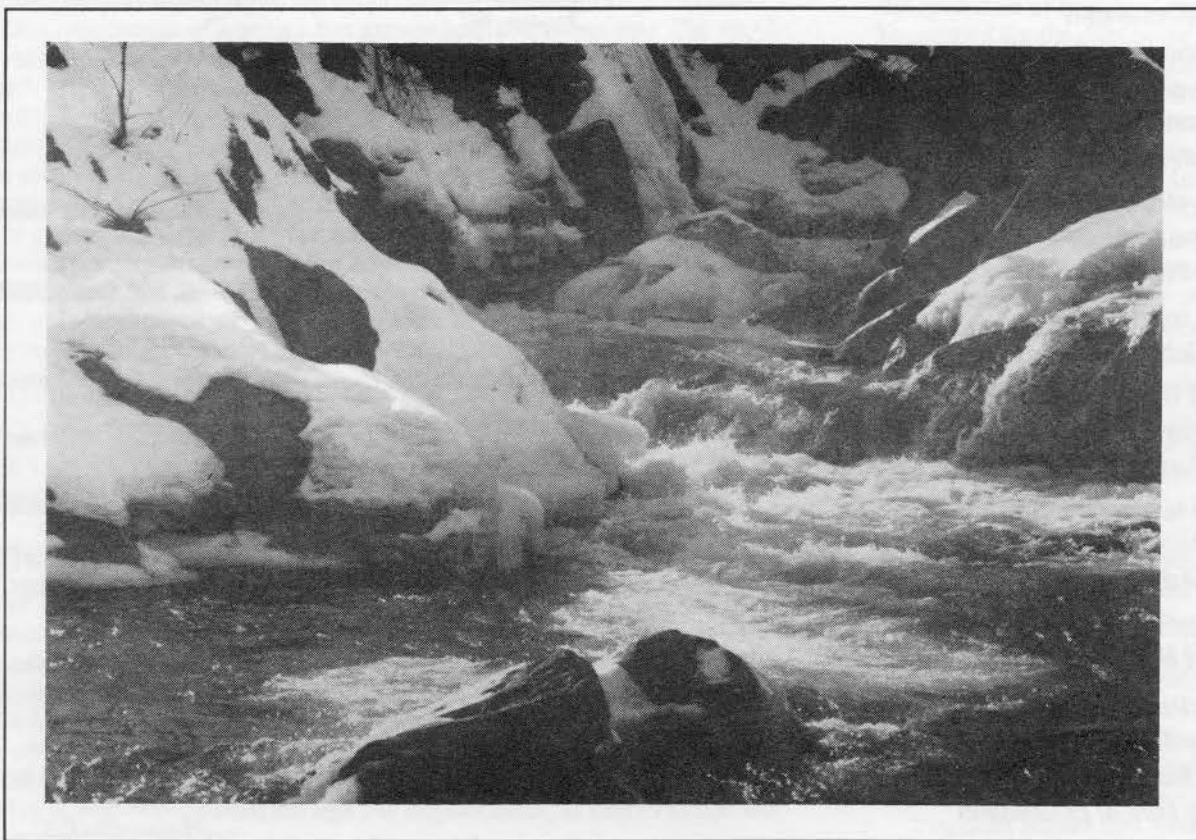


# Collaboration

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# Talking About It

By Gordon Korstange

**T**HE IDEA OF FOCUSING AN ENTIRE ISSUE ON MONEY originated with Margo MacLeod, treasurer of the Foundation For World Education, who gave a talk on the subject at last summer's A.U.M. We interviewed her and then sent out the transcript to a number of people who then either wrote comments in the margins or a completely separate piece. The resulting contributions have far exceeded our expectations and, perhaps, point to a new way for the newsletter to involve its readers in discussing topics that matter to them.

As David Wickenden wrote to us, "I think this was a terrific idea and hope you'll continue to use the newsletter as a kind of community bulletin board to air out contentious and tough issues related to the sadhana and the work generally . . . It's good to get people talking and thinking about the stuff that we've all got to deal with—without the benefit of having a live guru to help sort things out. The way I look at it, in the post-guru phase we've got to share our own 'notes on the way' with each other."

Why not? This is the way we'll try it. We will announce an upcoming topic (suggestions please!) and produce a primary document, either an interview or article, about that subject. If you are interested in being part of the conversation, spoken or written, you will have to contact us as soon as possible. We will then send you a copy of the primary document for your additions, call you for your comments, or print your own primary document on the subject.

The process may take time. This "Money" issue has been in the making since last August, so an "upcoming topic" may not automatically appear in the next issue. In order for everyone to get the most out of the conversation, it will be necessary for a certain amount of back and forth revision. Some issues may never get off the ground.

Since we know that most of our readers value the extracts from Mother and Sri Aurobindo that have been a part of *Collaboration* since its Matagiri beginning, they will be an integral part of the conversation.

## Questions

The articles in this issue raise many questions about money, both on the individual and organizational level. The most fundamental question, it seems to me, is why we in the USA have not progressed very far in reconquering the money power of a nation which, after all, seems to wallow in the stuff. Have we been conquered by money, the fear of being without, the desire for an endless list of products, pleasures, and powers? "What is the Divine's work?" asks Margo. Can we talk about this individually? Can we find some clarity about and consensus on goals at a national level and begin working toward it through our organizations, as Rudy Phillips and June Maher would have us do?

Why do our organizations and projects like Auroville lack financial support? Is it, as many in this issue suggest, because we still see the money power as incompatible with a spiritual life? Have we been disillusioned by the hype about Rajneesh's Mercedes? By the Sri Aurobindo Society/Auroville quarrel? By distrust of our widely diverse fellow Aurobindonians? Should we and Auroville, as Santosh Krinsky suggests, plunge wholeheartedly into the marketplace "to offer something of value to humanity at the level at which (humanity is) able to recognize it?" In fact, as Dee DeCew points out, in Auroville productivity and money-making have become linked in ways and lifestyles that she and others lament and is a hotly debated issue in the community.

All of these questions, and others, are ripe for discussion during our center and regional meetings, at the A.U.M. in July, and on the pages of *Collaboration*. We welcome your letters, suggestions and contributions.

**Upcoming Topic: Feminism and the Yoga**

# Sri Aurobindo On Money

**M**ONEY IS THE VISIBLE sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action it belongs to the Divine. But like other powers of the Divine it is delegated here and in the ignorance of the lower Nature can be usurped for the uses of the ego or held by Asuric influences and perverted to their purpose. This is indeed one of the three forces - power, wealth, sex - that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the Asura and are most generally misheld and misused by those who retain them. The seekers or keepers of wealth are more often possessed rather than its possessors; few escape entirely a certain distorting influence stamped on it by its long seizure and perversion by the Asura. For this reason most spiritual disciplines insist on a complete self-control, detachment and renunciation of all bondage to wealth and of all personal and egoistic desire for its possession. Some even put a ban on money and riches and proclaim poverty and bareness of life as the only spiritual condition. But this is an error; it leaves the power in the hands of the hostile forces. To reconquer it for the Divine to whom it belongs and use it divinely for the divine life is the supramental way for the Sadhaka.

You must neither turn with an ascetic shrinking from the money power, the means it gives and the objects it brings, nor cherish a rajasic attachment to them or a spirit of enslaving self-indulgence in their gratifications. Regard wealth simply as a power to be won back for the Mother and placed at her service.

All wealth belongs to the Divine and those who hold it are trustees, not possessors. It is with them today, tomorrow it may be elsewhere. All depends on the way they discharge their trust while it is with them, in what spirit, with what consciousness in their use of it, to what purpose.

In your personal use of money look



on all you have or get or bring as the Mother's. Make no demand but accept what you receive from her and use it for the purposes for which it is given to you. Be entirely selfless, entirely scrupulous, exact, careful in detail, a good trustee; always consider that it is her possessions and not your own that you are handling. On the other hand, what you receive for her, lay religiously before her; turn nothing to your own or anybody else's purpose.

Do not look up to men because of their riches or allow yourself to be impressed by the show, the power or the influence. When you ask for the Mother, you must feel that it is she who is demanding through you a very little of what belongs to her and the man from whom you ask will be judged by his response.

If you are free from the money-taint but without any ascetic withdrawal, you will have a greater power to command the money for the divine work. Equality of mind, absence of demand and the full dedication of all you possess and receive and all your power of acquisition to the Divine Shakti and her work are the signs of this freedom. Any perturbation of mind with regard to money and its use, any claim, any grudging is a sure index of some imperfection or bondage.

The ideal sadhaka in this kind is one who if required to live poorly can so live and no sense of want will affect him or interfere with the full inner plan of the divine consciousness, and if he is required to live richly, can so live and never for a moment fall into desire or attachment to his wealth or to the

things that he uses or servitude to self-indulgence or a weak bondage to the habits that the possession of riches creates. The divine Will is all for him and the divine Ananda.

In the supramental creation the money-force has to be restored to the Divine Power and used for a true and beautiful and harmonious equipment and ordering of new divinised vital and physical existence in whatever way the Divine Mother herself decides in her creative vision. But first it must be conquered back for here and those will be strongest for the conquest who are in this part of their nature strong and large and free from ego and surrendered without any claim or withholding or hesitation, pure and powerful channels for the Supreme Puissance. Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, (SABCL, Vol. 25, S.A.A. Press, Pondicherry, 1972) pp. 11-14.

# The Mother on Money

Compiled by Eric Hughes and Margo MacLeod

## 14 January 1963

Very entertaining.

There you are, mon petit.

Agreed, then, we'll try and learn to laugh with the Lord.

I know — I know He wants me to learn not to take seriously the responsibility ("responsibility" isn't the right word), the formidable task of finding 8,000 rupees a day to meet the Ashram's expenses — in other words, a colossal fortune every month.

And I very well see (because I told Him several times, "You know, it would be great fun if I had plenty of money to play with"), so I see that He laughs, but He doesn't answer! . . . He teaches me to be able to laugh at this difficulty, to see the cashier send me his book in which the figures are growing astronomical (*laughing*) it's by 50,000, 60,000, 80,000, 90,000, while the drawer is nearly empty! And He wants me to learn to laugh at it. The day when I can really laugh — laugh, enjoy myself — Sincerely (not through effort — you can do anything you want through effort), when it makes me laugh spontaneously, I think it will change. Because otherwise it's impossible. . . . You see, we have fun

with all sorts of things, there's no reason we couldn't have fun with more money than we need and do things in style! It will surely happen one day, but we should — we shouldn't be overwhelmed by the amount, and for that we shouldn't take money seriously.

**"You know, it would be great fun if I had plenty of money to play with"**

It's very hard nowadays, because all over the world people take money seriously, and that makes it very hard. Especially those who have money. Those who have money, how seriously they take it, oh, Lord! That's why it's difficult. We should be able to laugh — laugh, laugh frankly and sincerely, then it would be over.

Well! . . . All right, we'll talk about it again.

Good-bye, mon petit.

*Mother's Agenda* — 1963, [I.F.E.R., N.Y., N.Y., 1982] Vol. 4, p. 34.

## 28 July 1954

*This talk is based upon Chapter 4 of The Mother by Sri Aurobindo.*

*How does money manifest on other planes?*

What other planes? He speaks of the vital and physical, doesn't he? . . . that it is a force which manifests on the vital plane and the physical plane. The vital forces have a very great influence over money.

(*After a silence*) You see, when one thinks of money, one thinks of bank-notes or coins or some kind of wealth, some precious things. But this is only the physical expression of a force which may be handled by the vital and which, when possessed and controlled, almost automatically brings along these more material expressions of money. And that is a kind of power. (*Silence*) It is a power of attracting certain very material vibrations, which has a capacity for utilization that increases its strength — which is like the action of physical exercise, you see — it increases its strength through utilization.

For example, if you have a control over this force — it is a force which, in





the vital world, has a colour varying between red, a dark, extremely strong red and a deep gold that's neither bright nor very pale. Well, this force — when it is made to move, to circulate, its strength increases. It is not something one can accumulate and keep without using. It is a force which must always be circulated. For example, people who are misers and accumulate all the money, all the wealth they can attract towards themselves, put this force aside without using its power of movement; and either it escapes or it lies benumbed and loses its strength.

The true method of being in the stream of this money-power is precisely what is written here: a sense of absolute impersonality, the feeling that it is not something you possess or which belongs to you, but that it is a force you can handle and direct where it ought to go in order to do the most useful work. And by these movements, by this constant action, the power increases—the power of attraction, a certain power of organization also. That is to say, even somebody who has no physical means, who is not in those material circumstances where he could materially handle money, if he is in possession of this force, he can make it circulate, and if ever he finds it necessary, receive from it as much power as he needs without there being externally any sign or any reason why the money should come to him. He may be in conditions which are absolutely the very opposite of those of usual wealth, and yet can handle this force and always have at his disposal all the wealth that's necessary to carry on his work.

Therefore, it was like this, you see: this letter was written to someone who wanted to go out from here to collect money for Sri Aurobindo's work, and this person had no means at all. So he began by saying to Sri Aurobindo, "But as I myself have no means, people will have no trust in me, and I won't be able to get anything." And Sri Aurobindo answered him something like this, that it is not the external force in its most material form which is necessary, it is the handling of the inner force which gives one control over money wherever it is: whether it is in public institutions or with individuals, one obtains control over it and one can, when it is necessary, attract by a certain movement what is needed.

*Sweet Mother, it is men who have created money. Then how is it a divine power?*

Hm! (*laughing*) It is as though you told me: it is a man and woman who have created another person, then how can he be divine in essence? It is exactly the same thing! The whole creation is made externally by external things, but behind that there are divine forces. What men have invented—paper or coins or other objects—all these are but means of expression—nothing else but that . . . I just said this a moment ago, it is not the force itself, it is its material expression as men have created it. But this is purely conventional. For example, there are countries where small shells are exchanged instead of money. There are even

**You may pile up money, but it doesn't belong to you until you spend it. Then you have the merit, the glory, the joy, the pleasure of spending it!**

countries where. . . Someone has written a story like this: in the North wealth means having hooks for fishing; and the rich man is he who has the greatest number of fish-hooks. You know what these are, don't you?—small iron hooks for catching fish which are

fixed at the end of the line. So the multimillionaire is one who has a huge number of hooks!

It is purely conventional. What is behind is the force I am speaking about, you see, and so it manifests in all sorts of ways. For example, even gold, you know. . . men have given a certain value to gold, because of all metals it deteriorates the least. It is preserved almost indefinitely. And this is the reason, there's no other. But it is a mere convention. The proof is there each time a new gold-mine is found and exploited, the value of gold has fallen. These are mere conventions between human beings. But what makes money a power is not this, it is the force that's behind. As I was saying a while ago, it is a force that is able to attract and use anything whatever, all material things and . . .

So this is used according to a convention. Now, it is understood that wealth is represented by bits of paper which become very dirty, and on which something is printed. They are altogether disgusting, most often good only for lighting the fire. But it is considered a great fortune. Why? Because that's the convention. Yet one who is capable of attracting this and using it for something good, to increase the welfare of this world, the welfare and well-being of the world, that man has a hold on the money-power, that is to say, the force that is behind money.

(The Mother, *Questions and Answers* 1954, [Collected Works, S.A. A. Press, Pondicherry, 1979] Vol. 6, pp. 249-53.)

## Money is Valuable When Spent

(The following quotes from Mother are excerpts from *The Great Adventure: A Diary For All Times*)

It is infinitely more difficult to be good, to be wise, to be intelligent and generous, to be more generous, you follow me, when one is rich than when one is poor. I have known many people in many countries, and the most generous people I have ever met in all the countries, were the poorest. As soon as the pockets are full, one is caught by a kind of illness, which is a sordid attachment to money. I assure you it is a curse.

