



Collaboration

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A view of Matagiri.

We begin our sixth year of publication with some of the views of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on health and illness. Their evolutionary vision and concept of transformation stress the fundamental importance of the embodied life, which is the place, the locus where the work of transformation is to be done; it cannot be done without the body. The passages given here represent only a small part of what they have said or written, which covers the whole field of physical well-being.

We want to thank particularly all our subscribers who responded to our renewal notice in the last issue with amounts greater than the minimum requested. Your generosity enables us to send *Collaboration* without charge to a large number of men and women in prisons

who would not otherwise be able to have it. We regularly receive requests from prisoners who would like to have *Collaboration* for their own use or use in their spiritual study groups. We are also grateful for the many letters of appreciation we have received from readers of *Collaboration*. It is encouraging and helpful to us to know that *Collaboration* is helpful and inspiring to so many.

We are happy to present in this issue a short piece by Satprem regarding the works of the Mother. We continue some of our regular features as well as some shorter pieces which we felt readers might find of special interest. We are always interested in poetry and readers are invited to submit their work for consideration.

ILLNESS AND MEDICINES

Sri Aurobindo

All disease is a means towards some new joy of health, all evil and pain a tuning of Nature for some more intense bliss and good, all death an opening on widest immortality. Why and how this should be so, is God's secret which only the soul purified of egoism can penetrate. [1]

Attacks of illness are attacks of the lower nature or of adverse forces taking advantage of some weakness, opening or response in the nature,—like all other things that come and have to be thrown away, they come from outside. If one can feel them so coming and get the strength and the habit to throw them away before they can enter the body, then one can remain free from illness. Even when the attack seems to rise from within, that means only that it has not been detected before it entered the subconscious; once in the subconscious, the force that brought it rouses it from there sooner or later and it invades the system. When you feel it just after it has entered, it is because though it came direct and not through the subconscious, yet you could not detect it while it was still outside. Very often it arrives like that frontally or more often tangentially from the side direct, forcing its way through the subtle vital envelope which is our main armour of defence, but it can be stopped there in the envelope itself before it penetrates the material body. Then one may feel some effect, e.g., feverishness or a tendency to cold, but there is not the full invasion of the malady. If it can be stopped earlier or if the vital envelope of itself resists and remains strong, vigorous and intact, then there is no illness; the attack produces no physical effect and leaves no traces. [2]

* * *

There is a sort of protection round the body which we call the nervous envelope—if this remains strong and refuses entrance to the illness force, then one can remain well even in the midst of plague or other epidemics—if the envelope is pierced or weak, then the illness can come in. [3]

All illnesses pass through the nervous or vital-physical sheath of the subtle consciousness and subtle body before they enter the physical. If one is conscious of the subtle body or with the subtle consciousness, one can stop an illness on its way and prevent it from entering the physical body. But it may have come without one's noticing, or when one is asleep or through the subconscious,

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or in a sudden rush when one is off one's guard; then there is nothing to do but to fight it out from a hold already gained on the body. Self-defence by these inner means may become so strong that the body becomes practically immune as many yogis are. Still this "practically" does not mean "absolutely."

The absolute immunity can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental it is the result of an action of a Force among many forces and can be disturbed by a disruption of the equilibrium established—in the supramental it is a law of the nature; in a supramentalised body immunity from illness would be automatic, inherent in its new nature.

There is a difference between yogic Force on the mental and inferior planes and the supramental Nature. What is acquired and held by the yoga-Force in the mind-and-body consciousness is in the supramental inherent and exists not by achievement but by nature—it is self-existent and absolute. [4]

* * *

It is not the medicine that cures so much as the patient's faith in the doctor and the medicine. Both are a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power which they have themselves destroyed. [5]

* * *

Medicine is necessary for our bodies in disease only because our bodies have learned the art of not getting well without medicines. Even so, one sees often that the moment Nature chooses for recovery is that in which the life is abandoned as hopeless by the doctors. [6]

* * *

...A certain medicine is found, because of favourable circumstances, to cure a number of people of a particular disease. Then it is announced that the medicine is an absolute remedy for that disease. But it is not true. If the same medicine is given to a hundred persons, it will affect them in a hundred different ways: sometimes the reactions are quite opposite. In no two cases will the result be similar. Therefore it is not the virtue of the medicine itself that effects the cure. It is a superstition to believe in the absolute efficacy of medicines.

But going farther we can say that there is very little difference between science and superstition! The only difference is in the manner of expressing oneself. If you take care to say like the scientists, "it seems it is like that, one might conclude that things appear like that" etc., etc., then it is no longer superstition. But if you assert pointblank, "It is like that," then you land in superstition. [7]

* * *

Please remember that R- has studied homeopathy and he has knowledge of homeopathic medicines if not of allopathic pathology. He took a degree in America and the Mother tells me that many of his ideas of which we were so impatient and thought them his own inventions are the ideas of the American school of homeopathy

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which is more meticulous, intolerant, intransigent, dead against allopathy, particular about the subtle properties of homeopathic drugs and their evanescence by wrong contacts (quite yogic that) than others....

The universe is not shut up in the four walls of allopathic medicine. There are plenty of cases of illnesses being cured by other systems (not homeopathy alone) when they had defied the allopaths. [8]

HEALTH AND HEALING

The Mother

Eat for living but do not live for eating. [1]

* * *

Unless you control the food you take, you will always be ill. [2]

* * *

In the effect of food on the body, 90% belongs to the power of thought. [3]

* * *

Sri Aurobindo speaks [in *The Synthesis of Yoga*] of physical needs, the needs of the body, which are generally considered as imperative and which have their own truth; he says that even that can be only quite a partial light, that is to say, a semblance of knowledge or even something false.

That goes against all modern ideas.

People always have the impression that what they call the needs of the body, what the body demands, is an absolute law; that if it is not obeyed, well, one commits a great wrong against one's body which will suffer the consequences. And Sri Aurobindo says that these needs in themselves are either very partial lights, that is to say, only a way of seeing things, or even not lights at all—completely false.

If one were to study the problem attentively enough, one would find out to what an extent these so-called needs of the body depend on the mental attitude. For example, the need to eat. There are people who literally die of hunger if they have not eaten for eight days. There are others who do it deliberately and observe fasting as a principle of yoga, as a necessity in yoga. And for them, at the end of eight days' fasting, the body is as healthy as when they started, and sometimes healthier!

Finally, for all these things, it is a question of proportion, of measure. It is obvious that one can't always live without eating. But it is as obvious that the idea people have about the need to eat is not true. Indeed, it is a whole subject for study: the importance of the mental attitude in relation to the body.

Sri Aurobindo does not recognize the needs of the body as things true in themselves. He says: it is not true, it is only an idea you have, an impression, it is not something true which carries its truth in itself. [4]

* * *

Physical culture is the process of infusing consciousness into the cells of the body. One may or may not know it, but it is a fact. When we concentrate to make our muscles move according to our will, when we endeavour to make our limbs more supple, to give them an agility, or a force, or a resistance, or a plasticity which they do not naturally possess, we infuse into the cells of the body a consciousness which was not there before, thus turning it into an increasingly homogeneous and receptive instrument, which progresses in and by its activities. This is the primary importance of physical culture. Of course, that is not the only thing that brings consciousness into the body, but it is something which acts in an overall way, and this is rare. I have already told you several times that the artist

The human body has always been in the habit of answering to whatever forces chose to lay hands on it and illness is the price it pays for its inertia and ignorance. It has to learn to answer to the one Force alone, but that is not easy for it to learn. [9]

References

- 1-6. *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Illness* (Sri Aurobindo Society, n.d.), pp. 1, 19-20, 25-26, 31.
- 7, 8. Nirodbaran, *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1969), 1: 326, 344-45.
9. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 3: 1563.

infuses a very great consciousness into his hands, as the intellectual does into his brain. But these are, as it were, local phenomena, whereas the action of physical culture is more general....

...There is an essential difference between muscles developed through specialised, local and limited use and muscles which have been cultivated deliberately and harmoniously according to an integral programme which leaves no part of the body without work and exercise.

...One can say that any discipline that is followed rigorously, deliberately, is a considerable help, for it enables life on earth to attain its goal more rapidly and prepares it to receive the new life. To discipline oneself is to hasten the arrival of this new life and the contact with the supramental reality. [5]

* * *

The real disease is *fear*. Throw the fear away and the disease will go. [6]

* * *

The power of formation has a great advantage, if one knows how to use it. You can make good formations and if you make them properly, they will act in the same way as the others. You can do a lot of good to people just by sitting quietly in your room, perhaps even more good than by undergoing a lot of trouble externally. If you know how to think correctly, with force and intelligence and kindness, if you love someone and wish him well very sincerely, deeply, with all your heart, that does him much good, much more certainly than you think. I have said this often; for example, to those who are here, who learn that someone in their family is very ill and feel that childish impulse of wanting to rush immediately to the spot to attend to the sick person. I tell you, unless it is an exceptional case and there is nobody to attend on the sick person (and at times even in such a case), if you know how to keep the right attitude and concentrate with affection and good will upon the sick person, if you know how to pray for him and make helpful formations, you will do him much more good than if you go to nurse him, feed him, help him wash himself, indeed all that everybody can do. Anybody can nurse a person. But not everybody can make good formations and send out forces that act for healing. [7]

* * *

In reality illness is only a disequilibrium; if then you are able to establish another equilibrium, this disequilibrium disappears. An illness is simply, always, in every case, even when the doctors say that there are microbes—in every case, a disequilibrium in the being: a disequilibrium among the various functions, a disequilibrium among the forces.

This is not to say that there are no microbes: there are, there are many more microbes than are known now. But it is not because of that you are ill, for they are always there. It happens that they are always there and for days they do nothing to you and then all of a sudden, one day, one of them gets hold of you and makes you ill—why? Simply because the resistance was not as it used to be habitu-

ally, because there was some disequilibrium in some part, the functioning was not normal. But if, by an inner power, you can re-establish the equilibrium, then that's the end, there is no more difficulty, the disequilibrium disappears.

There is no other way of curing people. It is simply when one sees the disequilibrium and is capable of re-establishing the equilibrium that one is cured. Only there are two very different categories you come across. Some hold on to their disequilibrium—they hold on to it, cling to it, don't want to let it go. Then you may try as hard as you will, even if you re-establish the equilibrium the next minute they get into disequilibrium once again, because they love that. They say: "Oh no! I don't want to be ill," but within them there is something which does not want to let it go. There are other people, on the contrary, who sincerely love equilibrium, and directly you give them the power to get back their equilibrium, the equilibrium is re-established and in a few minutes they are cured.

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY (10)

Sri Aurobindo

The Vital (2)

By the higher vital parts of the nature I mean the vital mind, the emotional nature, the life-force dynamis in the being. The vital mind is that part of the vital being which builds, plans, imagines, arranges things and thoughts according to the life-pushes, desires, will to power or possession, will to action, emotions, vital ego reactions of the nature. It must be distinguished from the reasoning will which plans and arranges things according to the dictates of the thinking mind proper, the discriminating reason or according to the mental intuition or a direct insight and judgment. The vital mind uses thought for the service not of reason but of life-push and life-power and when it calls in reasoning it does that for justifying the dictates of these powers, imposes their dictates on the reason instead of governing by a discriminating will the action of the life-forces. This higher vital with all its parts is situated in the chest and has the cardiac center as its main stronghold governing all this part down to the navel. I need not say anything about the emotional nature, for its character and movements are known to all. From the navel downwards is the reign of the vital passions and sensations and all the small life-impulses that constitute the bulk of the ordinary human life and character. This is what we call the lower vital nature. [1]

* * *

The heart is the centre of the emotional being and the emotions are vital movements. When the heart is purified, the vital emotions change into psychic [soul] feelings or else psychicised vital movements. [2]

* * *

I make the distinction [between the lower vital movements and the emotions of the heart] by noting where these things rise from. Anger, fear, jealousy touch the heart no doubt just as they touch the mind but they rise from the navel region and entrails (i.e., the lower or at highest the middle vital). Stevenson has a striking passage in *Kidnapped* where the hero notes that his fear is felt primarily not in the heart but the stomach. Love, hope have their primary seat in the heart, so with pity, etc. [3]

* * *

The physical-vital is the being of small desires and greeds, etc.—the vital-physical is the nervous being; they are closely connected together. [4]

* * *

The vital-physical governs all the small daily reactions to outward things—reactions of the nerves and the body consciousness and the reflex emotions and sensations; it motivates much of the

Their knowledge was not sufficient or their power was not sufficient to re-establish order—disequilibrium is a disorder. But if you intervene, if you have the knowledge and re-establish the equilibrium, quite naturally the illness will disappear; and those who allow you to do it get cured. Only those who do not let you do it are not cured and this is visible, they do not allow you to act, they cling to the illness. I tell them: "Ah! you are not cured? Go to the doctor then." And the funniest part of the thing is that most often they believe in the doctors, although the working remains the same! Every doctor who is something of a philosopher will tell you: "It is like that; we doctors give only the occasion, but it is the body that cures itself. When the body wants to be cured, it is cured." [8]

