



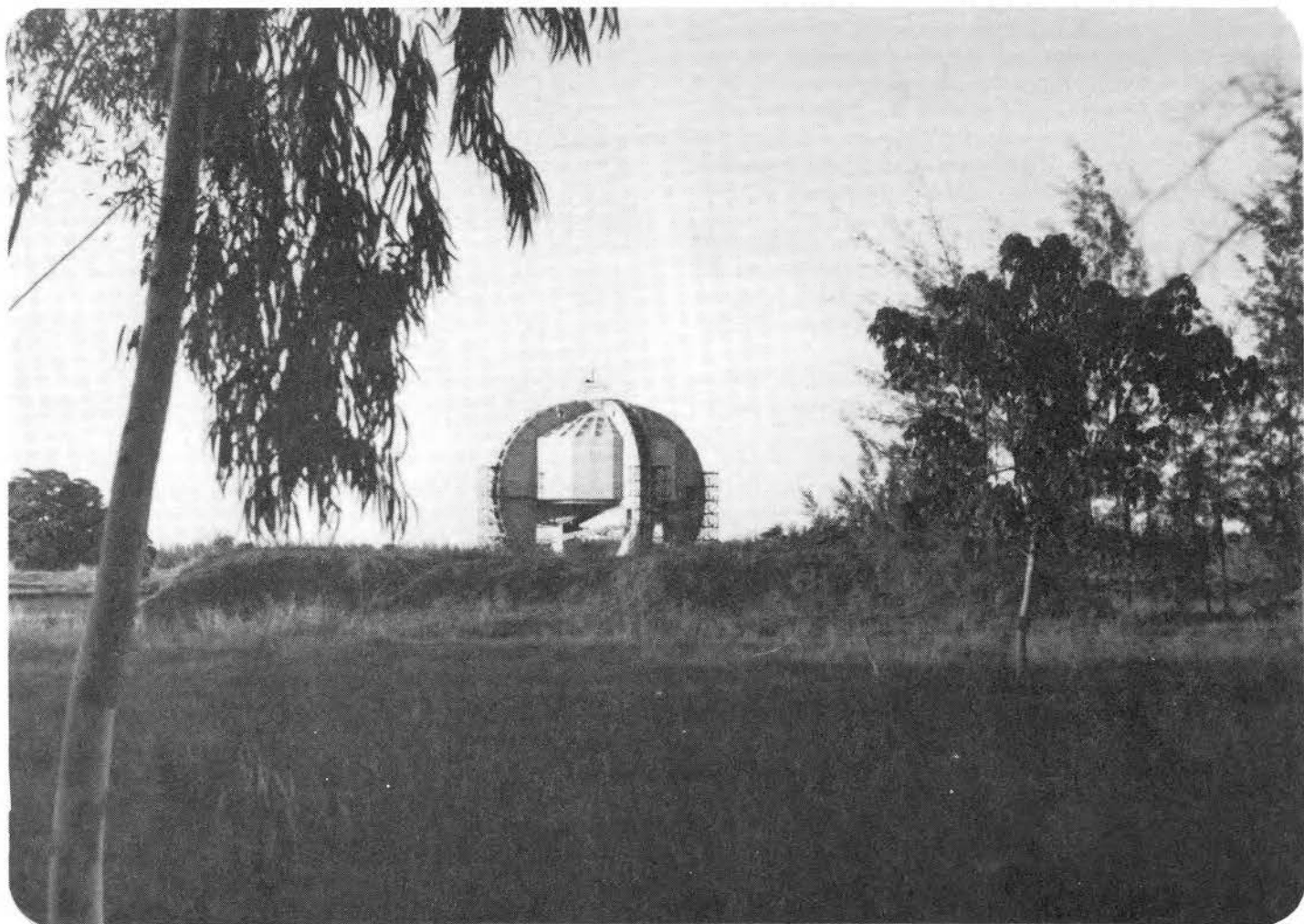
Collaboration

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In this issue we feature the subject of love, about which there is much confusion in the minds of many aspirants, especially those new to spiritual teachings. We begin with an introduction by Pavitra, a French disciple, from his compilation *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Love*, which he prepared to bring some light to the subject. We have also quoted passages from the two Centenary booklets *On Love I and II*, compiled from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Among the passages we have chosen are two by the Mother regarding marriage which we thought readers would find interesting.

With the 1980 Olympic games soon to begin, we also felt that the short article by the Mother on the significance of the Olympic

rings would be informative. Other articles are on the Daivic (upward aspiring) and Asuric (downward pulling) natures by Sri Aurobindo, on the difference between religious and spiritual teachings and on families of beings by the Mother. We continue our series on Integral Psychology, the significance of flowers, and the Free Progress educational system. We are also happy to present poetry by two aspirants both dealing with visits to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Again we invite readers to submit their own poetry (and prose) for consideration.

Back issues of *Collaboration* are available for 50¢ each: Summer 1979 (on death); Spring 1979 (on children); Winter 1978-79 (on money); Fall 1978 (on women); Spring 1978 (on the Mother's centenary).

Now each human being—everyone of us—is evolving in the universe through a succession of many lives upon earth, and as the object of this evolution is the progressive awareness of our essential identity with the Divine—One and Many simultaneously—everyone of us will progressively become aware of the essential Love that is in him and of his bonds of love with the other beings.

Then, instead of opposing eternally all others, each of us will feel a natural affinity with this one or that one. All throughout the ages consciousness grows as evolution progresses. One day, the individual being is at last ready to recognize in others the same consciousness that exists in him. He recognizes others as his other selves; he recognizes himself in others and in all. He can at long last understand the meaning of this passage of the Upanishad about the One Self or Spirit everywhere:

“It is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear, but for the sake of the atman [the Self, one with the Divine] [which is in him] ; it is not for the sake of the wife that the wife is dear but for the sake of the atman [which is in her].”