So the first thing to do when one has money is to give it. But as it is said that it should not be given without discernment, don't go and give it like those who practice philanthropy, because that fills them with a sense of their own goodness, their generosity and their own importance. You must act in a

**It is impossible  
to have a  
financial  
success in  
affairs of pure  
speculation  
without its  
being  
detrimental to  
another**

sattwic way, that is, make the best possible use of it. And so, each one must find in his highest consciousness what the best possible use of the money he has can be. And truly money has no value unless it circulates. For each and every one, money is valuable only when one has spent it.

## Money Belongs to No One

The conflict about money is what might be called a "conflict of ownership," but the truth is that money belongs to no one. This idea of possessing money has warped everything. Money should not be a "possession;" like power it is a means of action which is given to you, but you must use it according to ... what we can call the "will to the Giver," that is, in an impersonal and enlightened way. If you are a good instrument for diffusing and utilising money, then it comes to you, and it comes to you in proportion to your capacity to use it as it is meant to be used. That is the true mechanism.

The true attitude is this: money is a force intended for the work on earth, the work required to prepare the earth to receive and manifest the divine forces, and it—that is, the power of utilising it—must come into the hands of those who have the clearest, most

comprehensive and truest vision.

This force should be in the hands of those who know how to make the best possible use of it, that is, as I said at the beginning, people who have abolished in themselves or in some way or other got rid of every personal desire and every attachment. To this should be added a vision vast enough to understand the needs of the earth, a knowledge complete enough to know how to organise all these needs and use this force by these means.

If, besides this, these beings have a higher spiritual knowledge, then they can utilise this force to construct gradually upon the earth what will be capable of manifesting the divine Power, Force and Grace.

## Production

If one produces something, instead of an impoverishment it is an enrichment; simply one puts into circulation in the world something else having a value equivalent to that of money. But to say that one cannot make a heap without making a hole is all right for those who speculate, who do business on the Stock Exchange or in finance—there it is true. It is impossible to have a financial success in affairs of pure speculation without its being detrimental to another. But it is limited to this. Otherwise a producer does not make a hole if he heaps up money in exchange for what he produces. Surely there is a question of the value of the production, but if the production is truly an acquisition for the general human wealth, it does not make a hole, it increases this wealth. And in another way, not only in the material field, the same thing holds for art, for literature or science, for any production at all.

## The Perfect Gift - I

I remember having read, in a book of Indian legends, a story like this. There was a very poor, very old woman who had nothing, who was quite destitute, who lived in a miserable hut, and who had been given a fruit. It was a mango. She had eaten half of it and kept the other half for the next day, because it was something so marvellous that she did not often happen to get it—a mango. And then, when night fell, someone knocked at the rickety door

**... the most  
generous people I  
have ever met in  
all the countries,  
were the poorest**

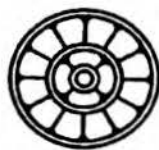
and asked for hospitality. And this someone came in and told her he wanted shelter and was hungry. So she said to him, "Well, I have no fire to warm you, I have no blanket to cover you, and I have half a mango left, that is all I have, if you want it; I have eaten half of it." And it turned out that this someone was Shiva, and that she was filled with an inner glory, for she had made a perfect gift of herself and all she had.

I read that, I found it magnificent.

## A Perfect Gift - II

What you are, give that; what you have, give that, and your gift will be perfect; from the spiritual point of view it will be perfect. This does not depend upon the amount of wealth you have or the number of capacities in you nature; it depends upon the perfection of your gift, that is to say, on the totality of your gift. . . .

The right man, or even people who are quite well-off and have all sorts of things in life and give to the Divine what they have in surplus—for usually this is the gesture: one has a little more money than one needs, one has a few more things than one needs, and so, generously, one gives that to the Divine. It is better than giving nothing. But even if this "little more" than what they need represents lakhs of rupees, the gift is less perfect than the one of half the mango. For it is not by the quantity or the quality that it is measured: it is by the sincerity of the giving and the absoluteness of the giving.



# "What is Destitution Anyway?"

An Interview with Margo MacLeod and Commentary by  
Dee DeCew, Shashi Kant Desai, and Rudy Phillips.

**C** **OLLABORATION:** What started you thinking about money and the Yoga and donating money to Mother's works?

**Margo:** Working on the Foundation For World Education Board and realizing that everyone has their hands out and wants to have money for projects, but no-one seems to be thinking, especially in the long term, about putting money in, about keeping Sri Aurobindo and Mother's work going over the long run. So one part was that I started thinking about my own life in relationship to money, and I realized that I didn't think in the long term at all either. I was moved to give money occasionally or even regularly, small sums of money, and I didn't think to myself: 'Is there some way that I could bring what money I have to bear in a more powerful fashion.'

The other part was working with the Foundation's money to ensure that it would be there over the long run generating income, so that money could be given out year after year. I have become much more familiar with financial planning as an idea, and with some of the things that you can do even when you have just a tiny bit of money. I have long been in a position of having virtually no money, and so I got intrigued with what one might do even when you don't have very much.

**Rudy:** I have spent my whole life with one foot in the material world of science and business, and the other foot in a spiritual plane of aspiration, i.e., one foot firmly rooted in the earth (with a stellum in Taurus for you astrologers), the other one on a shooting star to eternity. This polarity could have torn me in half. I had to find my own  $E=MC^2$ , my own relation between matter and spiritual energy.

I was raised relatively poor in a blue collar, alcoholic household where scratching for money was routine and meant that both parents were working often at two jobs each, and I started working in the sixth grade. Coming

from these roots, I found that making things better, i.e., creating change, was first a survival issue and then a life script. For me money has always simply been a tool to make things better, to implement change. Because of this, I see a natural fit between money and the Yoga, but I have come to think more about that because so many of us find it difficult to see this natural fit.

**C:** Do you think that people's lack of thinking about money on a long-term basis reflects a lack of commitment to giving money or is it just the inability to think reasonably about the subject?

**Margo:** I think it's more fear. My sense is that most people are extraordinarily afraid of not having enough, and it doesn't really much matter how much they actually have. In other words, people can be upper class, upper middle class, and be as or more frightened than people who have very little money. There's a sense of, "I've got to take care of myself," and "I've got to be sure that I have enough," and "I've got to be sure that I have a retirement plan or can take care of my children or can take care of the obligations that I've already incurred or the obligations that I would like to incur in terms of houses and cars and material possessions." There's a sense of real fear that operates.

**Shashi Kant Desai:** In my life I initiated many projects without thinking money. Money comes as the need arises.

**Rudy:** We may aspire for change, but I think most people have difficulty manifesting change of any kind, especially long term change. This is, we all are able to fantasize, to have dreams, but not necessarily vision, where my definition of vision includes not only the dream but also the means to get there, to manifest the dream. In that vane, money is simply one means to manifest change in the "physical

world." It happens to be one of the most powerful means of affecting the material world because it is universally exchangeable for so many material things (and even many forms of relationship); it is intertwined with human vitality. But even if we substitute "hard work" as the means to manifest change, people have difficulty. In net, for me, change is a question of vision.

**Dee:** Already at this point, I feel a bit out of the conversation because I've lived most of my life in Auroville, rather than in the States. Although consumerism is increasing, still in India it does not predominate — the sustenance style of the peasant, and the ascetic style of the yogi are still prevalent and honored. That makes it much easier to practice detachment from money, because you can sense in the atmosphere that if you let go, you won't fall hard.

**C:** So basically you think that it's fear that stops people from giving money, fear for themselves or fear of where the money is going?

**Margo:** No I think it's absolutely a sense of "I can't be sure that there's going to be enough for me" and so that means that nobody sits down and looks at the fact that really we've all been taken care of materially. I mean we may not have everything we desire, but we have been taken care of.

**Dee:** This is a very important point — the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo may not call for a total leaving-the-householder-life type of renunciation, but renunciation of desire is a must. This is difficult anyway, but too many people read Sri Aurobindo and Mother's criticism of mere external renunciation as a license to indulge a lot of material desires that have nothing to do with "need." Certainly the modern economic paradigm reinforces this with tremendous power, making us feel we can't do work for the Yoga unless we participate in high



technology and the high consumption life style that goes with it.

**Rudy:** It is true that fear enters into this change process. People are afraid to "dream big," that is to honestly "go for it," to have faith in the goal and the process and to put their lives on the line, so to speak, to make the dream happen. But it is also a question of knowledge, understanding, planning, and leadership. The fear must be dispersed with clarity and direction. What do we want to manifest? Why is that good and necessary? Who can help us get there, tell us how or point the way? It starts with a faith stance. The "faith stance" reminds me of my biblical schooling as a child. Paraphrased as near as I can recall, "Why, says the Lord, do you worry about what you shall eat or what you shall wear? Do I not clothe and feed the birds of the sky and animals of the field? Are you not much more than they?" And in another part the text cautions the would-be disciple not to "store up possession (material wealth) in barns "but rather to put your heart and mind (and material) in God." In short, spiritual teachers in all times entreat us to set aside fear of material scarcity and lead the dedicated life. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother say no less, and both in their own way sacrificed their lives to manifest change to transform the material existence: He in the knowledge of supramental possibility; She in the embodiment of cellular evolution toward that possibility for all humankind, here on this planet. Those who lay claim to their Yoga are "hooked" by their message. We have an aspiration.

The problem is to translate this message, this faith stance, this aspiration into visions rooted in time and space, in this U.S. geography, say over the next 10-20 years.

**Margo:** I look at my own life which has gone up and down a lot in terms of income. I've worried a lot about what I've earned, and what I haven't earned, and what jobs may or may not be available and whether I can pay back my student loans . . . so on and so



Dee DeCew and Margo MacLeod

forth. Yet I realized some time ago that I've always had enough to meet what were the real obligations. I've always had enough. And so, as a matter of fact, has everybody else that I know. I know that there are people who really do become destitute, but mostly that doesn't happen to people in the Yoga in this country—mostly we are just very afraid that it will happen.

**Dee:** What is destitution anyway? It's clear to me if we're talking about surrender to the inner guru, that we've got to expect whatever lessons He via life metes out to us. There's something to learn from destitution also, if taken as yoga. It wasn't so long ago in America, the 50's or 60's, when there was a sort of surge of "renunciation," voluntary destitution you might call it — beatniks seeking freedom from corporate societal bonds by renouncing the material lifestyle. This was refined into an idea of voluntary simplicity, return to the earth — but what's happened since then? Is everyone out on their farms living simply, developing inwardly, letting Dharma take its own course in changing larger society? Will there be a new resurgence of the transformation of man and society?

**Rudy:** I can't accept materialism and fear of scarcity as an excuse for lack of money to support the work of this Yoga in America. The same American materialism affects the little old ladies who reportedly sign over limited income, social security checks, to ministers preaching their visions on radio and TV. No, I think we in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga have been slow to define our American vision, slow to create an understanding and leadership

to manifest it, but there is evidence of beginnings.

We should not forget the vision creating progress of the last five-plus years in A.U.M. meetings with sharing of knowledge, understanding and networks of people.

With this progress on a collective American agenda we now have the challenge to crystallize that dream with enough clarity that we can rival those little old ladies in

our giving money to manifest the dream. In my terms, only then will we truly have defined our vision. What do we want to create and how? The answer is getting closer.

**Margo:** The other thing I felt when I gave this little talk at the A.U.M. meeting last summer about money—which was the first time I have ever talked about this subject in a public forum—I felt as if there was an enormous negativity, an enormous sense of defeat, an enormous lack of responsiveness from the audience about even broaching this subject at all. There were a few exceptions, especially those with an Indian cultural background, who have an entirely different attitude to giving. But apart from these few people there was negativity or resistance. There was also suspicion of me—like who am I and who do I think I am talking about money and asking people to think about giving money. And too, there was simply an enormous inertia, and I think that that inertia is fundamentally based on a real egoistic sense of, "But what about me. I gotta take care of me first." The Indian community has a very different response. They automatically open up their pocketbooks and say, "Let me give you something."

**Dee:** Because in the East people are more in touch with their feelings, they are sensitive enough to feel the tingle of pleasure that always accompanies real giving. In the West, we're so jaded by over stimulation of the senses that we lose touch with these subtler inner feelings. Of course being more sensitive to feeling can also make you more fearful or reactive, if you're not

accompanying the increased sensitivity with a developing *samata* (equanimity).

**Margo:** As soon as you start talking to people about money it becomes very clear that people have very, very different ideas. I mean Mother and Sri Aurobindo said very clearly that the idea in this Yoga is not to lead an ascetic life, but to win back the power of money for the Divine, but every person that I've talked to has a totally different idea of what that means. It was very easy when Mother was there and the Ashram needed financial support. Then you could write your check and send it to her—now it's not so clear. So what's the Divine's work? Is the Divine's work to lead the good life and try and create a certain amount of beauty around you? What does this mean? People not only have very different notions of what it's all about, but also resist talking about it. If you even talk about it they start to feel defensive. There's a strong sense that just by talking about it you're accusing someone of not doing enough. Guilt—it's called guilt.

**Dee:** I'm glad to hear someone else call the defensiveness surrounding this subject. I know I seem to be making fellow Aurovilians defensive all the time, just by not going along with the current trend toward personal comfort. I don't actually say much about it, but it's obvious that motorcycles, big houses, fashionable clothes, VCR's, parties, etc. are not a necessity, if someone just goes on doing a lot of work without any of it—but when you're convinced you need or deserve these comforts and pleasures, well you're convinced. But the funny thing is that they obstruct the feeling of much more subtle and satisfying pleasures (like giving, like space and time to realize what love is)—but there seems to be a sort of blank space between stopping the grosser pleasures before the subtler ones begin to register—and it is tempting to fill that void with another gross thrill. We have to have the strength and faith to pass thru that blank.

**Margo:** One way to start rethinking this, if anybody wants to rethink it, is to look at yourself over a long period of time and say, "Well, no matter how

little money I've been earning, I've been earning something, and if I've been earning a lot, well great." Then to ask of myself how much money is passing through my hands, and what do I want to do with it over a period of ten years... or over a lifetime! Never mind making plans about giving it away—most people don't even plan their own financial life.

**Dee:** In Auroville I just spend all I've got on whatever projects I'm working on. This doesn't do much in ego-diminishing, as I'm always involved on both the giving and receiving end. But at least I'm making good use of Mother's opportunity to live all life as an offering and enjoy the pleasure of living without personal property.

**Rudy:** Yes, that question, "What and how?" brings us individually and collectively to learning how to harness this maverick, vital power—for good.

What? At the moment, the dream for the Yoga in America may still need more clarity, but that clarity is coming quickly on the strength of more than five years of collective dreaming together. A national agenda is forming. That is, we are about to have an inclusive consensus of what we in America want to manifest. As we come to A.U.M. 1992, the collective consciousness must face the critical need to finally articulate with great clarity the goals, the concrete dreams that are wanted.

How? In my view, disciplined practices and disciplined living remain the true spiritual calling and the example. But if we are doing only inner work for some "heavenly" future we lose sight of the examples given in the Yoga to manifest physical change. Buildings can be built; commerce can be created to support aspiration; individuals can tithe if they share a common dream for something to happen... for example to provide education, to offer spiritual outreach, to sponsor gatherings, to create living communities, etc.

The tithe can take many forms, but put simply, it boils down to reordering our personal priorities and I would like to suggest that part of our priorities, part of our practice, should be substantial giving now to manifest our collective vision in our lifetime. As an

important preamble, I'd like to share that where and how we give makes a difference. For example, "seed money" makes things grow. Working on the FWE granting process, we've witnessed over and over the power of giving with discrimination, of providing seed money that creates new sources that multiplies the original force. For example, the FWE made a sizeable grant to help create the Revolving Loan Fund in Auroville. The money was and is seed money for many commercial efforts and the repayments keep the fund ever-green.