References

1-8. *The Mother, Health and Healing in Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1979), pp. 185, 186, 191-92, 211-13, 38, 109, 111.

ordinary actions of man and joins with the lower parts of the vital proper in producing lust, jealousy, anger, violence, etc. In its lowest parts (vital-material) it is the agent of pain, physical illness, etc. [5]

* * *

The nervous part of the being is a portion of the vital—it is the vital-physical, the life-force closely enmeshed in the reactions, desires, needs, sensations of the body. The vital proper is the life-force acting in its own nature, impulses, emotions, feelings, desires, ambitions, etc., having as their highest centre what we may call the outer heart of emotion, while there is an inner heart where are the higher or psychic feelings and sensibilities, the emotions or intuitive yearnings and impulses of the soul. [6]

* * *

The body-energy is a manifestation of material forces supported by vital-physical energy which is the vital energy precipitated into matter and conditioned by it. [7]

[Seeking enjoyment] is the attitude not of the whole vital but of the physical vital, the animal part of the human being. Of course it cannot be convinced by mental reasoning of any kind. In most men it is the natural and accepted attitude towards life varnished over with some conventional moralism and idealism as a concession to the mind and higher vital. In a few this part of the being is gripped and subordinated to the mental or the higher vital aim, forced to take a subordinate place so that the mind may absorb itself persistently in mental pursuits or idealisms or great political or personal ambitions (Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini). The ascetic and Puritan try to suppress it mostly or altogether. In our yoga the principle is that all must become an instrument of the Spirit and the parts of enjoyment taste the Ananda [Bliss] in things, not the animal enjoyment of the surface. [8]

* * *

Of course most men live in their physical mind and vital, except a few saints and a rather large number of intellectuals. That is why, as it is now discovered, humanity has made little progress in the last three thousand years, except in information and material equipment. A little less cruelty and brutality perhaps, more plasticity of the intellect in the elite, a quicker habit of change in forms, that is all. [9]

* * *

Most people live in the vital. That means that they live in their desires, sensations, emotional feelings, vital imaginations and see

and experience and judge everything from that point of view. It is the vital that moves them, the mind being at its service, not its master.... It is only the minority of men who live in the mind or in the psychic or try to live in the spiritual plane. [10]

* * *

In the ordinary life people accept the vital movements, anger, desire, greed, sex, etc. as natural, allowable and legitimate things, part of the human nature. Only so far as society discourages them or insists to keep them within fixed limits or subject to a decent restraint or measure, people try to control them so as to conform to the social standard of morality or rule of conduct. Here [in the Ashram], on the contrary, as in all spiritual life, the conquest and complete mastery of these things is demanded. That is why the struggle is more felt, not because these things rise more strongly in sadhaks than in ordinary men, but because of the intensity of the struggle between the spiritual mind which demands control and the vital movements which rebel and want to continue in the new as they did in the old life. As for the idea that the sadhana raises up things of the kind, the only truth in that is this that, first, there are many things in the ordinary man of which he is not conscious, because the vital hides them from the mind and gratifies them without the mind realising what is the force that is moving the action—thus things that are done under the plea of altruism, philanthropy, service, etc. are largely moved by ego which hides itself behind these justifications; in yoga the secret motive has to be pulled out from behind the veil, exposed and got rid of. Secondly, some things are suppressed in the ordinary life and remain lying in the nature, suppressed but not eliminated; they may rise up any day or they may express themselves in various nervous forms or other disorders of the mind or vital or body without it being evident what is their real cause. This has been recently discovered by European psychologists and much emphasised, even exaggerated in a new science called psychoanalysis. Here again, in sadhana one has to become conscious of these suppressed impulses and eliminate them—this may be called rising up, but that does not mean that they have to be raised up into action but only raised up before the consciousness so as to be cleared out of the being.

As for some men being able to control themselves and others being swept away, that is due to difference of temperament. Some men are sattvic and control comes easy to them, up to a certain point at least; others are more rajasic and find control difficult and often impossible. Some have a strong mind and mental will and others are vital men in whom the vital passions are stronger and more on the surface. Some do not think control necessary and let themselves go. In sadhana the mental or moral control has to be replaced by the spiritual mastery—for that mental control is only partial and it controls but does not liberate; it is only the psychic and spiritual that can do that. That is the main difference in this respect between the ordinary and the spiritual life. [11]

* * *

[The reason for calm and self-control in people in ordinary life] is social pressure accompanied by a certain habit of mental control born of the social pressure. It is not from peace at all. Remove the social pressure even partly and as in England and America recently people let themselves go and do according to the vital impulses instead of controlling them—except of course those who stick to the religious and moral ideas of the past even when society drifts away from these ideas. [12]

References

- 1-7. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 1:341, 342, 342-43, 344, 345, 346.
- 8-12. Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 3:1294, 1296, 1297-98.

THE SUPRAMENTAL CONTAGION

Satprem

We are dispersed, distant, each on his own little continent, with his little cares, big cares, and life like every day. Still, it is no longer like every day, a marvelous story seeks to slip in through the wires of our screen—if we really want it. What can we do to help this story, to hasten its Time—it is so necessary for it to go faster. Earth is sorrowful, our little continents are so gray and out of date. Here and there, we are a few, like little points of ardent thirst, and what can we do to help this new species be born among us?

Certainly the greatest help is to call this "something else," this tomorrow of the Earth, in our heart, in our acts, our thoughts, with each step, each gesture, mutely, obstinately as one knocks at a door, as one calls for oxygen and space and the smile in this suffocating grayness. To call is to grow the wings of the new species, to pierce a hole in the shell of habit. If there was no necessity, the species would never come out of its sticky hole. We are in the sticky hole of the Mind. To call—one doesn't know what—is already to grope in the future, it is already to touch a sunlit shore for which we do not yet have eyes. But perhaps many eyes are necessary for it to be: a new species is built all together. There is a golden contagion, like a day many birds take flight for the sunlit country. If we were many, it would perhaps hasten the hour of the Mother's country.

This call within you, you can share it and awaken it around you. You can work for the great supramental Contagion. We need to be together, but not like the followers of a new church, all crammed together around some comfortable ideas. The "idea" is not comfortable at all. It is rather as if an infinity of searching in all directions had to kindle around a central Sense, a central Push, a Force which throws out from the center each little point of light making it pass through the different layers of consciousness, the different zones of human action. In the passage through a layer, each one kindles corresponding points which in their turn are going to break ground around other zones. And it is a whole range of terrestrial work which is brought about. Many types of vibrations have to arrive at the point of mutation: a painter and a surgeon do not have the same way of "operating," and yet the end of their concentration can emerge into another universe, which is the same. We must emerge into another universe like a multitude of exit points or perforations of the old bubble which imprisons us. It is the phenomenon which is now happening innumerable. It is necessary to understand the Sense of the phenomenon, which is not to make a super-surgery or superpaintings, but to emerge into another power of being and another perception. To understand is to hasten the phenomenon and to participate in the Great Contagion of the New World. The Experience of Mother is the force of propulsion. So we shall rediscover ourselves, not packaged in a little Church but burst forth, indescribably reunited in another material dimension like so many butterflies on a "new" prairie.

Practically, you can help in the Work by spreading the Works, the Sense, the Dynamic of all that. Others must *touch* it. Others must feel, breathe a little this light air which is trying to slip in through the mesh of the old screen. One must taste the Thing, let oneself go a little toward That... You who love Mother, who have felt this Smile, this great Possible throbbing, give yourself a little. Get out of your shell. Go carrying this imperceptible thrill of the New World. The books of Mother, the *Agenda* are not truly "books" or even an "explanation," a new philosophy: they are a Power of action, they are a Force in movement. They are a Lever. If you put them in the hands of a friend, in the display window of a bookstore in your area or city, in a corner of a newspaper or a magazine, on an improvised poster, they *will act* beyond all comprehension, on the most unexpected levels, like a radioactive ore. It is

perhaps even the Ore of the New World. So take hold of yourselves, do the Work. And a grain of heart has unexpected results. In fulfilling others, you will be fulfilled. And finally we will all be there together, fulfilled, in that garden of the future which is the very Sense of these millions of years of an inadequate mental species.

If each of you touches ten people, it will do an inestimable work.

If we looked a little at the "little miracles" of the Mother multiplying around us with such a light smile...multiplying so much that the world will melt in a smile and the other Law will take us by surprise like the little salamander drawn up out of the mud.

May our smile ever embrace more smiles. May the Earth grow light.

MORAL VIOLENCE

The Mother

...There is this idea of nonviolence about India, which has replaced material violence by moral violence—but that is far worse!

You should make them [the children in the Ashram school] understand this... You can say this, explain to the children that to replace physical violence, material violence, by moral violence, is no better.

Lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is a moral violence which can create more disturbances than physical violence...

But it depends on the child, it depends on the case.

You should make them understand that lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is as great a violence...even greater than attacking it with weapons. You understand, there are many, many things that could be said....

I myself encouraged fencing a great deal because it gives a skill, a control of one's movements and a discipline in violence. At one time I encouraged fencing a great deal, and then too, I learned to shoot. I used to shoot with a pistol, I used to shoot with a rifle because that gives you a steadiness and skill and a sure-sightedness that is excellent, and it obliges you to stay calm in the midst of danger. I don't see why all these things.... One must not be hopelessly nonviolent—that makes characters that are...soft!...

But you must be able to understand yourself, and above all, make them understand...that moral violence is just as bad as physical violence. It can even be worse; that is, at least physical violence obliges you to become strong, self-controlled, whereas moral violence... You can be like this [*Mother demonstrates an apparent calm*] and yet have a terrible moral violence. [*From Mother's Collected Works, Vol. 12, On Education (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1978)*].

WHAT IS FREE PROGRESS SYSTEM? (2)

Pavitra

II. The Role of the Teacher

1. The first task of the teacher is to maintain the class environment well supplied with objects of interest suited to the varied grading of his students. He has to prepare the work sheets—a considerable work—and the related documentation (photos, pictures, etc.). I hope I have clearly shown that the self-education which is the core of the method can only start and sustain itself when the child finds a satisfaction of his needs in the school equipment.

2. The second task is to organize and maintain the good will of the students. For this purpose the teacher must carefully observe the behaviour of every student and detect any sign of boredom,

FLOWERS AND THEIR MESSAGES (3)

The Mother

A deep concentration seized on me, and I perceived that I was identifying myself with a single cherry blossom, then through it with all cherry blossoms; and as I descended deeper in the consciousness, following a stream of bluish force, I became suddenly the cherry tree itself, stretching towards the sky like so many arms its innumerable branches laden with their sacrifice of flowers. Then I heard distinctly this sentence:

"Thus hast thou made thyself one with the soul of the cherry trees and so thou canst take note that it is the Divine who makes the offering of this flower-prayer to heaven."

When I had written it, all was effaced; but now the blood of the cherry tree flows in my veins and with it flows an incomparable peace and force. What difference is there between the human body and the body of a tree? In truth, there is none: the consciousness which animates them is identically the same.

Then the cherry tree whispered in my ear:

"It is in the cherry blossom that there lies the remedy for the disorders of the spring."

Some Messages

Acacia longifolia (Sydney golden wattle), fragrant deep yellow catkins—Work.

Albizia leffleck (Siris tree, Lebbeck tree, woman's tongue tree, frywood tree), fragrant white powderpuff flower with green center—Integral wisdom.

Artabotrys odoratissimus (climbing ylang-ylang, grape vine), very fragrant greenish-yellow flower with thick leaf-like petals—Clear mind.

Catharanthus roseus (Vinca rosea, Madagascar periwinkle), starlike flowers with rounded petals and narrow corolla tube—Progress.

Hibiscus, small delicate single flower with softly ruffled petals, very pale cream yellow with pure white center—Ananda.

Hydrangea, large dense rounded heads of small light pink flowers—Collective harmony.

Lantana, yellow—Light in the cells.

Nelumbo nucifera (Sacred Lotus), pointed bud on long stem opening into large fragrant many-petalled pink flower with golden center—The Avatar, the Supreme manifested on earth in a body. Sri Aurobindo's flower.

Rosa, fully double medium to large solitary pink roses (except "Surrender" and "Perfect surrender")—Loving Surrender.

Strelitzia regina (bird of paradise), spectacular orange, yellow and blue flower resembling the head of a crested bird—Supramental bird.

Zinnia, cream with red center—Ananda of endurance.

Zinnia, royal purple—Courageous endurance. [*From Flowers and Their Messages, Auroville: Auropress Trust, 1973.*]

fatigue or restlessness, any hitch in the normal functioning of the class. He must find the cause of the disturbance and remove the obstruction.

It is wrong to believe that the teacher should constantly goad his students into activity. The urge to work must come from the student himself. The teacher is there only to canalize the interest of the child and supply a constructive outlet to his activity.

During the first stage (adaptation) the teacher's role is mainly to see that the necessary equipment is available, to eliminate obstacles due to a faulty organization of the classwork, to smooth and facilitate the adaptation of the children to the new method.