With the help of these powerful and significant words it is possible to classify individual human beings in one or the other of two groups. Those of the first group—the *outward path*—find in as association with another individual a real help. For them, no problem; they follow instinctively the reactions of Nature in them, and it would be at once unwise and vain to try to change their reactions by advocating a higher path; they would not understand.

Those of the second group—the *return path*—are more advanced in their evolution and feel strongly the attraction of the divine pole in them. For them, a long-standing association with another individual would be contrary to their spiritual destiny and to indulge in it would cause delay in the progress of their soul. They cannot commit themselves and alienate their deep-rooted freedom.

But the borderline between the two groups is not clearly drawn. There is a large category of men and women evolving in a margin of incertitude. These become the seat of a prolonged and painful conflict between the two poles of their being, the human and the divine. But they have to move forward, at whatever cost.

Yoga is a process that accelerates individual evolution. Through yoga those that are treading the *return path*, and even those that are struggling in the zone of incertitude, may clear in one life a great part of the way and reach divine union. The fact of aspiring to yoga is a proof that one is treading the *return path*, or is quite close to it.

With this in mind we understand clearly what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, speaking to all who follow yoga or aspire to it, repeat constantly that a “vital” or sexual relationship with another individual is one of the greatest obstacles on the way.

This explains also why persons from outside—who do not follow yoga—get an impression when reading the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that they reject human love, vital and sexual, for the whole of mankind. It is now clear that this is a wrong impression. If someone of the *outward path* consults the Mother in order to ascertain whether it is advisable to marry or not, the answer will in general not be negative. And her approval would hold all the more for the innumerable millions of men and women to whom the idea will never come to consult a spiritual leader about their marriage.

These explanations should enable anyone of us, if he observes and studies himself attentively, to ascertain, at least roughly, where he stands on the long scale of evolution. He will not only be able to understand his instinctive reactions, but will also know that, whatever place he has now reached, he will tread the entirety of the scale and attain liberation. Fear drops out of him—that fear of standing forever condemned, contemptible, imperfect. He will be able to look at himself without losing strength and come to decisions accordingly.

This is the light given to us by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; it is a priceless gift....

Sri Aurobindo

But it is only a divine love and unity that can possess in the light what the human forms of those things seek for in the darkness. For the true unity is not merely an association and agglomeration like that of physical cells joined by a life of common interests; it is not even an emotional understanding, sympathy, solidarity or close drawing together. Only then are we really unified with those separated from us by the divisions of Nature, when we annul the division and find ourselves in that which seemed to us not ourselves. Association is a vital and physical unity; its sacrifice is that of mutual aid and concessions. Nearness, sympathy, solidarity create a mental, moral and emotional unity; theirs is a sacrifice of mutual support and mutual gratifications. But the true unity is spiritual; its sacrifice is a mutual self-giving, an interfusion of our inner substance. The law of sacrifice travels in Nature towards its culmination in this complete and unreserved self-giving; It awakens the consciousness of one common self in the giver and the object of the sacrifice. This culmination of sacrifice is the height even of human love and devotion when it tries to become divine; for there too the highest peak of love points into a heaven of complete mutual self-giving, its summit is the rapturous fusing of two souls into one. [1]

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Love is in its nature the desire to give oneself to others and to receive others in exchange.... Physical life does not desire to give itself, it desires only to receive.... Love at first obeys the law of hunger and enjoys the receiving and the exacting from others rather than the giving and surrendering to others which it admits chiefly as a necessary price for the things that it desires... Its true law is to establish an equal commerce in which the joy of giving is equal to the joy of receiving and tends in the end to become even greater; but that is shooting beyond itself under the pressure of the psychic flame to attain to the fulfilment of utter unity and has therefore to realise that which seemed to it not-self as an even greater and dearer self than its own individuality. [2]

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There is concealed behind individual love, obscured by its ignorant human figure, a mystery which the mind cannot seize, the mystery of the body of the Divine, the secret of a mystic form of the Infinite which we can approach only through the ecstasy of the heart and the passion of the pure and sublimated sense, and its attraction which is the call of the divine Flute-player, the mastering compulsion of the All-Beautiful can only be seized and seize us through an occult love and yearning which in the end makes one the Form and the Formless, and identifies Spirit and Matter. It is that which the spirit in Love is seeking here in the darkness of the Ignorance and it is that which it finds when individual human love is changed into the love of the Immanent Divine incarnate in the material universe. [3]

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Sex is a movement of general Nature seeking for its play and it uses this or that one—a man vitally or physically “in love” as it is called with a woman is simply repeating and satisfying the world-movement of sex; if it had not been that woman, it would have been another. [4]

The terrestrial sex-movement is a utilisation by Nature of the fundamental physical energy for the purposes of procreation. The thrill of which the poets speak, which is accompanied by a very gross excitement, is the lure by which she makes the vital consent to this otherwise unpleasing process; there are numbers who experience a recoil of disgust after the act and repulsion from the partner in it because of the disgust, though they return to it when the disgust has worn off for the sake of this lure.

The sex energy itself is a great power with two components in its physical basis, one meant for procreation and the process necessary for it, the other for feeding the general energies of the body, mind and vital—also the spiritual energies of the body. [5]

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It is the ordinary nature of vital love not to last or, if it tries to last, not to satisfy, because it is a passion which Nature has thrown in in order to serve a temporary purpose; it is good enough therefore for a temporary purpose and its normal tendency is to waver when it has sufficiently served Nature's purpose. In mankind, as man is a more complex being, she calls in the aid of imagination and idealism to help her push, gives a sense of ardour, of beauty and fire and glory, but all that wanes after a time. It cannot last, because it is all a borrowed light and power, borrowed in the sense of being a reflection caught from something beyond and not native to the reflecting vital medium which imagination uses for the purpose. Moreover, nothing lasts in the mind and vital, all is a flux there. The one thing that endures is the soul, the spirit. Therefore love can last and satisfy only if it bases itself on the soul and spirit, if it has its roots there. But that means living no longer in the vital, but in the soul and spirit. [6]