**Margo:** Most people have no information whatsoever about things that would make good long-term investments or ways to ensure that their wishes are fulfilled. Most people don't even have a Will for heaven's sake, and of all the silly things to not have, it's a Will. Nobody wants to think about having a Will because that means confronting the fact that, "Oh my god, I'm not going to be here forever!"

**C:** Do you have a Will?

**Margo:** Yes I do. I just wrote it out long-hand and got a couple of innocent bystanders to witness my signature. That's all you need, unless your situation is complicated. You don't need any more than that.

There are some very simple basic financial rules that we don't ever learn about, and we certainly don't ever apply. We just sort of lead this hand-to-mouth existence that also applies to what we give. We're moved by someone's individual appeal, and we say, "Oh great, okay. I met this person, and I thought they were doing good work so bingo, I'll give them some money." Or, "This particular brochure appeals to me so, oh goodness yeah, that seems to be a good idea." Whereas if we thought about it in a more long-term, open-ended way, there are ways to just multiply the impact of even a very small number of dollars.

I don't know of any better, long term way to leave a lot of money when you have very little yourself. For instance, I have really very little money of my own, so if I want to have an impact, if I want to be able to leave some money to do work that I think is of vital importance, then the way to do



it is to get a charitable life insurance policy, and designate the beneficiary which can be whatever charitable group, whatever non-profit group whose work you want to support. The other easy thing is just to write it in your Will. Just say look, whatever I have, some portion of it should go to whatever it is that I care about most deeply.

Now in terms of the Foundation For World Education, the message that I was trying to begin to convey at A.U.M. is that the Foundation is a viable long-term organization that exists in the United States dedicated to the financial support of Mother and Sri Aurobindo's work. It's the only one with an endowment whose sole purpose is to fund projects that further Sri Aurobindo and Mother's vision. If people want to give money to an organization that has expertise in evaluating and following up projects, and that will be around doing this work probably forever, the Foundation is a great vehicle. The more money that's part of our endowment, the more money we'll be able to grant. It's as simple as that. If people want to leave money in their wills or through some kind of a life insurance policy to the Foundation, it is set up as an accountable, fiscally responsible, on-going institution. We can easily accommodate someone who wants to fund particular kinds of projects, such as Auroville school children, book distribution, environmental restoration, Auroville International, the Ashram archives or whatever a person's passion might be.

C: Do you think it's better to take out a life insurance policy and pay the premiums than to tithe?

Margo: I don't see why they have to preclude each other. You can pay a life insurance policy for eight or nine years, and then you don't even have to pay it anymore. It pays itself. Then, if your means are limited you can follow that by giving in another way.

C: Some people would say that life insurance policies are rip-offs.

Margo: Ah, but in fact they aren't. There are a lot of variables here. It depends on which company one goes with and so on, but it's a very sound way to invest. Usually the interest that

accrues on one's money is comparable to what you could get as the non-expert investor, and there are all kinds of other benefits. For instance, there are tax benefits to you for having a charitable life policy. If you tithe and give your money, it's not going to accumulate. In other words, it's not going to get larger. It's going to be spent immediately. There's nothing wrong with doing that, but it also precludes having a chunk of money that can have a major impact.

The idea here is to begin to think in the long term, to say Sri Aurobindo and Mother's work is going to take a long time; Auroville's going to take a long time to build; distributing the books and making their work available in this country is going to be a work that goes on for many, many years—it's not something that just happens today. An insurance policy for somebody in their 30's or 40's can be as little as \$200-250 in the year. That's not a great deal of money. It's not a large sum at all, even for me who hasn't had much money.

One of the capacities of this country, one of its drawbacks, but certainly one of its capacities is a deep involvement in the material world, the world of production and consumption. To begin to use that very flaw, if you will, in a more positive manner is really I think ultimately what it's all about. I think that's what They mean when They say to turn money from being used by the Asuric forces to being used by the Divine. I think we all are aware that this is absolutely not happening at this time at all in the USA. Any number of other countries are far, far and away greater givers to this work than are people in this country.

C: So how would you counsel somebody who decided they wanted to examine what they wanted to do with money vis-a-vis the Yoga.

Margo: I would say there are three steps: First, take some pieces of paper and figure out really where you are, where you really have been, realistically where you might be, so that you have some facts, you have some numbers, you have some sense instead of these vague feelings of desperation or fear or anxiety or even compla-

cency. I think a lot of people will be surprised with their real situation when they get the numbers down. Second, look at what it is you have given in the past to whatever causes, and say, "Is this really what I want to do, is this the kind of world that I want to help create for my children?" People who have children obviously feel a financial obligation to them, but part of that obligation is certainly to create the kind of world they want their children to live in. This can be done by contributing energy and money to those groups and causes you care about—who help create that world. Then, go within and say, "Is this what I want financially for myself? Is this what I want to be doing in terms of my giving? What do I really want?" Never mind all the things I think I want. Spend some meditative time on it. Then third, I would take those musings and numbers to a qualified financial planner, somebody who doesn't have an axe to grind or something to sell, and say to that person, "Look this is what I would like to be doing; this is where I am now; these are the kinds of numbers I have. Can you help me figure out what to do?"

Now, I am more than happy to help anyone do that. I'm not a financial planner, but if it's helpful for someone to talk about it, I'm more than willing to do that, and I also have the names of some people who are financial planners who can help do that. So if somebody feels stuck for lack of qualified advice, I can offer at least some help in that direction.

In fact, I may be a pretty good example of what I've been talking about. I've been a bum for years (in the sense of not having regular employment), and I've been worried for years, and had very little income. And what with one thing and another I've made it. Sure I've got debts to pay back and so on, but so what? Where did all that worrying get me? It got me nothing. Worrying was no help at all. Every time I really could get myself together I could say, "Margo, you have enough. It really is enough." And then I'd also give. When I would finally get myself centered and calm enough, and I'd give something to Village Action in Auroville, to the Matrimandir, to the Sri Aurobindo Association, or wherever, I can't say that there was this



immediate inflow, but I do have the feeling that it kept something moving that was vitally important—even in the years when I was stumbling along, and I still am.

**C:** The priorities are, oh, the other things that we encounter every day and pay for directly because it's somehow there, right in front of us.

**Margo:** Somebody once said to me, "Show me where a person spends their money and I'll tell you exactly what they care about." When I think about it that way, I begin to get nervous. I begin to say to myself, "Do you mean to say that just because I have to spend all my money on rent and the federal and state governments, and to keep my car running and my utilities and my food, that that's the sum of what I care about?" To me that's an appalling statement and it makes me very unhappy. I want to change it in my own life because I don't care about those things. I mean, yes, one has to maintain oneself, but what meaning does that have? I'd like to contribute to the things that I care about. It's a way to make a difference. Think about it. If somebody sums up what's important to you by looking at your checkbook, that's going to be a pretty appalling statement about who you are.

I think a lot of us who are in the lower to non-existent tax bracket feel as though we give our time and our energy to causes we care about, so that's enough. What I'm suggesting is that it's not enough—it's not enough anyway, but it's absolutely not enough for people who are in this country. Part of our "mission"—that sounds like a pretty grand word—but part of the mission of the USA is to take the very materialism of this country and transform it. This means transforming our own relationship to the material in our own individual lives.

**Dee:** I think there will be people who have little money and spend it mostly on food, but may put all their energy into serving others.

**Rudy:** I would summarize my view by saying that this Yoga calls for deep inner work and physical transformation of the human condition in this world. I would offer the observation that through collective effort of the last five

or so years, a collective dream for the Yoga in America is emerging. We can transform this emerging dream into a manifested vision by committing ourselves to reorder our individual priorities. Tithing is a valid means. Insurance vehicles allow small funds to be seed money for harvesting large funds. Wills are a court of last resort but shouldn't be overlooked as a means to express your aspiration.



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### "Maintenance" in Auroville

**Dee DeCew:** I think it's worth mentioning the experiment that Mother made in Auroville (which we have dismantled in our shortsightedness) of a society where money was not used to control the direction of energy, where people were afforded a minimum sustenance no matter what their material /physical contribution to the work.

There was a growing belief among those who were "hard-working" (i.e. those who had chosen to earn money for Auroville and had fallen into the stressful lifestyle that accompanies such a choice) in "productive" units (this word, despite protests, is still used in Auroville to denote money-making units, as if productivity could only be measured in money or material products) — that many people were not working and needed to be coerced by "maintenance" linked to work.

While it is true that the implementation of this policy did indeed bring a lot of people into jobs like accountants, managers, etc., I myself saw the passing of the old system with sorrow, because I had benefited from Mother's grace in this area. I can remember the slow realization coming over me that (as I worked in the leather workshop) I did not have to be a slave to earning in Auroville, that I could drop that American (actually industrial society) conditioning, and do what needed to be done in and for Auroville — Centre Kitchen was ready to feed me; a room was available to stay in a new environment in Auroville; Matrimandir was ready to take my physical work and give me spiritual support; so everything Mother was saying seemed reinforced by the conditions in Auroville.

As I understood Sri Aurobindo's "Fourfold personality" I was accepting my Vaishya consciousness. But in the movement of release towards the centre, I found the next work for me—Village Action, which moved me out of "earning" into "raising" and sharing money, also stepped my communal role up into Kshyatra responsibilities. I learned simultaneously to accept that the Divine would, thru Auroville and other sources, take care of my livelihood as I worked for others rather than for myself, and at the same time give me the needed powers to administrate a growing organization (these were entirely new skills for me, as I'd "dropped out" long before taking on any managerial responsibility in mainstream society). Altho I've been slowly recognizing the diversity of human capabilities and openings, and that a single policy is not going to suit all types of people, nevertheless I feel a great loss with the passing of that economic style in early Auroville when this transition in my life was fostered.

# Reevaluating the Mindset

By David Wickenden

**M**ARGO'S FRAMING OF THE issue is exactly right in two respects. First, if we are to be true to our work and mission in this country, then we must transform our relationship with the forces of the material world—something that requires us to constantly reevaluate how we think about and conduct our "spiritual" practice. Second, just as we work in our personal sadhana to unearth, air out and transform or release old, negative or simply unhelpful attitudes and blockages, so should we tackle mindset issues that prevent the collective manifestation of the energies needed to bring about a new creation.

It seems to me that there are several knots of various sorts in the U.S. community that obstruct the free flow of the forces needed for material transformation. Margo talked about a few. Here are three more, all related.

## The Money/Power Knot

When she talks about applying some "very simple basic financial rules" with the intent to "multiply the impact of even a very small number of dollars," what she's really saying is that we need to consciously channel the money energy, the money power. That we need to open up to that force, accept it and direct it in a focused manner. Sounds pretty straight forward. But actually it's a mindset, and, more deeply, an inward poise, that people in this yoga have typically shied away from.

If we're serious about transformation, we've got to become more fully engaged with and master the root level forces that operate here, including the basics of money, sex and power generally. Although equating the spiritual life with renunciation as commonly understood runs counter to everything Sri Aurobindo and the Mother tried to do, it's hard to shake the attitude completely. If we're honest, many of us deep down still carry the notion of an either/or world: "Either I make money and lose my values, or I remain true to my values

and don't have money." Or, "I'll never have any money because I refuse to sell out." (A more integral, non-dualistic mindset would say, "I can be true to my purpose and be financially successful.") Similarly, many of us still have an instinctive distrust of people who are working with large sums of money, assuming they're somehow tainted or not really doing "spiritual" work.

We hold a lot of corresponding images, too, such as, "Working for a worthy cause means working long hours in an understaffed, inadequate office for low pay." This kind of conceptual and visual orientation creates a force field that makes the work of an organization like the FWE very difficult; quite literally, it creates an obstruction that prevents the money energy from flowing in to be used positively and constructively.

Beyond the need to root out the vestiges of a negative, dualistic attitude toward money and those that handle money, it seems to me that we need to acknowledge the need to deal more positively with power generally. Mention the word "power" and people in this work instantly start to feel uncomfortable. It's easy for most of us to feel closer to Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati than to Durga or Kali. It's easy to feel fear about opening personally to power. And it's hard to acknowledge power in another (or in an organization like the FWE) without feeling vaguely distrustful, defensive and suspicious.

This was a constant problem in the early years in Auroville, where the instinctive sense to guard against people going off on power trips led to a constant leveling that held down or, in some cases, actively attacked exceptional talent, initiative and capacity. Historically, whether in Auroville or in the U.S., individual and organizational power has generally seemed threatening — both on an individual level, in many peoples' own sadhana, as well as a force in others.

Certainly, there was and is often good reason to be on guard. But unless we learn to deal responsibly and

maturely with the enormous need for power in the work we are doomed to turn round and round forever in the same small, stultifying circles. Channeling large sums of money or working with any other form of energy requires a frank acknowledgement of the force that's involved and a willingness and capacity to work with it. The greater the capacity of the channel, the more the power can flow through. We need to be more helpful and supportive of developing this aspect of the work, in ourselves and in others.

## The Abundance/Scarcity Knot

A lot of good work has been done over the past 20 years by spiritually oriented people on the concept (or we might say, underscoring the reality) of divine abundance as a way of breaking through the negative, limiting notions we've attached to money and the spiritual life. It's something we'd benefit from considering more fully.

In describing the ideal society in *The Human Cycle* Sri Aurobindo says that such a society would make as one of its foremost aims "the creation of a simply rich and beautiful life for all." Indeed, if our sense of the Divine Reality is that of an infinite abundance of beauty, harmony, truth, light, love, bliss, and the rest, then it's only natural we should wish to express that reality fully on the physical plane.

Furthermore, if the nature of the Divine is of infinite abundance, then a feeling of scarcity is an unnecessary and false limitation that dishonors a fundamental aspect of divinity. It's not enough to acknowledge the falseness of the old idea of equating the spiritual life with life in a cave, cell, or in rags. It's also necessary to create and affirm a positive vision of a life that is "rich and beautiful" as well as pure and holy.

In this sense, it seems to me, we need to push beyond even the point of equilibrium Margo describes in the interview — that inner place where we're free from the fear that there's "not going to be enough for me" and recognize that we really always have been taken care of. That's good and right. But the concept of "enough" or simply "being taken care of" is still insufficient. Life live in and for the Divine on the material life should be



more than "enough" and more than "getting by;" it should be wondrously beautiful, elegant, harmonious, flowing, abundant and refined. The only way I know to get there is to better exercise our visioning capacity and strengthen our ability to channel energy, including the money energy.

## The "Talking About It" Knot

As Margo says, there's always been a reluctance in this work to talk about what's going on or not going on — and not only money, but all sorts of things connected with the sadhana. There are lots of reasons for this, some of them perfectly valid. But just as it's healthy to air out a discussion of the money taboo, the process of opening up and sharing information of other kinds seems to me to be essential for the proper circulation of money energy.

This seems especially true for organizations. the Foundation is just starting to address this issue for itself, and it's one that other groups such as the Sri Aurobindo Association also need to deal with more effectively. Margo talks about wanting people to "give money to an organization (the

FWE) that has expertise in evaluating and following up projects . . . that's a great vehicle" and so on. But the truth, and the problem, is that very few people know anything about the Foundation at all. How is it run? How are decisions made? Who appointed the current board? What's their tenure? What's the board's accountability, and to whom? How much money is granted every year? To what projects? How many projects are turned down and for what reasons? Have the projects been successful? What are the FWE's accomplishments? What's the endowment? How does the Foundation report its activities, to whom and when? How can a person participate or contribute?

*(Editor's Note: For answers to some of these questions, see "History of the Foundation for World Education" on page )*

The instinctive tendency for an organization like the FWE is to say as little as possible about these things, because addressing them is a hassle, promises to open up the floodgates, and almost certainly will make their job more difficult. It's safer to be quiet. But actually the FWE (like the SAA and other organizations) will be

unable to grow and fulfill its potential if it doesn't provide an effective, clear, and transparent communications channel, opens up a dialogue, establishes a genuine relationship with its natural constituency.