During the second stage (responsibility) he should help the students to organize their work and show them the way to responsibility. His intervention should always be restrained, tactful and unassuming. He should avoid pushing himself forward and act only when requested. Especially in speech, he should be moderate and discreet. In most cases, the initiative of speech should come from the student, and the teacher's answer should fit exactly to the student's question.

Indeed the teacher must guard himself against reverting to the old outlook, i.e., the attitude of one who has the knowledge and whose duty it is to impart it to the student. There are very subtle forms of this reversion and the teacher will find that the return of old habits has disastrous results.

Many people may think that the teacher has now a reduced role and that he may as well be dispensed with. Nothing could be farther from the truth. His presence is of paramount importance: it must be *constant* and *total*, as I have explained. The success of the class will depend on the correctness of his attitude towards the children, on his psychological insight, his forbearance, his self-mastery, his devotion to the work and his spirit of collaboration with his colleagues.

Let there be no misunderstanding. When I say that the teacher must be moderate, discreet and unassuming, I do not mean that he should concede every demand of the students. When I say that he is not the one who has the knowledge and whose duty is to impart it to his students, I do not mean that he is devoid of knowledge, but that his aim is to teach the students how to liberate the knowledge that is within them. If he should not speak too much, it is because he is a source of information and not of knowledge and he must supply only the information that is needed. If he should not enforce his decisions, it is not because he is unable to reach a decision or to impose it, but because his purpose is to train the students to come to their own decisions. The teacher is there to support the children's growth toward responsibility and self-acquired knowledge. He must therefore be steady, strong and reliable. Thus only can he inspire confidence and conform to the need of the child for security and protection. In short, I can say that the good teacher is certainly a person of character and authority, but these should be felt rather than asserted. His action and guidance are constant, but are indirect and veiled.

3. The third aspect of the teacher's work is to help the children to find the inner guidance. This part is the most delicate of all: to be able to induce a psychic opening in the children he should himself always keep in touch with his soul.

As the Mother said: "Teachers who do not possess a perfect calm, an unflinching endurance, an unshakable quietness, who are full of self-conceit will reach nowhere.

"One must be a saint and a hero to become a good teacher.

"One must be a great Yogi to become a good teacher.

"One must have the perfect attitude in order to be able to exact from one's pupils a perfect attitude.

"You cannot ask of a person what you do not do yourself. It is a rule."

This statement should not give rise to hesitation and misgiving, it should rather encourage us. To teach is certainly a very efficient form of *sadhana*...

We can say that the demand made upon a teacher is great, but his reward is to watch and assist the emergence of living souls.

Now there is a point about the teacher's action at which I have hitherto only hinted. It is the collaboration among teachers.

The organization and working of a new class require a constant exchange of thoughts and experiences, coordination and harmonization of decisions among the teachers of the same class. They must know each other well, trust one another and act as a team. A new class is thus a very good field for the practice of true collaboration. It has been found also that the presence at the same time of more

than one teacher has beneficial results both for teachers and students: a better mutual understanding among teachers, a more intimate knowledge of the students, more dignity, self-mastery and punctuality from the teachers, a feeling of closeness and unity, and better relations between teachers and students.

The necessity of a co-ordinated collective action of the teachers makes it indispensable that one of the class teachers should be in charge of the organization of the class and responsible for its unity. Let us call him the First Teacher.

Some teachers might be afraid lest this organization should restrict their own independence. Freedom for the child is all right, they will say, but what about the freedom of the teacher? Will there not be a great rigidity and fixity in the system?

First, when textbooks, collective class teaching and homework are replaced with work sheets prepared by the teacher and with individual work by the students under his guidance and control, the teacher's freedom of action is not impaired in any way, it means only that one set of instruments has replaced another set. And the new one gives to the teacher the possibility of a greater adaptation to the individual nature of the children and hence a greater flexibility.

But it is true that the new class is a collective unity, from the point of view of both students and teachers. The action and attitude of every teacher have often immediate and important repercussions on the atmosphere of the class, and therefore on its work and progress. In the same way every child's behaviour has an effect on the whole class. This is also true in the traditional education, but it is perhaps felt here with a greater acuity, owing to the quietness of the class and the harmonious yet independent activity of the students. One can say that the atmosphere is more sensitive. This is probably due to the fact that the children are less subjected to outer commands and impacts, more often placed face to face with themselves and asked to look silently within for guidance.

What would one say of a musician who refuses to play his agreed part in an orchestra but insists on complete independence and freedom of action? Or of a mason who rejects the architect's plan and follows his own inspiration regardless of what the others are doing? Or of a volley-ball player who declines to concert and synchronize his movements with his fellow players? The same is true of all collective work. The independence of each is qualified by the interdependence of all. Each one has to accept a certain degree of restriction and even subordination. The closer the collaboration, the better the efficiency.

Now, a new class is eminently a collective undertaking. Yet much freedom is left to the teacher, not only in the preparation of the work sheets, but in the guidance of the students and in contact with them. What is important is that the principles and distinctive features of the method should be carefully observed—the rules of the game—as any deviation from them would create confusion and render the scheme worthless. The principles have been laid down by Sri Aurobindo and the features of the method are in complete conformity with the principles. Moreover, these principles and features are supported by the recent findings of child psychology and the trend of modern research in education. Therefore, there can be no valid objection to a *sadhak's* entering into such collaboration.

However, as the method is new and not yet fully tested, it must be expected that some teachers of our Centre of Education may be reticent and feel the need of further experiment before committing themselves. For this reason there can be no question of imposing the new method on anybody. Those who will join the new classes as teachers will be entirely volunteers. Not only must they accept freely the method, but it is my opinion that they should feel a certitude about its correctness, its value—they should see it as a *step in the right direction*. Moreover, if they understand all its implications, they will discover that it is truly a *new attitude towards the*

child and education. They must feel an urge to participate in what is and will be a pioneering work.

I recall here the recent words of the Mother in connection precisely with this new venture:

"We are not here to do (only a little better) what the others do.

"We are here to do what the others *cannot* do because they do not have even the idea that it can be done.

"We are here to open the way of the Future to children who belong to the Future.

"Anything else is not worth the trouble and not worthy of Sri Aurobindo's help." [To be continued. Taken from Mother India December 1968. Adapted from Pavitra's Education and the Aim of Human Life.]

SOLAR ENERGY

Udar Pinto

There is, at present, quite some anxiety about resources of energy. All this disquietude arises from our narrow view that our energy requirements can only be met by coal and oil, and both are becoming more difficult of access whether from our own resources or from other countries.

Let us examine this question with some spiritual vision and that is really the only true vision on any subject. For such spiritual vision we can know best by asking what The Mother has said on these points because, as Mother had Herself so often explained to me, whenever I asked Her a question, She answered from what She saw and not from what She thought. She repeated often that for over 40 years She had not thought, but only "seen."

Regarding coal and oil, Mother said, both are fossil fuels and so, by their very nature, belong to a dead past. We should look for our energy requirements from things of the present leading to the future. With regard to nuclear energy,... this energy is obtained by breaking up the nucleus of the atoms and so, in its very principle, is a destructive energy, the force selected by the Powers that try for the destruction of the world, the Pralaya. The Mother said that we should concentrate our research on Solar Energy. The sun, Mother said, is the physical sign of the supramental, the goal towards which we are moving in Their Yoga. The sun pours down a tremendous amount of energy and only a very little fraction of it is being used, almost all of it goes to waste. Particularly in India, we are very fortunate in having so much of the glory and the blessing of the sun that we should thank God constantly for it. But we do not realise this great boon and sometimes even complain of it. So I appeal to our scientists and research organisations to make the maximum possible efforts for solar energy research. [From Sri Aurobindo's Action Journal, June 1979.]

SOME REMARKS ON "THE WIZARD OF OZ"

The Mother

[The following remarks were made by the Mother just before a showing of the film in the Ashram.]

A short explanation will surely increase the interest of the picture to be shown to you tonight.

This picture is in three sections, two black [and white] and one, the most extensive, in color. The two black [and white] sections (first and last) show how things appear in the physical world; the coloured one expresses a similar sequence of events and similar characters in the vital world, the world where one can go when the body is in deep sleep, when one gets out of the body. So long as you have a physical body, no true harm can happen to you in the vital world, for the physical body acts as a protection, and you can always return into it at will. This is shown in the picture in a classical way. You will see that the little girl wears on her feet some magic ruby-red slippers, and so long as she keeps the slippers on her feet nothing wrong can happen to her. The ruby-red slippers are the sign and the symbol of the connection with the physical body, and as long as the slippers are on her feet, she can, at will, return to her body and find shelter therein.

Two other details can be noted with interest. One is the snow shower that saves the party from the influence of the wicked witch, who by her black magic has stopped their advance towards the emerald castle of beneficent vitality. In the vital world, snow is the symbol of purity. It is the purity of their feelings and intentions that saves them from the great danger. Note also that to go to the castle of the good wizard they must follow the broad path of golden bricks, the path of luminous confidence and joy.

The second is when Dorothy throws water on the straw man to save him from burning, some water falls on the face of the wicked witch, who lit the fire, and at once she gets dissolved and dies. The water is the symbol of the power of purification and no hostile being or force can resist this power handled with goodwill and sincerity.

Finally, when the good fairy teaches the little girl how to go back home by knocking her red slippers one against the other, she says that nothing is better than home; by "home" she means the physical world, which is the place of protection and realisation.

As you see, the subject of this picture is interesting and not altogether devoid of knowledge. Unhappily the rendering is not as beautiful and harmonious as it could have been. In the setup there are some serious faults of taste and many regrettable vulgarities. [14 September 1952; from The Mother's Collected Works, Vol. 12, On Education (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1978), pp. 246-48.]

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SOUL IN INTEGRAL NONDUALISM

Rebecca Field

[The following is a chapter from "The Concept of the Soul in the Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo," an earlier chapter of which appeared in our last issue.]

Related to the Bliss (*Ananda*) aspect of omnipresent Reality is Sri Aurobindo's concept of the soul (*caitya purusa*) by means of which and through which individual limitation, especially in terms of incompleteness of personality with the tendency to consider itself as separate, is to be surmounted. The work of the real soul as it gradually infuses the personality and the psychicization of the being is the core of Sri Aurobindo's divine psychology. Once the personality becomes aware of cosmic unity, the individual is liberated.

His soul so infuses his being that soul perception can be said to be both horizontal and vertical. On the horizontal axis, the soul-infused personality is aware of unity expressing by extension in multiplicity. The vertical axis of soul perception reveals the unity of the One and the many. The philosophical basis for the soul is in the ontological premise of monism that states that the individual soul (*caitya purusa*) is one with the Divine. The individual soul in its lower expression in the multiplicity as the ego or desire soul asserts separate existence.

What is the reason then for man's having an ego or a desire soul? The ego is a device of Consciousness-Force to unite inner spirit with its instrument in the physical body so that ignorance can emerge from its inconscience and move to higher, more nearly perfect methods of cognition. Hence, the tendency of ignorance is to grow upwards towards knowledge, but ignorance in man can only move upwards in proportion to the openness of the limited ego. The ego must be open to a more vast being and consciousness. There are two methods for precipitating a change in the self moving from ignorance to knowledge:

1. by awakening to inner realities and becoming sensitive through the impulses coming through the real soul; and
2. by finding and identifying with the cosmic self, the divine Purusha.

Thus the purpose of the ego is to serve as an intermediate principle between body, life, and mind, and Life, Mind, and Supermind [1].

The Real Soul

Bound as he is in the matter of his body, man finds himself surrounded by the material universe. A great part of the life quest is to seek progressive consciousness of the self. Thus the soul which outgrows superficialities seeks infinite Consciousness-Force, Sachchidananda. The method of the soul's desire to seek Sachchidananda is by attunement. It integrates Sachchidananda within itself. This is the divine Delight experienced in joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure, or in some neutral state. Within that experience lies hidden the great delight, the bliss of Ananda. Upon this fundamental premise Sri Aurobindo makes the assertion that "eternal and inalienable Bliss of Existence, Bliss of Consciousness, Bliss of Force or Will whether concentrated in itself and at rest or active and creative, this is God and this is ourselves in our essential, our non-phenomenal being" [2].

Bliss is that aspect of Sachchidananda that involves and descends through Supermind and takes its place in the phenomenal world. Since Bliss is a part of Sachchidananda, it must also be found in mind, life, and body. That organ or aspect of man which becomes aware of the delight aspect of omnipresent Reality is the soul or psychic principle. The soul is not body, mind, or life, but supports the flowering and the evolution or return to infinite Existence in body, life, and mind.

The soul is closely related to the Life principle which has both an outer and an inner aspect. The outer aspect relates to the physical body, is subject to birth and death. The inner vital aspect supports the form. Sri Aurobindo is emphatic that there are two "souls," the real soul (*caitya purusha* or psychic being) and the desire soul, which correspond to these two Life aspects.

The real or subliminal soul is a pure power of light, love, and joy; it is the refined essence of being which comprises true individuality [3], since it is in constant touch with universality.

