



# Collaboration

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What is God after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden. —Sri Aurobindo. (Photo by Dominique Darr.)

## THE CHILD AND SOCIETY Sri Aurobindo

But it is from the self-determination of the free individual within the free collectivity in which he lives that we have to start, because so only can we be sure of a healthy growth of freedom and because too the unity to be arrived at is that of individuals growing freely towards perfection and not of human machines working in regulated unison or of souls suppressed, mutilated and cut into one or more fixed geometrical patterns. The moment we sincerely accept this idea, we have to travel altogether away from the old notion of the right of property of man in man which still lurks in the human mind where it does not possess it. The trail of this notion is all over our past, the right of property of the father over the child, of the man over the woman, of the ruler or the ruling class or power over the ruled, of the State over the individual. The child was in the ancient patriarchal idea the live property of the father; he was his creation, his production, his own reproduction of himself; the father, rather than God or the universal Life in place of God, stood as the author of the child's being; and the creator has every right over his creation, the producer over his manufacture. He had the right to make of him what he willed, and not what the being of the child really was within, to train and shape and cut him according to his own nature's deepest needs, to bind him to the paternal career or the career chosen by the parent and not that to which his nature and capacity and inclination pointed, to fix for

The U.N. has proclaimed 1979 International Year of the Child. Most member nations have developed programs to focus attention on the special needs of children and existing problems. In addition, many nongovernmental organizations affiliated with the U.N. are participating with their own programs. UNESCO has adopted a Declaration of Rights of the Child. (For further information on the IYC, write to IYC Secretariat, 866 U.N. Plaza, New York, NY 10017; U.S. National Commission on IYC, 6001 New Executive Office Building, 766 Jackson Place NW, Washington, DC 20506; or National IYC Commission, % U.S. Mission to the U.N., 799 U.N. Plaza, New York, NY 10017.)

In recognition of IYC, *Collaboration* features some remarks of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on children and education (since to speak of children is to speak of education) from a deeper point of view, as well as some expression of the children of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and of Auroville.

In addition to our regular features, we are initiating a new one: Flowers and Their Messages, about which many readers have inquired.

Our next issue will focus on the subject of death from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's evolutionary viewpoint. It will be edited by Charles Maloney of Matagiri.

him all the critical turning-points of his life even after he had reached maturity. In education the child was regarded not as a soul meant to grow, but as brute psychological stuff to be shaped into a fixed mould by the teacher. We have travelled to another conception of the child as a soul with a being, a nature and capacities of of his own who must be helped to find them, to find himself, to grow into their maturity, into a fullness of physical and vital energy and the utmost breadth, depth, and height of his emotional, his intellectual and his spiritual being. [From *War and Self-Determination*, in vol. 15 of the Centenary Library, pp. 604-05.]

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Therefore a society which was even initially spiritualised, would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self in man the whole first aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its art, its economical and political structure. As it was to some extent in the ancient Vedic times with the cultural education of the higher classes, so it would be then with all education. It would embrace all knowledge in its scope, but would make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, but this self-developing and self-finding. It would pursue physical and psychical science not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but to know through and in and under and over all things the Divine in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them. [From *The Human Cycle*, in vol. 15 of the Centenary Library, pp. 240-241.]

# EDUCATING THE CHILD

## The Mother

*Disciple:* You told me once that one must not ask a child to make a mental effort before the age of seven.

*The Mother:* ... There it is a question only of the formation of the physical brain which develops slowly, little by little. If you ask of a brain in formation an effort beyond its capacity, you tire it, you overwork it or you make it ill. [1]

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*Disciple:* How is it that as mental activities increase the capacity to renew one's energies diminishes?

*The Mother:* In adults mental activity tends to paralyse the spontaneous movement of exchange of energies. Till he is fourteen, every child, apart from a few rare exceptions, is a little animal; he renews his energies spontaneously like an animal by means of the same activities and exchanges. But the mind introduces a disequilibrium into the being; spontaneous action is replaced by something that wants to know, to regulate, to decide, etc., and to get back this capacity to renew spontaneously one's energies, one must rise to a higher rung above the instincts, that is, from ordinary mental activity one must pass direct into intuition. [2]

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Before the age of reason, little children receive a lot of energy and they spend it lavishly, without thinking, and this allows them to play for hours together without getting tired. But gradually as thought develops, one begins to measure and calculate the energy spent—usually this is futile, for unless you have the knowledge of the process of receiving energy, it is better to spend freely what you get than let it stagnate within you. [3]

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*Disciple:* Children must be taught to see the divine manifestation in the world and not the side which ends badly.

*The Mother:* No, if the child thinks that the Divine is different from the world, its idea that everything ends badly will be quite justified.

*Disciple:* Children must be given the idea of divine justice.

*The Mother:* But we know nothing about it, for this justice does not manifest in the world as it is today.

However, if one observes things a little deeply, one perceives that there is progress, that things become better and better, though apparently they do not improve. And for a consciousness seated a little higher, it is quite evident that all evil—at least what we call evil—all falsehood, all that is contrary to the Truth, all suffering, all opposition is the result of a disequilibrium. I believe that one who

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is habituated to seeing things from this higher plane sees immediately that it is like that. Consequently, the world cannot be founded upon a disequilibrium, for if so it would have long since disappeared. One feels that at the origin of the universe there must have been a supreme Equilibrium and, perhaps, ... a progressive equilibrium, an equilibrium which is the exact opposite of all that we have been taught and all that we are accustomed to call "evil." There is no absolute evil, but an evil, a more or less partial disequilibrium.

This may be taught to a child in a very simple way; it may be shown with the help of material things that an object will fall if it is not balanced, that only things in equilibrium can keep their position and duration.

There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts a comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoiled by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

For, if you want to find one teaching, one doctrine upon which to base your progress, you will never find anything—or, to be more exact, you will find something else, for in accordance with the climate, the age, the civilisation, the teaching given is quite conflicting. When one person says, "This is good," another will say, "No, this is bad," and with the same logic, the same persuasive force. Consequently, it is not upon this that one can build. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma, and it will tell you that if you conform to the dogma you are in the truth and if you don't you are in the falsehood. But all this has never led to anything and has only created confusion.

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality—within themselves, within the earth, within the universe—and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and

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Larger contributions, all tax-deductible, are welcome for the work of the center.



**THE CHILDREN OF AUROVILL**  
*Photos courtesy Dominique Darr.*



that still opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.

*Disciple:* Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?

*The Mother:* For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought—there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic—it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being....

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at college, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind. Such boys do not respond to the vibration. One would say they are made of wood or plaster....

*Disciple:* When I was a child if I did something bad immediately I felt uneasy and I would decide never to do that again. Then my parents also used to tell me never again to do it. Why? because I had myself decided not to do it anymore?

*The Mother:* A child should never be scolded. I am accused of speaking ill of parents! but I have seen them at work, you see, and I know that 90% of parents snub a child who comes spontaneously to confess a mistake: "You are very naughty. Go away, I am busy,"—instead of listening to the child with patience and explaining to him where his fault lies, how he ought to have acted. And the child, who had come with good intentions, goes away quite hurt, with the feeling: "Why am I treated thus?" Then the child sees his parents are not perfect—which is obviously true of them today—he sees that they are wrong and says to himself: "Why does he scold me, he is like me!" [4]

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Instead of letting oneself go in the stream of one's nature, of one's mood, one must constantly keep in mind this kind of feeling that one is a representative of the Supreme Knowledge, the Supreme Law, and that one must apply it in the most honest, the most sincere way one can; then one makes great progress oneself and can make others also progress. And besides, one will be respected, there will be no more indiscipline in the class, for there is in every human being something that recognises and bows down before true greatness; even the worse criminals are capable of admiring a noble and disinterested act. Therefore when children feel in a

teacher, in a school master, this deep aspiration to act according to the truth, they listen to you with an obedience which you would not get if one day you were in a good mood and the next day you were not, which is disastrous for everybody. [5]

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*Disciple:* Why were children not accepted [into the Ashram] before the [Second World] war?

*The Mother:* Ah, my children, it is very simple. Because where there are children, you have to be busy most of the time with them only! Children are very absorbing creatures. Everything must be organised for them, everything must be arranged in view of their welfare, and the whole aspect of life changes. Children are most important personages. When they are there, everything turns around them. And the entire organisation of the Ashram has completely changed. Formerly, it was quite different. First of all there was a kind of austerity that cannot be imposed upon children. There are simplicities and austerities of life that can be imposed upon grown-up people, because they are told: "Take it or leave it: if you cannot bear it, if you do not like it, well, you may go away. This is what it should be like; if you do not want it, you may leave the place, the door is always open." But with a child... What right have you to demand of a child things that have no normal relationship with its growth? Children must have reached a certain maturity before they are able to make a choice. You cannot compel them to do a thing before they have the capacity to choose. You have to give them quite normally all that they need. And this changes life completely. And I knew that very well. I already had the experience of what the life of solitary people or a group of solitary people is like or of a life in which children are admitted. It is absolutely, totally different. You have no right to demand of a person something when he has no free choice; and so long as a person is not formed, has not attained a certain maturity, you cannot make him choose. When one reaches this maturity, then one chooses. And the children have not come of themselves. Most of you were not taller than a boot—when you came here how old were you?...One cannot tell them: "You have chosen, therefore you have to take it or leave it, either you do this or you go away." They have been brought here, hence it is one's duty to give them what they need; and the needs of children are not at all the same as those of big people. [6]

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[Children] shouldn't be allowed to play when they are sleepy. This is exactly the intrusion of vital movements. A child who doesn't live much with older people (it is bad for children to live much among older people), a child left to itself will sleep spontaneously whatever it may be doing, the moment it needs to sleep. Only, when children are used to living with older people, well, they catch all the habits of grown-ups. Specially when they are told: "Oh! You can't do this because you are young! When you are older, you can do it. You can't eat this because you are small, when you are bigger you will be able to eat it. At this particular time you must go to bed because you are young..." So, naturally, they have that idea that they must grow up at any cost or at least look grown-up. [7]

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Children are not as "concretised," materialised in their physical consciousness as older people—as one grows up, it is as though one is coagulated and becomes more and more gross in one's consciousness unless through a willed action one develops otherwise. For instance, the majority of children find it very difficult to distinguish their imagination, their dreams, what they see inside themselves from outer things. The world is not as limited as when one is older and more precise. And they are extremely sensitive within; they are much closer to their psychic being than when they are grown up, and much more sensitive to the forces which, later, will become invisible to them—but at this moment are not. It is not unusual for

children to have some sort of fits of fear or even of joy in their sleep, from dreams. Children are afraid of all sorts of things which for older people don't exist any more. Their vision is not solely material. They have a kind of perception, more or less exact and precise, of the play of the forces behind. So, being in that state they are influenced by forces which otherwise have no hold over people who are shut up in themselves and more gross. And these forces—the forces of destruction, for example, or forces of cruelty, forces of wickedness, of ill-will—all, all these things are in the atmosphere. When one is more conscious and more well-formed within, one can see them as outside oneself and deny them any expression. But when one is very young and lives in a half-dream, these things can exercise much influence and make children do things which in their normal state they would not do....

