 found.

What a marvelous thing, to be
 awake to the Night, while the world
 sleeps! There is, simply, no society.
 Darkness should not call forth riotous
 laughter, talk and dance; it should open
 a crack in the adamant wall of self,
 allow a glimpse of masked joy. It
 gives space to set aside the familiar,
 and become a part of the cosmos.
 Night is more than the absence of day:
 it is a time of illumination for the
 reflecting soul.

*David Hutchinson lives in
 Sacramento, California.*

Heinz Kappes

By Ulrich Mohrhoff

Dear Collaboration,

Bhaga and myself were surprised to
 read in your report on the 1990 A.U.M.
 that Medhananda left his body a few
 years ago; and so would he be, since he
 is alive and well. The actual name of
 the "man of true wisdom and love...
 who has translated most of the major
 works of Sri Aurobindo into German"
 was Heinz Kappes. Neither
 Medhananda, with his fine sense of
 humor, nor Heinz, with his preference
 for anonymity, would have minded,
 though.

Since Walter mentioned Heinz at
 the meeting (though not by name), and
 since he has been mentioned in your
 last issue (though not by name), I feel I
 should add a few words about him.

Heinz found the *Life Divine* or, as
 he preferred to put it, the *Life Divine*
 found him in Jerusalem, where he had
 emigrated from Nazi-Germany and
 was working for the British administra-
 tion. It was pay-day, he had stopped
 by his bookstore, and when he came
 home he revealed to his wife that
 maybe they wouldn't have enough to
 eat this month, but for that they now
 owned a copy of Sri Aurobindo's
 magnum opus.

While reading *The Life Divine*,
 Heinz had a series of spiritual experi-
 ences about which he wrote to Sri Au-
 robindo. He never received a written
 reply, but during a visit to the Ashram
 in the Sixties a senior sadhak told him
 that when his letter was read out to Sri
 Aurobindo in the presence of some
 attendants, Sri Aurobindo had jokingly
 remarked (I can't vouch for the
 wording): There is someone having
 these remarkable experiences just by
 reading my book, while you right here
 complain about not getting any
 experiences!

During his stay in the Ashram Heinz
 once asked the Mother whether he
 could look on the people who come to
 him for help or guidance as being sent
 by her. The Mother concentrated for a
 moment and then simply said, "Yes."

Heinz believed that the greater the
 psychological mess one was in, the
 nearer one was to spiritual break-
 through. When one has lost all faith in
 one's personal effort, one is ready to
 capitulate to the Divine Force (or
 whatever - Heinz couldn't have cared
 less about names) which is always
 ready to take over. So instead of
 killing one's body, which only aggra-
 vates the situation, one only has to kill

one's ego! This is not what Heinz
 would have normally told a person
 seeking help; it is what he helped that
 person do by the power of his love. It
 is therefore small wonder that after
 retiring from his pioneering spiritual
 welfare works within an ecclesiastical
 framework, Heinz poured much of his
 seemingly inexhaustible energy into the
 A.A. and similar spiritual organiza-
 tions.

In the *Kena Upanishad* it is said: "The
 name of That is 'That Delight'. He who
 so knows that, towards him verily all
 existences yearn." Heinz surely was
 such a person.

Love,
 Ulrich Mohrhoff
 Sri Aurobindo Ashram
 Pondicherry, India

*We apologize profusely to
 Medhananda, a wonderful presence who
 was primarily responsible for the Sri
 Aurobindo Ashram library. Our report
 of his death was a hastily jumped
 conclusion based on our complete
 ignorance of Heinz Kappes.*

*We thank Ulrich for his gentle
 remonstrance and fond obituary.*

People

Steward Johnston, known to most of his friends as **Steven**, died in Madras on December 21, 1990. He was twenty years old, having been born on March 29, 1970.