The desire soul acts in the desire for life as experience, for emotional fulfillment, and for the mind's acquisition of knowledge [4, 5]. While the desire soul tends to identify with Matter, and hence the opposites, it perceives pain and pleasure, birth and death, but the subliminal soul responds to and supports essence, significance, meaning, value, and principle in its experience in mind, life, and body. Therefore, the subliminal soul is important if man is to become self-aware and tread the path of evolution toward the Infinite.

The psychological task of becoming self-aware must be done by diving into the subconscious parts of existence and by identifying the surface parts of being with the superconscious which is one with Sachchidananda and simultaneously one with the soul of the manifested world.

Does the subliminal or real soul perceive pain, pleasure, and indifference? It takes all life experience, whether pain, pleasure, or indifference, and derives delight and joy from them. Therefore,

from pain and pleasure it grows, since it seeks to find balance among inequities, to bear the unbearable, so that the real or subliminal soul may develop in Nature.

By what method can the real soul be brought into such prominent focus that the ego with its pains and pleasures can be dissipated? It is done when body, mind, and life consciously cooperate with Nature and see in the workings of Nature divine Joy. In other words, the real soul universalizes, finds essence, meaning, and significance in Nature. It identifies with the Good, the True, and the Beautiful and embraces Knowledge, Beauty, and Joy [6].

Theoretically it sounds like a simple thing to do, but it is difficult. Why? Because, Sri Aurobindo responds, the ego or desire soul with its tendency to separateness asserts itself and focuses on pain and pleasure. It is bound by illusion (*maya*). The ego shrinks from universality, impersonality, and spirituality.

On the contrary, the subliminal or real soul is the essence of the indwelling Godhead. It is the flame of the Divine and has, therefore, the quality of Light and luminosity as it throws its brightness against the shadows of ignorance. It is a tool of the mind, since its face is always Knowledge, in the sense of the awareness of universality and transcendence, meaning, principle, and significance [7, 8]. It is the true being within man and is untouched by death and incapacity. It may also be termed a Self or Atman according to Sri Aurobindo [9]. It is the real soul, the individual soul which supports mind, life, and body and profits from the experience of body, emotions, and mentality. It is the indwelling entity, the Psychic Person which involves itself in personality from life to life. It survives death and encourages birth.

The Real Soul and Mind, Life, and Body

What is the relation of the real soul to mind? The real soul progressively directs action through the mind to the life and body. Why must it also relate to life and body? All parts of Nature descend into Matter, where involution has taken the form of *apparent* imperfection, which to the human mind is unbearable, but the real soul is by nature in constant harmony and communication with the Divine. Lila is, therefore, not paradoxical [10], but must be understood as (1) the conscious cooperation of the real soul in the individual with the various aspects of personality, and (2) a reason for the play which makes it intelligible. Hence, imperfection is necessary for the play (*Lila*). It is an element of the game, no less important than the players. Pain, suffering, and imperfection are the challenge to the play itself. But no game can be played in an instant and thus the cosmic play is progressive. Sri Aurobindo further makes the point that without the imperfection, pain, and suffering, perfection itself could not come into being.

The Relation of the Soul to Force

How is the soul related to Force? Force, which finds itself in form is always pushed by its soul to the transcendental aspect of itself. So basic is this hypothesis that there is a law of Newtonian physics which states: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics that is to say that as the involution moves on, so also must evolution. Thus the urge in the triple soul, i.e., the soul in mind, life, and body, is toward unity and the perfect balance that exists in Supermind.

The Effect of the Real Soul on the Mental, Vital, and Physical Bodies

The real soul, or psychic being, is behind all the other bodies in the ordinary being. However, the sadhak, or practitioner of Yoga, being further along on the path of evolution, is one whose real soul moves to the front. When this happens, it becomes so powerful that it suffuses the other bodies. Then the physical, vital, and mental are transformed by its influence.

Sri Aurobindo parallels the self with the psychic being, since it functions in space and time via body, mind, and life and is also capable of identity with the universal Self (*Atman*), which operates beyond narrow spatiotemporal limitations. The self is the "I am." The surface of the "I am" consciousness is the experience in space/time. The real soul or psychic being supports and contains all phenomenal experience. Why? The surface mind experiences constant change in space/time. However, philosophically the psychic being supports experience in space/time because of causality: i.e., there is a cause for the change in the surface mind from one moment to another, from one experience to another. Memory is important since it links the past and present experiences to make them coherent to the surface mind [11].

The ego is a process of the surface mind which relates to ignorance. The ego is the sense of individuality, and it serves as coordinating intelligence to the being. It is the basis of real self-knowledge [12]. The ego has its own evolution from inconscience to self-conscience.

The ego has its own operations which are from the lowest upward:

1. knowledge of superficial mental acts and personality experiences; in this operation the world is becoming;
2. knowledge of being as limited to the individual and his experiences; in this operation the world is being; and
3. the relation between being and becoming is worked out by partial knowledge; this is a negative relationship and Sri Aurobindo insists that the positive relationship is integral knowledge which reconciles being and becoming [13].

The method of integral knowledge is to go into the self as it is constituted and quiet the surface mental activities. Then in the mind's silence the psychic being, the real soul which supports the individualization can be perceived. It is the psychic being itself which contains and congeals both self-experience and world experience. Therefore, the psychic being is the connecting link between the inner and the outer world. It joins Spirit and Matter. It is indispensable knowledge, since it helps both Spirit and Matter see each other.

Integral Knowledge and the Aim of Life

In terms of knowledge, the Becoming, that which becomes, can only know itself completely when it knows itself as Being. The soul in the Becoming attains self-knowledge when it knows the Absolute and has within itself, and all aspects of the being it supports, the Infinite and Eternal. This is the supreme aim of life and the soul or psychic being is central to that aim. For the soul the need to realize Being in the Becoming is as great as food is to the hungry body. In fact, so great is the soul's need to realize Being that mind, life, and body are affected and drawn into the process [14].

The soul is driven by the energy of evolutionary force to raise the lower nature out of the ignorance it is imbedded in, and to recover the knowledge of its essential unity with divine Being and simultaneously its unity with all beings. The soul must become aware of itself in the universe and also of the universe within it. Therefore, the individual must make a dual movement in consciousness by universalizing himself and simultaneously being aware of the transcendence [15].

Both supraterrrestrial and terrestrial existence encompasses the truth of Being in Spirit and Matter. The earth is the location of the evolutionary unfolding of being which in turn moves toward the expression of infinite consciousness, being, and delight. This is what is behind the soul's growth and the efforts of Nature. Therefore the soul can ascend into high consciousness beyond the earth and its limitations, but the soul must develop itself within the confines and limitations placed on it by the earth. The earth too is a manifestation of Being and has its becoming too. This is the reason Spirit is concealed in Matter. However, total withdrawal into divine Being is

not called for in integral knowledge, since that would be a negation of Spirit's involvement in Matter. The aim is for the progressive awareness of manifestation so the soul can relate wholly to both Being and Becoming [16].

Evolution and Integration

The purpose of mind, life, and body is upward movement into Spirit. The psychic being is capable of assisting in the ascent and integration into Being. The spiritual man, the divine gnostic, is nature's supreme effort and the consummation of all her creative energy, which necessitates the psychic being's assumption of a "frontal" position in the being. The soul creates the truly wise person who is a result of the conscious effort of the human mind to break the ties of ignorance. The creation of a wise person comes about by his going inward and discovering the psychic being so that he has a conscious union with all Existence. This is the final aim of evolutionary nature, and Sri Aurobindo adds: "It is not necessary or possible that the whole [human] race should transform itself from mental into spiritual beings, but a general admission of the ideal...a conscious concentration are needed to carry the stream of tendency to its definitive achievement" [17]. Hence, the foundation of the development of spirituality is the soul which makes man receptive to light, power, knowledge coming from Being above and moving downwards as well as within and moving outwards.

It must be noted that Sri Aurobindo ascribes rebirth to the evolutionary process, since he assumes that the soul culminates its work in Supermind, which takes much experience in phenomenal existence before the being can consciously cooperate with the soul and bring it to the front. He claims that if there is evolutionary consciousness in mind, life, and body with a soul supporting, then the progressive experience of soul in Nature is essential for the evolution of consciousness [18], and the advent of the eternal sun, in which mind, life, and body must be developed and brought under the conscious control and direction of the real soul.

The Real Soul and Evolution

In what manner is the real soul related to evolution? Since it is the destiny of the real soul to direct mind, life, and body and to reflect the Divine in each of them, they must each progressively turn toward the evolutionary ascent into spiritual existence. Thus Sri Aurobindo asserts the basic psychological premise that if the real soul becomes man's focus, he can ascend into spiritual existence, but concomitant with the movement of the real soul to the front of the being must also be the intervention of Supermind. This is so since the self-realization of man's being is dependent on a spiritual transformation or divine transmutation from above. Though the real soul may be content to universalize, to focus on the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, or unite with the Infinite in cosmic consciousness, or even to return to its Source, its mission would be unfulfilled without the operation of Supermind.

It is, therefore, the goal and purpose of the real soul to bring divine realization into the lower nature consisting of mind, life, and body. For this supreme realization of omnipresent Reality to be known or experienced, the ego or desire soul must vanish with its metaphysical ignorance, its tendency to be engrossed in duality. The separateness of the desire soul must be transcended and reconciled in the light of Supermind where ignorance becomes Knowledge, pain becomes Delight, and being becomes the Infinite. Then higher and lower hemispheres are linked to Sachchidananda [19].

Since pain and suffering appear to be a part of the grand play (*Lila*) of the universe, what is the relation of the real soul to suffering? The real soul is a portion of Divinity involved in the evolution. Without it the advent of the eternal sun would never be possible.

References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (New York: Sri Aurobindo Library, 1957), p. 51.
- 2 - 6. *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 302, 201-202, 205, 206.

7. Cf. Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," in *Republic*, in which Plato suggests that the light of reason, symbolized by the sun, casts its light on the shadows of forms, revealing essence and meaning.
8. Eugene Freeman and David Appel, *The Wisdom and Ideas of Plato* (New York: Fawcett, 1956), p. 147.
9. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 207.
- 10-19. *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 459, 466, 466-67, 588, 607-608, 645, 680-81, 645.

IN MY YOUTH I SEE

Rinku Sanjukta Chatterjee

[The following essay, by a 14-year-old student in the Cedar Bluff Middle School in Knoxville, Tenn., was a runner-up in the 1979 Optimist International Oratorical Contest. Miss Chatterjee is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arun Chatterjee of Knoxville, Tenn.]

In my youth I see many things that are bright and promising and also things that are very depressing. First let me tell you of the depressing things that I see.

When I read the newspapers or listen to the news on television, hardly a day goes by when I do not hear of a war being fought between countries. I wonder—have we not learned anything from history? There is hardly a day when I do not hear of people hating and fighting with each other because of a difference in culture and race. Every day I hear of people cheating others or misusing the environment because of their greed for money. I wonder if these things are ever going to stop. I look around me and see an abundance of wealth and prosperity—cars, television, stereos—and at the same time I see unhappy people. I also learned about cases of children of all ages who have been deserted by their parents or who have run away from home to avoid their parents' neglect. I wonder if children of today are really better off because of the comfort and luxury that they live in.

I could go on and on with examples of the bad and cruel things that I see. But I think that I have said enough to convince you that our situation is far from desirable. It is easy and tempting to conclude from all this that things will never get any better. But is there really no hope? The answer lies in our history. Let us look back.

Sometime, long, long ago, this universe of ours was nothing but a material existence—a huge mass of apparently unconscious energy, and from this slowly developed a new form of energy called life. As time passed, evolution progressed from plants to animals, and finally to man. Man has more advanced faculties than the other animal species. Man has a mind and he is proud of it. Man also has an ego that separates him from others. But does it make sense to believe that man in his present form is the last step of this ascending evolution? Is it practical to conclude that the progress that has been taking place over the billions and billions of years finally has come to an end and man will never change? Is it not more likely that as nature has evolved plants and animals out of matter, so it will work out a higher being from the present man? Why shouldn't a higher principle of consciousness emerge within man with which he would be able to reconcile all apparent differences and resolve all the problems that face mankind today?

I believe that further evolution of man is inevitable, and I see ample evidence around me already. I see a new trend unfolding in the whole world. I see this new trend especially among the younger generation—among my friends. I see the children with a new outlook and a new attitude. I see them having a better understanding of the different cultures and a better appreciation for the environment. The process of evolution has indeed been tardy, but I believe the time has come when man can and will consciously speed up this process. Many philosophers and poets also feel the same way as I do and they have written about a better future. I would like to conclude by reading a few lines written by the poet-philosopher Sri Aurobindo, whose words reflect the good things I see in my youth, and I quote:

"I saw the Omnipotent's flaming pioneers,
Come crowding down the amber stairs of birth,...
I saw them cross the twilight of an age,...
The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn,...
Their tread one day shall change the suffering earth,
And justify the light on Nature's face."
[From *Savitri*, by Sri Aurobindo.]

Thank you.

EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE

NEWS OF AUROVILLE

THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

[From time to time we will publish things the Mother wrote about Auroville and said to Aurovilians about a variety of subjects.]

Disciple: Don't you think that the two collective "meditations" that we are trying to have in Aspiration—on Thursday and Sunday at the same hours as the Ashram—are the minimum of inner discipline that our Aspiration should give to itself?

These rare moments of silence and the effort to concentrate together—if not to meditate—are they not an opportunity to receive your force and to open ourselves a little more to you and to Sri Aurobindo, helping to form our collective soul?

Without any wish to impose anything on anybody from outside, is not this elementary discipline, however, necessary in the beginning?

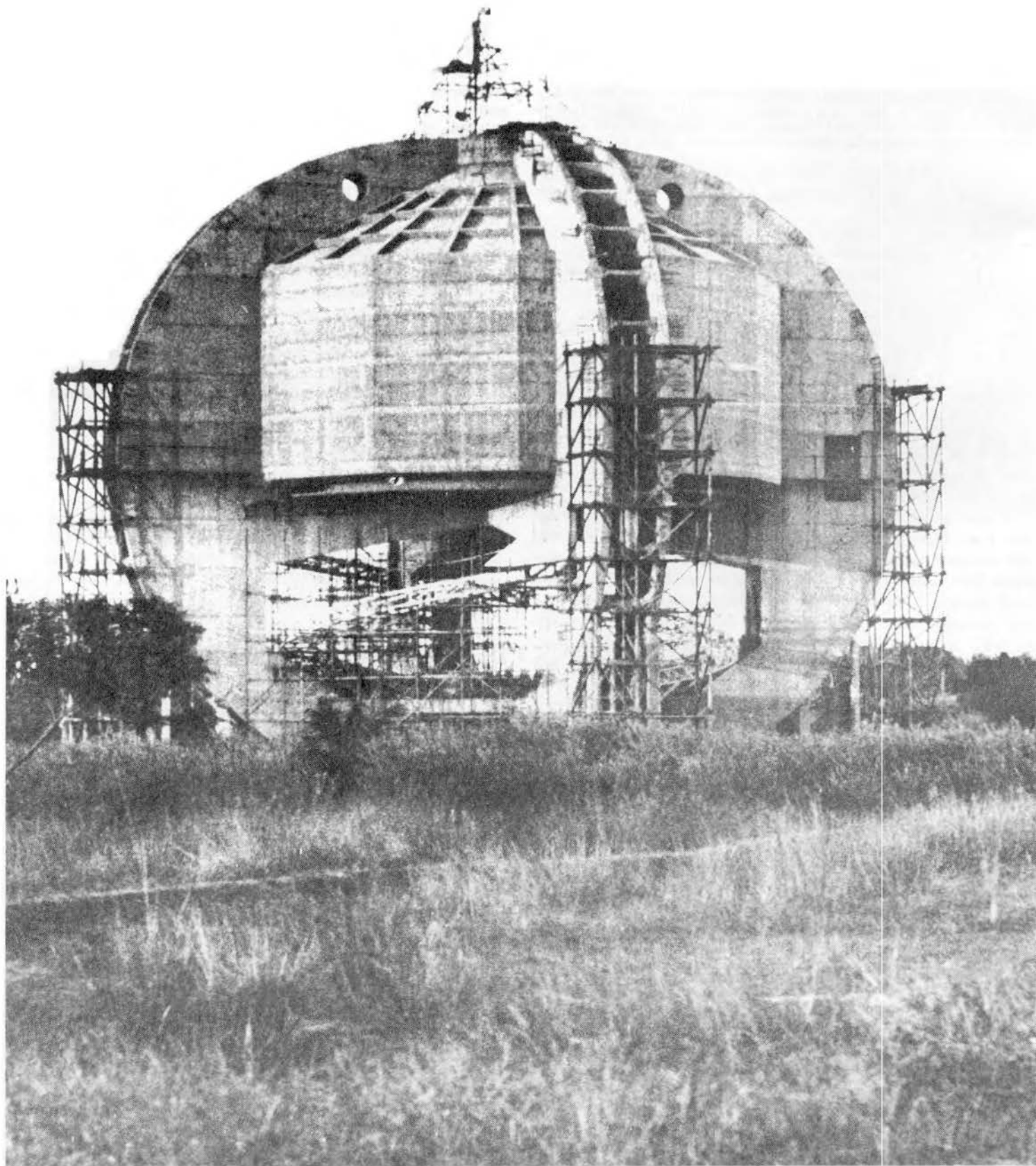
The Mother: Concentrating together is indeed a very good thing and helps you to become conscious. But it cannot be imposed. I advise you and them to organise this moment of silence *daily* for all those who want to participate, but without imposing anything on the others. It is not compulsory but it is good. [13 November 1970. From *The Mother on Auroville*, *Auropublications*, 1977.]

Matrimandir

The final fitting and welding of the second spiral ramp has now been completed. Meanwhile, the first ramp was tested for strength on January 24 by loading 20,000 kg. weight in sandbags onto a central span. The test was a total success: there was no sign of failure in any of the 180 welds involved, and the ramp returned fully to its original position after dipping only 12 cms. at the most extreme point. Subsequently it was decided, because the test had been so successful, that a test on the other ramp would not be necessary.

Concretings have also taken place to complete the ramp spans between the north (Mahakali) and south (Maheswari) pillars. The bridging concrete spans have at the same time provided the last links necessary to complete the structural strength of the building. Two more concretings are needed to finish the ramp-entry through the doors at chamber level.

Scaffolding and shuttering was put in place for work to begin on concreting the first quarter of the lower ring beam of the outer covering. Preparatory steel cutting and bending work were also begun for the 800 or so precast beam units which will make up the outer structure. This work will probably take two years to complete, depending upon the availability of money, materials, and workers. Meanwhile, all other scaffolding and shuttering has been removed so that the structure stands free and beautiful at present.



The Matrimandir, 1979.

Growing Food in Auroville *An Organic All-Auroville Project for 1979-80*

The land of Auroville is a very barren land. Many of the lands considered as poor for cultivation in other areas of the world would be most probably better than most of the land we are working with.

Yet it is our land, Auroville's land. We have developed, year after year, a great love for that land, and we want to give her back her ancient fertility, when she was covered with forests in the old ages.

This is a difficult process, often a painful one. Our dedication to the land makes us seek only those processes which really reclaim, rejuvenate the land and give back to her her natural balance. It means that we refuse ourselves the dangerous facilities of the green revolution with its chemical heavy hardware. We use only biological methods, no chemical fertilizers at all. It may not sound that extraordinary, after all. It is done already in a number of places in other countries. Yet, one must understand that in India, this experience is practically nonexistent. Everywhere, and particularly around us, heavy doses of chemical fertilizer and insecticides are used....

For more than 10 years now, the battle for the land of Auroville has been going on. The first big effort was more oriented towards afforestation and erosion control, so badly needed. Up to now, hundreds of thousands of trees have been planted, countless bunds made to check erosion—it is estimated that totally, each year, about 1% of the Indian topsoil is washed away into the ocean!

In the same time, some efforts were made to grow food, particularly by creating orchards, but there was not really a systematic effort in that direction. It is very much different now. In many places, small or big orchards have been created, vegetable gardens developed, monsoon and—more and more now—irrigated crops raised.

Yet the land is so poor that it takes much energy and much investment to get some results. Every week, in the weekly meeting for fund allotment in Auroville, there is quite a lot of money that goes

for maintenance and development of orchards, vegetable gardens, dairies, etc. We have so little money now in Auroville that to continue this effort of developing the capacity of the land represents a real sacrifice that is Auroville's offering for the future. This is the only way, because the land is the base of Auroville as much as any country's land is the base of its economy. For us, it is even more: it has something to do with the soul of Auroville, and we accept it with all the implications.

Another important aspect is the laboratory aspect: Auroville as it is represents a vast practical research center for biological methods for afforestation, erosion control, food growing and processing. Already certain quite apparent results—particularly in afforestation and erosion control—have drawn some attention to Auroville's methods. Biological farming has been little tried in India, and we are doing it on a larger and larger scale, year after year. Auroville's farmers and herborists are testing the potential value of scores of foreign plants for South India. In food processing, we experiment with the villagers' staple foods, in order to find new and healthy ways to use these basic materials.

All of these experiments are part of Auroville's attempt to adapt itself to its environment. It is very clear already that some day we will get out of Auroville land nearly all our food requirements. It is also becoming more and more something like a collective discipline for the Auroville residents: we basically accept to have the diet that Auroville can truly offer to us, and in many cases it is and it will be more and more a very good and healthy diet.

In this small document, we want to inform our friends all around the world more specifically of what we are actually doing and planning for this year to grow food in Auroville. [The present population of Auroville is about 500 people, children included, more than 100 being local Tamil villagers.]



A farm in Auro-Green, Auroville.

Varieties

Vegetables: Recently, in the places where sufficient water is available, many vegetable gardens, big and small, have started—in the farms, around the fruit trees, near the houses, even next to the kitchen itself. The compost produced by the Auroville dairies is utilized for these gardens.

The indigenous vegetables: brinjals, beans, many types of spinach, white radishes, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, etc., with preference given to those which can be eaten raw. Imported vegetables being grown: European tomato, special types of radishes, butternut squash, etc. Vegetables ordinarily requiring a cooler climate are being experimented with: onions, carrots, beetroots, with some results. **Irrigated crops:** Rice: It is only recently we have been able to irrigate fields for growing rice. Organically grown, it is processed carefully to keep its full nutritional value.

Peanuts: An estimated 25% failure for dry crops can be reduced to 10% with irrigation. One acre of irrigated peanuts yields 15 to 25 bags as opposed to 8 to 12 for unirrigated land.

Monsoon Crops: Kambu, a type of millet, can be used in many different ways: porridge, biscuits, bread, and even as a simulated coffee. It is a very nutritive cereal. Ragi: Ragi and Kambu are the two grains which are most planted by the village people. Ragi contains a lot of calcium and is used especially to prepare malt. Red rice, which is used polished by the villagers, is eaten in Auroville as a whole grain, as its golden husk contains vitamin B. Varagu, which is a type of millet tasting something like buckwheat, is resistant both to drought and to waterlogging. The villagers use it only when polished and consider it the cereal of the poor. It forms a large part of our daily diet. Black gram, a type of pulp which is high in protein and gives high-quality sprouts. Millet: some types, such as tenai (Italian millet) or samai (little millet) have yet to be experimented with on a large scale. Peanuts are also an indigenous monsoon crop. And to be complete, this list should include a number of fruits, mostly papayas, guavas, mangoes, coconuts, etc.

Summary

Vegetables: There are approximately 9 acres of irrigated vegetables, nearly half of them in Aurogreen.

If the money needed can be made available, it will enable us to cover most of our present needs. For this year-round cultivation we need a total of 51,900 rupees (about \$6,500).

Rice: One area only of Auroville is really suitable for irrigated rice. By the middle of the year (1979) we expect to have at least 3 acres of good rice land under irrigation. Three crops a year can be expected. It means that the potential capacity of Auroville for growing rice will be between 150 and 200 bags of rice paddy (a bag of rice paddy yields about a half bag of edible rice) a year, which should cover nearly all our needs of the moment. For one year's cultivation, we need 7,650 rupees (about \$955).

Peanuts: We propose to cultivate 26 acres of peanuts this year, for a total cost of 18,190 rupees (\$2,275).

Red rice: We propose to cultivate 10½ acres of red rice; the cost will be 4,935 rupees (\$615).

Varagu: We use a lot of varagu and intend to cultivate 39½ acres. The cost will be 9,487 rupees (\$1,200).

Other crops include kambu, 31 acres, 9,900 rupees (\$1,240); ragi, 11½ acres, 5,580 rupees (\$695); black gram, 27 acres, 4,975 rupees (\$595); and kulu, 15 acres, 1,800 rupees (\$225).

Besides this regular program, we would like to make a few experiments on a small scale. For instance, with some vegetables not grown in India so far, or some other grains such as semai. Proposed amount: 4,000 rupees (\$500).

In India tax-deductible donations may be made payable to Auromitra/Friends of Auroville Research Foundation, and sent to Auromitra Center, Aspiration (Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104,

India), specifying that the donation is for the project Growing Food in Auroville.

In the United States tax-deductible donations may be made through Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457; East-West Cultural Center, 2865 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; and Auroville Association, 212 Farley Dr., Aptos, CA 95003. Donations (not tax-deductible) may also be made through Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306.

Total Money Requirements

The total cost of the 1979-80 proposed program is 118,417 rupees, or approximately \$14,800 (the present rate of exchange is about 8 rupees to the dollar).

1. Rain-fed crops program is basically a 6-month program each year. Preparation starts early in June and continues until the last harvest in mid-January.

2. White rice and vegetables are year-round irrigated programs. So far only Aurogreen is doing all other crops year round irrigated.

If you feel you want to help implement this program, Growing Food in Auroville, you may:

1. either contribute generally for the program;
2. contribute for a specific crop;
3. or you can also contribute for a specific community or project.