There is also the phenomenon of unconsciousness. Very often a child does harm without even being aware that it is doing harm; they are unconscious, they are shut up in their movement, and they are not aware of the effect of what they do. That happens very often.

That means that if a child is rightly educated, and if one appeals to his best feelings and explains to him that to do things in such and such a way is harmful to others (and one can make this very tangible for them with a little demonstration), they stop doing harm, very often.

It is above all a question of education. These half-conscious movements of cruelty—it is very rare for parents not to have them; well, that is enough to set its impression upon a child's consciousness. [8]

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The only thing it is our duty to tell [children] is this: "Now you are of the age when your brain is in the course of preparation. It is being built up. Each new thing you study makes one more little convolution in your brain. The more you study, the more you think, the more you reflect, the more you work, the more complex and complete does your brain become in its convolutions. And as you are young, it is the time this happens best. That is why it is human practice to choose to learn when young, for then it is infinitely easier." And it is obvious that till the child becomes at least a little conscious of itself, it must be subjected to a certain rule, for it has not yet the capacity of choosing for itself.

That age is very variable: it depends on people, depends on each individual. But still, it is understood that in the seven-year period between the ages of seven and fourteen, one begins to touch the age of reason. If one is helped, one can become a reasoning being between seven and fourteen.

Before seven there are geniuses (there are always geniuses everywhere), but the general rule is that the child is not conscious of itself and doesn't know why or how to do things. That is the time to cultivate its attention, teach it to concentrate on what it does, give it a small basis sufficient for it not to be quite like a little animal, but belong to the human race through a primary intellectual development.

After that, there is a period of seven years during which it must be taught to choose—choose what it wants to be. If it chooses to have a rich, complex, well-developed brain, powerful in its functioning, well, it must be taught to work; for it is by work, by reflection, study, analysis and all that follows from it that the brain is formed. At fourteen you are ready—or ought to be ready—to know what you want to be.

And so I say: If at about that age some children declare categorically: "Intellectual growth does not interest me at all, I don't want to learn, I want to remain ignorant in the ordinary way of ignorance," I don't see by what right one could impose studies on them nor why it should be necessary to level them all.

There are those who are below, and others at another stage.

There are people who may have very remarkable capacities and yet have no taste for intellectual growth. One may warn them that if they don't work, don't study, when they are grown up, they will perhaps feel embarrassed before others. But if that does not matter to them and they want to live a nonintellectual life, I believe one has no right to compel them. That is my constant quarrel with all the teachers of the school! They come and tell me: If they don't work, when they are old they will be stupid and ignorant. I say: But if it pleases them to be stupid and ignorant, what right have you to interfere?

One can't make knowledge and intelligence compulsory. That's all.

...Essentially *the only thing* you should do assiduously is to teach them [children] to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow. To teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves *and* decide for themselves. That is infinitely more important than teaching them what happened on earth in former times, or even how the earth is built...indeed all sorts of things which are quite a necessary grounding if you want to live the ordinary life in the world. [9]

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Your friend is not one who encourages you to come down to the lowest level of yourself, encourages you to commit stupidities with him or practise vice with him or one who commends you for all the nasty things you do, that's quite clear. And yet, usually, very, very often, much too often, one makes friends with somebody with whom one doesn't feel uneasy when one has sunk lower. One considers one's best friend him who encourages one in one's follies: one associates with others to go aroaming instead of going to school, to go off to steal fruit from gardens, to jeer at one's teachers and for all kinds of things like that. I am not making personal remarks....

There are children here who were full of promise, who were at the head of their class, used to work seriously, from whom I hoped much, and who have been completely ruined by this kind of friendship. Since we are speaking of this, I shall tell them today that I regret all this very much and that such people I do not call friends but mortal enemies from whom one should keep oneself away as one does from a contagious disease.

We don't like the company of one who has a contagious disease, and avoid him carefully; generally he is segregated so that it does not spread. But the contagion of vice and bad behaviour, the contagion of depravity, falsehood and what is base, is infinitely more dangerous than the contagion of any disease whatsoever, and it is that which must be carefully avoided. [10]

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When one is very young and as I say "well-born," that is born with a conscious psychic being, there is always in the dreams of this child this sort of aspiration, which for its childish consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be a beauty without ugliness, a justice without injustice, boundless goodness, and finally a conscious, constant success, the perpetual miracle. One dreams of miracles when one is very small, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily. It is on this one must rely. When the body feels its miseries, its limitations, one must establish in it this dream of a force which would have no limits, of a beauty which would have no ugliness, and of marvellous capacities: one dreams of being able to rise in the air, of being wherever it's necessary to be, of getting things in order when they go wrong, healing the sick; indeed one has all sorts of dreams when one is very young.... Usually parents or teachers pass their time throwing cold water over this, telling you: "Oh! that, that's a dream, it is not a reality." It is the very opposite that should be done! Children should be taught, "Yes, it is *this* that you must try to realise and

not only is it possible but it is *certain* if you enter into contact with that in you which is capable of doing this thing. It is *this* that must guide your life, organise it, make you develop in the direction of the *true real* which the world calls illusion."

It should be thus, instead of making children ordinary, with that plain, vulgar commonsense which becomes an inveterate habit and, when something is going well, immediately brings up in the being the idea: "Oh! that won't last," when somebody is sweet and gentle, the impression, "Oh! he will change!," when one is capable of doing something, "Oh! tomorrow I won't be able to do it so well." It is this which acts like an acid, a destructive acid in the being, which takes away hope, certitude, confidence in future possibilities.

When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water upon it, never tell him, "You know, life is not like that!" You must al-

ways encourage him, tell him, "Yes, just at present things are not quite like that, they *seem* ugly, but behind this there is a beauty trying to realise itself. It is that you must love, must attract; it is that you must make the subject of your dreams, your ambitions." [11]

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## THE IDEAL CHILD

### *The Mother*

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What a child should always remember:

The necessity of an absolute sincerity.

The certitude of Truth's final victory.

The possibility of constant progress with the will to achieve.

*An ideal child is good-tempered.* He does not become angry when things seem to go against him or decisions are not in his favour.

*is game.* Whatever he does he does it to the best of his capacity and keeps on doing in the face of almost certain failure. He always thinks straight and acts straight.

*is truthful.* He never fears to say the truth whatever may be the consequences.

*is patient.* He does not get disheartened if he has to wait a long time to see the results of his efforts.

*is enduring.* He faces the inevitable difficulties and sufferings without grumbling.

*is persevering.* He never slackens his effort however long it has to last.

*is poised.* He keeps equanimity in success as well as in failure.

*is courageous.* He always goes on fighting for the final victory though he may meet with many defeats.

*is cheerful.* He knows how to smile and keep a happy heart in all circumstances.

*is modest.* He does not become conceited over his success, neither does he feel himself superior to his comrades.

*is generous.* He appreciates the merits of others and is always ready to help another to succeed.

*is fair and obedient.* He observes the discipline and is always honest.

#### To the Children of the Ashram

There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.

You have the immense privilege of having come quite young to the Ashram, that is to say, still plastic and capable of being moulded according to this new ideal and thus become the representatives of the new race. Here, in the Ashram, you are in the most favourable conditions with regard to the environment, the influence, the teaching and the example, to awaken in you this supramental consciousness and to grow according to its law.

Now, all depends on your will and your sincerity. If you have the will no more to belong to ordinary humanity, no more to be merely evolved animals; if your will is to become men of the new race realising Sri Aurobindo's supramental ideal, living a new and higher life upon a new earth, you will find here all the necessary help to achieve your purpose; you will profit fully by your stay in the Ashram and eventually become living examples for the world. [From *The Ideal Child*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971.]







**THE CHILDREN OF SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION**

*(Photos courtesy Sri Aurobindo Asram.)*



**WHAT DOES YOUR SOUL LOOK LIKE?**  
*Some Answers from the Students of the Sri Aurobindo  
International Centre of Education*

My soul is golden. It is more bright than the sun. It is somewhere inside the heart. There are three *deepas*. The one on the left has a beautiful blue flame on which is sitting Sri Aurobindo in the supramental body. To his right on a beautiful white flame is sitting Mother in a supramental body. In front of them on a much tinier golden flame is sitting Hanuman. [age 11]

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My soul is an invisible thing. Sometimes when I am quiet and happy I hear it. It is a thing which never dies. I don't hear anything when I shout and become angry. [age 12]

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The soul is an unknown thing to me. I never see it nor imagine it, but I feel it. It is a lighted jewel, very bright, and it burns like a long fiery flame. It is a very precious treasure to me. Around the soul's hard surface dance the black devils of the vital world. That is why it is very difficult to contact the soul. But the soul always tries to contact me and sometimes I hear the soft voice whispering through the dark weeds of the vital world.