Energy needs to circulate, money needs to circulate, information needs to circulate for systems to run smoothly and grow. The absence of adequate information moving down through the pipeline shrinks the channel and constricts the flow coming back. The more the FWE, the SAA and others make their process, the projects, and the results visible, the more they will generate a response in support — monetarily and otherwise. I'd guess that the more we as individuals clear out false and outmoded attitudes toward money; the more we work on developing the right understanding and use of power; and the more we live a vision of the Divine as infinite abundance and grace, the more we'll bring plenitude to our own lives and help advance the progress of the greater whole.

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# Money, Consecration, Commitment

By Ariel Browne

*What I would like is to see you suddenly emerge into the supramental light, with that sense of eternal plenitude.*

The Mother

**M**ONEY IS A BIG, PAINFUL issue. People treat money like a taboo. They avoid talking about it; they're afraid to talk about it. And when people do discuss it, their body behaviors have all the markings and gestures of the most painful issues— eyes averted, body contracted— re-living gestures. It's all there. Why is that? Why is money such a loaded issue? Why do we avoid talking about it, especially personally?

Money has always been associated with power, and power is identification with God. For some people, identification with God becomes an ego trip and

it is O.K. with them, at a great cost to their spirit, to play that game. We all know folks like that. But they can't be our teachers. Then there are folks who identify with God through strong spiritual practice and studiously avoid anything to do with money and material things because these have so often been the symbols of the ego-trippers. And more of us identify with them. But we still avoid the issue. The situation is polarized and unenlightened. Money is an innocent tool, but since it was usually displayed and enjoyed overtly by the power-trippers, we so-called spiritual folks reject money along with ego and power.

In *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo talks about willingness to re-experience the material as the Universal: "The redemption comes by the recovery of the universal in the

individual and of the spiritual term in the physical consciousness. Then alone the soul in Nature can be allowed to partake of the fruit of the tree of life and be as the Divine and live forever." (L.D. VII.51, emphasis mine) Sri Aurobindo says, in the same chapter, "...the right goal of human progress must be always an effective and synthetic reinterpretation by which the law of that wider existence may be represented in a new order of truths and in a more just and puissant working of the faculties on the *life-material of the universe*. (L.D. VII.53, emphasis mine)

As a student of psychology I have always been troubled by Mother's adamant reactivity to the ego. According to The Mother, Ego must be rejected in order for human to ascend. In my experience, humanity in its



current stage of evolution knows little of healthy ego. As long as we are in a physical body we must be self-identified (ego) otherwise the body is in a very bad way.

The trouble is that we must work so diligently to keep clear with the woundedness of the ego and the seductiveness of the society which is oriented to assuaging the wounds and insecurities of the ego in the lowest possible ways (and so often involved with money). But the difficulty of the task does not take away its importance.

I prefer Sri Aurobindo's stance on ego. "By getting rid of the ignorance of the ego and its resultant limitations we do indeed eliminate the dualities, but we eliminate along with them our existence in the cosmic movement. Thus we return to the essentially evil and illusory nature of human existence... But if we adhere to the larger and profounder idea that the ego is only an intermediate representation of something beyond itself, we escape from this consequence and are able to apply Vedanta to fulfillment of life and not only to escape from life. The limited ego is only an intermediate phenomenon of consciousness necessary for a certain line of development. Following this line the individual can arrive at that which is beyond himself/herself, that which he/she represents, and yet can continue to represent it, no longer an obscured and limited ego, but as a center of the Divine and of the universal consciousness embracing, utilizing and transforming into harmony with the Divine all individual determinations." (L.D. VII.58-59)

## A Breach in the Fabric of Human Experience

Because of the unavoidably powerful and transforming influence of the Supramental Force, there is a breach right now in the fabric of human experience. Heretofore, in the public mind, rich was bad and poor and holy good and virtuous. When I was growing up my mother was indefatigable in her virulent attacks on the evil of money and the rich. She was starved as a child, and persistently denied certain basic comforts and needs because her dad, ironically a pastor in a Christian church, saved and invested in stocks. He became wealthy

over time, at the expense of her well being, and she took her rage into generalization.

My dad told us about the owner of John Deere, whom he knew while growing up in Illinois. This was a rare instance of a person who was very rich and who shared the money with compassion. My dad's gentle remonstrance to my mom's virulence ended up getting lost. And of course our society has held these truths to be self-evident: money and power corrupt.

But back to the rift. Humanity is beginning, for the first time in body, at least during the patriarchy (last 8,000-10,000 years approx.) to experience a God identification collectively. And it would seem that it is a more contemplative and synthetic experience. If it were purely patriarchy, it would all be in action and external. But since it partakes now of feminine and masculine influences converging, we can consider what there is to do with the empowerment.

Certainly, the collective experiments by TM'ers in meditation to uplift and ease global areas of war and suffering are synthetic experiments which meld feminine and masculine force. The gatherings of artists to raise money for Ethiopia and Sudan and Bangladesh seem to me meldings of the power to identify with God.

Whether they are effective and appropriate and work is not so much a concern for me. It is immensely exciting to see experiments being launched which involve an idea to affect creation or co-create.

But we are still involved, most personally and importantly, in my opinion, with the central work and responsibility, and that is to turn the synthesis ability into the self, toward the ego and with the ego, to look at our cells and what they carry historically and how what we carry of the story of the past predetermines what we/I do and am in the world.

I, human, want to love the earth and bless her and hear her and help her woundedness. I, human, want to love my own body and unblock my joy and appreciation of my own body and also to accept love and give love and feel a much more free flow of love in my world and in my universe. I must acknowledge the pain and fear and neglect and abuse I have experienced

day after day and be willing to forgive myself of it and release it and accept more and more the real Gold of the Supramental and see how it brings newness to my life in every aspect. I cannot have one without the other. I have to deal with the garbage. And as a psychotherapist, I am exposed to dumpster loads of it every day.

I, human, want to redeem matter. Matter is Prakriti, is Mater, is Mother, is Nature, is the Mother-Body which we have all raped and plundered and misused and manipulated and despised. And the Christian Church has not helped. It has been our national guide and teacher and it doesn't recognize the Mother as sacred and holy. It doesn't name her in the Trinity. It doesn't call forth her name and invoke her powers. It ignores her.

## I, human, want to love the earth and bless her and hear her and help her woundedness

I, human, adopt a new/ancient attitude toward Matter/Mother. I turn toward her and honor her. I am unsure and fumbling in my movements. My joints creak. My muscles hardly remember this dance but deep in the cells, under the fear and the mistrust and the almost instinctive defenses and the memories of war and violence there is a sweet memory, a memory of unity, of moving together, of the sacred, and consecration. I must plunge back to that memory, back to that place of peace and solace and togetherness with all things, underneath the fire.

Thank you, Mother and Sri Aurobindo for reminding me so clearly and absolutely, that all of Matter must be taken back, must be redeemed and reconciled. It isn't enough to focus spiritually exclusively. Every level of human experience must be taken back into embrace, no matter how repellant and covered with sores and dirt and self-hatred it may appear to be.

## Abundance

I bought a book awhile ago called *Moneylove*. How I burned and twisted to have that title on my shelf. And how right my spirit knew that title was.

I carried moneyhate for years in my cells. I repelled money; I refused it; I lost it. I disliked nice people who had it. And secretly I wanted it. And secretly I was afraid of wanting it. But then my husband died and the government began giving me money from the Social Security Administration. And it was a nice amount of money that let me take care of my son and me without working. And I accepted it and liked it. And then I won a monetary settlement from a lawsuit, nearly \$100K, and I had to accept that and I liked it and felt also a burning shame to hold that much money in my hands and have no idea how to behave or what to do with it. I had rejected money for so long.

That is where my search to understand and appreciate money in a new way began. Because there was a bunch of money, I took lots of seminars and trainings regarding money and matter and life and a new relationship with myself and the extensions of myself: Catherine Ponder's book, *Moneylove*, *The Seven Laws of Money*, *Wishcraft*, Napoleon Hill's stuff, all kinds of things.

But the most meaningful was a very small book written by a man who visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in the 70's, John Randolph Price, *The Abundance Book*. This small book is about the consecration of self to a new vision of money. Money does not come from the outside; it comes from the inside. The Divine Presence is inside us sourcing all matter. Re-consecrating the self to that and entrusting physical well being to that rather than focusing outside for the source is the reorientation that this little book teaches.

Indeed, since I began doing the 40 Day Abundance Plan which the book offers, I have experienced subtle and powerful changes. I have been working with this book for about three years. I took a break for some months and felt my energy and awareness slowly diminish so now I do it as a daily meditation.

There are obvious results. Those are: increased income, ease and acceptance with physical harmony, growing capacity to trust myself physically in the world, joy at others' good fortune, acceptance of the appropriateness of safety and comfort

and joy for the human body. These obvious changes are wonderful, especially since it is a growing experience of wealth in a new way... not wealth held and hoarded in insecurity, but wealth experienced as process and flow.

I focus a bit here on money since it is actually money that society has been so befuddled about (and me too!). Getting actually, really straight with money is one of my own big goals and



Ariel Browne

I am getting there. I feel money as a behavior which reflects my inner experience of the Divine Presence. That posture is a huge reorientation in this society and out of my family. I don't believe I am at the place yet where I can know that it is solidly held in my cells. Everyday I see such denial of this truth all around me, although the Supramental Influence cannot be denied. Inexorably it is changing everything. Turning it inside out. And Truth is revealing itself willy-nilly.

## Tithing/Sharing

The subtle changes are the most beautiful to experience. This *Abundance Book* also teaches the Universal Truths. And by doing a daily discipline with the book and the plan, I am remembering these truths and beginning to act them externally. They are beginning to seep into my behavior, my vision, my speaking, my sensing. For example, tithing/sharing. The book says, as did Sri Aurobindo, that

you can't outgive the Divine. By giving/tithing/sharing and identifying with the transcendent aspect, you are giving to yourself (if you need reassurance, and most of us do...) and by giving to yourself, especially with joy and compassion, there is a wonderful healing which results in more receptivity.

The idea is not just to give, however. The idea is also to receive and complete the equation. The Christian church has taught for years that it is better to give. The underscript to that injunction was, give to the church and feel no pain. But the flow of life is inflow and outflow, inhalation and exhalation, masculine and feminine, dark and light, etc. When I tithe/share, I also must feel joy in receiving, otherwise I am incomplete and belittled.

Consecrating this new behavior is consecrating to the true transformation of humanity. The church has always belittled humanity, has told it not to be powerful and never, under any circumstances, to identify with God. God is unattainable, inaccessible and remote.

Mother and Sri Aurobindo teach us, remind us, that we are, in every part of us including body and cell, God. We are Divine essence. We may have forgotten it; that is the wounded ego. But we must remember and BE. That's the work. *The Abundance Book* says that the Divine Presence is within us, forever blessing and providing and loving and caring and generating our very life.

So we can see why the Divine is so kind to allow the Supramental Force to move slowly and subtly in its immense transformative capacity. In order to reflect this change, we must defy hundreds of years of savage repression of human truth and Universal Truth. The church tried to keep Divine Power for itself. It not only oppressed with its use of power, it also modeled, globally, the lowest form of power use: violent oppression, limitation of resources, control of expression and experience.

## Gold

As Mother and Sri Aurobindo have taught us, the healing is so simple. All we must do is look to the Supramental for our new teaching. It bestows power from within. And space to feel and experience one's true being, to dance with it and to find all the new



moves we can do now; we're almost unlimited, or maybe we are unlimited, but dance, in this golden space to find out. And it is safe to identify with God. How not to, when we really feel the Gold. And what is it... let's stretch to find out? And matter is good, good as Gold. And transforming matter is easy, let me try the ways. The cells are awake and alive and listening, I just forgot to acknowledge them, "Hello, dear cells; what adventure shall we have today?!"

And money, money is great! I love money. Yes, I do. It's part of the Mother's body. I hold it with respect. It's part of my body. I accept it. And it seems to move, of its own accord. It is concrete, yet fluid. If I try to hold it and hoard it, then the old fear rises up and I block the absolute abundance of the Universe. So I let it go and feel it come in at the same time. And the best feeling movement is to give it to

Mother, whatever I do with it. I write out the gas bill and I say, I give this to Mother through the gas company. Because it is Her body, and we are all agencies of her.

The "Wilderness Society" asks me for a contribution and I write out a check and give it to mother, through the Wilderness Society. My bank account is Mother's and mine. My clients pay Mother and me. It is She who is so vastly, lavishly abundant and I acknowledge her and enjoy her and say, "Yes," fearlessly.

As a footnote, it is only important to note that with the Supramental Force comes, as its handmaiden, the sense of tribe or community. There is something so vast and yet so personal about the Supramental. It is as if the Divine recognized that humanity has suffered so long from a remote father complex and adjusted the creation such that this movement would address just that, in

its behaviour.

The Supramental Force is such a bestowal of tenderness, as it fiercely pushes out the dark and resistant and past from the cells. Somehow, humanity is linking up again. And it is a great comfort. We are not just a bunch of individuals, together. We are a unity coming together individually. What we are learning about money is immediately being shared, and thus the return on our money has lots of almost immediate gratification. The results go into this rapid transformational surge we're in, and it couldn't be more satisfying.

The tribe has been underground for a long time. We, humans, celebrate coming together on top of the rubble of old religion, forming a circle of new abundance, in Gold.

And so it is!

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## Reconquering the Money Power

By Santosh Krinsky

**T**HE SUBJECT IS THE question of money as it relates to the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. This question has often been the subject of much controversy, as it is bound up in both the normal desires of life, as well as the traditional religious or spiritual response to counteract the action of this desire.

Money is obviously a power which is utilized for the fulfillment of the outer life. It is the power which provides basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing and shelter. It is also the power which can provide conveniences and luxuries, and even extravagance and ostentation. Finally, it is also a force of action, which when appropriately applied can transform systems, structures, and events.

Traditional spiritual teaching has recognized that this power has such a hypnotic hold on most people, that it is a true obstacle to spiritual progress. Even highly idealistic people can in many cases be led to focus their attention on "money" rather than

"ideals." The traditional response has been to abjure the money power and to either proclaim a vow of poverty, or become an ascetic or hermit or wandering mendicant.

### Mixed Message

Much of this mixed message continues to plague all of us in our finding an appropriate relationship to the money power. On the one side, we live in the USA and need to have a means of support. We have also adopted some degree of "comfort" in our own lives. And we have seen the power money has to build not only "negative" things, but also beautiful, positive structures for the future.

On the other side, we have been inculcated with this message of the "dirtiness" of money or its power to corrupt anyone who touches it, and as spiritual aspirants, we have a wary concern not to let ourselves fall into this trap.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have

taken a much different view of the money power, a view which does not fall into the traps posed by either extreme in looking at money. The extremes are both based upon the adherence of the ego to the money power. Sri Aurobindo has pointed out that money is actually "the visible sign of a universal force." He further admonishes that this force is "indispensable to the fullness of the outer life." Using this clue, we can begin to address the money issue from the perspective of the integral yoga.

### Options for Obtaining the Money Power

Eventually, the transformation of the planet, the systems of society, and the structures of civilization will require the application of untold sums of money. The method of obtaining this money is now the question, as it is rightly pointed out that the existing powers, entrenched in the status quo, resistant to the type of change we



# ... the true indication of whether the money power is "reconquered" or not is the application to which those funds are put

envision, are the controllers of the money power at present. We have several options available to us to obtain this money power:

1. Beg for it. Essentially this means addressing the people currently holding the money power (for the most part, this means those actively resisting the changes in society) and asking them to give it. This method has the obvious drawback that it is likely to fail. The only people who respond to such a call for donations are generally those who have already committed themselves to some degree to the transformative work, and thus, by definition, are already holding the money for use in the transformative process. Thus, there is no net gain of money here for the forces of **transformation**, simply a moving of already committed funds from one locale to another. In the long run, therefore, this method is incapable of providing the funds needed to do the job!