What Our Food Will Be

It all took place as if an invisible hand had set the process in motion a long time ago.

The work developed, slowly, things were prepared—slowly. Experiments were attempted—sporadically. People talked about it—halfheartedly.

Then this invisible hand decided to accelerate things. And quickly, delicately (but it was too brutal for us!) she cut the cord:

No more money for food, my god, no more money for the market, my god, what are we going to do? We borrow, that's it, we borrow, fast! Uh, OK...that is, from whom? No, we don't borrow any more, no more loans; borrowing is forbidden. Help! There aren't even any onions! And me, and me... There's nothing to put in the Aurovilians' food baskets.. what are they going to think of Pour Tous! Never mind! Do like this: send the baskets empty. My god, my god, let the money come so we can go shopping in Pondicherry and buy potatoes and buy chocolate and buy... We'll have vitamin deficiency, we'll have protein deficiency, it's terrible...

Yes, really, I think we needed this period of "dieting" so we could discover all that the land of Auroville could give us.

Progressively during two years the money allotted for daily shopping diminished, introducing little by little into the diet what was grown here: but to reverse the situation, to make food grown in Auroville the main thing and the produce coming from Pondicherry a kind of "extra," it was necessary for the shelves in the kitchens to be emptied, for Pour Tous to resemble an abandoned storeroom, and for the vendi [Tamil word for bullock carts used in India] to return from Pondy wobbling beneath the weight of one unhappy sack of onions, and that in the bottom of the big community baskets, three lemons and one tapioca root stare miserably at each other.

We began by cutting out the fish and the chocolate, then the fruits, then the tea, then the vegetables and then even the rice. I know it's said that almost no one lacked anything and that individually many Aurovilians went to Pondy to buy what Pour Tous could no longer provide. Yes, it's true, but it's an unimportant detail. The importance is that concretely, an emptiness was created, and in this emptiness there was something like a call. Yes, the empty hampers of Pour Tous (you can laugh if you like) was something like a call.

And slowly we saw a new phenomenon take place: from everywhere, from all over Auroville, food began to come in: bags of rice, baskets of tomatoes, bunches of bananas, kilos of beans.

It's surely not enough yet, and surely a little money might be needed to buy oil or sugar; but now that's not important, we're looking to the future and it's a future of abundance.

Auroville is becoming covered with grain fields and vegetable gardens. All kinds of vegetable gardens: from the perfectly straight French ones with as many aisles as beds; to the Tamil kind, a bit jumbled—not an inch of wasted land—with pineapples under the banana trees and beans tangled in with the tomatoes; there is the “aesthetic” garden that draws gracious curves and intermingles flowers with green peppers; there are the big “productive” gardens, bordered by regular irrigation canals; and there is also the little garden plot beside the hut where some spinach is planted beside the rose bush.

Perhaps some may object that this work has been done for a long time and that nothing in all this is new.

And yet even so, I think the motivations have changed. It's no longer a matter of producing something to embellish the menus of one's community, it no longer means simply some “ecological-biological” experiments. We have to nourish ourselves, Auroville's land must nourish us at the same time as we nourish it. It's like a base, and a basic agreement.

And it's a great joy to see the things come into Pour Tous, and to go out again to other places. It's the blood that circulates, it's the life that sings. [From *Auroville Review/Revue no. 3.*]

* * *

Auroville Cooperative: The Auroville Cooperative is a group of 12 Aurovilians that tries to represent, in as wide a way as possible, the whole of the community. After a first attempt in June-October of 1978, the Cooperative has been re-formed and is functioning on a new basis since the beginning of this year.

Its role is to provide the link between Auroville, an entity with no “legal” definition, and the outside (government authorities, official organizations, etc.) and in the course of its weekly meetings to examine Auroville's internal problems and questions.

Thus the Cooperative often prepares various proposals or decisions which are then presented to the community, and it coordinates different areas of work with Auroville (visa service, reception of newcomers, publication of the *Auroville Review*, collaboration with Auromitra, etc.).

The Cooperative's membership is able to change in a very flexible and spontaneous way that allows it the better to reflect Auroville's own particular evolution.

Auroville's Visitor Accommodations

Center Guest House (Field), % Unity, Auroville 605101, India.

Swagatam, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104, India.

Write for reservations; daily charges: Rs 20.00, which covers meals at a community kitchen and helps with community maintenance.

Guests are expected to take up some regular work for the community. (This is one of the easiest ways to get into touch with the life of Auroville.) Some areas that may be of special interest to visitors (area population is noted after the place name):



Joel Goodman of Auroville Land Service surveying erosion in Auroville.

Center (90): Matrimandir, Nursery gardens, community kitchen.
Aspiration (180): workshops, farming, incense production, community kitchen.

Kottakarai (21): bakery.

Green Belt (90): afforestation, farming, ecological research.

Fraternity (36): handicrafts production and sales.

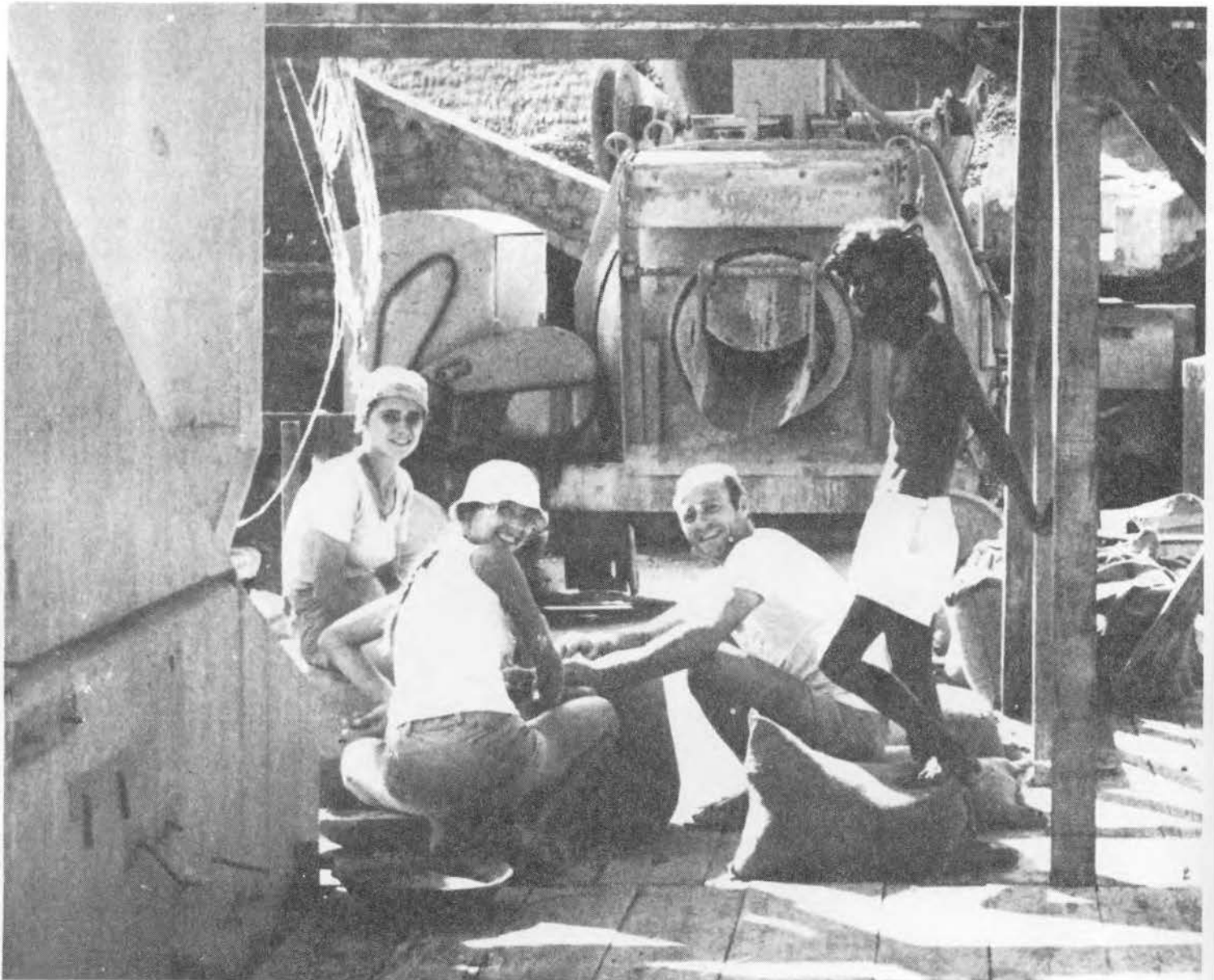
Djaima (15): ecological research, alternative energy.

Ami (12): children's community.

Visas: Friends and centers are again reminded of the present policy regarding visas for anyone wishing to come to stay in Auroville for more than 6 months. You must apply at a local Indian embassy for an entry visa, renewable for an indefinite period of time. When you apply, accompany the application with a covering letter addressed properly to the embassy, stating specifically why you wish to come to Auroville, mentioning any previous connections with Auroville or an Auroville center, and giving your financial status—i.e., you should be able to support yourself for the time you are in India and provide return air fare. If a center is also able to give a letter of recommendation and/or financial guarantee, so much the better. Then have two copies made of each of these documents and send them to Auroville Visa Service, Auroville Cooperative, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104, India.

The Auroville visa coordinator, working on behalf of the Auroville Cooperative, will then send these copies to the authorities in India, along with a covering letter. However, we should inform you that recently people abroad who have followed this process have still been refused. Until the situation is clearer, we recommend that, if it is possible, you come to India on a 3-month tourist visa, which may be renewed for further 3 months, but it is not convertible to a permanent visa, so you must be prepared to return to your country of origin after 6 months.

Auroville Review/Revue: Originally announced as a quarterly but irregular in its appearance, the *Review* will now be issued more frequently, hopefully every two months. The Auroville Information Service Newsletter is being discontinued and its functions absorbed by the *Review*. The "new" *Review* will be less thick, but more frequent, with more concrete and detailed information regarding the evolution of the work in Auroville. It is hoped the new format will be agreeable to readers and help them participate even more fully in Auroville's development. [A one-year airmail subscription is \$10.00. Make checks payable to "Auroville Review/Revue" and send to Auroville Information Service, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104, India. Subscriptions may also be ordered through Matagiri and other centers: make checks payable to the particular center.]



Matrimandir workers. (Photo by Bill Sullivan.)

Pour Tous Envelopes [for an account of the institution and operation of this financial system, see *Collaboration V:3*]. After a few weeks of experimentation, three new envelopes were opened: one for electricity (approximately Rs 10,000 a month); one for medical expenses; and one for collecting money to refund old debts.

Practically, the functioning of the system is as follows: every Friday afternoon a working group consisting of one or two representatives from each community, plus those interested for a specific reason meet at Abri. The money contributed in each community is collected by these representatives as well as funds from external sources. We begin each meeting by entering all the money received onto charts, which are later filed. Each representative fills into a "requirement sheet" the needs of the following week. As the amount of money received during the week affects the manner in which the requirements are met, it has been found necessary to define priorities and emergencies (wages, cow food, etc.). Thus the remaining requirements are cut down to suit the budget (hoping the balance can be paid next week!). As the first necessities are obvious to all, this usually proceeds in a harmonious fashion. After balancing the weekly budget, the money is distributed.

After 5 months of experience, it is interesting to note that:

- 430 Aurovilians are participating;

- money given for a specific purpose has always been used for that purpose. This has brought a greater clarity and accuracy into the accounts and given confidence to donors;

- no debts have been incurred since 1 November 1978, in accordance with the two basic principles of the system;

- Tamil workers engaged in different activities have been paid regularly every Saturday (wages have priority);

- the difficulties of the first weeks in meeting the budget have helped us to become conscious of the importance of being self-sufficient. Since then there has been progress in the growing and processing of Auroville's own food;

- Aurovilians' participation has increased;

- external donations largely come from centers for Auroville abroad, and a few donations have started coming from India;

- the productive units (handicrafts) under the Artisana Trust have begun to give regular contributions to Pour Tous for the Aurovilians working in their units;

- we were often "saved" by last-minute donations which allowed us to buy kitchen supplies in Pondicherry;

- the most interesting experience is that the force money represents has become more impersonal; in fact, we intervene much less in its utilisation. We must only be "the good trustees." The money is directly channeled into the various envelopes, leaving only a minimum of decisions for the Friday working group (only unspecified donations, which are used in accordance with the week's emergency).

Over the last 5 months we have tried to discover why money flows to a particular area and not to another. Innumerable times, this system has spotlighted our resistances, limitations and mistakes.

If money did not flow into a particular category, we always realised later that there was something disharmonious, or that greater clarity and accuracy were necessary. In this sense the envelopes are a marvellous working tool for the collective progress of Auroville. This system has brought to light very concrete and practical problems: for example, the balance between the food bought in Pondicherry and products growing in Auroville: a tremendous effort has been made to change the balance in favor of self-sufficiency.

It will be interesting to enlarge the envelopes to include not only cash donations but also contributions in kind. Some donors are keen to give concrete donations to Auroville, such as oil, sugar, wheat, or money for development projects (new farms, afforestation, research in alternative energy). Some sponsors have already started helping us in this way.