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The action of the animal sex-energy in Nature is a device for a particular purpose in the economy of the material creation in the Ignorance. But the vital excitement that accompanies it makes the most favourable opportunity and vibration in the atmosphere for the inrush of those very vital forces and beings whose whole business is to prevent the descent of the supramental Light. The pleasure attached to it is a degradation and not a true form of divine Ananda. The true divine Ananda in the physical has a different quality and movement and substance; self-existent in its essence, its manifestation is dependent only on an inner union with the Divine.... Divine Love, when it touches the physical, does not awaken the gross lower vital propensities; indulgence of them would only repel it and make it withdraw again to the heights from which it is already difficult enough to draw it down into the coarseness of the material creation which it alone can transform. [7]

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This is a miracle that men can love God, yet fail to love humanity. With whom are they in love then? [8]

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The Mother did not tell you that love is not an emotion, but that Divine Love is not an emotion,—a very different thing to say. Human love is made up of emotion, passion and desire,—all of them vital movements, therefore bound to the disabilities of the human vital nature, in spite of all its shortcomings and dangers.... But our aim is to go beyond emotion to the height and depth and intensity of the Divine Love and there feel through the inner psychic heart an inexhaustible oneness with the Divine which the spasmodic leaping of the vital emotion cannot reach or experience. [9]

And first about human love in the sadhana. The soul's turning through love to the Divine must be through a love that is essentially divine, but as the instrument of expression at first is a human nature, it takes the forms of human love and bhakti [devotion]. It is only as the consciousness deepens, heightens and changes that that greater eternal love can grow in it and openly transform the human into the divine. But in human love itself there are several kinds of motive-forces. There is a psychic human love which rises from deep within and is the result of the meeting of the inner being with that which calls it towards a divine joy and union; it is, once it becomes aware of itself, something lasting, self-existent, not dependent upon external satisfactions, not capable of diminution by external satisfactions, not self-regarding, not prone to demand or bargain but giving itself simply and spontaneously, not moved to or broken by misunderstandings, disappointments, strife and anger, but pressing always straight towards the inner union. It is this psychic love that is closest to the divine and it is therefore the right and best way of love and bhakti. But that does not mean that the other parts of the being, the vital and physical included, are not to be used as means of expression or that they are not to share in the full play and the whole meaning of love, even of divine love. On the contrary, they are a means and can be a great part of the complete expression of divine love—provided they have the right and not the wrong movement. There are in the vital itself two kinds of love,—one full of joy and confidence and abandon, generous, unbargaining, ungrudging and very absolute in its dedication and this is akin to the psychic and well-fitted to be its complement and a means of expression wherever that is pure and right and possible; it does not depend upon that, it does not diminish, revolt or go out like a snuffed candle when it is deprived of any such means; but when it can use it, it does so with joy and gratitude. Physical means can be and are used in the approach to divine love and worship; they have not been allowed merely as a concession to human weakness; nor is it the fact that in the psychic way there is no place for such things. On the contrary, they are one means of approaching the Divine and receiving the Light and materialising the psychic contact, and so long as it is done in the right spirit and they are used for the true purpose they have their place. It is only if they are misused or the approach is not right, because tainted by indifference and inertia, or revolt or hostility, or some gross desire, that they are out of place and can have a contrary effect.

But there is another way of vital love which is more usually the way of human nature and that is a way of ego and desire. It is full of vital craving, desire and demand; its continuance depends upon the satisfaction of its demands; if it does not get what it craves or even imagines that it is not being treated as it deserves—for it is full of imaginations, misunderstandings, jealousies, misinterpretations—it at once turns to sorrow, wounded feeling, anger, all kinds of disorder, finally cessation and departure. A love of this kind is in its very nature ephemeral and unreliable and it cannot be made a foundation for divine love.... It is for this reason that we discourage this lower vital way of human love and would like people to reject and eliminate these elements as soon as may be from their nature. Love should be a flowering of joy and union and confidence and self-giving and Ananda,—but this lower vital way is only a source of suffering, trouble, disappointment, disillusion and disunion. Even a slight element of it shakes the foundations of peace and replaces the movement towards Ananda by a fall towards sorrow, discontent and Nirananda. [10]

The manifestation of the love of the Divine in the world was the great holocaust, the supreme self-giving. The Perfect Consciousness accepted to be merged and absorbed into the unconsciousness of matter, so that consciousness might be awakened in the depths of its obscurity and little by little a Divine Power might rise in it and make the whole of this manifested universe a highest expression of the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Love. [11]

Love is not sexual intercourse.

Love is not vital attraction and interchange.

Love is not the heart's hunger for affection.

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

To be pure is to be open only to the Supreme's influence and to no other. [12]

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Love is one of the great universal forces; it exists by itself and its movement is free and independent of the objects in which and through which it manifests.... Men think that they have suddenly fallen in love; they see their love come and grow and then it fades—or, it may be, endures a little longer in some who are more specially fitted for its more lasting movement.... Love does not manifest in human beings alone; it is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones; in the animals it is easy to detect its presence.... Love divine gives itself and asks for nothing. What human beings have made of it, we do not need to say; they have turned it into an ugly and repulsive thing. And yet in human beings the first contact of love does bring down something of its purer substance; they become capable for a moment of forgetting themselves, for a moment its divine touch awakens and magnifies all that is fine and beautiful. But afterwards there comes to the surface the human nature, full of its impure demands, asking for something in exchange, bartering what it gives, clamouring for its own inferior satisfactions, distorting and soiling what was divine. [13]

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At the beginning of this manifestation, Love is, in the purity of its origin, composed of two movements, two complementary poles of the impulsion towards complete fusion. On one side, it is the supreme power of attraction and on the other the irresistible need of absolute self-giving.... What was projected into space had to be brought back to itself without, however, destroying the universe so created. Therefore Love burst forth, the irresistible power of union....