There are moments when I can hear the soft voice of my pure soul, which echoes through my mind. It is when I am calm and silent with a high aspiration for the Divine. That's when I feel an extraordinary change in myself. The soul is a very peculiar little thing to me but the voice is very well known. [age 12]

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What is the soul? What does it look like? How many persons have asked this question to themselves? Here, in the Ashram, Mother has taught us to meditate and go within and "see." But I have never tried this.

I feel the soul is a tiny flame, which is never touched by our misdeeds or other unworthy deeds. It takes a new body and comes down on earth for more experience. I feel it is a flame which aspires

to progress, to improve on past records.

As a palm tree stretches itself towards God, so the flame in me stretches itself. [age 13]

\* \* \*

My soul is hidden deep inside my body and covered with a thick fog-like thing. It is apple-shaped, of a dark red colour, as we get older the soul also becomes older. It moves here and there like a bouncing ball and tries to get rid of those vital beings that trouble man day and night. [age 13]

\* \* \*

What does my soul look like? It's the most unusual question I have ever been asked. The interesting point of the soul is that, though it is imperceptible physically, I am quite aware of it mentally.

(Truly confessing) I feel that my soul has no form. It's like the immaculate holy smoke that rises from the incense stick. Though frail and ethereal to look at, it has the most incredible strength to fight and this it always does until we let it down by being the mind's slave. [age 15]

\* \* \*

My soul looks like . . .

- (a) A warm and friendly smile filling every heart with joy.
- (b) The golden sunshine streaking through the veils of clouds.
- (c) A sweet summer shower of silvery drops.
- (d) The vast, swaying paddy fields caressed by the wind.
- (e) A blade of grass which spends its beauty in a simple, unstinted life.

In fact, my soul is like a kaleidoscope. Each time I turn it, I see Him in an infinite number of forms. [age 17]

[From *Mother India*, February 1978, pp. 108-112.]

**THE VILLAGE OF THE FUTURE**  
*Dennis*

Does the village *have* a future? To many modern minds it has not. The future is the megalopolis; hive life in sanitary, efficient, regimented cities; the countryside deserted save for robot farms and mass recreation areas; most of humanity in any case off somewhere beyond the moon, "colonizing" space.

Nonetheless, the characteristic grouping of human consciousness on this planet is the village: the 600,000 villages of India; the how many million more individual, personal, no-two-alike villages spread throughout most of the rest of the world; the billions of human beings living in villages.

Does the village have a future? This is not an item of discussion for learned or benevolent societies. It is a human question, a simple matter of life and death affecting most of the world's population.

Does the village have a future? Ask the village. Forget the assumption that villagers have to be told what to want. Ask the village. Listen to what people living in villages have to say about their future for themselves.

The following experience was gone through as part of the Youth Camp Programme coordinated by Meenakshi, Auti and others working at Ilaingnarkal, in Auroville. A group of older children from several villages in the Auroville area was separated into three subgroups. Each subgroup was given work space and materials and a common assignment. The task was to assemble a collage portraying the village as they would like it to be, the ideal village, the village of the future.

The final productions were in principle and even in most details surprisingly unified. The collective aspiration and hope for the village expressed by the spontaneous collages of these three groups of children is a clear and integrated vision of a beautiful, entirely possible near future.

These children are neither isolated nor ignorant of industrial civilization. They are familiar with "civilized" gadgets, motors, machines, aware through radio, films, magazines of most aspects of "civilized" life. Many of them have had at least some direct contact with natives of that civilization now living in Auroville. If these children do not long for skyscrapers, that is, it's not because they're unaware that skyscrapers exist.

And they don't long for skyscrapers. The hum of the industrialized hive has no real attraction for them. They want to continue to live in the village.

Some may find this basic commitment to village life astounding. Why, the cities offer so much! But so much of what the cities have to offer is worthless, dead, and most villagers have learned this by now. All those transistor radios have not been bought in vain. The village wants to stay in touch with trees and running water.

Trees, flowers, vegetable gardens; beautiful and productive dairies and farms; and above all an abundance of clean, healthy water. The desire to live in a natural environment, close to growing things, nourished by one's own bit of earth, is an integral aspect of the vision of the future village expressed in the three collages. The



ideal village is located amidst clear-running streams and springs, in a garden set in a forest.

Within the garden are houses, simply but very finely made; well-lit, comfortable, weatherproof, durable. Clean water is available for all. All waste is efficiently disposed of. Each home has access to ample energy for all domestic purposes.

The people in the houses eat well. No one suffers from an inadequate diet. Children, especially, are amply provided with fruit, vegetables, milk. Disease is an accident in the village of the future; not, as now, an accepted fact of life. Clean water, proper hygiene, nutrition, and sanitation prevent most disease without need of medicine. Skilled healers, though, are readily available in case of accident.

Healthy human beings, well housed and clothed and fed, are energetically engaged in the village of the future in a wide variety of useful occupations. Traditional and innovative arts, crafts, sciences are practiced. Tools are excellent, productivity is geared to quality, beauty, durability, use.

Education is wide; anything which can be learned anywhere can be learned in the village of the future. Books, equipment, teachers are as good as anywhere in the world.

The village of the future does not live in isolation. Through many means, villagers are in continuing direct contact with other human beings all over the planet.

Thought and religion are free in the village of the future. Temples, mosques, churches, meetingplaces for many different types of minds stand peacefully side by side.

This is the vision of the village of the future seen by children of the village of today.

Perhaps the single most powerful human energy source is to be found within the dreams of children. The dreams, the visions, the hopes for the future of the children of the Auroville area will determine, more than anything anyone else can plan or conceive, the future of the area as a whole.

What we who are no longer children can do is to offer our skills and energies at the service of our children's dreams. We who have acquired through the years some competency in working with the world as it is can direct our competency to the realization of the world in becoming, the world of our children's dreams.

It will come. There is nothing impossible or impractical about this vision of the village of the future. The means, the skills, the energy and resources to realize the dream are all ready at hand. It only requires, on the part of all of us living here, the will, dedication, concentration, coordination, consciousness to join in the process of bringing this vision into being.

[Further information on this work going on at Ilaingnarkal, write to Meenakshi, Ilaingnarkal, % Unity, Auroville 605101, India.]

## INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY (8)

*Sri Aurobindo*

### *Mind (3)*

The vital mind is usually energetic and creative even in its more mechanical rounds, so it must be the physical that is turning. It is that and the mechanical that last longest, but these too fall silent when the peace and silence become massive and complete. Afterwards knowledge begins to come from the higher planes—the Higher Mind to begin with, and this creates a new action of thought and perception which replaces the ordinary mental. It does that first in the thinking mind, but afterwards also in the vital mind and the physical mind, so that all these begin to go through a transformation. This kind of thought is not random and restless, but precise and purposeful—it comes only when needed or called for and does not disturb the silence. Moreover the element of what we call thought there is secondary and what might be called a seeing perception (intuition) takes its place. But so long as the mind does not become capable of a complete silence, this higher knowledge, thought, perception either does not come down or, if partially it does, it is liable to get mixed up with or imitated by the lower, and that is a bother and a hindrance. So the silence is necessary. [1]

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All depends on the meaning you attach to words used; it is a matter of nomenclature. Ordinarily, one says a man has intellect if he can think well; the nature and process and field of the thought do not matter. If you take intellect in that sense, then you can say that intellect has different strata, and Ford belongs to one stratum of intellect, Einstein to another—Ford has a practical and executive business intellect, Einstein a scientific discovering and theorising intellect. But Ford too in his own field theorises, invents, discovers. Yet would you call Ford an intellectual man or a man of intellect? I would prefer to use for the general faculty of mind the word intelligence. Ford has a great and forceful practical intelligence, keen, quick, successful, dynamic. He has a brain that can deal with thoughts also, but even there his drive is towards practicality. He believes in rebirth (metempsychosis), for instance, not for any philosophical reason, but because it explains life as a school of experience in which one gathers more and more experience and develops by it. Einstein has, on the other hand, a great discovering



Charly's place, Auroville. (Photo by Dominique Darr.)

intellectual, not, like Marconi, a powerful practical inventive intelligence for the application of scientific discovery. All men have, of course, an "intellect" of a kind; all, for instance, can discuss and debate (for which you say rightly intellect is needed); but it is only when one rises to the realm of ideas and moves freely in it that you say, "This man has an intellect." Address an assembly of peasants, you will find, if you give them scope, that they can put to you points and questions which may often leave the parliamentary debater panting. But we are content to say that these peasants have much practical intelligence.

The power to discuss and debate is, as I say, a common human faculty—and habit. Perhaps it is here that man begins to diverge from the animal; for animals have much intelligence, many animals and even insects have some rudimentary power of practical reasoning, but so far as we know, they do not meet and put their ideas about things side by side or sling them at each other in a debate (perhaps the crows do in the crow-Parliament sometimes!), as even the most ignorant human can do and very animatedly does.

But this, though a general faculty of the race, is very often specialised, so much so that a man whom it is dangerous to cross in debate in the field of literature or of science or of philosophy may yet make a fool of himself and wallow contentedly in a quagmire of blunders and fallacies if he discusses politics or economics or, let us say, spirituality or yoga. His only salvation is the blissful depth of his ignorance which prevents him from seeing what a mess he has made. Again, a man may be a keen legal or political debater, the two very commonly go together, yet no intellectual. I admit that a man must have some logical intellect to debate well. But, after all, the object of debate is to win, to make your point, and you may do that even if your point is false; success, not truth, is the aim of debate. [2]

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If the intellectual will always have a greater wideness and vastness, how can we be sure that he will have an equal fervour, depth and sweetness with the emotional man?...