Steward had gone to live in Pondicherry in 1975 and was a student at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education for the next five years. One of his happy memories of this time was of rising and going to the Ashram at 3:00 a.m. on the morning of Mother's Centenary and, along with other small boys, busily offering cups of water to the long lines of people waiting to see Mother's room. Around this time he had asked Nolini-da for a new name. Nolini-da gave him the name Stota, "one who chants the mantra."

From 1982 to 1987 he lived in Auroville, where he developed an interest in pottery and in the plants and trees of south India. He also expanded his knowledge of languages to include Tamil and German, in addition to continuing his fluency in French and his native English. Soon he knew the names of all the trees in Tamil, Latin, and English, including the names Mother had given. He was modest about this knowledge and once, when hearing it praised, remarked simply, "All the trees look different to you when you know their names."

At the time of his death he was on his way to visit Auroville and to participate in an afforestation project in the Palni Hills. He had worked previously with this project and had a great interest in afforestation and environmental concerns.

By Martha Orton

Rijuta (Neé; Patricia Lunin) left her body in October of 1990. She came to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1955 and stayed for sometime in Golconde until her house was built. Her husband Micheal put so much of himself into this beautiful house that even the smallest details bear his imprint.

Rijuta, the name given by Mother, means straightforwardness. She was indeed not only straightforward but also remained one-pointed in her aspiration. Mother entrusted her with the American desk. Rijuta spent a lot

of time answering queries from America.

She led a spartan life foregoing anything she thought would be a luxury. She spent her spare time doing strenuous exercises to keep herself fit. Her dedication to Mother and Sri Aurobindo was total, and she lived mostly within herself; a delicate smile on her lips testified to her inner happiness.

Her attitude toward the Ashram is best summed up in the last letter she wrote from America to a friend; "... Your letter brought such a glorious reminder to me and an assurance that however wildly the world is rushing toward chaos the citadel of consciousness that the Ashram represents is going to preserve always the true values and goals that make it worthwhile to keep this civilization alive."

She died of a serious ailment which forced her to return to America in February 1986. She refused to take the treatment prescribed for her as it might have entailed an operation. Instead she did some exercises to Sunil's Music and fully immersed herself in the Mother's consciousness. There was a vast improvement in her health. She had been unable to walk, but this discipline not only enabled her to walk but to also take up work in a hospital by way of doing useful and selfless service.

Her loss is deeply felt by the wide circle of her friends; but they are also sure that she has found her place in the heart of the Mother.

By Wilfy with Lilou Patel

Robert McDermott, editor of *The Essential Aurobindo*, was appointed president of the Cultural Integration Fellowship in San Francisco, CA (see Center News)

J. Raju, a teacher in Auroville, is completing the second semester of a one year program at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage.

Carlos Goetz (1939-1990) was a gentle man who was very active in the New York City group. He had a wonderful home in Pomander Walk, and we often met there. It had a special ambience of rarified intellect and true warmth, with the feeling of the countryside, for there

was a special silence that seemed far from the noise of the city.

A native of Columbia, Carlos studied at Columbia University, worked in hotels in Manhattan and London and taught at the Riverdale Country School in the Bronx and the Trinity School on the Upper West Side. In 1975 he founded the Pomander Book Shop, a famous Upper West Side spot at 252 West 95th Street in Manhattan.

It grew into a kind of informal salon, drawing literary giants, scholars, thinkers and searchers, including Eric Bentley, Susan Sontag, Adrienne Rich and Robert Payne. The earliest inventory was based on his own collection, including British and American literature, comparative religion and philosophy.

The *New York Times* wrote: "Most often, Mr. Goetz could be found at the back of the shop, meticulously mending or cleaning books. From that post, he would make knowledgeable recommendations, laced with trenchant commentary on politics and the passing scene."

I remember him telling me that when he first came across a book about The Mother, he was so moved that he flew to Pondicherry to be at the Ashram himself.

He was crucial in organizing the viewing of the Satprem film *Man After Man* at the Thalia theater in New York City.

His kind wit, penetrating perspective, urbane sophistication, and sincere aspiration will be missed by all of us.