We have also received proposals for reimbursements of specific maintenance expenses already incurred. The system allows for this by transferring from the relevant envelopes the amount back to the unspecified envelope. If, for example, one wishes to refund the envelope system for one month of cow-food purchase, the money can be given to the food envelope, which will pay it back to the unspecified envelope.

Even though Auroville has not suddenly become richer, the experience has been very enriching. The envelopes have brought clarity and accuracy in the fields touched by money and thereby greater unity between the communities. If we can breathe "the flame of life" into this system, its basic flexibility will give us a dynamic tool, one in accordance with our need to grow, to change and experiment. [*Slightly edited from Auroville Review/Revue no. 3.*]

Silent Gatherings: Commencing on 3 March 1979 a series of silent gatherings was begun for Aurovilians and others concerned with the realization of the ideal. It was felt that the coming together could provide an opportunity for people silently to express their aspiration for goodwill and unconditional collaboration among all interested in Auroville. They could also be a means of communicating the feelings of oneness and unity with others which lie within. No words are spoken; no messages are relayed; only music is played. As one of the organizers put it, "We seek only one thing through these gatherings—to call for the Mother. Just that."



The Banyan Tree seen from the top of the Matrimandir. (Photo by Bill Sullivan.)

Central Banyan Tree: The unattractive wicker fence around the Banyan Tree has now been removed, having served its purpose of protecting the tree while 5 or 6 major roots descended into the soil from the upper branches. Pruning work has also been carried out to remove some of the older broken branches and shape the tree better for future growth.

With new foliage now bursting forth, the Banyan is looking more beautiful than ever before. It's almost as though its health and overall growth are keeping pace with and providing a natural, visibly living complement to the Matrimandir's growth and development.



An Auroville landscape showing erosion.

Pitchandikulam: Started in 1973 on 35 acres of bare, almost waterless land, Pitchandikulam is now a young forest, where fruit-bearing and other economically useful species of trees, both local and introduced varieties, are thriving. From the beginning the effort there has been to establish a rich forest environment and at the same time to investigate ways of making maximum use of the resources it provides, while maintaining a vivid awareness of the needs, knowledge and evolving attitudes of the local Tamil land users.

Various methods of obtaining water have been tried, including wells with power, wind and hand pumps. At the moment five hand pumps are in use. But the ideal in view is to find a way to conserve enough of the abundant winter rainfall to provide an adequate year-round water supply for both humans and plants in the area. To this end, excavation work is now in progress to more than double the capacity of the existing *kulam*, or pool, which gives Pitchandikulam its name. The enlarged pool will then be lined with a layer of fine black clay from a neighboring source to prevent seepage. This work is expected to be completed well before the first monsoon rains this year. At the same time a masonry dam is being constructed in a nearby gully to replace the earth dam destroyed in last December's record overnight cloudburst. It seems that until a way is found to reduce the flow of water through the canyons and wadis during heavy rain, only masonry dams are strong enough to withstand the rush of surface water down the slope from the Matrimandir to the sea. A similar masonry dam is being built at the outlet of the neighboring Kulapalayam village tank [pond], further down the same wadi.

All this year's water-conservation work at Pitchandikulam is be-

ing carried out with the cooperation of the Tamil Nadu Forestry Department on common land, as part of a scheme adopted by the department two years ago, for water conservation in the Auroville area. The local forestry officer has been very appreciative of the work done by Auroville residents in the field of conservation and land improvement.

Karass (% Center on Technology and Society, 129 Raymond St., Cambridge, MA 02140), which has been sponsoring the video project linking Auroville, Findhorn and Arcosanti, has given Auroville a grant of \$1,000 for the development of Auroville's internal and external communications. The communications center will be housed in the Unity office, which has not been fully utilized for some time. Work is already going on to remodel and revamp the office. Initially a mimeograph machine and typewriters will be purchased for Auroville Notes, an internal publication. Plans include a "knowledge/information collection and storage (technical books, construction manuals, new age materials including magazines, etc.), correspondence, Auroville records, information centralization, distribution and coordination."

The Unity garden has come alive; a Free Store is also located at Unity. Shelving units, a fish pond, solar water heater and a biogas generator are in the works. Video shows are given downstairs in the Unity office. This is expected to fill a need felt for some time, and Unity seems an ideal place as it is located in the center of Auroville, next to the Matrimandir, where visitors and guest reception and resources access interact with practical daily activities.

The Cooperative and Pour Tous

[The following was written in answer to a question from the editor of Collaboration.]

Has the Cooperative replaced the Pour Tous meetings and taken on the work that was being done there?

It is simply impossible to answer such a question yes or no, for it would be necessary then to leave aside all the circumstances in which the process of Auroville unfolds and ignore the whole function of the "Envelope Game," which is presently the collective financial system and is concerned with a very important aspect of our daily life with something which is connected with the old Pour Tous meetings.

They equally had a deeper sense than the simple fact of struggling with problems; it was a question of meetings which manifested our need to be physically together, for the communities of Auroville are extremely scattered and it was an "occasion," a "pretext" for Mother to work on a wide group of Aurovilians together in one compact place; that aspect, in my opinion, is the most important aspect of those meetings and if, today, that need and that necessity have lessened a little, they have not for all that disappeared.

We have already experienced in various areas the problem of cyclical movements and the apparent disappearance of the Pour Tous meetings is one of them; besides, we've had, ever since, meetings of communities about every 15 days either called for a particular problem or to make a decision...one can certainly say that those meetings are for the moment something a little "groping," and sometimes even a little "empty," but still it remains that the meetings are taking place and that they will certainly evolve.

It's one aspect which the Cooperative cannot replace with anything, at least for the moment.

It is true nevertheless that for the practical aspect of the work, the Pour Tous meetings no longer were at all adequate, for it was difficult to concentrate in them (at least in a certain way) to study problems which arose sometimes with a too rapid rhythm, which created also a difficulty of time, the meetings being weekly; moreover, it had also become extremely difficult (most particularly toward the end) to attend to: —the difficulty of the Matrimandir, —to the visa situation, —to the problem of lands, —to the relation with such and such an outer agency, etc.... and to devote one's time and energy to the development of a farm, for example. (Saying this, I'm using my own case, which can scarcely be different from that of the majority of Aurovilians); so, the necessity for the creation of a group concerned with those particular tasks became evident and much more especially as a play of circumstances brought an equal pressure on the part of "our friends of Auroville" for such a work group to be formed and able to be used for our relations with the outside world.

A great progress is also necessary on the part of the collectivity in order to carry out this movement, to delegate tasks often delicate and always full of consequences for each Aurovillian and for the collectivity as a whole: a progress of trust, a total and joyous trust and perhaps not so much a trust in one another as a trust in Auroville itself, in the Adventure of Auroville.

A group such as the Cooperative can function only on a basis of trust, individual, collective and reciprocal.

It goes without saying that that movement called the Cooperative is *the movement to be carried out* and this in all the areas with all the practical and psychological and other implications...and we are fully in the process, in the movement, but I believe sincerely that it would be premature and not quite just to claim this movement is fulfilled. We are on the way, but in my view none of the problems which have been raised, problems of resistances and difficulties, have been resolved even if they are on the way to being. For example, the problem of representation: in the beginning the members of the Coop themselves chose the provisional or final replace-

ments, but as that way created a certain distance between the Coop and the group, it had to be abandoned and the designation of new members left to the meetings of communities, where one person can be designated, present himself if a place is vacant and the meeting approves (in general) or can show itself reticent. The renewal [of members of the Coop] has been until now assured by resignations or absences, quite simply.

This is a small example which shows very simply and practically that everything is a search which constantly evolves. The aspect of representation still remains to be defined; it has been based until now on geographic representation of the different communities, on the different sectors of work, but perhaps we will come to one group taking form constituting the various aspects, modes of approach, and family of beings so that one can find his point of contact in full confidence so far as to say that that movement has to be his true inner dimension, that Auroville finds and manifests its true inner dimension and so on for each of the Aurovilians; that's the only solution and possibility.

The Coop is for the moment a work group and in no way a "decision-making body."

In spite of the problems which arise, various sectors have been effectively taken in hand, such as visas, a certain administrative aspect, etc.

This movement is above all a good chance for progress, a good exercise and that happens incontestably, and perhaps in order to understand something, it's necessary to try to look in another way than with one's nose stuck into the so-called day-to-day news.

A whole sector of work has been taken in hand by the "Envelope" group, which doesn't have the problem of representation to solve since it is not a matter of a fixed and either an elected or an appointed group. The system is sufficiently formulated so that the representatives change as much as they want without affecting the group at all and personalities have no or very, very little importance. It's very interesting. I think that you are up to date on the "Game": envelopes representing various categories of needs (food, salary, maintenance, green work, children, etc., regrouped at the time of the weekly meeting every Thursday afternoon at Abri and redivided according to needs, necessities and possibilities, which change enormously according to the help we receive from one association or another). The group remains parallel, complementary and overlaps sometimes with the Coop, in the work.

This is one way, rather brief but it seems to me complete, of the collective functioning of Auroville.

The Envelope group, the Cooperative, the meeting of communities (still so hesitant, I repeat), then again, the Land Service and again the meeting of Tamil Aurovilians. None of these groups has to replace the other, for they each have different and complementary functions.

And always everything is on the way, like Auroville, susceptible to change from one moment to another, according to the necessities, and always progressing according to the capacity to be real, simple, and true and living...or it disappears...just like Auroville, just like the progress of Aurovilians, for everything goes forward together.

—Claude, Sharnga, Auroville.

—18 June 1979

NOTE: Just as we were going to press we received word that the Pour Tous meetings in Auroville had been reestablished. They will take place Thursday mornings at Tapoloka, Certitude.

Rs 200,000 have been granted for work in five areas of Auroville, through the European Economic Community (EEC). This integral project includes work in Two Banyans (water catchment excavation); Kottakarai (afforestation and water conservation), New Lands (water development and conservation, and afforestation); Fertile Windmill (tree nursery for 100,000 trees to be made available for the total land area of Auroville, and afforestation); Aurogreen (dairy development, irrigation development, extension of land under cultivation and irrigation of 6 acres, construction of a new grain storeroom, and a drying and threshing floor).

Approximately 100,000 rupees is for the first four communities listed above, and 100,000 is specified for Aurogreen. The first instalment of 100,000 rupees has been released, and some of the work has been completed, the remainder of the work relevant to the first phase is underway. For example, two pairs of cart bullocks and milk cows have been purchased, and a windmill. A major portion of the water-catchment excavations has been completed and a

start has been made on bunding, pit excavation for trees, and preparation of cropland at Aurogreen farm. The afforestation nursery is fully underway: bags have been purchased and prepared; and seeds have been planted, which are now germinating. Dairy housing is complete, and the shed for bullocks and tools and the overseer's office quarters are both nearing completion. Purchase of materials for check dams has begun and one overhead water tank has been completed.

During the next 6 months of the projected program all structures and construction, purchase of supplies—fertilizers and seed, animals, equipment, etc.—will be completed. At least 6 acres of cropland and 6 acres of orchard will have been undertaken and permanent irrigation facilities will have been installed. Excavation, preparation of tree pits and trenches, planting of seedlings, completion of water catchments and bunding will be finished. The windmill of New Lands afforestation site will be put into operation.



Views of the flooding in the Matrimandir area of Auroville after the record cloud-burst last December. (Photos by the Matrimandir Gardens staff.)

- The 6th triennial convention of World Union International will be held in New Delhi, India, 23-27 November 1979. N. Sanjiva Reddy, the President of India, has been invited to inaugurate the convention. Among the people who have indicated they will participate are Gody Murahari, deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha of India; Dr. Max Habicht of Switzerland; Dr. Helen K. Billings of the U.S.; Reinhart Ruge of Mexico; Dr. Karan Singh; and many others. The agenda for the 5-day conference includes prospects of the U.N. being converted to a supranational organization with full powers of world government; Constitution for the Federation of the Earth; progress of education for one world; and democratic federal world government. Anyone interested may write to World Union International Centre, a-1/57 Safdarjang Enclave, New Delhi 110016, India.

- On April 6, 1979, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, composer-conductor Joel Thome's *Traveller of the Worlds* was performed. The work, inspired by the writings of Sri Aurobindo, draws its title from Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri*. Thome has scored the piece for a small orchestra of percussion, winds, strings, electronic sound modification instruments and short-wave radios, with a mezzosoprano. Thome hopes to do a dance/theatre version of the work some time in the future in collaboration with Mrinalini and Mallika Sarabhai, in India.

- Vasant V. Merchant of the Humanities Department of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff addressed the World Conference on Humanity in April in Toronto. She delivered two talks, "Education of the Future" and "Sri Aurobindo's Integral Vision of Human Destiny," and served on the panel "Spirituality in the Nuclear Age." Some 800 people attended. Also in April she chaired a panel for a humanities conference in Prescott, Ariz., on "The Practicality of Arts and Humanities," in which she spoke of the significance of art and beauty according to Sri Aurobindo.