Do not confuse the higher knowledge and the mental knowledge. The intellectual man will be able to give a wider and more orderly expression to what higher knowledge he gets than the *homo psychicus*; but it does not follow he will have more of it. He will have that only if he rises to an equal width and plasticity and comprehensiveness of the higher knowledge planes. In that case he will replace his mental by his above-mental capacity. But for many intellectuals, so-called, their intellectuality may be a stumbling-block as they bind themselves with mental conceptions or stifle their psychic fire under the heavy weight of rational thought. On the other hand, I have seen comparatively uneducated people expressing higher knowledge with an astonishing fullness and depth and accuracy which the stumbling movements of their brain could never have allowed one to suppose possible. [3]

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There are two kinds of understanding—understanding by the intellect and understanding in the consciousness. It is good to have the former if it is accurate, but it is not indispensable. Understanding by the consciousness comes if there is faith and openness, though it may come only gradually and through steps of experience. [4]

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In the West the physical mind is too dominant, so that the psychic does not so easily get a chance—except of course in exceptional people. [5]

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To reject doubts means control of one's thoughts—very certainly so. But the control of one's thoughts is as necessary as the control of one's vital desires and passions or the control of the movements of one's body—for the yoga, and not for the yoga only. One cannot be a fully developed mental being even, if one has not a control of

the thoughts, is not their observer, judge, master.... It is no more proper for the mental being to be the tennis-ball of unruly and uncontrollable thoughts than to be a rudderless ship in the storm of the desires and passions or a slave of either the inertia or the impulses of the body. I know it is more difficult [to control the thoughts] because man being primarily a creature of mental Prakriti [nature] identifies himself with the movements of his mind and cannot at once dissociate himself and stand free from the swirl and eddies of the mind whirlpool. It is comparatively easy for him to put a control on his body, at least on a certain part of its movements; it is less easy but still very possible after a struggle to put a mental control on his vital impulsions and desires; but to sit like the Tantric yogi on the river, above the whirlpool of his thoughts, is less facile. Nevertheless, it can be done; all developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other or at least at certain times and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire. [6]

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The error comes from thinking that your thoughts are your own and that you are their maker and if you do not create thoughts (i.e. think), there will be none. A little observation ought to show that you are not manufacturing your own thoughts, but rather thoughts occur in you. Thoughts are born, not made.... Of course, there is a sort of labour and effort when you try to produce or else to think on a certain subject, but that is a concentration for making thoughts come up, come in, come down, as the case may be, and fitting themselves together. The idea that you are shaping the thoughts or fitting them together in an egoistic delusion. They are doing it themselves, or Nature is doing it in you, only under a certain compulsion; you have to beat her often in order to make her do it, and the beating is not always successful. But the mind or mental energy—whatever you like to call it—does this in a certain way and carries on with a certain order of thoughts, haphazard intelligentialities (excuse the barbarism) or asinities, rigidly ordered or imperfectly ordered intellectualities, logical sequences and logical inconsequences, etc., etc. How is an intuition to get in in the midst of that waltzing and colliding crowd? [7]

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Thoughts, ideas, happy inventions etc., etc. are always wandering about (in thought-waves or otherwise), seeking a mind that may embody them. [8]

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First of all, these thought-waves, thought-seeds or thought-forms or whatever they are, are of different values and come from different planes of consciousness. The same thought-substance can take higher or lower vibrations according to the plane of consciousness through which the thoughts come in (e.g., thinking mind, vital mind, physical mind, subconscious mind) or the power of consciousness which catches them and pushes them into one man or another. Moreover, there is a stuff of mind in each man and the incoming thought uses that for shaping itself or translating itself (transcribing we usually call it), but the stuff is finer or coarser, stronger or weaker, etc., etc., in one mind than in another. Also, There is a mind-energy actual or potential in each which differs and this mind-energy in its recipience of the thought can be luminous or obscure, sattwic, rajasic or tamasic with consequences that vary in each case. [9]

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Thought is quite possible without words. Children have thoughts, animals too—thoughts can take another form than words. Thought perceptions come first—language comes to express the perceptions and itself leads to fresh thoughts. [10]

It is the physical mind that raises all these questions and cannot understand or give the right answer. The real knowledge and understanding can only come if you stop questioning with the small physical mind and allow a deeper and wider consciousness which is there within you to come out and grow. [11]

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What you have now seen and describe in your letter is the ordinary activity of the physical mind which is full of ordinary habitual and constantly recurrent thoughts and is always busy with external objects and activities....

To deal with this mind two things are necessary, (1) not so much to try to control or fight with or suppress it as to stand back from it: one looks at it and sees what it is but refuses to follow its thoughts or run about among the objects it pursues, remaining at the back of the mind quiet and separate; (2) to practise quietude and concentration in this separateness, until the habit of quiet takes hold of the physical mind and replaces the habit of these small activities. [12]

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Commonsense by the way is not logic (which is the least commonsense-like thing in the world), it is simply looking at things as they are without inflation or deflation—not imagining wild imaginations—or for that matter despairing “I know not why” despairs. [13]

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A man may have read much and yet be mentally undeveloped. It is by thinking, understanding, receiving mental influences from his intellectual superiors that a man's mind develops. [14]

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Writing and reading absorb the mind and fill it with images and influences; if the images and influences are not of the right kind, they naturally turn away from the true consciousness. It is only if one has the true consciousness well established already that one can read or write anything whatever without losing it or without any other harm. [15]

#### References

1. *Letters on Yoga 1* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), pp. 329-30.
- 2-15. *Letters on Yoga 2* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), pp. 1248-49, 1250, 1251, 1256, 1257, 1258-59, 1260, 1261, 1264, 1268, 1278, 1280.

## FLOWERS AND THEIR MESSAGES

### *The Mother*

*[For many years the Mother used flowers to communicate with disciples and students in the Ashram. She gave an occult and spiritual significance to several hundred flowers and plants, after meditating upon them. The significances came to her largely from the fragrance, color and form of the flower. The book Flowers and Their Messages, published in 1973 by Auropress, has been out of print for sometime. A new “flower book” is being prepared but no date has been set yet for its release. We thought readers would be interested if from time to time we gave flower significances from the 1973 edition.]*

#### *Finding the Message*

There is a mental projection when you give a precise meaning to a flower. It can answer, vibrate to the contact of the projection, accept the meaning, but a flower has no equivalent for the mental consciousness. In the vegetal kingdom there is a beginning of the mental consciousness. In the animal it is different: the mental life begins to form and for them things have a meaning. But in the flower it is something like the movement of a baby—it is neither a sensation nor a feeling, but something of both; it is a spontaneous movement, a very special vibration. If you are in contact with it, if you feel it, you can get an impression which may be translated as a thought. That is how I give a meaning to flowers and plants.

#### *Some Messages*

*[Following are the floral messages, beginning with the botanical name, followed by the common name where given, and then the significance given by the Mother.]*

- Acacia farnesiana* (Sweet Acacia, Popinac), small deep yellow very fragrant fluffy balls—Supramental Knowledge.
- Acer* (Maple), brilliant red leaves—Flame of Aspiration.
- Bougainvillea*, clusters of two or more different coloured bracts—Manifold protection.
- Bougainvillea*, red—Physical protection.
- Coleus*, slender racemes of tiny lavender-blue flowers—Spiritual Awakening of the Vital.
- Delonix regia*, *Poinciana regia* (Royal Poinciana, Gul Mohur, Flamboyant), clusters of striking orange-red to deep red flowers, one petal varying in colour from white to cream or yellow, and marked orange-red—Realization.
- Dianthus caryophyllus* (Carnation, Clove Pink), highly scented double flower with ruffled petals, several colours—Collaboration.
- Hibiscus*, medium-sized double flower, light salmon-pink with fine red veins and deep red center—Agni; the flame of purification which must precede all contact with the invisible worlds.
- Hibiscus*, large double bright yellow or golden-yellow flower with or without red centre—Supramental Consciousness.
- Iberis* (Candytuft), small flowers in compact heads, many colours—Equanimity.
- Jasminum* (Jasmine), all fragrant single white jasmines—Purity.
- Petunia hybrida*, soft delicate fragrant single showy flowers, profusely blooming—Enthusiasm.
- Petunia hybrida*, light pink—Psychic Enthusiasm.
- Portulaca grandiflora* (Rose Moss, Flowering Purslane, Sun Plant), small rose-like flowers with delicate petals in many colours, single and double—Sri Aurobindo's Compassion.
- Tagetes* (Marigold), double composite flowers, leaves have bruised odour—Plasticity.
- Trifolium* (Clover), dense rounded heads of tiny papilionaceous flowers in several colours—Kindness of Nature.
- Zinnia*, sturdy composite flower in a wide range of colours and forms—Endurance.
- Zinnia*, white—Integral Endurance.
- Michelia champaca* (Champak), highly fragrant flowers with many separate slender pointed petals, cream-yellow or light orange—Supramentalized Psychological Perfection.



The two Nursery live-in grass cutters, behind the latest waterlily/lotus pond. October 1978.



# FREE PROGRESS SYSTEM—ITS NECESSITY AND MEANING

*Tanmaya and Kireet*

*[From time to time we will publish pieces concerning the initiation and development of the Free Progress System cultivated at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. The following piece was written by two teachers involved in the system there.]*

All education aims at the progress of the students. But the question is: how to ensure this progress? The ordinary methods include the routine pursuit of a syllabus, exposure to a series of lectures and finally a system of examinations which decide the promotion or failure of students.

These methods, it is universally agreed, are so rigid and so deadening in their effect that they need to be radically changed. Indeed, a new system of ensuring the progress of the students has to be discovered and implemented.

And, first, what is Progress? Is it an increasing amassing of information? Is it even a development of certain skills? Or is it a development of the psychological abilities of adaptability, discovery, invention, manipulation, ideation and organisation? Is it the training of the mind to deal with large and universal ideas so as to be able to reconcile and unite by some kind of dialectic opposing or conflicting systems of thought? Or else can it be a development of body, life and mind so as to arrive at a harmony among them by the governance of Reason?