By Miriam Belov

Amidst these passings, two births and a marriage: A son, **Eli Walker**, was born to **Kay** and **Paul Lisseck** of Northampton, Massachusetts and a son, **Abimanyu**, was born to **Rajaveni** and **Rathanam**, two recent Aurovilian visitors to the USA. They were here last year along with **Aurora** and **Selvaraj**, who celebrated their marriage in Auroville on February 15. An interview with the newlyweds was published in the 1990 Spring/Summer *Collaboration*.

☆

Center News

**Cultural Integration
Fellowship
360 Cumberland
San Francisco, CA 94114**

The center was founded by Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri and is a non-profit and non-sectarian religious and educational corporation devoted to the concepts of universal religion, cultural harmony and creative self-unfoldment.

The programs for January - February 1991 were as follows:

Jan. 6: "The Desired New World Order", A Talk by Dr. C.R. Goswami

Jan. 13: "The Ten Commandments as an Upanishad", A Talk by Makund Makowsky.

Jan. 17 thru Feb. 21: A six week seminar on "Meditation for Freedom" by Dr. C. R. Goswami.

Jan. 20: "The King Still Reigns", A Talk for Martin Luther King Day by Rev. Josephine Cole.

Feb. 3: "The New Understanding of Death: A Meeting of Science and Spirituality", A Talk by Anton Brosz (author of *Letters to a Dying Friend*, *What Comes Next*, *a Quest Book*.)

Feb. 10: "The Knowledge That Liberates", A Talk by C.R. Goswami.

Feb. 17: "Problem of Duality and Self Image", A Talk by Dr. James Plaugher.

Feb. 24: "Surrender to the Divine: Its Meaning", Dr. C.R. Goswami and Celest Powell.

The Annual Business Meeting of CIF will be held on Sunday, Feb. 17 at 1 p.m. The Fellowship has a book store which carries books on psycho-spiritual wisdom. Membership is available.

It is with great sadness we are announcing the untimely death of our dearest friend and most beloved member, Uday Sankar Sengupta. An architect by profession, Uday was an artist of the finest order, a dancer and choreographer. He was a long time member of the Board of Trustees of the Fellowship. His contributions and involvement with our work were beyond measure. We shall always remember him with love.

Contributions to establish a memo-

rial fund for Uday Sengupta have already been received by the CIF to promote dance, music and the arts which were so close to his heart.

**California Institute of
Integral Studies
765 Ashbury Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
415-753-6100**

Inauguration of Robert McDermott as President

By Wayne Bloomquist

The inauguration ceremony for Robert A. McDermott was presented at the De Young Museum auditorium in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco on February 2, 1991. Dr. McDermott was appointed President of the California Institute of Integral Studies in August, 1990.

The program was an artful blend of music, prayer, humor, and brief but interesting talks. Dionne Somers began with a compellingly paced reading of Sri Aurobindo's *The Hour of God*. Michael Murphy, founder of Esalen, reminisced about Allan Watts, Haridas Chaudhuri and others in 1950 at the Academy of Asian Studies, the predecessor to the California Institute of Asian Studies (now CIIS).

Dr. Jacob Needleman, Professor of Philosophy at San Francisco State University, talked about the repression in our society in asking fundamental questions about life.

Dr. McDermott gave a thoughtful and humorous presidential address, "Hope for a Renewing Community," and talked about the various people and groups that have influenced his life.

The program concluded with the audience singing alleluia to Pachelbel's *Canon* followed by a superb reception.

**AVI-USA
P.O. Box 162489
3112 'O' St., Suite 13
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916)452-4013**

Excerpts from the 1990 Annual Report

From January to December 1990 the AVI-USA office conducted "business as usual," selling videos and books, gathering mail from the post office each day, answering letters, distributing *Auroville News* every four to six weeks, and having volunteer work parties once a month. We are fortunate to retain the services of a bookkeeper Karmyn Kleinschmidt, who comes in twice a month to keep accounts.