Is it not love, under an erring and obscure form, that is associated with all the impulsions of the physical and vital nature as the push towards every movement and every grouping? This has become quite visible in the plant world. In the plant and tree, it is the need of growth to get more light, more air, more space; in the flower it is the gift of beauty and fragrance in a loving efflorescence. And in the animal is it not there behind hunger and thirst, the need for appropriation, expansion, procreation, in brief behind all desire, whether conscious or not? And, among the higher orders, in the self-sacrificing devotion of the female for her young ones? This naturally leads us to the human species where, with the triumphant advent of mental activity this association attains its climax, for it is there conscious and deliberate....

It is also from this very moment that there has clearly appeared in Nature's works her will to build up again, by stages and degrees, the primordial unity through groupings more and more complex and numerous. She used the power of love for bringing two human beings together and creating the dual group, the origin of

family. Once she had broken the narrow limits of personal egoism by changing it into a dual egoism, she brought into being, with the appearance of the child, a more complex unit, the family. In course of time through manifold association between families, interchange between individuals and blood mixture, larger groupings appeared: the clan, the tribe, the caste and the class to end in the creation of the nation. The work of group formation proceeded simultaneously in different parts of the world; it has crystallised in the formation of different races. Even these races Nature will by degrees fuse together in her endeavour to build a material and real basis for human unity. [14]

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Humanity has the sexual impulse; that is altogether natural, spontaneous, and, if I may say, legitimate. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality [in man].... The most conscious impulse in a superior humanity, that which has persisted as a source of—bliss is too big a word—joy, delight, is certainly the sexual activity. It will have absolutely no reason for existence in the functions of nature, when the need to create in that way will no longer exist.... But what the ancient spiritual aspirants had sought on principle—sexual negation—is an absurd thing, because this must be only for those who have gone beyond that stage and have no longer animality in them. And it must drop naturally without effort and without struggle. It is only when the the consciousness ceases to be human that it drops off naturally. Here also there is a transition that may be somewhat difficult, because beings of transition are always in an unstable equilibrium; but within there is a kind of flame and a need which makes it—it is not painful effort, it is something that one can do with a smile. But to seek to impose it upon those who are not ready for this transition is absurd. [15]

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Love (at least the thing to which human beings give that name) is especially looked upon as an imperious master whose caprices one cannot evade, who strikes you as he pleases and compels you to obey him whether you like it or not. In the name of love the worst crimes have been perpetrated, the wildest follies committed.

And yet, man has invented all kinds of moral and social rules hoping to control this force of love, to make it sober and docile. These rules, however, seem to have been made only to be broken and the restraint they impose upon its free activity seems only to increase its explosive power. For it is not by rules that the movements of love can be governed. Only a greater, higher and truer power of love can master the uncontrollable impulses of love. Love alone can rule over love by illumining, transforming and enlarging it. For here also, more than anywhere else, control consists not in suppressing and abolishing, but in transmuting through a sublime alchemy. This is because, of all forces acting in the universe, love is the most powerful, the most irresistible; without love the world would fall back into the chaos of inconscience. Consciousness is indeed the creator of the universe, but love is its saviour. [16]

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The Rungs of Love: At first one loves only when one is loved. Next, one loves spontaneously but one wants to be loved in return.

Further on, one loves even if one is not loved but one still wants one's love to be accepted.

And finally one loves purely and simply without any other need or joy than that of loving. [17]

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As for instances of the difference, I may give you two from the opposite poles of experience, one from the most external phenomena showing how the inward opens to the awareness of the universal forces, one of spiritual experience indicating how the inward opens to the Divine. Take illness. If we live only in the outward physical consciousness, we do not usually know that we are going to be ill until the symptoms of the malady declare themselves in the body. But if we develop the inward physical consciousness, we become aware of a subtle environmental physical atmosphere and can feel the forces of illness coming towards us through it, feel them even at a distance and, if we have learnt how to do it, we can stop them by the will or otherwise. We sense too around us a vital physical or nervous envelope which radiates from the body and protects it, and we can feel the adverse forces trying to break through it and can interfere, stop them or reinforce the nervous envelope. Or we can feel the symptoms of ill-

ness, fever or cold, for instance, in the subtle physical sheath before they manifest in the gross body and destroy them there, preventing them from manifesting in the body. Take now the call for the Divine Power, Light, Ananda. If we live only in the outward physical consciousness, it may descend and work behind the veil, but we shall feel nothing and only see certain results after a long time. Or at most we feel a certain clarity and peace in the mind, a joy in the vital, a happy state in the physical and infer the touch of the Divine. But if we are awake in the physical, we shall feel the light, power or Ananda flowing through the body, the limbs, nerves, blood, breath and, through the subtle body, affecting the most material cells and making them conscious and blissful and we shall sense directly the Divine Power and Presence. There are only two instances out of a thousand that are possible and can be constantly experienced by the sadhak. [From *Letters on Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 3: 347-51.]

THE DAIVIC AND ASURIC NATURES

Sri Aurobindo

The Deva nature is distinguished by an acme of the sattwic habits and qualities; self-control, sacrifice, the religious habit, cleanness and purity, candour and straightforwardness, truth, calm and self-denial, compassion to all beings, modesty, gentleness, forgivingness, patience, steadfastness, a deep sweet and serious freedom from all restlessness, levity and inconstancy are its native attributes. The Asuric qualities, wrath, greed, cunning, treachery, wilful doing of injury to others, pride and arrogance and excessive self-esteem have no place in its composition. But its gentleness and self-denial and self-control are free too from all weakness; it has energy and soul-force, strong resolution, the fearlessness of the soul that lives in the right and according to the truth as well as harmlessness, *tejab* [force], *abbayam* [fearlessness], *dbritih* [steadfastness], *abimsa* [harmlessness], *satyam* [truth]. The whole being, the whole temperament is integrally pure; there is a seeking for knowledge and a calm and fixed abiding in knowledge. This is the wealth, the plenitude of the man born into the Deva nature.