Or should we not mean by progress a discovery of an inner principle of guidance which holds in it the light and the truth of the development, harmony and perfection of our body, life and mind? And shall we not even go farther and say that true progress is an ever-open step towards a total revolution of our entire being and consciousness so as to transform all the limitations to which man as an evolutionary being is subject?

And, again, is it not irrational to set a standard of progress uniform for all? Or is it not wiser, although more difficult, to consider each individual as a special centre having his own unique rhythms and stations of progress and thus to assess each individual's progress by standards appropriate to each individual?

The idea of Free Progress is precisely an answer to the above questions. For, if man is not the last term of evolution, if Reason is not the true or highest governor of life, if the general aim of human life is to discover one's inmost and highest principles and to transform by their light and power the entire mode of one's present embodied mental life, and if the specific aim of each individual is to be a special or unique centre of a higher action according to the rhythms of that action, then education must be a process of free progress so organised

(i) as to give to each one the possibility to discover his own line of development in accordance with his inner being,

(ii) to give the possibility of progressing at one's own pace of progress, and

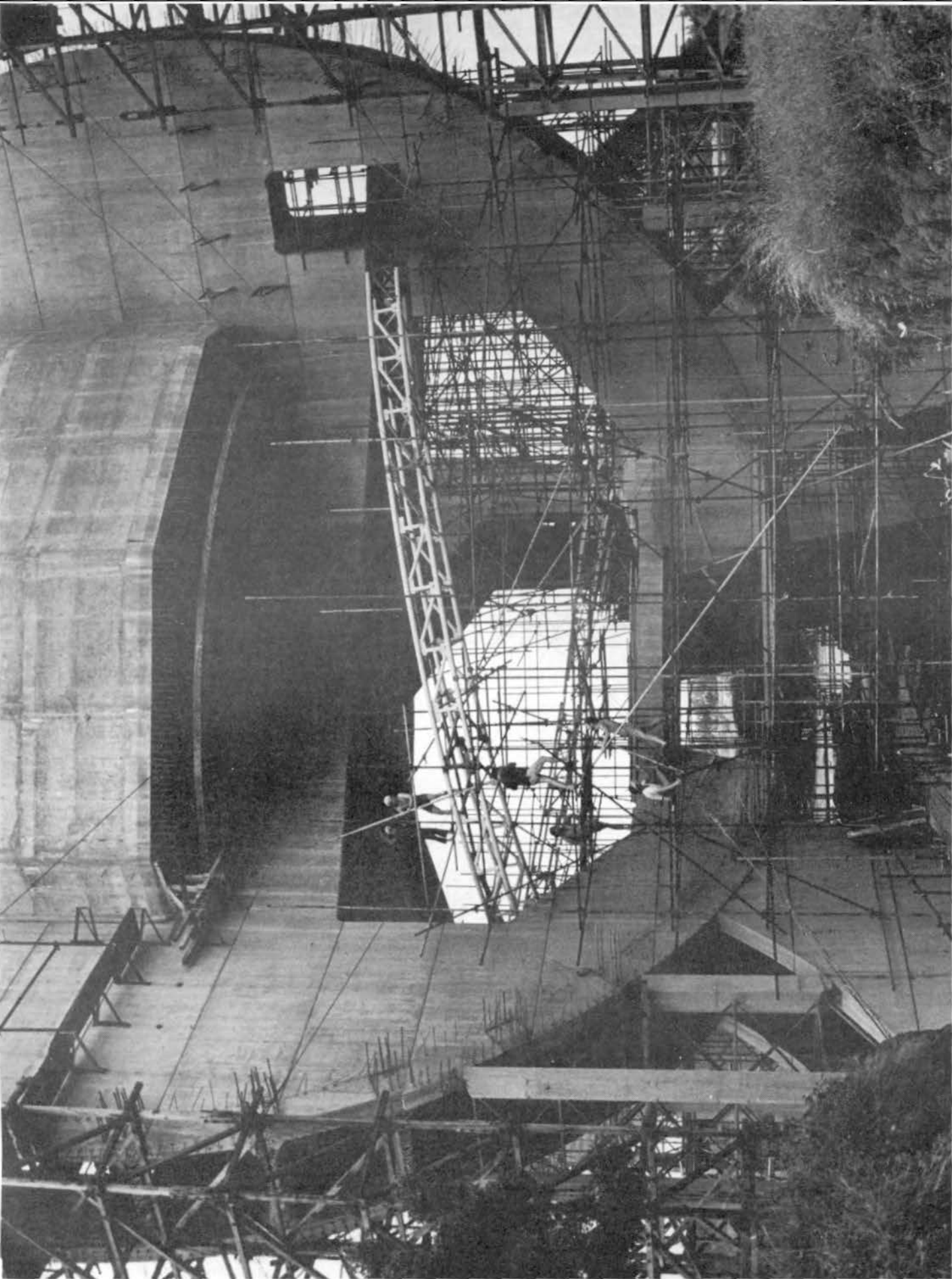
(iii) thus, ultimately, to enable him to take the charge of his own development.

Education is a process of a harmonious and progressive awakening; education is a process of self-revelation of knowledge which is within, and, as Sri Aurobindo has said, "The first principle of teaching is that nothing can be taught." Education is a process of the discovery of one's true place and function in the totality of existence and of the progressive lifting of one's station to the highest possible reach of consciousness and action.

This is the truth of education underlying the Free Progress System. It is free because it is not prefabrication; it is free because it is not imposed on any individual; it is free because it encourages each one to break the limitations of the past and to open to an exploration of new future possibilities; it is free because it is guided, not from without, but by oneself, by one's inner self, one's inner soul. In the words of the Mother, "Free Progress is progress guided by soul and not enslaved by habits, conventions and preconceived ideas." [From *Mother India*, December 1968, pp. 88-89.]



Sanskrit School in Aspiration, for young Tibetans. (Photo by Dominique Darr.)





## THE ASPIRATION TALKS (2)

[As the Mother was giving Service and Transformation flowers, she said:]

Service leads to transformation.

**Disciple:** In Aspiration some people would like to know if it could be not always the same persons who come to see you on Tuesdays.

**The Mother:** You see, I am quite willing, but it is up to you. All I ask is that they be sincere, that they don't come out of mere curiosity, that they really wish to progress. Only the quality of the receptivity matters. If they are open and feel that it does them good, then it's quite all right.

I am going to set two conditions. To want to progress—that is really a moderate condition. To want to progress, to know that everything has yet to be done, everything has yet to be conquered. The second condition: to do, everyday, some activity, some work, something which is not for oneself, and especially something which expresses goodwill for all, so that you do not live solely for yourself as if you were at the centre of the universe and the whole universe had to revolve around you. That is how it is for the vast majority of people, and they don't even know it. Each one should become conscious that, spontaneously, one puts oneself at the centre of the universe and wants everything to come towards oneself in one way or another. But one should make an effort to recognise the existence of the whole, that's all. It is to widen one's consciousness, just to become a little less tiny. So those who adhere to my programme will come once a week, in turn. Is that all right? [24 March 1970]

[In answer to questions on how to deal with the local villagers:]

For your questions, the best way, you see, it is education. To educate them not by words and speeches but by example. If you can make them mix with your life and your work, and if they receive the influence of your way of being, your way of understanding, then, little by little, they will change; and when they become curious and they ask questions, then it will be time to answer and to tell them what you know. [21 April 1970]

**Disciple:** It seems very difficult to be able to want to achieve any specific thing and at the same time to love everyone. When we begin to want something and try to act with a particular result in mind, immediately we cut ourselves off from everyone who does not agree with that. In practice, how can we do both at the same time?

**The Mother:** You cut yourself off from people who do not think as you do?

**Disciple:** Really....all the time...

**The Mother:** But not a single person thinks as you do!

**Disciple:** Of course...

**The Mother:** So how can you love anyone?

**Disciple:** As long as I don't want anything, it is all right...

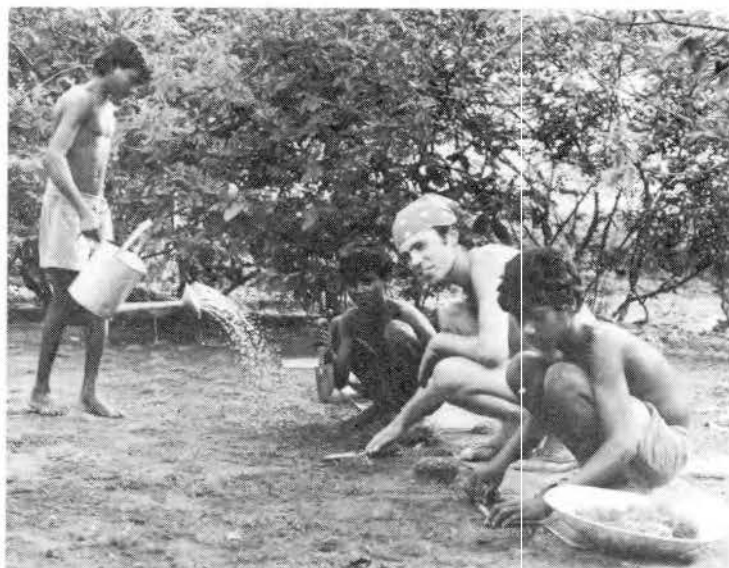
**The Mother:** Oh!

**Disciple:** Yes!

**The Mother [after concentrating two or three minutes before replying]:** It is because when you want something, it is the ego that wants. So, the ego...must be ignored. The first thing to do is not to act for yourself but to act in obedience to the Divine, to express the divine Will.... As long as it is a personal will, a personal desire, it is not the true thing, and you cannot.... Not only is it not the true thing, but you cannot know the true thing!

That must be.... [Mother makes the gesture of rejecting something forcefully] ... expelled!