Chris and Jocelyn Gray went to Auroville in late '89/early '90 and were well received. Their visit strengthened the relationship between AVI-USA and Auroville, laying a solid groundwork for better communication and future projects.

Two high points of the year were the visits of seven young people from Auroville: Aurora, Selvaraj, Rathanam, Rajaveni, Boomi, Radhakrishna, and Arumugam. AVI-USA was instrumental in channeling money to them, and we were pleased to visit with them when they arrived. As they traveled through the United States they generated interest in Auroville, resulting in requests to AVI-USA for Auroville information.

The board had its annual meeting at June's cabin in Yosemite from May 25-28. In the months preceding the May meeting, June and Constance had done some research on foundations and fund raising. One realization at the meeting, however, was that although for years AVI-USA has considered a major part of its purpose to be "raising funds for Auroville," in actual practice our collective heart is not in fund raising. Our true interests and primary accomplishments lie elsewhere.

Four main areas were identified as being closer to AVI's active purpose:

- 1) Channeling contributions and resources to Auroville;
- 2) Maintaining communications to

and from Auroville, AVI centers, and individuals and groups in the USA;

3) Providing hospitality and "people support," helping visitors to and from Auroville;

4) Marketing Auroville materials such as books and videos. We feel that with AVI-USA's goals thus clarified, we will better be able to maintain a strong organizational direction.

Another important development at the May meeting was a growing sense of group cohesiveness. The board members exhibit considerable diversity, but in getting to know each other better we are also learning how to work together more effectively. We all felt the meeting to be extremely meaningful. Spending three days together brought us to a deeper level than our monthly teleconferences, which by definition focus on accelerated, efficient decision making. And while outer, executive activities are important, we discovered how essential it was for us to nourish the spirituality within and foster the sense of oneness so necessary to the Yoga.

Mary and Jack had only two weeks after the board meeting to prepare themselves for the annual international AVI meeting in France, which they attended. Several board members also went to the annual All-USA Meeting in Seattle.

In August Paula Murphy left the board after three years of active service. Her entry into graduate school, in addition to full-time work and raising a family, left her no time for board activities. AVI-USA thanks her for her many contributions, knowing she will continue to be visible in AV circles. We are currently in the process of selecting another board member to occupy Paula's vacated position; several people have expressed an interest.

In September the office lost Satya Alexander, who left to attend the University of Hawaii. His input is sorely missed. AVI-USA has not yet found a suitable replacement, and Jack and Mary are fending onward by themselves.

The second half of the year was characterized by a slowdown in group projects as all board members began experiencing events in their own lives that needed large amounts of attention

and time.

Meanwhile, the office has observed that in the last few months there have been more "serious" requests than ever before for AV information—that is, from people planning to visit the community or even live there. This may indicate an additional need to get information to people seeking an alternative living experience.

In November Larry selected and set up a new printer for the office, replacing the one lost in the break-in. We now have both a printer and a computer back on-line, which is a boon to office efficiency.

The *Introduction to Auroville* brochure is all designed and laid out; the only thing keeping it from final production is agreement on which and how many quotes from Mother and Sri Aurobindo to include—a matter to be treated with thoughtful consideration.

Rod Hemsell retains his ongoing interest in establishing a Sri Aurobindo/Auroville center in Santa Cruz. It would ideally house a small lending library and be large enough to show slides, videos, and have regular meetings and meditations. The center would accommodate gatherings such as the regional get-together held on Nov. 24 in Palo Alto, when Dominique Darr's new video was shown, and the New Year's meditation at Rod's house, which was attended by interested people from Santa Cruz.

The board looks forward to a year of collective evolution and progress in 1991.

Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, Inc. Savitri House & Savitri Solar Village Baca Grande, P.O. Box 80 Crestone, CO 81131

The Global Village Network Conference and Celebration of Sri Aurobindo's birthday and that of India as a free nation was held August 11 thru 16, 1990 at Savitri House and Savitri Solar Village and is now having several significant results. The conference brought together distinguished speakers from Auroville, the Univ. of Colo-

rado in Boulder, Santa Fe, NM, Hyderabad and New Delhi, India, California, and Sedona, Arizona where the earth from the U.S.A. was brought to the Inaugural Urn on Auroville's Founding in 1968.