2. Steal it. Besides entering into the moral and ethical issue of "is it right to steal," this method has certain other major drawbacks, not the least of which is the danger of being caught and "put out of operation" for this 'divine action.' Many people actually argue that it is appropriate to use "any means" to put money "in the service of the Mother." This **fallback** to the old argument that the "ends justify the means" is unfortunately not so uncommon, even in our enlightened understanding of the modern day. There are actually examples of people professing to practice this yoga (I am sorry to say) who are willing to try this justification. This method, putting aside all moral issues, is quite unreliable, and has the additional drawback that the more money that is stolen, the more obvious its loss becomes to the former possessors, and therefore, counter-actions are

taken to prevent further depletion from their side. Thus, there is a strong "self-limiting" factor involved in this method.

3. Pray for it. Yes, this method is actually the "chosen" method for most people we meet who are practicing this yoga. The general refrain is something like "pray to Mother, and She will provide." I would be the last one to denigrate the true power of prayer. However, I have observed that for the most part, people taking this attitude, for one reason or another, are always complaining that they cannot undertake a particular action because they "don't have the money." Now this means one of three things: 1) either they did not actually "pray to Mother" for the needed support; 2) or they did not pray in a way that actually worked (that is, "ineffective methodology"); 3) or the force of money does not actually operate in this way for the most part.

## Understanding the Forces

Actually, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have pointed out on numerous occasions that they are not here to create "miracles" outside the evolutionary trend and principles of action of the world within which they are operating. Salvation by "miracle" is not their agenda. Rather, they have stressed that we should gain an understanding of the forces and master them, while ensuring that our inner attitude protects us from the pitfalls of becoming enthralled by the forces with which are operating, including the money force.

4. Understand and master it ("earn it"). This method, I believe, is most appropriately utilized by those trying to understand and integrate Sri Aurobindo's vision into their lives. In Chapter 4, of *The Mother*, Sri Aurobindo describes the ideal attitude and the global issue at stake in dealing with the money power. His exact statement on this subject is "...to reconquer it for the Divine to whom it belongs and use it divinely for the divine life in the supramental way for the Sadhaka."

First, let us be clear that he used the term "reconquer," which is a very active term. There is no indication here that we should be passive to the force, nor that we should sit back and "let it happen."

## The Appropriate Attitude

In order to effectuate this "reconquering" process, the first step is to achieve the appropriate attitude and balance within oneself. The first necessary change is the "change of consciousness" so that when we are personally dealing with money, it does not leave its taint, and we are then free to apply it appropriately into action without reservations.

Traditional religions addressed this issue to a certain degree, so that each individual would be obligated to forego part of his income through what is known as "tithing." This was meant to reduce the ego's hold on money by applying some of everything earned to a "nobler, wider" purpose than ego, **self-need** or **self-aggrandizement**. In addition, it was meant to provide the religion, the "keeper of the vision," if you will, with a source of funds from wher adherents could build that vision in the world, whether in the form of a church, a social structure, a charity action, a missionary or educational project, etc.

We are all aware of **the** abuse of this power that has taken place over the centuries, but there is a psychological truth to be gleaned here, which may be helpful to us in our individual attempt to redirect and "reconquer" the money power. After we receive the money (whether through our jobs, through business, through bequest, etc.), the true indication of whether the money power is "reconquered" or not is the application to which those funds are put. If they are put to the uses solely of the small ego and its needs, it has not been reconquered

This battle takes place inside us. In order to work on this point within ourselves, it may be useful for individuals to widen themselves by dedicating a certain portion of their income to activities of the growing light, on a regular basis. For most of us, who have limited incomes based upon "real world" jobs, this is a great step of dedication which supports the overall process of redirecting wealth towards some nobler purposes. This dedication in its turn, is the psychological change needed by the planet to truly restructure **human** civilization along the lines envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

## Supporting Our Institutions

We have dealt **with** the individual question somewhat here, but we have not yet addressed **the** "institutional" question of **the** support structures in society which we have built, our associations, ashrams, Auroville project, etc. Once again, **the** same issues are raised, and again, **the** right attitude must be achieved to be successful. Generally the first 3 methods listed above (begging, stealing or praying) face the same drawbacks that are faced on the individual level. Once again, we are faced with the solution of "understand and master" the force ('earning').

How does the "money force" work? By what principles does it tend to be drawn and to accumulate? What causes it to disperse? Is there a particular psychological attitude or social atmosphere which is conducive to **the** action of **this** force? These questions need to be answered by all of us, **both** individually and as a collective action. How many of us have actually grappled **with** this issue and experimented with the conclusions we have drawn to see if **they** are true and valuable?

In the history of the world, the true engine of economic growth and prosperity (the outer sign of the action of the money force) has been productive economic activity, organized along efficient and intelligent lines of action, and meeting a perceived need in the society within which it is operating. If this is the true key to gaining access to substantial amounts of the money power, then it would be obvious that our structures of action in the society should begin to develop institutional structures which accomplish this.

## Marketing Auroville Solutions

For example, the Auroville project, which is after all meant to be a "model city," needs to address the issue of supporting itself financially, obtaining the funds to grow and develop, all while remaining true to the basic lines of vision and action upon which it was founded. Serious thought needs to be directed towards encouraging and directing productive and positive

economic activity and programs in and for Auroville. Some ideas would be to develop a true expertise in areas where humanity has a perceived need. And **then** to package and market this expertise profitably. An example can be gained from **the** "greenwork" of Auroville, which we all admire so much. This work essentially incorporates issues of environmental regeneration which many countries, especially in **the** developing world, are grappling with. The people who have carried out this work in Auroville have acquired a great deal of practical expertise in this area, as well as the credibility of success over **the** last 25 years, and even testimonials from credible sources, such as the government of India to a certain degree. These are all the required elements **needed** to develop a productive and profitable enterprise, if Auroville can succeed in packaging this expertise and hands-on experience as something which can be taken to any country, for the right price, and put into practice in other places thereby.

This one example shows us that in doing "material and spiritual research" for the future of humanity, which is one of Auroville's primary missions, there can be an interchange developed with the rest of the world which will be mutually supportive and productive, provide huge sources of income in a steady stream, and truly carry out the "model" vision established by the Mother. And of course, there are numerous other potential projects of this same sort, such as Alternative Energy, Green Foods, Urban Planning, Education, development of more efficient shelter using low technology, computers and networking, etc., etc. In addition, the arts and culture could be represented by development of a myriad of crafts.

The point here is that Auroville could be truly an "alternative," and any solutions it achieves can be communicated and reproduced elsewhere so that humanity as a whole gets a benefit.

## That Dirty Word "Business"

If my analysis in **this** article is correct, an appropriate direction to harness the money force for the growth of **Auroville** would be to offer something of value to humanity (at **the** level at which

they are able to **recognise** it) and receive the just recompense within the commercial interchange structure existing already in **the** world. This means the development of "business" (that "dirty" word) structures which can **both** carry out the mandate of progress in various fields of human endeavor and do it profitably as an equal in the world of commerce and interchange within which we all still exist, no matter where we are on the planet.

Can it be done? Some people have embraced this vision strongly over the last 20 years or so and with time, we see that in fact progress in this direction has been made and that there are a number of signs which indicate that the real funding of Auroville can be achieved through such a methodology.

Business structures can be built which express a vision and have a higher purpose. **They** can interact with society and provide perceived benefits to the community of people, even those who do not share specifically **the** identical vision of the founders of the company. And they can generate profits to support alternative developments in the world and to continue their growth and development, thereby allowing more alternative action to flourish.

It is obviously easy to either deny the money force and abandon it; or else, to sink into its mesmerizing hold when it tempts with its comforts and luxuries. It is much more of a challenge to act in a balanced and responsible manner, as a trustee, not an "owner," and to create forms and structures of beauty and lasting value through application of a strong and pure relation to the money power. It is just this challenge, however, to which we are called by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. "In the supramental creation the money-force has to be restored to the Divine Power and used for a true and beautiful and harmonious equipment and ordering of a new divinised vital and physical existence in whatever way the Divine Mother decides in her creative vision." (Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, Chapter IV)

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# A Fat Envelope of Money for the Mother

By Naren Bhatt

**H**EMA PULLED SUBODH'S thick envelope from her handbag and gave it to me. "I don't know why you gave me so much money to take to Pondicherry!" she exclaimed. She was right. It was full of hundred rupee notes, several thousand to be sure. It was a good deal of money in the late 1960's.

In those days, my practice as an architect/civil engineer/planner was in full swing. However, my frequent visits to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville for months at a time were adversely affecting my clients' works in Ahmedabad, and several of my colleagues were complaining.

On the day before leaving, Subodh, who was an engineer-contractor responsible for a big housing project designed and supervised by me, came to see me personally and handed me that envelope. He said, "Sir, this is a small present for your work in Pondicherry. I hope you can finish what you all are doing there, and then you might not need to go so often."

Subodh was a very loving young man who could not spare any time away from the construction business. Without looking at it, I gave the envelope to Hema for safe-keeping, and we left for the Ashram.

## Pondicherry: Home at Last

After thirty-six hours of train and ten hours of bus journey, we reached Pondicherry. The rikshawalla drove us to the Ashram as we normally used to do. The Samadhi at last. Then through the courtyard and the meditation hall, and we were home. As I closed my eyes, everything drifted away, and a deep calm descended onto me.

Then I floated all around and moved through the earth mounds at the foundation digs of the Matrimandir that-was-to-be; and clearly heard Sri Aurobindo's voice saying: "In the supramental creation the money-force has to be restored to the Divine Power . . ." (from *The Mother*)

This was good, I thought, but how,

how, how? I was fumbling and groping when Hema tugged at my hand and gave me that envelope of money.

"I am going to pay off the rikshawalla," she said, "if we are going to be here for a while. The good fellow seems to be in a hurry, and he is getting restless."

So I took that envelope of money and pushed it into the offering box at the feet of the photograph of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and we left the Meditation Hall.

## Discussions with Swamiji

That was the first time I ever parted with so much of someone else's money so easily. The money is yours to use if somebody gave it to you, but why would anybody give me money? It was a hard fact of life that some of my clients back in Ahmedabad would give me a hard time before paying the last installment of my fees for completing their buildings. Giving less and getting the most is the motto of the trade and business world.

In the early 60's in the first phase of my private practice, I used to discuss this dilemma with Swamiji Sri Sharananand. He was one of the disciples of Sri Sai Baba of Shiradi, a barrister-at-law in earlier life, but an ordained monk for about forty years and now my mentor. "Whenever you get any money for whatever reason," he told Hema and me, "always give away at least a part of it to somebody who you feel really needs it also. Never use it all for your personal gratification only. That way you can never get misled by money."

Over the years we have found out how difficult even such a simple rule can be.

Swamiji also used to prompt me about my duty of taking care of my wife and children, my mother and brother as long as they needed it. He always cautioned me against bland asceticism or carelessness about money, and also never let me give him any money. When I discussed with

him about my wife-to-be, my Lakshmi (Hema means 'made of gold'), he used to smile and say, "Wait until you can get to the Mother Shakti (He Ma) through her." It was all very complicated, but I always tried, which ultimately led Swamiji to guide me to the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

## The School of Being a Rich Person

The early 70's got me entrenched in this way to the Mother's work. It was not that giving away "my" things was a totally new experience for me. On the contrary, this appears to be my Indian heritage. Sharing made things and events always more enjoyable. But willfully parting with a large sum of money, even putting it in the hands of my Guru, without attaching any strings to it, was the highest level of self-giving Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had inspired that day in the Meditation Hall. From then on, I was accepted in the school of being a rich person.

During that and subsequent visits to the Ashram, Pondicherry and Auroville, I encountered a strong need for collecting money for the Mother's works, like the Matrimandir. I knew that by myself I produced barely enough money for myself and my family and could spare hardly anything. The words 'enough' and 'spare' gave multiple echoes even to my apparently hollow thinking about money.

I learned a lot from learning how Sri Aurobindo and the Mother handled money. When Sri Aurobindo was a householder in Baroda after his marriage with Mrinalini in 1901, his younger brother Barin also lived with them. Sri Aurobindo used to keep all the money he earned in a small box on a table in the house, and it was spent for whatever was needed, when needed. Some money was always left in that box for the next month because each member of the family adjusted individual needs and budgeted activities to maintain that cashflow criteria.



Alternatively, if activities were increased or new projects were added, more money was produced.

At times, the set-up of the house (and the householder) had to be changed also. Taking such a hint from the Master's life, Hema and I also decided to change. Should we follow my sister and brother-in-law, Nirmala and Nautam, and move to Pondicherry and Auroville for good? In spite of my training as a professional town planner, it was not clear to me whether to move from outside in, or from inside out.

The early 70's in Auroville and the Ashram was a stormy period. During one of my visits in 1971 to the amphitheatre at the centre of Auroville, I climbed the incline to the lotusbud marble urn to touch the Mother's signature on the tablet embedded there. Before I settled into contemplation, I found that the glass cover was shattered and the tablet was vandalised. I was deeply hurt and realised that we all were not ready to establish the Mother in our hearts.

When I went to the Mother after a few days on my birthday for offering my pranams, I asked her again why she did not physically even visit the location of the Matrimandir! She smiled and made me realise that I and others who need a shrine of the Divine Mother as their guidepost have to dig out the dirt from their hearts first, build there a firm footing appropriate for that shrine, and then only can it be constructed physically. A vandal and the Mother's disciple had to work side-by-side. I realised that some of us will throw stones before they bring out flowers.

If Auroville was needed by the world as the Mother had prophesied, the money required for its realization was to come from all who had Auroville in their hearts. The Mother had also said that America would bring forth the money for this work. The French and German Aurovilians were already bringing some money.

## Landing in America

When our family landed in New York in 1971, we thought we would be effective liaison personnel in the new world. Early efforts at establishing Friends of Auroville New York did not progress far enough. The others who already had a head start were equally

baffled. In the new world of America there was never enough money or enough time. Time was money (in contrast to time easily available in India) in this world, and the odd couple of money and time for Auroville had but little chance to anchor in New York.

Efforts were made to establish a Sri Aurobindo International Center in New York. We helped evolve the philosophy of "the Center belongs to those who belong to the Center" which did help for a while. Some people gave \$25 per month, some gave even \$1000 or more. But the Center's offering box was more often empty. Food used from the Center's refrigerator was not always replaced. Calls from the Center's telephone totalled up to hundreds and nobody wanted to pay for them.

Other centers had other problems. They reached out admirably, but had no capacity to receive the inflow. They did not open out to all who wanted to come in. After a while these efforts were lost causes. "Sri Aurobindo Associations" also emerged, both official and private. They moved with the persons who moved for their own livelihood. Most of us who manned them kept Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (and their Yoga) on the fringes and ourselves at the center. These ego trips had a lot for self gratification, very little for the Mother's work.

For a long time we searched for good value proportions for the formula we were trying to evolve: Maximum Divine, Optimum Society, Minimum Habitation. Not really knowing where minimum ended or when maximum would begin, we ultimately compromised for Optimum Habitation, Optimum Society, Optimum Divine. I became an American citizen in 1976, the bicentennial of the American freedom. Only a trickle is flowing to the Mother's work begun with the Matrimandir. The odd couple of Time and Money is struggling and struggling. I am not yet ready with another fat envelope to stuff into the Mother's offering box.