That is why alone we are nothing at all. This is life. We do not



Tom O'Brien planting grass with three Tamil boys at the Matrimandir Gardens Nursery. October 1978.

act for ourselves. We do not act by personal will and for a personal result. We act only by the divine Will and for the divine Will. So much so, that effortlessly, spontaneously, we can have the deepest affection for our physical enemy. When you have felt that, you will understand.

When we say, "We are at the service of the Divine," it is not just words. It is He who should act through us, not ourselves. The greatest objection is: How can we know the divine Will? But as a matter of fact, I am telling you, "If you sincerely renounce your personal will, you will know. [26 May 1970]

[To be continued. From The Mother on Auroville, Auropublications, 1977.]



Paolo Soleri (in tank top) of Arcosanti, in Arizona, on his visit last year to Auroville. Seyril Rubin is on the left. (Photo by Dominique Darr.)



*Matrimandir*

Chipping work on the upper surface of the inner chamber roof, to prepare weak points and a number of seepage holes for final cementing, was completed 16 October—exactly one month after the chipping of the underside of the roof. The final concreting work remaining to be done should completely seal the roof against water penetration.

All support scaffolding for the inner chamber walls is being dismantled, as confirmation was received from Madras that the curing process of the concrete had sufficiently advanced to give the necessary independent strength. This has freed pipes to prepare scaffolding for concreting the lower ring beam of the outer spherical cover and also for use on the ramp work.

The whole of the first spiral ramp has now been welded into position. Only the two sections passing through the north and west pillars have yet to be concreted into position. Before this is done, however, the ramp has to be tested for strength by loading several thousand pounds of weight in sandbags onto each of the three spans. This involves adjusting the scaffolding downwards slightly and strengthening it in case of any weakness in the ramp. Meanwhile, work has already begun on the second ramp. Sections are in position for approximately one-third its length, starting from the north pillar.

*Matrimandir Gardens Borewell*

Narad of the Matrimandir Gardens reports that a borewell is going to be needed for the work of the Gardens by this summer. Rs 2,000 has already been donated, but another Rs 22,000 (about \$2,750) is urgently needed. The well proposal includes a long-awaited piece of land. Anyone who would like to contribute to this project can do so by sending donations (tax deductible) to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

*Matrimandir: Projected Work for 1979 and Estimates*

The work during the 12 months of 1979 involves:

1. Erection of the second spiral ramp for which 11 modules of each 5 meters long have been prefabricated in the Matrimandir workshop. The ramp structure consists of tubular space frame in steel, with welded joints. Time: 3-4 months.

2. Construction in reinforced concrete of the space frame for the outer cover of the Matrimandir, to be partially precast at ground level and mounted in place. Estimate includes only half of the structure, from bottom to the equator. Time: 12 months.

3. Finishing work in the meditation room, including plastering of the ceiling, stainless-steel fittings for mounting of marble sheets on the walls of the room, research on the optical system for lighting and sun ray, large-scale model of the symbols and crystal sphere in the center of the room.

4. Contouring of the gardens surrounding the Matrimandir to prepare the land for planting trees.

Estimate for materials and expenses for the foregoing work for 1 year:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Construction of the outer cover space frame, below equator:  |           |
| a. T.S. Steel, 20 tons at Rs 2,700 a ton  | Rs 54,000 |
| b. Sand & aggregate, 120m <sup>3</sup>  | 8,000     |
| c. Cement, 900 bags at Rs 22 a bag  | 20,000    |
| 2. General expenses—workshop, storerooms, replacement of materials and tools, machine repairs and maintenance, transport, electricity, telephone, office expenses, Rs 5,000 a month |           |
|   | 60,000    |
| 3. Wages (1 welder, 2 helpers, 2 boys, 3 watchmen), Rs 1,500 a month  |           |
|   | 18,000    |
| 4. Contouring and garden work (15 workers at a total of Rs 2,250 a month, tractor expenses at Rs 750 a month, totaling 3,000 a month)   |           |
|   | 36,000    |



Night concreting for the roof of the inner chamber of the Matrimandir. (Photo by Dominique Darr.)

5. Nursery expenses, plant and green cover research, Rs 2,500 a month	30,000
6. Food and maintenance for Aurovilians working on the Matrimandir:	
a. Tamil Aurovilians—10 workers & families, Rs 3,000 a month	36,000
b. Other Aurovilians, at Rs 200 a month each, 20 workers, Rs 4,000 a month	48,000
Total for the year	<b>Rs 310,000</b>

Other long-range projects not included in the foregoing estimate:

1. Crystal sphere for the center of the Mother's room, estimate by the French crystal firm Baccarat	Rs 3 lakhs
2. White woolen carpet for Mother's room, estimate by a factory in north India, at Rs 30 a square foot	1.2 lakhs
3. Air conditioning plant, estimate by Blu Star	3 lakhs
4. Optical system for lighting, involving capturing sunlight and directing a single beam into the crystal sphere at the center of Mother's room: construction of large-scale model, design of machinery and computer system for driving are in preliminary stages, involving foreign assistance. It is not possible at present to estimate cost.	
5. Purchase of extra tubular scaffolding for the construction of the space from above the equator	2 lakhs
6. Purchase of land: the total area for the Matrimandir gardens is about 40 hectares (100 acres) of which about one-fourth is still to be purchased. Estimate:	2 lakhs

7. Deep borewell: to supply water for irrigation in the gardens and to replace evaporated water in the lake. Estimate, including casing and turbine pump 1 lakh

[Note: Current exchange rate is about 8 rupees to the dollar; a lakh is 100,000 rupees. Contributions for the Matrimandir may be made to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.]

### *Pour Tous Reorganization and Move*

The Pour Tous Fund, the central fund gathering and disbursing agency in Auroville, has moved to Abri, midway between Aspiration and Centre.

As a result of the continuing financial difficulties and the community's decision no longer to borrow money for deficit spending, a new experiment was proposed, formulated through a series of collective meetings, to allow for a greater clarity, transparency and precision in the handling of funds as well as a greater individual participation and sense of responsibility from each Aurovillian.

The system is simple, flexible and each one is free to choose whether he wishes to participate in it. The following arrangement emerged from a meeting held at Abri on 24 October:

The basic needs of the community were listed. An envelope was to be opened for each category of need, corresponding to actual collective priorities. The first and immediate series of envelope categories is as follows (this is just a basis and can be elaborated and expanded as need arises):

1. *Food*— this includes the expenses for food purchased; kitchen expenses such as gas; all expenses related to food growing on the farms, such as cow feed; and wages for all those employed in food-related activities.
2. *Community Maintenance*— which would include repairs such as roofing and plumbing; electricity; garden upkeep; freestore; kerosene; and wages related to maintenance such as watchmen, chobies and electricians, etc.
3. *Services*— which would include vans; Toujours Mieux and Abri workshops; pump repair; cycle care; road maintenance; visa ser-

vice; all wages related to these services; and gasoline for transport and motorcycles.

4. *Children of Auroville*— something extra for the kids (whether it means supplementary food, special activities, etc.).
5. *Matrimandir*— This includes all the activities of the Matrimandir, construction, gardens, workshop and all related wages.
6. *Greenwork*— All work involved with afforestation and erosion prevention; bullock feed; wages related to greenwork.
7. *Personal Expenses*— individual needs of Aurovilians (i.e., pocket money, medicals, etc.).
8. *Unspecified Donations*.

Other possibilities might include an envelope for Debts to begin to pay back the loans that have accumulated and one for Development.



Pour Tous meeting at Myrtle's place, Certitude. (Photo by Dominique Darr.)

The experiment should be kept very simple and clear. It can be seen as a game.

First, the envelopes represent categories of needs. Aurovilians as well as friends donating from outside are now free to choose into which envelope they wish to place their money. Money cannot be transferred from one envelope to another.

Each community is to choose one or two members who will be responsible for holding the envelopes for their community. They will act as a team forming the Pour Tous Cooperative. The function of this team can be seen as follows:

1. *Receiving*— In other words, the members of each community can give what they feel into the envelopes held by these persons. The team will then meet weekly, turning over the contents of their community envelopes into the respective central envelopes.
2. *Informing*— During the weekly meetings, the team can evaluate the total financial situation and keep their communities informed as to where things stand.
3. *Distributing Unspecified Donations*— The cooperative team, who will be in touch with the overall state of Auroville finances, will be responsible for distributing the contents of Unspecified Donations envelope. They will be able to weigh the collective priorities of the moment and draw from the Unspecified Funds to fill in where the needs are.

As a background to this Pour Tous Cooperative team, working groups of Aurovilians directly concerned with the various categories of needs would meet at the beginning of the process to research and determine realistic figures corresponding each week. This figure (which and communally as envelope.



Any Aurovillian is free to participate or not to. Those not wanting to participate in the beginning can participate at any time they change their minds. There is no compulsion or judgment. Also there is no distinction between inside and outside Auroville. Friends and centers outside may also participate.

**Note:** All contributions from centers and friends abroad should be sent to the order of "Auroville Pour Tous Fund" by registered post along with a covering note indicating for which envelope(s) the contribution is given. "Auroville Fund" is reserved for internal use only.



David Wickenden and Bill Imig grinding peanuts for peanut butter.

## Visas

Following is a reprint of the text on visas which was published in *Auroville Review* no. 1 to reemphasize the necessity of following the procedure set up for obtaining residence visas. People following this procedure should be prepared to wait up to 6 months for the visa to come through.

Those going to Auroville on tourist visas are advised that Auroville can help in obtaining the usual 3-month extension, but beyond that cannot accept responsibility, so they may have to leave the country at the end of the 6-month period.

"We have been informed by some persons who wish to come to Auroville on a permanent basis that they are having problems obtaining a residence visa from the Indian Embassy in their respective countries. This fact has been brought to the attention of the Government of India, pointing out that those who wish to come to Auroville to stay but are unable to secure a permanent visa have no choice but to come on a tourist visa, which subsequently is then extremely difficult to convert into a residence visa due to the prevailing government regulations vis-a-vis visas.