Developments following the conference include the global link-up of the two most potentially potent youth movements emerging in the world today. Conference speakers Ameeta Mehra, International Unifier of the United Nations of Youth (UNOY) from New Delhi, India, and William Alder leader/founder with Yasha Ring of the New World Youth Network (NWYN) have formed a partnership to integrate their international structures into a single project, simultaneously maintaining their own identity and strengthening both. They are now planning the First Annual New World Youth Network Convention and United Nations of Youth U.S.A. Assembly in Crestone, Colorado for June 14 thru June 21, 1991.

If any of the USA Sri Aurobindo Centers have youth groups and would like information about the convention please write to: William Alder, c/o New World Youth, 2888 Bluff Street #11, Boulder, CO 80301.

Our featured speaker from Auroville, Bhaga, Director of Auroville's Laboratory of Evolution, has taken on the role of advisor in Auroville for UNOY. While in Baca itself, SALC has taken on the task of establishing a New World Youth - United Nations of Youth Center.

November 17, 1990 was the groundbreaking ceremony for Solarbridge, a low-cost solar residence/office and demonstration model that is being built on land next to Savitri House. This project will provide SALC with an experience in solar construction and will create space for the future Solar School they envision.

Mr. C.V. Devan Nair, former President of the Republic of Singapore and Chancellor of Singapore University will become SALC's Resident Director of Education and Research in Community Development at Baca.

Mary Francis Weathersby and William "Dub" Weathersby are living at Savitri House. Dub is working on the Solar Village and Solar Technology School projects. Mary has taught Hatha Yoga and meditation for 11

years and is continuing to do so at Baca.

"Quest for Health and Healing in Yoga" was a six-week course taught by Seyril Schochen, director of SALC at Savitri House from October 7, thru Nov. 11, 1990.

SALC has commissioned a half-hour electronic musical work with text from *Savitri* from Diane Thome, an outstanding contemporary composer. It is hoped that the work will be ready for performance on August 15, 1991 at Savitri House for the celebration of Sri Aurobindo's birth anniversary and the annual global conference.

**Pacific Northwest
2020 Roosevelt Ave.
Enumclaw, WA 98022
(206) 825-3431**

Since the 1990 A.U.M., the rest of the year has felt marked by that afflatus, taking the glow into the meetings of our two study groups. These weekly meetings, studying *Savitri* in Seattle, and *More Lights on Yoga* in Kent, had already been taking a deeper turn the last two years. But now the tone of meetings is even less mental, more sustained and serious, yet also with a more free wit and levity.

There are some specific changes. The length of the meetings has extended itself in Seattle from 7-8:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. as a pre-meeting quiet time and "practical sadhana issue" half-hour. And the ending tarries into approaching 9 p.m. In both groups the studied text is looked at more carefully in the life-stream each of us comes out of and applied in a more close-grained intensity.

Since we've been through the great demands of holding the A.U.M. our relationships are more resilient, more compassionate, more frank. We're more able and interested to extend our welcome to new people, to understand their feeling of something like "coming in the middle of a movie," which we can now help them through much more ably.

In that context, two larger meetings, drawing from the much wider area of British Columbia to Oregon, have been held. The first was on the occasion of

Sri Aurobindo's birthday (Aug. 15) in Seattle at Shyamraj Sharma's family's home where about 45 people had dinner, meditated, saw a video of the 1973 darshan of the Mother and had the evening together. The other was on Mother's mahasamadhi anniversary (Nov. 17) at Roger Stanley's home in South Seattle. For many that continued the following full day at Camp Brotherhood, an hour north of Seattle, with informal group sessions of about 40 persons on the theme of dealing spiritually with pain and suffering.