The Asuric nature has too its wealth, its plenitude of force, but it is of a very different, a powerful and evil kind. Asuric men have no true knowledge of the way of action or the way of abstention, the fulfilling or the holding in of the nature. Truth is not in them, nor clean doing, nor faithful observance. They see naturally in the world nothing but a huge play of the satisfaction of self; theirs is a world with Desire for its cause and seed and governing force and law, a world of Chance, a world devoid of just relation and linked Karma, a world without God, not true, not founded in Truth. Whatever better intellectual or higher religious dogma they may possess, this alone is the true creed of their mind and will in action; they follow always the cult of Desire and Ego. On that way of seeing life they lean in reality and by its falsehood they ruin their souls and their reason. The Asuric man becomes the centre or instrument of a fierce, Titanic, violent action, a power of destruction in the world, a fount of injury and evil. Arrogant, full of self-esteem and the drunkenness of their pride, these misguided souls delude themselves, persist in false and obstinate aims and pursue the fixed impure resolution of their longings. They imagine that desire and enjoyment are all the aim of life and in their inordinate and insatiable pursuit of it they are the prey of a devouring, a measurelessly unceasing care and thought and endeavour and anxiety till the moment of their death. Bound by a hundred bonds, devoured by wrath and lust, unweariedly occupied in amassing unjust gains which may serve their enjoyment and the

satisfaction of their craving, always they think, "Today I have gained this object of desire, tomorrow I shall have that other; today I have so much wealth, more will I get tomorrow. I have killed this my enemy, the rest too I will kill. I am a lord and king of men, I am perfect, accomplished, strong, happy, fortunate, a privileged enjoyer of the world; I am wealthy, I am of high birth; who is there like unto me? I will sacrifice; I will give, I will enjoy." Thus occupied by many egoistic ideas, deluded, doing works, but doing them wrongly, acting mightily, but for themselves, for desire, for enjoyment, not for God in themselves and God in man, they fall into the unclean hell of their own evil. They sacrifice and give, but from a self-regarding ostentation, from vanity and with a stiff and foolish pride. In the egoism of their strength and power, in the violence of their wrath and arrogance they hate, despise and belittle the God hidden in themselves and the God in man. And because they have this proud hatred and contempt of good and of God, because they are cruel and evil, the Divine casts them down continually into more and more Asuric births. Not seeking him, they find him not, and at last, losing the way to him altogether, sink down into the lowest status of soul-nature....

This graphic description, even giving its entire value to the distinction it implies, must not be pressed to carry more in it than it means. When it is said that there are two creations of beings in this material world, Deva and Asura, it is not meant that human souls are so created by God from the beginning each with its own inevitable career in Nature, nor is it meant that there is a rigid spiritual predestination and those rejected from the beginning by the Divine are blinded by him so that they may be thrust down to eternal perdition and the impurity of Hell. All souls are eternal portions of the Divine, the Asura as well as the Deva, all can come to salvation: even the greatest sinner can turn to the Divine. But the evolution of the soul in Nature is an adventure of which Swabhava [inborn or essential nature] and the Karma governed by the Swabhava are ever the chief powers; and if an excess in the manifestation of the Swabhava, the self-becoming of the soul, a disorder in its play turns the law of being to the perverse side, if the rajasic qualities are given the upper hand, cultured to the diminution of Sattwa, then the trend of Karma and its results necessarily culminate not in the sattwic height which is capable of the movement of liberation, but in the highest exaggeration of the perversities of the lower nature. [From *Essays on the Gita* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1976), pp. 456-58.]

In plants there is a great vital force. And this vital force acts to a large extent. And there is also the genius of the species, which is a consciousness. There is an active consciousness already working in plants.

And in the genius of the species there is a beginning—quite embryonic, but still—there is a beginning of a response to psychic influences, and certain flowers are clearly the expression of a psychic attitude and aspiration in the plant; not very conscious of itself, but existing like a spontaneous clan.

It is quite certain that if you have a special affection for a plant, for instance, if, in addition to the material care you give it, you love it, if you feel close to it, it also feels this: its blossoming is much more harmonious, happy, its growth the best possible, its life prolonged. All this means a response in the plant itself. Consequently, there is the presence of a certain consciousness; and surely the plant has a vital being.

Can you imagine plants having vanity! That is to say, plants you have reared yourself. Supposing you pay them compliments, by words or through feeling, supposing you admire them, well they straighten up their heads—in vanity!

THE OLYMPIC RINGS *The Mother*

It has been officially stated that the five rings of the symbol of the Olympic Games represent the five continents, but no special significance has been attached to the colour of the rings, nor has there been any intention of allotting a specific colour to each continent.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to study these colours and to find out what meaning they may have and what message they may convey.

It is quite well known that each colour has its significance, but the meanings attached to the various colours by different interpreters vary and are often conflicting. There does not seem to exist any universally accepted classification of these significances. This is because these colours are considered from a mental standpoint, or at least because the vision is influenced by the mind of the interpreter. But if one rises above the mind to the truly occult regions beyond, the real meaning of each colour is the same for all those who can read it directly. This is true not only in this particular case but for all occult and spiritual experience. There is a remarkable similarity in the experiences of mystics of all times and places.

Consequently, if the colours of the rings in the Olympic Symbol are viewed from this standpoint, we shall be able to find their real esoteric meaning and see how they apply to the five continents.

Green denotes a vast peaceful feeling with a direct contact and a very harmonious relationship with Nature. It could represent a continent with vast open spaces and an unspoiled population living close to the soil and Nature.

Red is the colour of the physical and material world. The red ring could therefore be allotted to a people that has achieved a mastery over the physical world. This colour would also indicate that material success has given it predominance over the others. In any case, it represents a people that stresses physical and material things.

Blue, on the other hand, indicates a young continent with its whole future before it and great possibilities, but still new and growing.