- Gene Maslow, who lived for several years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville, participated in July in an exhibit called "Synthesis" at the Soho Center for Visual Artists in New York City. His current works are two-dimensional acrylic-plastic wall sculptures. His sculpture was recently selected for the Marietta National 1979 Exhibition in Ohio and his work was exhibited last year in the Provincetown Museum of Art's annual exhibit.

THE FUTURE Roger Harris

No more with lilting melodies
Shall I bedeck the morn,
For summer's gone and evensong
With autumn now is born.

And golden winds from ancient fields
The old year now outrace,
Whose haunting timeless melodies
Through the future make their ways

With lines of splendid majesty
That hint at what's to come,
The flaming twilight hierarchies,
Announcers of the sun.

And in the gathering twilight
Now trembling like a veil
I have felt the mighty harmonies
That shall one day prevail.

[From Mother India, June 1979.]

- M.P. Pandit from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is currently in the United States on a lecture tour. Between September 1 and 6 he will be giving programs at the University of Washington; September 7-21, he will be in Seattle speaking at the Theosophical Society (contact Ms Linda Jo Pym, 19012 20th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98177; tel. 206-542-4585); September 21-26, in Missoula, Mont., and Casper, Wyo., for the Theosophical Society; September 27-29, at the Theosophical Society, 306 S. Washington, Suite 217, Royal Oaks, MI 48067 (tel. 313-879-1654); September 30-October 7, at the Theosophical Society, 1926 N. Main St., P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60187 (tel. 312-668-1571); October 8-18, programs at Purdue University (% Dr. R.L. Kashyap, 642 Eden St., W. Lafayette, IN 47906, tel. 317-463-1935) and Columbia University in New York; October 19-21, Theosophical Society, 36 Thirteenth St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30309 (tel. 404-355-4146); October 22-November 2, Flagstaff, Ariz. (% Dr. Vasant Merchant, 1436 N. Evergreen, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, tel. 602-523-3881) and Phoenix (% Dr. Joan Price, 8409 Via del Parque, Scottsdale, AZ 85258, tel. 602-991-2072); November 3-15, Los Angeles (% Jack Alexander, E. Silverdale Dr., Pomona, CA 91767).

- Joey Baker, long a friend of the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles, has developed and is marketing (with his partner Stephen Smith) an electric leisure car, called Aurocondo. Powered by the Bakersmith twin hy-torque electronic drive systems, it requires a simple 6-hour charge from any 110-volt outlet and provides up to 50 miles of driving on hard surface at 12 miles per hour. Maximum speed is 18 miles per hour. It is used largely for golf-course and similar driving at present, but Baker and Smith are seeking to develop the car further for wider use. Baker notes that the Mother had once said that Auroville would use electric cars. At present Baker is suing a California law firm charging, among other things, that the firm had attempted to control Baker's electric-car manufacturing business, according to a *News West* article. Further information on the Aurocondo may be obtained from Bakersmith ETS, P.O. Box 67203, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

NEWS OF MATAGIRI

- In June Rambhai Amin visited while touring centers in the U.S. with a view to arranging an American speaking tour for the eminent Indian writer and devotee of Sri Aurobindo, Rohit Mehta.

Amin, president of the executive committee of the Sri Aurobindo centers in the state of Gujarat (which has 105 Sri Aurobindo centers), is the sponsor of a series of talks on Sri Aurobindo since 1970, held yearly at his home in Ahmedabad.

Rohit Mehta, author of some 23 books, including works on Krishnamurti, theosophy, and the Gita, has written 3 books on Sri Aurobindo: *The Dialogue with Death* (on Savitri), *The Miracle of Descent* (on the Integral Yoga), and *The Being and the Becoming* (on *Essays on the Gita*). Mehta, an inspiring speaker, has lectured widely throughout India as well as in East Africa, New Zealand and elsewhere. (If any reader is interested in having Mr. Mehta speak at a center or institution in his area when he comes, please write to Matagiri.)

M.P. Pandit and Vasanti Golikere of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram visited in July with David and Navaja Mitchell. (See under General News for Pandit's itinerary on his current tour.)

Chitta and Shila Goswami, who had a Sri Aurobindo center in Ohio, visited in June with their children. Goswami is the author of *Soul-Culture in the Upanishad* and *Sri Aurobindo's Concept of the Superman*. The Goswamis are planning to move to Florida.

- Samie Spanier has returned to Matagiri after 6 months in Paris, where he made many friends at the Auroville International center at 67 rue de Rome.



Taken at the annual flower show at the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles, April 1979. Standing left to right: Donna Sharkey, Jyoti Sobel, Suzanne Sekhon, Suzanne Cosgrove, Trudy King, Patti Frick, Barbara Gibson. Seated: Jyotipriya (Dr. Judith Tyberg), founder of the center, and Marty Brown. (Photo by Prem Sobel.)

NEWS OF CENTERS

[Centers are invited to send reports of their regular activities and special functions, as well as photographs of members and events for inclusion in *Collaboration*. Please supply full identification with any photographs sent. Send to Editor, *Collaboration*, Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.]

• **East-West Cultural Center** (2865 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; tel. 213-480-8325) offered an Easter flower festival with a large display of flowers and talks on the significance of flowers as given by the Mother and on various other aspects of the plant kingdom. On 29 April Prem and Jyoti Sobel gave a talk on "The Education of Future Man," showing the psychological structure of man and his different levels of consciousness according to Sri Aurobindo and Mother. This talk was taped and is available from the center: two 60-minute tapes for \$8.00. In June Dick Hawk, a close associate of the center who lived in the Ashram and Auroville for 7 years, spoke on "Discovery of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother" and related his experiences.

• Anyone in the Cleveland (Ohio) area interested in forming a study group for Sri Aurobindo's teaching, please call Ms Anita S. McNeal at (216) 236-8067 (evenings).

• **Hadassah Haskale**, P.O. Box 51, Rosh Pina, Israel, invites those travelling to or from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram or Auroville, or members of World Union, to contact her if they pass through Israel. A small group of aspirants has been meeting there to share readings and Ashram tapes. A library of works by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as well as Ashram tapes, has been started as a help in establishing an "influence" in Israel.

• Muriel and Joseph Spanier of **Sri Aurobindo's Action Center/Association for Auroville** (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306) gave Auroville slide presentations and sold Auroville products on a trip to Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico and Arizona in March and April. Jan O'Shinsky arranged the presentation shown at Stephens College, Columbia, Mo. The trip included a visit with Constance of Auroville (now living in Questa, N. Mex.), Professor Jeffrey Cook, an architect helping with the Matrimandir; a slide presentation at Dr. Joan Price's Valley Center for Studies in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; a visit with Paolo and Colly Soleri at Arcosanti; and a slide presentation at the University of Northern Arizona, arranged by Dr. Vasant Merchant.

M.P. Pandit and Vasanti Golikere visited the center in early August, and Pandit spoke at the Universities of Colorado and Denver, the Mevlana Foundation, Rudrananda Ashram, Theosophical Society, and World Family, and was interviewed on radio station KGNU in Boulder.

The center also publishes *Auroville Voice*, a quarterly focusing on Auroville and its development.

• **Marten of Auroville International-Sweden** (Ravlanda 29, S-270 57 Lund, Sweden) reports that in February he had an article published in Sweden's largest daily paper, *Dagens Nyheter*, concerning small-scale greenwork in Auroville. The article led to an invitation from the Agricultural University of Sweden for Marten to give a talk there, on 23 April, on "Technology and Culture," illustrated with slides of Auroville greenwork, erosion control and afforestation.



Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo: The Perfect and the Good by Robert Neil Minor.
Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1978. 191 pp.

Robert Minor has followed the "religiohistorical method" in this work, which means it is a descriptive and not a normative study, "subject to the limitations of historical evidence," "verified by appropriate documentation" and "concerned to understand the religion of the person or group studied."

At the outset Minor clarifies the meanings of three words: understanding, religion, and ethics. By understanding he means "any valid knowledge about religion communicable in propositional form," by religion, "the ultimate concern," and by ethics, those principles which "promote the ultimate concern."

The book contains 5 chapters. Chapter 1 is a biographical sketch of Sri Aurobindo and the goal of the study is explained. Chapter 2 deals with the development of Sri Aurobindo's ideas of religion and ethics while he was a student in England and, later, in Baroda, where he was absorbed in studies of Indian culture. Chapter 3 discusses Sri Aurobindo's "ultimate concern" and ethics. Chapter 4 includes studies of Sri Aurobindo's "religion and ethics" as a Yogi in Pondicherry. And chapter 5 delineates "the line of development from Sri Aurobindo's Baroda days to his work at Pondicherry" and also shows how Sri Aurobindo's "religion and ethics," as Minor thinks, are the same.

As this is a Ph.D. thesis (accepted by the School of Religion of the University of Iowa), it was written under certain limitations, as Minor mentions. Even so, my submission is that some fundamental concepts—spirituality, religion, and ethics—of Sri Aurobindo cannot escape the notice of a scholar such as Minor. According to Sri Aurobindo, spirituality, religion, and ethics are quite different things "and one must know which one desires and not confuse the three together." Though the religious life tries to turn towards the Divine, very often it is led by dogmas and sectarian creeds and it does not concern itself specially with the change of consciousness of the average man which is enveloped in ignorance. "The spiritual life, on the contrary," says Sri Aurobindo, "proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters."

Morality or ethics again is based on "certain mental rules" "in the image of certain mental ideals." But "the spiritual life goes beyond the mind; it enters into the deeper consciousness of the spirit and acts out of the truth of the spirit." Sri Aurobindo further asserts, "Morality is a question of man's mind and vital, it belongs to a lower plane of consciousness.... The law of action of spiritual consciousness is higher...founded on obedience to the Divine Will."

Minor, of course, says that by Sri Aurobindo's religion he means his "ultimate concern" and his ethics as those principles which augment his ultimate concern. Now, while Minor accepts Sri Aurobindo's ultimate concern as transformation of human consciousness into divine consciousness, human life into life divine, it is not clear why Minor would call it religion, though I presume he knows it fully that religion more often than not "is turning about in a round of rites, ceremonies and practices of set ideas and forms without any issue" and rarely an approach towards the spiritual.

Very few people could understand Sri Aurobindo's role as a nationalist leader as a preparation for the life of a great seer and harbinger of the superman. Some people, I suppose out of ignorance, even remark that Sri Aurobindo's departure for Pondicherry was a kind of escape. It is to Minor's credit, however, that his studies have adequately proved that Sri Aurobindo's nationalism is absolutely spiritual and a prelude to "the realisation of the Divine both internally in each man and externally in application to [the nation and] the world." To describe a nationalist leader of Sri Aurobindo's stature, Minor might as well quote Chitta Ranjan Das, who told the court of justice that Sri Aurobindo would be reckoned as "a poet of patriotism, a prophet of nationalism and lover of humanity." Minor has aptly said that Sri Aurobindo regarded the independence of India as a step toward this ultimate concern. He says: "Nationalism, as Sri Aurobindo conceived it, was thereby no political aspiration to which he added 'religious' elements. It was part and parcel of the realisation of an ultimate concern which transcends the independence of India."

Throughout the book Minor mentions the "Vedantic vision" of Sri Aurobindo or "promotion of Vedanta" by Sri Aurobindo or "what he proclaimed was true Vedanta" or "the whole programme" as Sri Aurobindo visualized it "derives its legitimacy from the Vedantic truth." By this does Minor mean that Sri Aurobindo is a follower of Vedanta or at best a better interpreter of Vedanta? It may, of course, be right to say that Sri Aurobindo found his vision of truth mainly on the lines of Vedanta; but it is equally true to say that Sri Aurobindo realized the Supreme Reality independent of any Sastras. The seeker of truth no doubt tries several methods of finding the truth, including study of the Sastras, but, to quote Sri Aurobindo, "in the end he must take his station, or better still, if he can, always and from the beginning he must live in his soul beyond the written truth." As Sri Aurobindo is concerned with transformation of terrestrial consciousness and the divine life on earth, obviously he is not satisfied with a new interpretation of Vedanta only.

A question may arise why Sri Aurobindo then often refers to the scriptures, the Gita, the Upanishads, the Vedas, etc. The answer is given by Sri Aurobindo himself: "For it is in those ideas we shall find the best previous foundation of that which we seek now to rebuild." As regards evolution of the superman, transformation of human consciousness, laying the foundation of the gnostic community, etc., which were not developed in the Vedantic tradition, Sri Aurobindo says, "I have been testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory or his method on the physical plane." His attitude, therefore, as a seeker of "ever-changeless and ever-changing" Infinite Truth is experimental and not bound to any tradition Eastern or Western.

I congratulate the author for the title of the book, which speaks for itself. The work draws upon Sri Aurobindo's complete works and is undoubtedly a commendable effort especially in tracing the development of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual ideas, from his early years. The quotations from Sri Aurobindo's writings are very appropriate. We believe any reader, whether a devotee or a scholar, will find great pleasure in reading this book.