Some of those among us and some new people brought their professional experience as care-givers, doctors, social workers and psychologists. Textual hand-outs or excerpts from "In Praise of Pain", taken out of Christmas Humphries' *Studies in the Middle Way*, from Ram Dass' *A Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky* and Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* (The Book of Fate, Canto Two). One of the most valuable resources was the insight of a Viet Nam veteran out of his experience of returning to the USA.

Other meetings are envisioned in Victoria, B.C., Oak Harbor, Washington and elsewhere. Anyone who visits the Pacific Northwest and would like to get together, please contact Gennie Barnett at (206) 784-0622 in Seattle or Ron Jorgensen (206) 825-3413 in Enumclaw. Being with you would be a delight.

Tapes of all the 1990 A.U.M. presentations are available from Ron Jorgensen at the above address.

**Wilmot Center
33719 116th Street
Twin Lakes, WI 53181
(414) 877-9396**

Wilmot Center was pleased to sponsor several midwest group meditation meetings over the last few months, including the December and January meetings, at our facilities in Twin Lakes. In January, 1991 there was a concurrent meeting at Spring Green due to travel difficulties for the entire group. The midwest group is systematically studying the *Synthesis of Yoga* and anyone interested is

welcome to attend.

Lotus Light Publications, the publishing arm of the center, released a compilation of the Mother's writings in November, 1990 entitled *Search for the Soul in Everyday Living*. The book was compiled by Wayne Bloomquist and is an excellent introduction to the Mother's teachings, with a list price of \$8.95.

The USA edition of Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* appeared in December, 1990 in both a paperbound and hardbound edition. The list price of the paperbound is \$29.95. The hardbound, with its raw silk binding die stamped in gold, lists at \$39.95.

The publishing arm is currently working on a USA edition of *Gems from Sri Aurobindo, First Series*, compiled by Sri M.P. Pandit. In addition, *Wisdom of the Gita* should appear late in the spring. Sri Aurobindo's *Problem of Rebirth* has been taken up for a USA edition to appear later during 1991 under the title *Rebirth and Karma*.

The publishing department has as its goal a wide and far-reaching development of U.S. editions of various works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother over the next few years.

The Institute for Wholistic Education continues its focus with Ayurveda. The first year correspondence course in Ayurveda has been well received and the second year course is in active preparation at this time.

The Institute continues to search for a teacher to take up the elementary education department. The position has been funded and any interested applicants may apply.

**Sri Aurobindo
Association
2550 9th St., Suite 206
Berkeley, CA
94710
(415) 848-1841**

The Sri Aurobindo Association has been active in completing a transition from headquarters in High Falls, NY to Berkeley CA. National book distribution, information services, and center support activities now take place as

volunteer activities with the principal material base in Berkeley. Wayne and Surama Bloomquist are principal coordinators of the office.

A public book display and meditation area also has been established at Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, where a building has been renovated for that purpose.

Recent work at the new Berkeley office includes:

- Completing book inventories and updating book prices
- Setting up a fully operational computer system and Visa/Master Card accounts
- Printing 2000 new book catalogs for national distribution
- Hosting an open house for Bay Area residents, at which books were also sold
- Completely updating the national mailing lists, including more than 300 changes and/or deletions
- Sending out 4 mailings—one for new addresses, two for *Collaboration* and renewals and the annual solicitation letter

Several activities are planned for 1991—of which more later!

Collaboration

We find ourselves with less than 100 subscribers to this publication at a time when the Sri Aurobindo Association is striving for self-sufficiency. We have committed ourselves to publish *Collaboration* three times during 1991 and then to take stock of the situation at the end of the year. If the number of subscribers has not increased (We need approximately 200 to pay for the printing and mailing costs—all work is volunteer) we may be forced to discontinue publication.

Thus, if you are reading this and are not currently a subscriber, please consider becoming one. We would like *Collaboration* to grow and come out more often, but without your support, including articles, news, People, and photos, it cannot. Send your subscriptions (\$12) to Sri Aurobindo Association, 2550 9th St., Suite 206, Berkeley, CA 94710.