*Naren Bhatt is a Water Resources Planner and Civil Engineer for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.*

## Investing in the Future

By Jerry Schwartz

**M**ONEY IS THE MOST concentrated form of energy ever defined by humans. For most of us, money controls our life circumstances and choices. Historically, money has symbolized our baser motives, such as attachment, greed and envy. It has also served to bring into intense relief the historical condition of scarcity, competition, conflict and survival. Yet money, as energy, is subject to the same laws and principles as any other dimension of consciousness. At least within the empirical world, it is subject to our direction and we can assign it qualities and value.

There are some laws and principles that govern energy in any of its forms. We know that energy follows thought. This is the basis of meditation, visualization, prayer and invocation. This means that where we put our attention or focus our consciousness, is where our reality manifests. For example, while we are reading this article, most of us are not consciously aware of our clothing or jewelry. However, once attention is directed to them, we become aware of them. The sensations were always being registered by our minds, but until we focussed our attention on the sensation, it did not manifest as a reality in our consciousness. In this sense, we determine the direction of the energy of our consciousness and the plane or level of awareness upon which it manifests. We can identify with our physical, emotional, mental, spiritual or divine selves. The level of our identification will determine the plane or field of our awareness and experience. The higher we go, the more expanded the view.

Our consciousness has a qualitative nature as well and we have a great deal of control over this dimension too. We can think and feel joyfully, expansively, with inspiration or our thoughts and feelings can be qualified by fear, anger, separation, attachment and loneliness.

## The Path of Least Resistance

We are also familiar with another profound principle of consciousness or energy: that it follows the path of least resistance (unless directed by will). In our everyday experience we know this is true for energy in the form of electricity or water. Electricity is only potential until a circuit is complete. Only then will the power flow. Water, we say, seeks its own level. By this we mean that water at a higher elevation will flow to lower elevations, if a pathway is available. If no path is available and the potential energy of the water is great enough, it will create a pathway and follow it.

In our physical, emotional and mental lives this corresponds to our habits and patterns of behavior, feeling and thinking. Regardless of what caused the pathway to develop, once it is established we will automatically follow it (and even reinforce it) unless and until we create a new path. Typically we have to impose a new awareness and a discipline to redirect our ancient habits.

## How Does This Relate to Money?

It is only recently, in historical terms, that the average person has had to be concerned with using money for anything beyond survival. In the contemporary industrial and technological societies individuals have experienced significantly greater relative wealth during the past one hundred or one hundred and fifty years. Consequently, they have had to develop the knowledge and skills needed to manage and enhance it. This wealth is a result of greater productivity and reflects the added value of creativity, knowledge and skill, as well as physical labor. It has brought with it more freedom and control over life's conditions.

Yet our attitudes toward money have not grown as fast as our ability to acquire and consume it. Many people are still dominated by the ancient appearance of scarcity. As a result, their decisions remain conditioned by attachment and the fruitless quest to satisfy the desire for more: more money, control, material wealth, status,

security. As long as our consciousness is conditioned by scarcity we will be attached to fear, especially fear of loss.

However, this fear and attachment will never be dissipated by depreciating money. It is, after all, only a symbol and extremely dense or involved form of energy. We add all the rest of the characteristics. If our minds are directed to and focussed on scarcity, it will manifest in some way. Perhaps only psychologically, but still real to the one whose consciousness is conditioned by it.

## Money and the material welfare it controls is the planetary prana.

As disciples we know or, at least, believe that energy is unlimited. It is our thinking and awareness that are limited. If we recognize the unlimited Source and Supply of energy, we can devote our thinking in relation to money to the task of accumulating and directing it, without fear and attachment. In this sense we reverse the common notion that "seeing is believing" and realize the deeper principle that "believing is seeing." We can be freed from self-interest and discover other-interest and, finally, community-interest on increasing scales.

There is value for all of us in developing a better understanding of the role of money in the world economy, as well as in our individual lives. If we understand that money is energy and subject to the laws of consciousness, then we can understand its role in the planetary body. Money functions as the medium in which the physical planetary vitality circulates. Money and the material welfare it controls is the planetary prana. We must therefore recognize that its appropriation and use are as significant a responsibility on the planetary scale as on the individual.

Just as the health of the body is determined by the free and balanced flow of prana, so too is the health of the planet determined by the circulation of material nutrients created out of the flow of money. Even now there is no lack of material welfare to support humanity. There is still, however, a

lack of will, based upon limited self-interest, resulting in an imbalanced and clogged planetary circulation.

Does this mean that the solution is to let the planetary wealth "seek its own level" and have the more highly concentrated wealth of the developed nations simply flow to the less developed nations? While this superficially seems to be a solution to the world's currently disproportionate distribution of wealth, it results from a misunderstanding of the process.

## Creating, Adding and Circulating Value

The problem is not simply one of distribution, but of creating, adding and circulating value. This added value is what we otherwise call "profit." Profit represents the increased value brought about through the investment of human energy into the process of wealth creation. The material welfare of all peoples depends upon this added value and its recirculation of the energy back into the system. The idea of redistributing wealth simply by letting it flow to the areas of lower concentration insures that all people will become equally poor. Human material wealth is not, as it is called, a "zero-sum game." There is not a determined amount of wealth which is then accumulated or consumed, with no net gain.

Two critical factors have historically proven that wealth is subject to a different dynamic. First, as a result of many causes, including political and technological, planetary wealth has expanded over time. New sources of wealth (energy) and more productive methods (adding value) have been discovered. Our human knowledge has progressed from the days of shivering in caves to the use of advanced energy sources, such as solar energy. With each advance, the wealth potential has been exponentially advanced. Availability or circulation of this wealth may have been impeded by human limitations, but the potential was introduced into the overall equation.

Second and of equal importance, the variable of individual and group human enterprise has always affected the quantity and concentration of wealth. It is this factor that the private enterprise democracies have institutional-



ized and harnessed during the past two hundred years.

Individual human initiative or enterprise has always resulted in an inequality of wealth. Even today if we were to evenly distribute the world's total wealth (including natural resources), it would be uneven by tomorrow. Different people have different desires, needs, capacities or willingness to labor and creatively experiment. This freedom to take and implement initiative is much of what the newly liberated peoples of the world have sought and now are challenged to pursue. The events of the past few years have demonstrated the close relationship between political, intellectual and economic freedom.

The factor which has unleashed the greatest sustained example of human initiative in history (capitalism) is embedded in the notion that a person can and will be rewarded in relation to productivity. This is the key to the productivity of the modern technological democracy and it is one major reason why the alternative systems have atrophied and have virtually disappeared (or soon will). Private enterprise democracy is built upon the recognition of the fundamental need and desire of people to be free to think and believe and pursue an improvement of their material condition.

As imperfect as modern democracies are, they have at least identified and included this critical factor of rewarding productivity in the ongoing experiment of human community.

### In the Global Village

As recognition of global economic interdependence increases, it becomes more imperative and possible to address planetary imbalances. The long-term key seems to be in promoting and supporting the political and economic structural changes that release human initiative and allow people to rely on the relationship between their labor and the guarantee of reward. This simple equation remains a goal even in the current democracies.

In the global village, wealthy countries are recognizing that their own futures depend upon helping the less developed. It has become the self-interest of the wealthy to promote this development as a way of redirecting

the enormous investment of resources in the ancient process of conflict and war. This will permit, it is hoped, a future of cooperation based upon shared values.

Furthermore, large issues, such as environmental concerns, are ultimately insoluble without the planetary context. As the planetary context becomes the background of decision making, especially in relation to communications and the evolution of global business, the whole notion of national sovereignty will need to be reexamined. Ahead may lie an era where conflict and consumption can be replaced by cooperation and circulation.

### The Individual

How can we, as individuals, contribute to and cooperate with this process? We need to recognize that the way we handle our money requires deliberation. Our use of money should be a deliberate, intentional process that expresses our understanding of money as energy and our duty to wisely use what we have been privileged to temporarily possess. It means investing in the future and allowing time, which is the financial leavening agent, to increase the store of energy we can direct.

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Today there is an increasing opportunity to invest in businesses and corporations that are striving to meet high standards of responsibility. Both from a sensitivity to higher values and simply because it has become "good business," many companies are becoming environmentally, socially and globally more responsible. They are incorporating value awareness into the very mission of their enterprises. As we seek to increase our financial

security and achieve our individual financial goals, we can also support this effort by business to develop and promote higher human values through our investments.

Additionally, we can begin to manifest the consciousness of abundance by intentionally directing energy (money) to the work of those groups supporting the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Directing money to do Divine work (however we understand this) must be an intentional, purposeful act. By infusing money with sacred purpose, we empower it and impart to it magnetic force to attract more of itself to its purpose. As a result, rather than this energy only functioning on the densest plane, our selfless redirection or elevation of money to Divine purposes becomes a contribution to the fundamental planetary and human transformation.

By intentionally directing money, of any quantity, to the work of the Yoga, we are serving both the immediate, practical needs of the work and creating a new path of least resistance for future increasing flow. The key is to act intentionally and purposefully — not from a sense of guilt or obligation, but from the joyous realization of participation and contribution. We can ask for abundance in the name of the Work, not for the separate self, but we cannot be given what we will not take. In practical terms this means that we must be willing to ask for and receive more energy and be responsible for its quality and the task to which we apply it. Service to the Divine is its own reward. To the disciple, all labor is sacrifice.

**Oh Thou, in whom we live and  
move and have our being, from  
Whom all things proceed and to  
Whom all things return, we are  
blessed by the abundance with  
which we are surrounded. Let us  
ever be aware of its Source and  
use this energy selflessly in the  
Great Collaboration! OM!**

*Jerry Swartz is President of Group  
Nine Financial Planning Services in  
Albany, New York and advises the  
Board of the Foundation for World  
Education.*



# History of the Foundation for World Education

By Anie Nunnally

**T**HE HISTORY of the Foundation for World Education dates back to the early 1950's when its founder, Mrs. Eleanor Montgomery, a wealthy New York City devotee, visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry and met the Mother. She was moved by the work being done there and asked the Mother, "How can I help?" The Mother replied, "Return to America and raise funds for the school." At that time many disciples were moving their families to the Ashram to live, and the Mother saw the need to form a high level educational center there for the children.

In the beginning, Mrs. Montgomery raised funds for the school through friends and a yearly monetary gift from her financier husband, A. Moore Montgomery. Eventually in 1955, at the Mother's behest, a foundation was incorporated in New York City under the name Sri Aurobindo International Center Foundation, Inc.

## The Original Board

With the Mother herself as president, the original board consisted of a group of disciples among whom were Mrs. Montgomery, Mr. Lee Russell, Elsie Calvert and Dr. Marie Karelitz-Karry (all now deceased). Other members who came on the board later on during that time period (also deceased) were Joseph Heil, Mrs. Polly Holmes and John Kelly. The foundation provided needs for the school such as encyclopedias, educational books and materials, office equipment and supplies and sports equipment. The electronic organ that the Mother played and from which music tapes were recorded was also donated by the foundation.

Mrs. Montgomery formed a study group in NYC at that time that met on

a regular basis and she was hostess, through the years, to many noted personalities such as the famous French Jesuit author, paleontologist-anthropologist, Teilhard de Chardin, and many other scholars from the Ashram and around the world. The foundation was highly active from around 1955 to 1963 with volunteer help from people such as Ann Harrison, Kailas Jhaveri, myself, and others.

In 1963 Mrs. Montgomery's husband passed away and the foundation fell into a period of quiescence. In 1972 a Sri Aurobindo Center was started in New York City by Muriel Spanier and opened to the public province for the first time. Udar Pinto of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was very instrumental in getting the center started as he had been sent to the USA in 1972 by the Indian Government as a representative in the interest of Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary year. He persuaded Mrs. Montgomery to reactivate the foundation in order to help the center. She did so and the foundation lent its financial support to the running and maintenance of that center.

By 1974 Mrs. Montgomery had changed the name of the foundation from Sri Aurobindo International Center Foundation to Foundation for World Education so its work could embrace related activities and be more widely accessible.

## The New Board

Mrs. Montgomery's health began to fail in the late 70's and early 80's and in 1983 she passed away on the Mother's birthday, February 21, at the age of 74. She left her entire estate to the Foundation and a new board of directors was formed in 1984. That board consisted of the late Jesse Cohen, Esquire, then attorney for the Foundation, who drew up the original papers of incorporation in 1955; Anie Nunnally, Sam Spanier, Julian Lines, John Kelly, Connie Buckley, Robert McDermott and George Nakashima.

The board members today are: Rudy M. Phillips, President, Margo W. MacLeod, Treasurer, Anie Nunnally, Secretary and directors Sam Spanier, Connie Buckley and Sudha Hunziker. The board honors, in memory, Eleanor Montgomery, John Kelly and George Nakashima. In terms of new board

members, the FWE operates similarly to other organizations of its type: new members are elected (unanimously) by the current board from among those who share the interests and concerns of the board (are devotees familiar with the work in this country and in India), who will be able to come to meetings, and who will have something special to contribute (a needed skill or perspective).

The newly formed Foundation operated out of New York City from 1984 until 1987 at which time the office was moved to the Woodstock, New York area. The board meets four times a year to deliberate on the various proposals received and also schedules additional meetings according to the demands of its agenda.

Our meetings begin with a reading and a meditation and proceed to decisions on grants which are made unanimously following discussion of project proposals that have been previously submitted. (By law, we cannot give grants directly to individuals, so individual and other proposals that come to us generally, but not exclusively, come through a non-profit organization such as the Sri Aurobindo Association, AVI-USA, or from Auroville or the Ashram.) A financial planner (Jerry Schwartz) and an accountant help to ensure our fiscal integrity and responsibility.

## Projects and Programs

Some of the projects and programs that the FWE has funded since 1984 are grants to the Sri Aurobindo Association in America; Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center in Mt. Tremper, NY; Auroville International USA in California; The Institute for Evolutionary Research; funding for various regional Sri Aurobindo Centers; funds to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and to the Ashram for reprint of Iyengar's biography of The Mother.

Other projects involve a yearly grant to help defray costs of the national meeting called A.U.M. that takes place annually in the USA. The publication and distribution of books, photographs and audio-visual material related to the goals of the Foundation also receive careful consideration. In addition, the international township of Auroville is of particular interest and the Foundation has helped Auroville

with funds for research and forestry projects, an organic food co-op, an information center, the purchase of teaching aids and materials, a solar village project, and the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research.

Since their inception in 1985, student exchanges have brought young Aurovilians together with young Americans in an extremely successful and productive series of visits and encounters. The extent to which the young **Tamil** Aurovilians (both men and women) who have studied and traveled here have been able to bring their heightened leadership and new skills back to the Amoville community has been especially gratifying.

FWE has co-funded with Merriam Hill center in Cambridge, Mass. a Management, Training and Development program for Auroville leaders and professionals. This collaboration has allowed Aurovilians in leadership positions to attend workshops, seminars, etc. that upgrade training for them in their particular area of expertise. The foundation also guaranteed payment on the crystal globe, created by Zeiss Camera Company in Germany, that has now been installed in the meditation room of the **Matrimandir** in Auroville. Donations from disciples from around the world poured in to pay for the crystal and the foundation made up the difference for payment to Zeiss.

The Foundation for World Education is proud of its achievements over the past eight years and looks forward to many more years of service in expanding and enlarging the work of Mother and Sri **Aurobindo**. The Foundation welcomes and encourages suggestions and donations from those who are interested in helping it to achieve the goal of a more enlightened humanity, in continuing the programs begun, taking part in the creation of new ones and perpetuating the message of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo for the benefit of the world.

For those who are interested in obtaining further information about the Foundation for World Education please write to Anie Nunnally, Secretary, P.O. Box 1172, Woodstock, NY 12498.

**Anie Nunnally performs and teaches music in Woodstock, New York.**

# Plenitude is the Underlying Signature of the Earth

By June Maher

**I**T WOULDNT TARE MUCH to convince me that money grows on trees. Despite the strictures in my own life, the often skimpy checkbook, this all-pervading sense of abundance and material well-being for myself and all others has never left me. And money is the outward form of the jet streams of plenty that engulf the planet.