"If any individual wishing to come to Auroville makes an application to the Indian Embassy in his country and sends a copy of the covering letter to us, then we may take up the matter with the Government and request the authorised concerned to ask the Embassy to issue a visa.

"We would therefore suggest that those individuals wishing to come to Auroville to live here permanently should submit their application to the Indian Embassy in their respective country, together with a covering letter, a copy of which should be sent to Auroville. Upon receipt of this copy, we shall try to activate the Government here to instruct the embassy concerned to issue this special type of semi-permanent visa.

"It is preferable that such applications be made through those associations in your country which are in regular contact with Auroville. This is important in order for us to be able to act here, having the assurance that the individual applying is in touch with Auroville through one of its associations.

"When you send the above-mentioned copy to Auroville, please include information about your position regarding the finances which are required here. These are two-fold: a deposit for return passage, and sufficient funds to maintain yourself for at least one year. The present amount required to maintain a single Aurovillian is Rs 360 per month, to be given to Pour Tous.

"All of the above information may be sent to:

Auroville Visa Service  
Aspiration, Auroville  
Kottakuppam 605104  
INDIA."

## The Guesthouse

The Auroville Guesthouse (funded by Interface Foundation of Somerville, Mass.) is now open. There are presently accommodations for five persons and a stay is limited to a period of up to several weeks only. Arrangements for extending a stay in other parts of Auroville can be made by the visitor once he is there.

Those wishing to be accommodated in the Guesthouse should write in advance, giving details of the planned visit, the number of people in the party (if children, their ages), and some information on their work and the purpose of their visit. Full travel direction will be sent with the Guesthouse booking confirmation.

For further information or to book a stay, write to

Frances E. Spaulding  
Guesthouse, Centre,  
Auroville 605101 Tamil Nadu  
INDIA

For further information on Auroville, write to

Auroville Information Service  
Unity  
Auroville 605101 Tamil Nadu  
INDIA

## Amba Garden Project, Auromodel

Adjacent to Auromodel are 35 acres of Auroville land which, during the last year, have become the focus for an important four-point program of soil and water conservation, afforestation and cereal-crop production.

The area concerned had received relatively little attention until a year ago, when Krishna Tewari became interested and put forward proposals for its development. Now work is well advanced toward completion of the essential bunding of fields, planting of trees and cash crops, and intensive cultivation of the central Amba Garden site. ("Amba" is a Sanskrit word meaning "mother.") Eventually the area should include some 17 acres of forested land, 14 acres of crops (there are already 9 acres of cambu, 2½ acres of groundnuts and 2½ acres of varagu under cultivation) and a further 3 or 4 acres of fruit and vegetables. There are also plans to put in a deep-bore well, build check dams on the two ravines just forming in the area, experiment with chemicals to control water seepage, farm fish, and plant an avenue of trees along the 750-meter stretch of road from the site to Kulapalayam village.

Most impressive at present is the development of the central "garden" area, where fruit trees already planted include over 350 papaya, 150 banana, 100 custard apple, 20 guava (with 50 more due in November), 15 chikku and 25 lemon. There are also 225 pineapple, 12 nellika and 200 sugar planted. In the vegetable section, cultivation has begun with tomato, brinjal (egg plant), ladies'



fingers, 2 types of spinach, ginger, parsley, mint, asparagus, beans, chili, radish and cluster beans. The total value of all crops from the area should soon be well in excess of Rs 20,000 (about \$2,500) per annum.

Amba Garden is obviously an important project for Auroville from many viewpoints. However, perhaps most interesting of all has been the bridge it has provided for a flow of unconditional goodwill and material help between the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. Teachers and students from the Ashram school came out in 1978—15 or so at a time—and dug and prepared the soil. Later the Ashram donated 50 banana trees, 50 papaya trees, a dozen lemon trees and the 100 custard apple trees. They have also helped with some 50 cartloads of compost.

So far all funding of this project has been provided by Mr. Tewari, a retired major general of the Indian Army who has settled in Auroville. However, outside help is needed. Estimated capital cost for the project, which will include bunding, afforestation, crops, borewells and motors, farm implements, and eventually a poultry and a dairy, and a tractor and trailer, is Rs 75,000 (about \$9,500). Friends who wish to contribute may do so either through "Auromitra—Friends of Auroville Research Foundation," a/c Amba Garden, and mailed to Amba Garden, Auromodel, Aspiration, Auroville 605104, India, or to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc., Mt. Tremper, NY 12457, both tax deductible in their respective countries.

Since 15 August 1978 there is a new publishing unit in Auroville, called in English Auroville Library. It has been established to bring out Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works in Czech. The first book they are issuing is a Czech translation of Pavitra's compilation *The Future Evolution of Man*. (This book will be available from Matagiri in the United States.) The unit also aspires to prepare translations for other Eastern European languages. Anyone interested, please write to Karel J. Pokorny, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605002, India.

## GENERAL NEWS

- Chitta R. Goswami, of the department of Religion of Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, and author of *Sri Aurobindo's Concept of the Superman*, attended the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in New Orleans last November.

- David Voremberg of the Karass Project of Interface Foundation (63 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02158; tel. 617-964-7140) has returned from Auroville and the Ashram, where he took the videotapes described in our last issue as well as the videotape equipment being donated to Auroville by the Karass Project in their program of linking New Age communities by means of videotape "letters." The Auroville equipment had to be brought back out of India, however, because all the necessary customs papers and clearances had not been obtained. The equipment will be taken back to Auroville as soon as the customs matter is settled.

While in Auroville David helped Aurovilians to make their first two videotapes. (Copies of the tapes have been obtained for Matagiri's library.)

(Anyone interested in further details on either the Karass Project or the Interface Foundation can write to David Voremberg or Peter Callaway at the above address.)

- Vasant Merchant of the Humanities Department of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff spoke on the importance of Sri Aurobindo for Indian independence at a celebration of Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights last 11 November. Earlier that month Dr. Merchant spoke to two conferences, one on humanities and the arts in Tempe, and the other on "Memory and Aging—Recent Re-

search," in which she referred to the "Divine Memory" as explained by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*.

- Ronald L. Campbell and Philip S. Staniford have published papers on "Transpersonal Anthropology" in the summer 1978 issue of *Phoenix: New Directions in the Study of Man*, a magazine published by a group of anthropologists, social scientists, etc., Phoenix Associates (880 Lathrop Drive, Stanford, CA 94305). Campbell, who studied Sri Aurobindo for many years with Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, presents the theoretical aspects. Staniford discusses the fieldwork experience he had in India, where he spent time with the followers of Sai Baba and at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

- The International Yoga Co-ordination Centre of Delhi, India, held its first international yoga congress in Delhi 11-17 January 1979. Among the participants who spoke were M.P. Pandit, on Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga; Rohit Mehta, on a new approach to Kundalini Yoga; and Gopikrishna, on Kundalini.

- Auroville is briefly described (and pictured) in the 1979 *Farmer's Almanac*. The article, "What Will the Future Bring?" by Guy Murchie, deals with various forecasts of future developments. Murchie is the author of *The Seven Mysteries of Life*, published by Houghton Mifflin.

- Multi-Media Productions (P.O. Box 5097, Stanford, CA 94305) has a sound filmstrip (with record or cassette) entitled "Auroville: Global Community for a Future World." There are two filmstrips in the program, lasting altogether about 20 minutes. It was written and photographed by Savitra, an American Aurovillian and author of *Auroville: The First Six Years*.

- A new book contains two articles of particular interest to students of Sri Aurobindo: *Kundalini, Evolution and Enlightenment*, edited by John White, presents a wide variety of essays on the title subject. Contributions include M.P. Pandit's "Kundalini Is Not the Sole Truth," and Vasant Merchant's "Sri Aurobindo, the Tantra and Kundalini." The book is published by Anchor Books, Doubleday.

## NEWS OF CENTERS

- Sri Aurobindo's Action Center and Auroville Association (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306; tel. 303-447-0982) held a special open house and sale of products from Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram; all proceeds went to Auroville.

A film on Auroville was shown at the University of Colorado as part of the New Age Film Festival sponsored by the Moksha Foundation, on December 17.

The center holds reading-discussion-meditation meetings every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

- East-West Cultural Center (2865 W. 9 St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; tel. 213-480-8325) observed November 24, Sri Aurobindo's Day of Illumination, with a concert by Lalita Ubhayakar (see News of Matagiri for additional information about Mrs. Ubhayakar). She sang classical and devotional music with Sanskrit bhajans and slokas. Other recent programs at the center included Richard Kinsey, who gave an improvisational "Music of the Essence" concert; Ronald Beesley of the College of Psycho Therapeutics of England gave a Color Fair Exhibition with demonstration of color healing; Uma Kumar gave a program of Bharata Natyam dance and a concert of Karnatic and Hindustani music.

Regular programs at the center include Dr. Tyberg at home in the library sharing the wisdom and Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Thursdays 8:00-9:00 p.m. and the Spiritual Inquiry Group, directed by Frederic Ross, Fridays 2:00-3:00 p.m.

• **Auroville International**, Quebec (4461 rue Saint-André, Montreal, Que., Canada H2J 2Z5; tel. 514-524-7445) reports that, following a meeting of members last September, they have chosen to break the routine of Thursday activities and to program only activities asked for or offered by members or friends of Auroville. As a result, two workshops were offered last fall, one on the concept of the self, and one on art with Jean Guy Laplante; a meditation directed by Guy Lafond; a talk by Jacques Perras on A Science of Light; and a talk on spirituality by Guy Lafond.

The office is open every Saturday afternoon for anyone interested in consulting Auroville papers, bulletins and reviews from Auroville associations around the world, or to buy books, etc. Volume 2 of *L'Agenda de Mere* is available from the center.