Some Messages

Anthurium species, firm waxy spathe and prominent thick spadix, bright red—**Mastery of sex.**

Anthurium species, white—**Purified sex centre.**

Centaurea cyanus (cornflower, bachelor's button), soft rounded heads of compositae flowers, all colors—**Idealism.**

Gladiolus, elegant flared or ruffled tubular flowers on long, graceful spikes—**Receptivity.**

Gladiolus, white—**Integral receptivity.**

Ipomoea, medium blue—**Artistic sensibility.**

Ipomoea species, small white flowers on long stalks—**Detailed gratitude.**

Nymphaea (water lily), showy, often fragrant aquatic flowers with innumerable petals—**Wealth.**

Nymphaea, lavender shades—**Emotive wealth.**

Nymphaea, yellow shades—**Generous wealth.**

Papaver rhoeas (Shirley poppy, corn poppy), cup-shaped flower with numerous stamens and delicately crinkled petals, several colors—**Spontaneous joy of Nature.**

Black is a very unfortunate choice of colour as it can only represent a continent which is fast falling into deep obscurity—the descent of a declining people into dark oblivion.

On the contrary, yellow is the most glorious colour of all. It is the golden colour of Light—the Light which comes from the Source and Origin of all things and which, with its helping hand, will lead evolving humanity back to its divine Origin.

The arrangement of the rings also has a significance. Black is the central colour upholding all the others, and this is indeed an indication of the black chaos which now governs the world and of the blindness of those who are at present struggling to guide the ship of humanity on the dark sea of ignorance.

It is our hope that in the future this black ring will be replaced by a white one, when there comes a turn in the tide of human affairs, when the shades of ignorance are dispelled by the dawn of a new light, the bright, white, self-luminous light of the new Consciousness, and when at the helm of the ship stand those who will face this brilliant radiance and set course towards the Promised Land. [*Bulletin*, November 1949; from *The Mother's Collected Works* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1978), 12: 267-68.]

RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND SPIRITUAL TEACHING *The Mother*

You must not confuse a religious teaching with a spiritual one. Religious teaching belongs to the past and halts progress.

Spiritual teaching is the teaching of the future—it illumines the consciousness and prepares it for the future realisation.

Spiritual teaching is above religions and strives towards a global Truth.

It teaches us to enter into direct relations with the Divine. [From *Mother's Collected Works* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1978), 12: 120.]

III. Syllabus in Free Progress System

We are often asked what programmes of studies we follow in our Free Progress classes. An answer can be formulated thus:

We wish, during the 13-year school course (kindergarten, primary, secondary and higher secondary), to awaken the child to his soul, that is to the existence in him of a Divine Spark, as a living Presence to whom he can refer and from whom he can draw guidance, comfort and help in dealing with the problems and difficulties of daily life. This is our aim.

If we can succeed in providing the child with an educational environment and the individual attention of spiritually awakened teachers so as to enable him to work in full freedom with interest and joy—both go always together—during these 13 long years, we feel sure that the best in him will be brought to the surface and made active. Even if it does not bring him any academic recognition, he will have acquired concentration, the capacity of learning, self-confidence and poise. Whatever knowledge he now has is certainly well understood and assimilated. At this level the “quantity” of factual knowledge in the child’s mind is of little importance. Gaps may be filled easily later when the need arises, as he will have learnt how to use documentation. And certainly his contribution to society and the world will be the best he can make. This is truly our programme.

If the child—now an adolescent—chooses freely to pursue his studies, our Higher Course offers him a comprehensive set of subjects from which he may select as many as he wishes, to give a wide and solid base to his knowledge. In each of the selected subjects, the student will work projectwise under the individual attention (not leadership: the leader is the student’s soul, not the teacher, however learned he may be!) of a capable guide.

The student will be advised (not compelled) to include in his selection the study of the principal works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother concerning man’s psychology, his place in evolution

and the future destiny of mankind. In this way, with an awakened soul and the knowledge of man’s future evolution, the young man or woman will be one of the spiritual pioneers of the nation and humanity. This will be our reward—if we need any! [*Conclusion of the article, from Mother India, December 1968. Adapted from Pavitra’s Education and the Aim of Human Life.*]

FAMILIES OF BEINGS

The Mother

There are large “families of beings” who work for the same cause, who have gathered in more or less large numbers and who come in groups as it were. It is as though at certain times there were awakenings in the psychic world, as though lots of little sleeping children were being called to wake up: “It is time, quick, quick, go down!” And they hurry down [to earth], and sometimes they do not drop at the same place, they are dispersed, yet there is something within which troubles them, pushes them; for one reason or another they are drawn close and that brings them together. But it is something deep in the being, something that is not at all on the surface; otherwise, even if people met they would not perhaps become aware of the bond. People meet and recognise each other only to the extent they become conscious of their psychic being, obey their psychic being, are guided by it; otherwise there is all that comes in to oppose it, all that veils, all that stupefies, all those obstacles to prevent you from finding yourself in your depths and being able to collaborate truly in the work. You are tossed about by the forces of Nature.

There is only one solution, to find your psychic being and once it is found, to cling to it desperately, to let it guide you step by step whatever be the obstacles. That is the only solution. [*Mother’s Collected Works* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1976), 3:2-3.]

FREE PROGRESS SYSTEM IN THE HIGHER COURSE

Kireet Joshi

The following points will briefly give an idea of the organisation of the Free Progress System in the Higher Course of our Centre of Education.