I find it hard to reconcile this fundamental experience with the suffering and poverty rampant in this country and elsewhere. It's gone wrong somehow. It is an appearance. It has to change. For me, Auroville's being is a chance for that change to begin.

Auroville is inexorably intertwined with my experience of yoga and money. In the early **70's**, with the formation of the Auroville Association (now AVI-USA), I first began thinking about how the two are intertwined. The Mother's only response to our appeal for a "message" in 1972 was, "No recruiting, but money may be obtained."

Money and the spiritual life were separate kingdoms. Although this attitude has changed with the times, there was something not quite nice in mentioning money and spiritual practices in the same breath. It was hard to grab anyone's attention when it was suggested that we form a non-profit organization for the purpose of collecting money for Auroville. We were busy focusing on meditation and the study of Mother and Sri **Aurobindo's** works in a rapture of discovery.

## Plunging Ahead

In the beginning there was nothing except a bank account in the Auroville Association's name and some papers filed by the lawyer with state and federal authorities. What to do next? Let people know that the channel was there waiting to be used.

I asked Al, my husband, to serve as our treasurer. He brought diligent

attention and care to maintaining our records. It is one thing to feel confidence in money, but another to **learn** how to handle it with meticulous attention to detail. I was impatient and relaxed about such details, although always interested in economics that didn't transfer to the nitty-gritty of accounting.

From Al we learned the necessity of maintaining a "paper trail," not to mix accounts, an absolute tally of receipts, and to balance the checkbook to the last penny. In 1974, because of this precise record keeping, he was able to produce for us the documentation needed to obtain our final ruling from the IRS as a 501 (c) 3 educational, non-profit foundation. It has proven a most valuable tool in our on-going ability to raise money for Auroville. It is with this tool that we interface with the financial world at large.

Another teacher was Jyotipriya, founder of the East West Cultural Center in Los Angeles. She severely but laughingly admonished us on the necessity of a fine-tuned record in Mother's work. "You never know when the IRS will appear and demand an accounting. Be prepared." She could produce her records in 10 minutes for examination, and did.

We were also naive about money in other ways. When one sets out to "win money back. . ." all sorts of things are set in motion, including monumental battles with one's own kind, revelations of personal egos, and, sometimes, attacks on the subtle physical that you become aware of as a physical unease that saps energy. Only Mother's protection can take care of it, and you go on.

Such difficulties are by no means limited to this Yoga, but in this light, handling money becomes an instrument of consciousness rather than simply something to go through. On the other hand, I, along with my co-workers, have found handling money for Auroville a privilege. At times I'd feel bathed in a wave of gratitude that accompanied a gift.

## The Gentle Penetrating Wind

In retrospect, it was one particular gift that quickened and deepened the newly formed money channel of the Auroville Association. I can't remember when the first check came — it was in the early years when we had just "opened for business." After the first check, a donation to the Matrimandir, a check came every month without fail. We have never met the donor nor spoken with him. The donation, not large but getting larger over the years, is absolutely steady. It reminds me of the spirit of the I Ching: the gentle penetrating wind. It is a gift whose "influence never lapses, always in the same direction" with an ardent aspiration. The check comes on the first of the month. I think it must be written first, not after all the bills are paid like many of us, and continues to this day. Now that kind of giving has the power to break barriers.

**... most of the donors give because they have been touched physically by Auroville. that direct experience inspires the gift.**

I have also been bowled over by the confidence and generosity of donors of goodwill who see Auroville simply as the City the Earth Needs, a site and an adventure that belongs to humanity as a whole. The gifts given in this spirit have helped Auroville take a leap forward in its development not otherwise possible.

The experience of working with money via AVI-USA carries a different perspective than that Margo has seen with the FWE, where responding to requests for funds is the main experience. Although Auroville turns to AVI-USA and expects support, reflecting what Mother has said about America and its role, and we, in turn, have sought money through grants and other appeals, most of the donors give because they have been touched physically by Auroville. That direct

experience inspires the gift.

## Going "Pucca"

In the 70's it was unthinkable not to send 100% of donated money to Auroville. I felt my personal needs and the expenses of the fledgling organization would be taken care of, and they were. It was appropriate for a newly born Auroville. Gradually that changed as Auroville grew. A respected advisor pointed out that it was poor management not to set aside a percentage from donations to help develop an organization.

Reluctantly I went with the shift. It has made a difference, a big difference and enabled AVI-USA to keep a pucca office and strengthened our ability to serve Auroville not only in channeling funds but in communication and networking. The latter, while not producing a demonstrable income, does help build a reservoir of goodwill and understanding that comes to bear eventually on the money power. All these changes were greatly aided by Mary and Jack Alexander willingly taking on the major responsibility for our finances and offices in Sacramento.

## Where Are the Magical Megabucks?

As for the large scale support Mother had seen coming from America for Auroville, why hasn't it come full tide? I don't have a ready answer. All of us have wrestled with that one and felt guilty, felt that we had fallen short of accomplishing what was expected, what was described as possible. This expectation has been a weight.

We have made many experiments in our organization and way of working, but none brought quite the expected results. Some months ago at a collective meeting where this was the main topic, we said, "OK. This is what we are, truly, not what we wish we were; these are our time and responsibility constraints of the moment."



June Maher

We decided that we would continue to go all out for those magical megabucks, but we would set aside the non-productive feelings of guilt. Collective handling of

money and decisions concerning money are tough but can also lead to deepening bonds of support and growth not otherwise possible, I believe.

Also, until quite recently Auroville couldn't have handled millions of dollars dropping down, as many there were the first to admit. But that is changing. Now the Auroville community is ever more complex, more assured and clear in handling resources; willing to persevere to work through knots that continue to enclose money matters. So I expect the flow of funds will reflect Auroville's increasing maturity, material depth, and ability to utilize abundance.

Yes, it does seem to me that people generally are more fearful of the future, less willing to take risks, make adventures—more so than in the 70's and 80's. But I think that this mood is only temporary and will not stand in the way of giving to higher causes that are seen to enrich life. Putting out the call can lift people who harbor aspirations for a changed humanity out of these concerns through giving to something they feel will help make that change.

At this stage, I think it would be interesting to join forces and energies to create an overall planned giving program that would generate bequests, trusts, and any other vehicles to benefit Auroville, FWE, and the USA centers—to take the generation of money to another term reflecting the seamless whole.

*June Maher was one of the founders of the Auroville Association, the predecessor of AVI-USA. She lives in Aptos, California and still works for Auroville.*



### Sacred Lucre

There exists a Rate of Exchange  
on the Big Board  
High Volume in Active Trading  
A Process of Change  
on the Tabla Rasa  
Endlessly Creating

Taking Stock and Breaking Bonds  
In Markets Produced and Con-  
sumed by Supply and Demand  
With Multiple Causes and Complex  
Effects  
Too Perplexing to Understand.

A Time-card produces a Paycheck.  
Industry is Rewarded with Skill.  
A Credit Merits a Rebate  
A Charge Redeems a Bill.  
A Beneficiary Inherits a Will.

The Insider Trustee Suggests  
We Invest in Shares . . . Goods'n  
Services  
That Yield Surrender  
The Commodity of Greatest Utility  
Value and Efficiency and Splendor.  
*Leslie Levy*  
(Los Angeles, CA)

technical marvel that is so easily taken for granted. This was also an indication of how their enthusiasm would be a gift as we shared getting to know America with them during their first few days here.

### Small Pleasures

Showers and settling in was accompanied by a meal of Indian dahl, basmati rice, chutneys and papadams. McDonald's could wait. That first week was special for all of us, as the three got to shop in some local stores, learn how to use the TV/VCR and became friends with other young fellows at our local town park's basketball courts. Auroprem was fascinated by the supermarkets with their neat displays of food and produce. They reminded him of an enormous, exotic version of the Pour Tous food distribution center in Auroville where he had worked.

Dining out became another fun adventure. We introduced them to various ethnic choices that included Italian pasta, Mexican burritos and Chinese sesame noodles. They enjoyed them all. A highlight came on July 4th. I had previously decided to walk with a peace group in a local July 4th parade. They enthusiastically joined in and experienced lots of Americana as well as mixed receptions when our peace group met the changing spectators. In the wake of Desert Storm some people viewed us as unpatriotic because we carried messages of hope for world peace. Most people were receptive, but the variety of responses we received brought to Perumal, Karna and Auroprem a range of American attitudes. We rounded out the day with an outdoor barbecue and an evening of fireworks. I had never quite celebrated the 4th of July to such an extent. It was both fun and curiously reflective as well.

### Bedford-Stuyvesant

Karna, Auroprem and Perumal were due to arrive in Brooklyn by July 7th. There they would meet the volunteer coordinators and other international as well as local youths for the 1991 Peace Trees Program. Having grown up in Brooklyn not far from where the program was being held (Bedford-Stuyvesant section), I felt some

## Projects: Peace Trees

By Tom O'Brien

**L**AST SPRING I RECEIVED a letter from Selvaraj, a Tamil Aurovilian I have known since 1984 when he came to the U.S. for a year of education and travel. He wanted to know if I could meet three young Tamil Aurovilians who were coming to the U.S. for the first time. They were going to be part of an international group of youth gathering together in Brooklyn during July to plant peace trees. Well, I grew up in Brooklyn, enjoyed getting to know other Aurovilians and knew my way to Kennedy Airport. It felt right to reply in the affirmative.

### The Big Apple

When I arrived at Kennedy Airport in late June with my close friend Rudy Phillips, we both realized that there would be some culture shock for the three young men: Perumal, Karna and Auroprem. This was their initial air travel as well as their first experience out of India. They crossed nearly a dozen time zones and had been travelling for about 36 hours. But most dramatically there would be the difference in pace. New York City and South India are at least a half a world apart in a variety of ways. We wondered about how we could best help them get to know the complex,

fast paced society that America is. We thought to take our cues from them. What do they want and need? As we later followed this tact, we all had fun together. For them this was an opportunity they had long awaited and for us they provided a chance to see the U.S. anew through curious open eyes.

Before Rudy and I met them we anticipated that they would be tired and eager to return to our home in northern New Jersey. However, they had considerable energy for awhile and wanted to see some of the Big Apple. Well, why not? So off we drove to mid-town Manhattan. What better place to start than the observatory deck on the 89th floor of the empire State Building. Here we pointed out the geography of Manhattan, Brooklyn across the East River and New Jersey to the west of the majestic Hudson. The three were impressed. It was a good beginning.

Jet lag caught up with our young travelers so off we went to New Jersey. Crossing the Hudson is quite routine for anyone living in metro New York, but it became an adventure for the recent arrivals. The easiest route from midtown is the Lincoln Tunnel, an engineering feat from the 1930's. As we plummeted underneath the river, their eyes were full of awe. They helped me to again appreciate the

trepidation about leaving them off. I sensed my protective urges and recalled the problems that inner city streets can harbor. Would they be safe? Do they understand the possible dangers? Are they going to feel welcomed? It had only been a week but already I felt like a parent who wanted only the "best" for his children.

The drive through Brooklyn was ominous. Gone were the abundant trees, gardens and open green spaces of our northern hilly suburbs. Instead there were endless streets of apartment houses and stores, assorted churches, schools and factories and enough abandoned, burnt out buildings to make an impression. It was Hot and humid, with the pavement providing no relief from the unrelenting sun. Brooklyn could certainly use a few more trees I thought to myself.

## Welcome to Peace Trees

When we walked into St. Mary's, the home base location for the Peace Trees Program, I was struck by strong feelings of being welcomed. Was it simply my hopefulness that I projected? The boys initially met a few of the volunteer staff members and youths from Jordan and the U.S. Their shyness was apparent. They checked into their dorm rooms at Pratt Institute which was just a short walk down the street from St. Mary's. Their rooms were spacious, security was good and they even had a view of an urban park with a few trees! The parent in me felt relieved. I entrusted them to the program and soon returned to New Jersey.

Later that week I heard favorable reports from the three and during the second week took a day off to join them for a day of tree planting. In addition, I would have a chance to meet Raju, another Aurovilian who joined the Peace Trees Program. Raju had been studying at Alaska Pacific University for two semesters and was visiting the East Coast before returning to India. That day was devoted to planting trees on Fulton Street, a fairly main thoroughfare through the borough.



PeaceTrees in Auroville

## Planting Trees

I remembered the street from 35 years ago and welcomed this opportunity to participate. What I witnessed was a blend of hard work and adolescent playfulness. There was at first an element of chaos, but then I perceived a fluid sense of community amongst these young people from inner city Brooklyn, the Soviet Union, India, Holland, Costa Rica, Jordan and New Jersey, as well as volunteers from various parts of the U.S. there was even a volunteer couple from Findhorn, the intentional spiritual community of northern Scotland. It was a familiar sense, reminiscent of Auroville, especially those times when the community came together for a large work project such as a Matrimandir concreting.

That evening I accompanied the entire group to Manhattan where a restaurant in Greenwich Village opened its doors to give everyone a free dinner! I was impressive and amazing. Then I learned that nearly every evening the group was provided with complimentary meals and often by a three or four star restaurant! Such is the result of the Peace Table Project begun by Jerilyn Brusseau, a chef who promotes world peace through culinary exchanges. The food was delicious and served with ample good will.

## Farewell

When I returned on July 25th, the last day of the NYC Peace Trees Program there were many tearful eyes and loving farewells. Not only were

trees planted but international friendships had been established and new avenues of communication opened. They began as a group of strangers with different languages, customs and expectations. They were leaving as a community who had broken down cultural as well as personal barriers. Their group activities helped

them confront the fears that grow out of differences. They learned to deal with racism, sexism and ethnocentrism. It appeared that they had grown stronger as individuals and were also more accepting of their divergences. I felt glad for all involved and mindful of the importance such projects hold for our present and future world.

The Peace Trees Program continues. In 1992, it will again take place on the East Coast of the U.S. and be coordinated by the Earthstewards Network, a non-profit organization of volunteers who are dedicated to ecological renewal and world peace. Other young Aurovilians are eager to have an opportunity to participate. Already I have received a letter from an Aurovilian who hopes he can raise the funds to come.

As with many non-profit organizations, the Earthstewards Network has limited resources to provide for participants' transportation. If any reader is interested in helping by donating funds or volunteering time with organizing Peace Trees '92, you are encouraged to write to myself or the Earthstewards Network.

Tom O'Brien  
3 Walnut Street  
Ramsey, NJ 07446

Earthstewards Network  
Holyearth Foundation  
P.O. Box 10697  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

*Tom O'Brien, a former resident of Auroville, is an counselor and lives in Ramsey, New Jersey.*

## Auroville Kindergarten

It is Tuesday, 24th December 1991. Our mid-year exhibition is just over, and the empty classrooms littered with drawings and paper garlands bear silent witness to the enjoyable time the children spent with their parents. Notebooks with first writing and drawing attempts, despised whenever the teachers wanted them to be used, were now shown proudly. Some parents could not come, and their children were obviously disappointed. Sharing your work is important, in particular for those small human beings. The specially made T-shirts, each with a different animal painted on it by an Auroville artist, helped to overcome the little grievances.

The day ended with a small ceremony of candles, carried by each child and put under a real Christmas tree, made available for the occasion by the Matrimandir nursery. The parting gifts at the end of the day caused excitement and flushed faces at the conclusion of the first term of the school year.

Our school break will last for 2

weeks and is used to re-paint and clean the water tanks, and to do some minor repairs, as far as money is available. One of these is to install a pre-fabricated ferro-cement toilet unit, manufactured by Auroville's Center for Scientific Research as part of India's attempts to create low cost sanitation. A parent, appalled by the condition of our toilet, donated the unit.