• **Auroville International—U.K.** and Sri Aurobindo Society of Great Britain (82 Bell St., London NW 1, England). A number of changes is taking place in the London center. Mr. Dhru Shah has assumed the administrative responsibility for the center. The new hall the center members have been working on is expected to be ready by 21 February. Two major projects being undertaken by the center are a Saturday school for young children based on the education principles of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and a service offered to schools which would include illustrated talks on Auroville, the experience of meditation, art and dance through meditation. Participating in this work, which can be either sent out to interested schools or the children can visit the Bell St. premises, will be Marguerite Smithwhite, who will be moving to the Bell St. center on her impending retirement from teaching.

June Maher of the Auroville Association in California visited the London center on her way to Auroville last fall. Mrs. Maher has now returned to the United States.

Vidyaben Patel contributed works of Sri Aurobindo to a Presentation of Faiths in Glasgow. Rod Hemsell is continuing to work on the marketing of Auroville and Ashram products in London and, with David Daniels, is doing the alterations to the top floor of the center premises.

## NEWS OF MATAGIRI

• On November 15, Lalita Ubhayakar gave a concert of bhajans and devotional songs at Matagiri. Mrs. Ubhayakar, a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is well known in India for her artistry not only in devotional singing but in classical Indian music and the Agra Gharana. She has given concerts throughout India and in Europe and is widely regarded as one of the finest singers India has produced. While in the United States, Mrs. Ubhayakar also performed at the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

• Sam Spanier, the founder of Matagiri, is spending several months as the guest of friends in Paris. Sam lived for several years in the early 1950s. He has visited several times with the Auroville group in Paris and at the Sri Aurobindo Centre of André Morisset.

• Mario Santonastaso (25 Marshall St., Providence, RI 02909), who may be contacted by people in his area interested in Sri Aurobindo, spent the Thanksgiving period at Matagiri. He brought with him an oscilloscope, which had been requested in *Collaboration* for use in the design of a light control for the Matrimandir.

• Sunil, a young Indian who grew up in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and later lived in Aspiration, in Auroville, visited Matagiri from Montreal in December.

• Charles Maloney of Matagiri spoke last November on attitudes toward dying and different kinds of death to a group of counselors

from Family, a volunteer social-service group in Woodstock, N.Y. Charles lived in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram before coming to Matagiri, and has taught philosophy at Rutgers University and worked with Jean Houston. He has also done psychological counseling.

On December 2, 1978, together with Seyril Rubin of Auroville, he gave a program on "The Conquest of Death in *Savitri*," at the Abode of the Message, the Sufi community in New Lebanon, N.Y.

On February 28, he spoke again at the Indian Consulate, on the occasion of Auroville's birthday celebration, which included videotapes.

• **Dr. G. Venkataswamy**, a longtime devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who is a noted eye surgeon, visited Matagiri in January. For 20 years he was professor of ophthalmology at Madurai Medical College and works with such organizations as World Health Organization, World Council for Welfare of the Blind, etc. He is president of the Govel Trust, which has built the Aravind Eye Hospital in Madurai. Dr. Venkataswamy is currently engaged in work with various groups and individuals, including the Seva Foundation, to develop a program for the eradication of unnecessary blindness (from malnutrition, cataract, etc.). (For further information on this program, write to Dr. Venkataswamy at Aravind Eye Hospital, 1 State Housing Board Colony, A.A. Nagar, Madurai 625020, India.)

Sanskrit classes, both beginner and advanced, are being offered by Matagiri. Anyone interested should write or call Gopal Bhattacharyya, who is the instructor.

**Note:** We appreciate being notified of people who are traveling to the Ashram or Auroville and who would be willing to take small items needed there. We usually have such items on hand waiting for someone to carry them. If you are planning to go and would be willing, please write to Matagiri.

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Children's Astrologer* by Dodie & Allan Edmands. New York: Hawthorn Books Inc., 1978. 143 pp.

The United Nations has declared 1979 as International Year of the Child. Publication of a book of astrology focusing the attention on child-rearing is welcome and more so the IYC. From a study of the book the question that arises in the mind at the very outset is how astrology could be related to child education. Secondly, is astrology a science or superstition? We propose to discuss the second question first.

How the stars and the planets of heavens could affect the destiny of the human beings is a very pertinent question. When we cannot answer the question with the help of the physical sciences, or, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "physical mind dealing with apparent laws of physical processes and seeing no farther," we take astrology as a thing of superstition. But if we consider the fact that there is not only a physical world but also a supraphysical world, or Sukshma Jagat, which escapes the ken of the sciences of the physical mind, we may not altogether condemn astrology as superstition. For, in order to understand the Sukshma Jagat, we need to develop the subtle mind or supraphysical sense, which the ancient astrologers of the East and the West did.

Talking about the subtle physical world, the Mother points out that there are so many worlds, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual. In her words, "The knowledge of these various states of being and their corresponding inner worlds give at the same time the capacity to discern the various destinies, their interpenetration and their combined and dominant action." To this we may add the words of Sri Aurobindo that the stars and the planets do not deter-

mine a man's character or fate but indicate it, "because they are the sensational, celestial and astral influences or nervous force in nature which become the instruments of our karma." Sri Aurobindo further asserts, "It is this same vital force which pours upon us from all parts of the solar system and of this physical universe. But man is mightier than his sensations ... or vital forces of the universe. Our fate and our temperament have been built by our own wills and our own wills can alter them." So the answer to the second question is this: astrology is beyond physical sciences but not a superstition and that by knowing his innate position and destiny through astrology, man can alter it through his determination.

The first question, about the relation between astrology and raising the child, I believe, can now be taken up. The twentieth century has often been described as the children's century. The work of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbert, Froebel, Thoreau, and Emerson of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, Montessori and Tagore of later years, and Jean Piaget and Arnold Gessel of current times has made people conscious of children's needs and laid the foundation of child study. It is now an established fact that a child cannot be treated as a miniature adult, like a tadpole as a miniature frog. Just like a tadpole, which is really a frog-in-the-making, a child is also an adult-in-the-making and by this very fact a child cannot be "sober, stiff youngster, dour in face, erect in posture, adult in demeanor." As a matter of fact, studies of psychology of the child have adequately proved that a child's cognition, affect, and conation are very different from those of an adult. The child's needs have been studied from this angle, his dispositions, instincts, and innate tendencies have been observed, his attention, interest, and aptitudes studied, his habits and behavior analyzed. Thus the importance of child study has been established and child education has opened up a wider new horizon.

In spite of the stress of the behavioristic school of psychology on the study of child's behavior in the physical sense only, modern educators would care for both the nature and the nurture of the child and not one at the cost of the other. To study the nature of the child an educator has to look at hereditary traits which make the difference between individual children. The innate tendencies coming out of the traits are, in fact, bricks and mortar of the edifice of the child's personality, which is structured in the formative years of childhood. Astrology indicates the inherent tendencies of the person according to his zodiacal sign. It is on this point that modern child psychology and child education meet with astrology, as the latter indicates the innate nature of the child. Modern educationists assert that the child should be allowed to grow and develop according to his inner nature, which of course varies from one child to the other. Astrological observations help an educator to understand with sympathy the inner nature of the child with which he is born, his uniqueness and his difference from others. As the Edmandses say, "Astrology sheds lights on these hidden distinctions; it reveals the different possible responses children might have to the same biological and environmental influences." They further add, "Astrology helps people to see themselves—and, more specifically, their children—better, when properly used, it gives a non-judgmental framework for sorting out our children's genuine strengths from our expectations of them." They also are very correct to caution us that what they have offered in the book should not be taken as "prescriptions or literal predictions." Rather, parents' and teachers' observations should be the main basis of understanding the child, and the content of the book should be verified in the light of their own studies.

The Edmandses have chosen rightly the period from birth through five for their studies. This period of life is considered by the educators as the most important one of life due to the fact that the structure of personality is formed then, which, in fact, cannot be altered basically after this period. Also, as the Edmandses say, "the changes that occur in this brief period seem truly astounding from the slowed-down perspective of adult time." Hence parents,

teachers, and others interested in child education should try to understand children in this budding period. They will find astrological knowledge helpful for it. Thus in broad outlines the Edmandses describe Aries children full of positive energy, busy and alert and always demanding the attention of the elders as the "me-first child." For the rearing of such children they suggest that parents and teachers should encourage creativity, cooperativeness, and following through on their enthusiastic beginnings of creative projects. Similarly the tendencies of the children of other signs, Taurus, Gemini and the other nine signs, are described and the kind of educational bearing of these signs pointed out. These suggestions are no doubt in accordance with the tenets of modern psychology.

Educators of the world give stress on the development of individuality of the child and they do so strictly on the basis of the findings of child psychology. But by individuality what do we actually mean? In the words of Sri Aurobindo, individuality is what "every one has in him, something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength, in however small a sphere, which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it." This individuality, although integrated, has a fivefold expression: physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual, and Sri Aurobindo says, "The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use." Thus education becomes a process of discovering oneself and one's unique line of development and role in the physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual worlds. Hence the Mother says that from infancy children should be brought up in such a way that they can realize that "there is an inner reality—within themselves, within the earth, within the universe—and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth." This may sound very abstract and philosophical, but as children are not "concretized in their physical consciousness," this is not difficult for them to realize with their unadulterated psychics.

A book such as *The Children's Astrologer* would be a great help if the education of the child is regarded as an awakening from within and not an accretion from without, if the individual child is considered against the background of infinite universe with which he or she is organically related, and if the human child is looked upon as potentially divine, going through the process of evolution and the exploration of consciousness from mind to supermind. Rightly the psalmist said some hundreds of years ago: "When I look at Thy stars, the work of Thy fingers, / I wonder what is man that Thou art mindful of him."

—Gopal Bhattacharyya

## CHILDREN

*Helen Gaebe*

Molecular structuring of time  
Finding seasonal measures  
In snowflakes  
With a sled

Spilled with unknown intention  
To form the measure of unseen things  
In worlds  
Of Sacred Marriage

Soothing wounds of empty time  
Filling Light with rainbow rhythms  
Flowing beings, finding form in essence  
Timeless, Ageless, little children.