- a. There is no compulsion with regard to any subject of study.
- b. The choice of a subject for a study is freely made by each student, and this choice reflects a real and serious quest of the student.
- c. At the beginning of the session, students are invited to indicate what lines of study or what particular topics they would like to explore.
- d. In order to facilitate the choice of topics, teachers may present to the students a suggestive but detailed list of suitable topics.
- e. Each topic thus selected constitutes a short or a long project, according to the nature of the topic.
- f. In exploring each project, students would take the help of the teacher or teachers whom they might choose from among the teachers competent to deal with it.
- g. Teachers, on their part, endeavour to relate the exploration of the project to the inner needs of the students and the methods of exploration would be so organised as to permit the cultivation of intuition and the higher faculties of knowledge and action.
- h. In guiding the students, teachers are expected to endeavour to widen and intensify the area of exploration so as to avoid narrow specialisation or a mere wide superficiality.

i. Each student’s programme of studies is thus flexible, supple and evolutionary.

j. In the selection of topics of study, students are not compressed to any single Faculty, whether of Arts or Science or Technology, even though they may belong predominantly or almost exclusively to one of the Faculties by virtue of the nature of the topics that they have selected.

k. There are no fixed oral classes; but teachers arrange, by agreement with their students, oral classes as and when necessary.

l. The timetable indicates as to when and how long a teacher will be available for consultation, etc.

m. The period of study for the predominantly Arts and Science students is 3 years, and that of the predominantly Engineering students is 6 years.

n. The exact quantum of work to be covered by each student for his selected course cannot be predetermined, but in order to have completed his course, he should have shown regularity of sustained effort, development of capacities, understanding of his subject and the power of answering relevant questions orally and in writing with sufficient clarity and precision. The quality of the work is considered more important than the quantity of the work, although the latter too should not be meagre, but commensurate with high standards. [*From Mother India, December 1968, p. 102.*]

The numerical significance of 1980, the coming year, is great so far as the history of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is concerned. "Dates which have an occult significance influence physical domains also," the Mother once remarked. Regarding the date 4/5/67, she said, "It is a very rare combination, we don't often come across it. It exercises an extraordinary power over the earth atmosphere, for example to bring something down."

For 1980, it is interesting to note that it will have the jubilees of many significant dates of the Ashram. It is also a year which comes in the 12-year mystic cycle observed in Sri Aurobindo's life.

We give below a list of such jubilee dates of 1980....

1. Diamond jubilee of the day on which the Mother came and settled in Pondicherry (April 24, 1920).

2. Golden jubilee of the Service Tree, which was planted in the Ashram courtyard in 1930 and which now forms a canopy over the Samadhi.

3. Silver jubilee of the descent of the Supramental Force, which took place on February 29, 1956....

4. Silver jubilee of the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, which was formed on May 1, 1955.

5. 6/7/80 is a date which has 3 consecutive numbers... 6 represents creation, 7 represents realisation, and 8 represents a double manifestation and a double protection (protection from inside and outside).

6. 28/2/80 is the 12th anniversary of the day on which Sri Aurobindo came to Pondicherry and settled there.

7. 15/8/80 is the 108th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. [From *All India Magazine*, September 1979.]

EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE

THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

To Be A True Aurovilian:

1. The first thing needed is the inner discovery, to find out what one truly is behind the social, moral, cultural, racial and hereditary appearance.

At the centre there is a being, free and vast and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who should become the active centre of our being and our life in Auroville.

2. One lives in Auroville to be free from moral and social conventions; but this freedom must not be a new enslavement to the ego, to its desires and ambitions.

The fulfilment of one's desires bars the way to the inner discovery which can only be achieved in the peace and transparency of perfect disinterestedness.

3. The Aurovilian should lose the sense of personal possession.

For our passage in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and action is put at our disposal according to the place we must occupy.

The more we are in conscious contact with our inner being, the more will the exact means be given to us.

4. Work, even manual work, is something indispensable for the inner discovery. If we do not work, if we do not put our consciousness into matter, matter will never develop. To allow the consciousness to organise a little matter by means of one's body is very good. To create order around us helps to create order within us.

We should organise our lives not according to outer artificial rules, but according to an organised inner consciousness, for if we let life go on without subjecting it to the control of the higher consciousness, it becomes dispersed and inexpressive. It is a waste of time in the sense that no conscious use is made of matter.

5. The whole earth must prepare itself for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to work consciously to hasten this advent.

6. Little by little it will be revealed what this new species must be, and meanwhile, the best course is to consecrate ourselves entirely to the Divine. [From *The Mother on Auroville (Auroville: Auropublications, 1977), pp. 31-32.*]

THE LIVING LABORATORY

David Wickenden

"City of Dawn," "City of Human Unity," "City of the Future" and similar sobriquets were applied to Auroville in the early years with sincerity, goodwill, and, as we can see now, considerable naiveté. One doesn't hear them much any more. The days of enthusiastic future projects ("A gliding club, a riding school and a golf course are planned in an extension of the Cultural Zone"), utopian reveries ("There will be no noisy, stinking automobiles, no smoking chimneys, no juvenile delinquency, no social unrest"), and unbounded expectations are over. It is interesting, and instructive, to look at what has replaced them.

The initial projections sprang almost wholly from the imaginations of architects and planners. They were mental in nature and, with hindsight, we can see that they should have been viewed as nothing more. "I have taken care," the Mother told a member of the Ashram, "not to say: Auroville will be like this or like that. I know nothing at all about it. The Auroville which I saw thirty years ago was the principle of something which ought to be realized." As it was, fashioned imaginatively and promulgated as a kind of space-age, spiritualized Disneyland which would be the answer to all humanity's problems, Auroville was burdened with an advance billing impossible to live up to. Things became difficult. The monorails weren't materializing (or the moving sidewalks or streets paved with mosaic either) and the rhetoric began to sour.

As the flyers and brochures continued to go out from Pondicherry, Aurovilians were settling on the land and struggling to survive. Enmeshed in the pedestrian urgencies of the moment, one wasn't so inclined to speak of Auroville in terms of glittering future possibilities. The appellations hung on the new community may have represented an important truth, may have been necessary, may hold something for the future. But in experience the truth of Auroville wasn't in models or plans. The truth which the designs attempted to transliterate was something more inward, invisible, intangible, an inner attitude or poise which would only eventually find shape as its reality grew.