The school break is also necessary for the teachers, not only as work with children from so many different backgrounds is challenging, but also in order to do some preparation and planning for the next term. For example, what to do with that sweet six-year-old Russian girl who came to the Kindergarten some days ago? She does not speak English, and the class in which she would fit is already full.

It became a long discussion. A few Russians and Ukrainians have managed to come to live in Auroville. The community is very glad about this and supports them in all possible ways. But when we heard that the child and her mother had just arrived, we decided

that they should first come to know Auroville a little better before she can join.

Looking at the gardens that separate the Kindergarten classrooms, I realize how beautiful this place is, lush after the recent monsoon rains.

Suddenly a cloud of dust appears in the wake of one of the many cars that pass nearby the Kindergarten. Visitors, guests, well-wishers, coming from all over the globe to this remote place in South India. And while the dust settles, covering the leaves with a light red color, I remember that this Kindergarten cannot fulfill our requirements anymore. Our hopes are set on the new year; will we receive the money necessary to start the building of our new Kindergarten?

Miriam Eckelmann

Those who would like to participate in this project can obtain more information from Jean and Gordon Korstange, P.O. Box 297, Saxtons River, VT 05154 (802) 869-2789

**Sri Aurobindo Learning  
Center, Inc.  
Savitri House &  
Savitri Solar Village  
Baca Grande, P.O. Box 80  
Crestone, CO 81131  
(719) 256-4917**

Dear Aurovilians-at-large,

29-2-92

It's Leap Year, and also a mirror date . . . .

It's the day after Auroville's official birthday and we know it's our occult birthday, the day of the Supramental Descent.

And since it's been so good to fall this year on a Saturday, we at Crestone (Rod, Kirti, Dee, Skye, Suzanne) are planning an Auroville Birthday Celebration the weekend of 28 February-1 March at the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center to which we most warmly invite YOU! If you can arrive by Friday, you can join us for an Auroville meditation at 7:00 p.m.

## Center News

Saturday, we'll meet at the Solar Dome at 10:00 a.m. to sit together and then go to the SALC living room to make a circle and share about "What Auroville means to us in our lives" and "What we're doing in our lives relating to Auroville."

We're inviting other residents of Crestone and the Baca to join us for Potluck Lunch a chance to meet each other and share our experiences of community (videos will be available, too). And, in the evening, another meditation at 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, we're all free to relate to each other, the local folk we've met, the other Baca centers, the mountains, and the deer the books at SALC, the silence of the Dome...

We'll be able to put you up either here at SALC, at a townhouse apartment about a five minute walk from here, or at Rod and Kirti's schoolhouse. If you're coming by car, bring bedding and some provisions to contribute to

the potluck dining. Let us know if you're coming so we can make arrangements.

If you can't make it in the physical, join us in your thoughts - you'll be in ours!

With much love,

Dee

**Wilmot Center  
33719 116th Street  
Twin Lakes, WI 53181  
(414) 877-93**

Wilmot Center is intensely active with a number of projects for the new year.

**Institute for Wholistic Education:** Completing work on the second year correspondence course in Ayurveda, as well as another course on Hatha Yoga. the Institute also continues to expand



its library with the acquisition of several hundred new volumes in the last six months. It is hoped to list all titles in a computer database to make them available for widespread research locally.

No one has yet come forward to take up the challenge of the Integral Education School here which we have presented. We've mentioned that the Institute has funded a position for a teacher to start this project. Several children are available! We are seeking someone who is willing to grapple with the issues of spiritual direction and purpose combined with uncompromising detailed effort in providing the "tools of action" for people within the context of U.S. society. The position remains open as well as our aspiration for someone to come forward and accept the challenge!

**Wilmot Center:** During late 1991 we were pleased to host several monthly meetings for reading of *Synthesis of Yoga* as a group, plus meditation and a potluck lunch. Anyone interested in joining this study group should contact the center, since meetings are occurring regularly. These meetings are part of the overall midwest coordination which has been occurring for several years. The February 29 meeting will be held at Spring Green, Wisconsin, hosted by Bryan and Fanou Walton. Everyone who attends finds them valuable and helpful to the focus. We all look forward to getting together with a serious purpose and the good will of a community of seekers.

**Lotus Light Enterprises:** 1992 witnesses a vast expansion in the publishing effort which has begun several years ago. In addition to the American edition of *The Life Divine*, Lotus Light has now published the first US edition of *Rebirth and Karma* (formerly *Problem of Rebirth*) which is now available. *Synthesis of Yoga* is in active preparation to be released in mid-year. In addition, *Flowers and their Messages* (The Mother) will be out in its first US edition this year as well. Work is progressing on the second in the series compiled by Wayne Bloomquist from the Mother's writings, tentatively titled *The Soul and Its Powers*. This should also be out by late spring. In addition, at least three books of Sri M.P. Pandit are in

preparation, including *Wisdom of the Gita*, *Gems from Sri Aurobindo 2nd Series* (the first one came out in 1991), and *Occult Lines Behind Life*.

Lotus Light is also the distributor of the new book by Dr. A.S. Dalal titled *Psychology, Mental Health and Yoga*, now available.

Work has now actively begun on a new title compiled from the letters of Sri Aurobindo titled *Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga* with a subtitle *Teaching and Method of Practice*. This book was compiled at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and has been awaiting publication for several years. We expect it to be available by mid-1992. This book is the subject of a collaboration with the Sri Aurobindo Association in terms of developing widespread outreach for it to the general public in the USA.

In additional publishing, Lotus Light is active on several other fronts as well. February 1992 should see us inaugurate our new custom-designed and built warehouse cum office facility in Silver Lake, Wisconsin (about 4 miles from the current facilities). This 20,000 square foot complex will provide for substantial expansion potential and increased operational efficiencies for the company and represents a major step forward in developing a strong national presence for the work we have taken up.

Lotus Light acquired a California location during 1991. February 1992 will spotlight the East Coast with the acquisition of a company located in New Hampshire to project our market presence much deeper into the Eastern sector of the country. Thus, by early in 1992 Lotus Light will have East Coast, West Coast and Central warehouse facilities. The year will be used to coordinate these three, stabilize all their functions and integrate operations nationally with the three local divisions as much as is practicable.

The company also used this growth as an opportunity to gain access to substantial resources of value to the alternative social direction we are focused on, including more than 1,000 alternative video titles and a complete complement of homeopathic medicines from the three major homeopathic suppliers to the country.

In addition, there was a major development of our access to Chinese

herbology and herbal formulas during 1991. Lotus Light now publishes six catalogs to the trade to encompass these myriad directions.

**Personal Notes:** A number of people from here have recently visited Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. At least one more person will be travelling to Pondicherry in February for a short stay. While there these friends had the opportunity to visit the Matri-mandir and see the installed crystal. It is a remarkable experience of "sensory dissonance" when one leaves the outer world of the work on the shell, with concrete and steel and dirt and goes into the silent, marbled hall wherein the crystal is enthroned. A worthwhile experience according to our friends who have done it. They also found the time at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram to be challenging and invigorating as always.

## Darshan Gathering and Weekend Retreat in the Southeast Greenville, South Carolina

and You are invited to attend . . .

**April 24, 1992 (Fri.)—April 26, 1992 (Sun.)**

Hosts: Hasmukh P. Rama family, with Ariel Browne of Atlanta, GA

Fee: No Charge

Housing: Rama Family Hotel

Food: Rama Family Hospitality

**Fri. 24 April—** 6:30 p.m. Check-in and greeting; 8:30 p.m. Meditation with Sunil's music and introductory games.

**Sat. 25 April—** Meditation, opening circle, open forum, reading of *Savitri*, sharing on Auroville and Sri Aurobindo Ashram, outdoor activities (This area is gorgeous in late April!), personal exchanges, New Games.

**Evening:** Informal sharing on the Yoga of Mother and Sri Aurobindo  
**Sun. 26 April—** Meditation, discussion of Southeast regional center potential and support network. Closing circle and farewell.

Make your reservations now with: Hasmukh P. Rama, JHM Enterprises, Riverside Office Park, Suite 3B, 880 S. Pleasantburg, Greenville, SC 29607. Fax# 8032326931; Phone: 803-232-9944 or Ariel Browne, Aur-ientation, 1924 Cliff Valley Way, Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30329. Office: 404-728-9807; Ans.: 404-662-6881

**Matagiri**  
**HC 1, Box 98**  
**Mt. Tremper, NY 12457**  
**(914)679-8322**

Excerpt from the reading and conversation of 2/29/56:

The law of sacrifice is the common divine action that was thrown out into the world in its beginning as a symbol of the solidarity of the universe. It is by the attraction of this law that a divinising, a saving power descends to limit and correct and gradually to eliminate the errors of an egoistic and self-divided creation. This descent, this sacrifice of the Purusha, the divine Soul submitting itself to Force and Matter so that it may inform and illuminate them, is the seed of redemption of this world of Inconscience and Ignorance. For "with sacrifice as their companio," says the *Gita*, "the All-Father created these peoples." The acceptance of the law of sacrifice is a practical recognition by the ego that it is neither alone in the world nor chief in the world. It is its admission that, even in this much fragmented existence, there is beyond itself and behind that which is not its own egoistic person, something greater and completer, a diviner All which demands from it subordination and service.

*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 98

*Sweet Mother, what does the "sacrifice to the Divine" mean?*

It is self-giving. It is the word the *Gita* uses for self-giving.

Only, the sacrifice is mutual, this is what Sri Aurobindo says at the beginning: the Divine has sacrificed Himself in Matter to awaken consciousness in Matter, which had become inconscient. And it is this sacrifice, this giving of the Divine in Matter, that is to say, His dispersion in Matter, which justifies the sacrifice of Matter to the Divine and makes it obligatory; for it is one and the same reciprocal movement. It is because the Divine has given Himself in Matter and scattered himself everywhere in

Matter to awaken it to the Divine consciousness, that Matter is automatically under the obligation to give itself to the Divine. It is a mutual and reciprocal sacrifice.

And this is the great secret of the *Gita*: the affirmation of the divine Presence in the very heart of Matter. And that is why Matter must sacrifice itself to the Divine, automatically, even unconsciously — whether one wants it or not, this is what happens.

Only when it is done unconsciously, one doesn't have the joy of sacrifice, while if it is done consciously, one has the joy of sacrifice which is the supreme joy.

**February 21st: Mother's Birthday**

**February 22nd: Noon Meditation at Matagiri followed by Pot Luck**

**February 28th: Auroville's 24th Birthday**

**February 29th: 9th Anniversary of the Supramental Manifestation**

Call Miriam Belov (212) 956-5683 for the details of observances in New York City.



**AUM '92**  
**in the Blue Ridge**  
**Mountains**  
**July 2 (1:00 PM) — July**  
**6 (1:00 PM), 1992**  
**Warren Wilson College**  
**near Asheville, North**  
**Carolina**

The planning group for AUM '92 is a collaboration of people in different geographical locations, connected with each other and with you via phone, fax, modem and mail. The program, for our July AUM, including children's activities, will be based on your input. What you would like to discuss/share with others at our "family reunion?" Please contribute ideas for the program that will reinforce the strong sense of connectedness we all feel.

Since Warren Willson College stands on the triad of Work, Service, and Academics, we, kids and adults, could participate in a work/service project for part of one day. Manual work, as a key part of the yoga, helps people of all ages come together and contributes to the environment around us.

Some of the activities for the kids could also include: games in the swimming pool, volleyball, soccer, hikes in the woods, baseball, trips to the Nature Center on the parkway, a trip to Sliding Rock and Looking Glass Falls on the parkway, an arts and crafts day (would require some materials and the guidance of an adult).

Ask your kids what they want to see happen this year. Please send all your ideas for the program to Sally Walton (address on next page).

## The Opening Session

The Opening Session will be kids and adults matching their interests with others. The center of the circle where we sit will have large felt-tip markers and sheets of paper (newsprint). Everyone who wants to, writes a topic of a session or event they want to help happen.

Each person in the group then stands up, introduces themselves, announces what they have written, and tapes their sheet to a large blank wall. Similar topics and interests can be taped near each other.

After completing this, a phase of marketplace negotiation decides how, when, and where the sessions and events will happen. It works like this: everyone goes up to the wall and writes their name on the papers of topics they want to attend. Those who wrote the topics can decide to combine similar topics into one session. Those who wrote the topics can also note time and place when that session or event will occur.

There is a lot of milling around and discussion. Though the scene looks chaotic, the process of setting a schedule usually takes about 15 minutes!

Conditions for success are that everyone knows in advance of arriving at AUM what's going to happen and have given thought to what they want to present as a session, or share with others in an informal, but focused conversation.

## Setting

AUM '92 will be held at Warren Wilson College, a unique liberal arts college nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, 11 miles east of the city of Asheville. The mission of Warren Wilson College is "to provide an education combining study, work, and service in a setting that promotes wisdom, spiritual growth, and contribution to the common good." Long ago, the Cherokee Indians had villages along the banks of the Swannanoa River on the WWC campus.

The campus-wide work program at the College requires each resident student to work 15 hours a week to earn credit toward the cost of the College. The student work crews are

essential to the daily operation of the College since students lay pipes, clean buildings, cook, trim trees, program computers, and take care of the farm, among other jobs. In addition, all students perform at least 20 hours of community service each year.

There is a strong sense of community at the College. There are about 500 hundred students, 93% of whom live on campus. Unlike most other colleges, 75% of the faculty and staff also live on campus. Because students and staff live closely together, study, work, and serve together, an ideal community relationship exists between teachers and students. The unique setting of the 1100-acre campus, with its farm, 700 acres of forest, and river, supports and encourages stewardship of the environment. The College operates one of the major recycling programs in the county and sponsors several annual clean-ups of neighboring rivers.

A slide and video presentation on Auroville was made at the College 3 years ago and was very well received. Several students and a couple of faculty have visited Auroville during their semester in India.

Three students from Auroville have attended the College in the past 10 years. Having AUM '92 at Warren Wilson will allow the College community to learn more about the yoga and may inspire more student exchange programs.

## Accommodations, Facilities, etc.

The participants of AUM '92 will be housed in the recently renovated Sunderland dormitory. Sunderland has four floors and is reserved for our group. It is air-conditioned, centrally located on campus, and properly equipped for handicapped and elderly people. All bedrooms have two beds; sheets, blankets, and pillows will be provided. The dining room will provide us three meals a day, starting with dinner on 2nd of July through lunch on the 6th of July. Vegetarian options are available. (Please indicate this on the registration form). Meditation rooms, audio-visual rooms, tennis courts, indoor basketball and volleyball courts, hiking trails, and the Swannanoa river will be available

to us.

The scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, a couple of miles from the College, provides many hiking trails and inspiring views of the mountains and heavens. The Pisgah National Forest, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Nantahalla Outdoor Center (for whitewater sports), and the Biltmore House and Estate make western North Carolina an ideal place for a family vacation combining spirituality and outdoor recreation.

## Travel Information

Warren Wilson College is 11 miles east of Asheville, NC. The Asheville Airport is served by several major airlines (including American, Delta, and USAir). The Greyhound bus comes to Asheville. A van can be scheduled to pick you up at the bus station (10 miles away) or airport (20 miles away). (If you desire this service, write Vijay at the address below as soon as your travel plans are confirmed.) If you are coming by car, follow Interstate 40 to Asheville's east side. Take exit 55 and turn north, toward US-70. Turn right (east) on US-70 and go 1.5 miles. Turn left onto Warren Wilson Road at the stoplight. Drive 1.5 miles until you see the College sign. The second and third driveways on the right will lead to Sunderland dormitory, where you will stay.

## AUM '92 Planning Committee

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View from Warren Wilson College, Site of the 1992 A.U.M.

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***Collaboration***  
**2288 Fulton St., Suite 310**  
**Berkeley, CA 94704**

**Non-Profit Organization**  
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