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St. Benedict Center on Lake Mendota
Site of the 1991 All-USA Meeting

A. U. M. in the Heartland July 3 thru July 7, 1991 St. Benedict Center on Lake Mendota Madison, Wisconsin

The A.U.M. community is diverse and wide spread. Although we are interconnected in many ways on many levels, it is only during A.U.M. that we are together on the physical plane. For these few days we have the opportunity to experience the multifaceted aspects of our unique spiritual community. We hope A.U.M. '91 will deepen our collective identity and enrich our collective realization.

A.U.M. in the Heartland will be held at the St. Benedict Center which is located on 135 acres overlooking Lake Mendota, just 15 miles from Madison, Wisconsin. It provides us with private single and double bed rooms, family rooms, conference meeting rooms, hiking trails, outdoor swimming pool, volleyball, tennis, baseball, a chapel for meditation and vegetarian menus with food from their garden.

Plan your flight to the Madison, Wisconsin airport and then take a shuttle or taxi to the St. Benedict Center which is 15 minutes from the airport. Flights to Chicago with bus connections to Madison are available.

The early registration fee for the entire meeting (before May 1, 1991) is \$50 per day for adults. After May 1,

the fee is \$55 per day for adults. The rate for couples is \$75 per day before May 1 and \$80 per day after May 1. This fee includes room and board and full use of the facility for 4 days beginning with dinner on Wednesday, July 3 and ending with lunch on Sunday, July 7. A per diem rate is available for those who cannot attend the all of the meeting. Accommodation is available for a few days before and after the A.U.M. on a per diem rate. Children under 5 are free. Check the registration form for the rates for other children. Please let us know about your child care needs.

At this time, our attitude is one of wide receptivity and a calling to Mother and Sri Aurobindo to inspire and infuse us with Their Presence. If you would like to lead an A.U.M. workshop or activity, please send your ideas and commitment to Brian and Fanou Walton, RR 3, Spring Green, WI, 53588 or call them at (608) 583-2626.

The A.U.M. '91 planning committee is as follows; Brian and Fanou Walton, Paula Murphy and Joel Goodman.

☆

A.U.M. in the Heartland 1991 Registration

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Work: _____

Names of adults: _____

Names of children: _____

Please enclose photos for AUM participant display at the Center.

Fees for four days: Wednesday July 3 thru Sunday, July 7, 1991

Individual (before May 1) \$200 x _____ adults = \$ _____

Individual (after May 1) \$250 x _____ adults = \$ _____

Couples (before May 1) \$300 x _____ adults = \$ _____

Couples (after May 1) \$350 x _____ adults = \$ _____

Children to age 5 Free

Children ages 6-11 \$ 40 x _____ children = \$ _____

Children ages 12-18 \$ 70 x _____ children = \$ _____

Students \$170x _____ students = \$ _____

Check the following to inform us of your needs:

Private room/single _____

Private room/double _____

Family room for _____ people

Children's room for _____

Vegetarian meals will be served. If you have other needs please try to plan for them.

Per Diem Fees: Please write in the extra day(s) you wish to attend:

Individual before May 1 \$55 x _____ adults = \$ _____

Individual after May 1 \$65 x _____ adults = \$ _____

Couples before May 1 \$80 x _____ couples = \$ _____

Couples after May 1 \$90 x _____ couples = \$ _____

Children ages 6-11 \$10 x _____ children = \$ _____

Children ages 12-18 \$18 x _____ children = \$ _____

Students \$44 x _____ students = \$ _____

Donation to AUM Scholarship Fund \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Send to:

Fanou and Brian Walton

R.R. 3

Spring Green, WI 53588



Consciousness Turned Towards the Light

Photo by Gordon Korstange

It is athirst for light and cannot live without it.

Collaboration
P.O. Box 297
Saxtons River, VT
05154

Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid Berkeley, California Permit # 55