The real Auroville, so intertwined with an ancient village culture, proved, rather frighteningly, to be moving in a direction of its own, independent of what anyone may have wanted or envisaged. Moreover, Aurovilians themselves were proving unpredictable and conditions appallingly difficult to manage. The choice seemed to be either to release the old ideas, attune to Auroville's inner essence and trust external things to eventually work themselves out as they should, or to resist the current, hold fast to the concepts and try to twist, stuff, or otherwise coerce the peccant reality into the mold. The latter led inevitably to painful logjams, anxiety, conflict and acute anomie. "If *that* Auroville (of models and plans) is the true reality, then *this* Auroville before us is a failure": it was the only logical conclusion. On the other hand, the work continued, simply, with people trying as best they could to bring down something into themselves, the work and environment. For them the essence of Auroville, its guidelines and directives, were given by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and the rest, well, it would define itself, it *was* defining itself. "The mental tendency," she said, "is to conceive and to will first and to do afterwards. But the truth in action is to do first and to understand afterwards." It was a question of listening, waiting, working and seeing.

Slowly, amid the debris of broken formations and shattered expectations, Auroville was growing. And it was growing inwardly, becoming conscious of itself. It has become axiomatic that difficulties represent our greatest spur for progress, and certainly this has proved true for Auroville. It has been in a state of perpetual crisis from the beginning. But the difficulties which seem outwardly so grievous have had in fact an immense utility, and have been powerful agents for the concrescence of community existence and identity.

All stable communities are held together by a shared vision and a clear sense of purpose and identity. This is essential if they are to survive and develop. The vision can come, broadly speaking, generally from without or it can emerge essentially from within. In the first case, it is constantly held before the group by an authority figure or figures (spiritual or otherwise), reinforced through agreed upon common collective attitudes, behavior, and language, and drilled into new members. Development is guided more or less tightly, canalized along "proper" lines. Elements within the group that cause friction are simply removed. This can lead to collective power, harmony and stability and to what Sri Aurobindo calls a "constructed unity." In the other mode, the vision evolves from within, germinating freely from a seminal force, ideal or idea cast into its being at birth. Collective growth is unstructured, unfolds organically with little or no outward instruction in the nature and ambit of the vision. Rules and norms are few and ample room is given so that individuals and collective structures may develop naturally (which means in practice under often divergent and superficially conflicting lines) under the influence of evolutionary pressure and the indwelling truth. This implies a considerable amount of chaos, meanderings, wrong turns, and discouraging cul-de-sacs which are obviated in the former approach. It also leads in the end to a genuine, deep-seated, and profound inner unity that has no need of compunctions and strictures in order to function, nor delimited behavior patterns, thought forms or verbal positive reinforcement in order to function.

Whatever the case, nearly always the guiding inspiration is expressed in a simple and compact formula which acts as a kind of beacon for the mental consciousness and a mantra for the heart. Thus, much of what Arcosanti is about, for example, is suggested or contained in the phrase "Two Suns Arcology." Findhorn is a "University of Light," and both these phrases imply a whole constellation of related concerns. They are accepted by the respective communities as being representative of their vision and nature and

help guide development. For some time Auroville was in an ambiguous zone where its identity was unclear. "City of the Future" remained an external appellative and nothing else seemed to be striking the right chords either. A stage has been reached, however, when out of a darkened maze of entanglements the community's inner reality has begun to clear and become manifest in collective expression. In the past two years, in different brochures, in letters to individuals and groups, on videotape and in conversation with guests, a phrase, an orientation has asserted itself repeatedly: "An 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 food processing..." "Auroville is forced by circumstances to serve as a constant laboratory, a crucible where all kinds of agricultural, technical and educational research must take place. The efforts of Auroville's research works are integrated, all aspects coming into play simultaneously..." "Auroville is a living laboratory for a world which must be."

We would do well, then, to look more closely at what this implies both on an inward level and in external manifestation.

Regarding external development, especially in contrast to the earlier phrase names, it indicates movement toward the specific and concrete. "City of Human Unity" was always rather nebulous: while it indicates an important aspect of Auroville's work on the inner, psychological levels, practically speaking it is an abstract concept, and remaining conceptual, is static rather than dynamic. It is significant that two of the three quotations from the Mother selected for the recent brochure *Auroville Today* emphasize the dynamic nature of the community. "I want to insist on the fact that it will be an experiment, it is for making experiments—experiments, research study"; and "Auroville wants to be a new creation expressing a new consciousness in a new way and according to new methods." The stress given to Auroville's experimental nature is equally important. The community is increasingly defining itself in the most essential sense of laboratory—as a place, simply, of experiment.

As the endeavor is fundamentally experimental, it follows that one shouldn't seek in it polished results: it is the process rather than the finished product (if there can ever be such a thing) that is of primary importance. No doubt there will be breakthroughs and outward manifestations, they are necessary and important, but they will always be necessarily derivative and will not change Auroville's protean nature. Without the fetters incurred from expecting Auroville to produce, like a rabbit out of a hat, universal brotherhood, futuristic architecture and a collection of fully realized beings, one will be far more able to discern the real and appreciable progress being made in many areas. In fact, the real work is far less glamorous than we might have hoped.

Thus the focus is different from Findhorn, for example, where an important part of their work is to provide a visible, tangible structure of results that can be grasped by a large number of people. As one of their booklets stresses, "Findhorn is a center for demonstrating, in concrete and practical form, the reality, the nature and the outworking of spiritual laws and principles. By allowing the power of a demonstrated vision, the power of achievement and tangible manifestations of the reality and effectiveness of living in harmony with spiritual law, Findhorn becomes a cornerstone of the universal foundation of new, inspired consciousness." Findhorn is in a position of selling (nothing derogatory intended) the principles of new-age consciousness. Whatever the similarities between the two communities, this particular aspect lies simply outside Auroville's domain. It is not a demonstration center, clean, posh, and proper, but a laboratory in the nature of a forge. It is hot, dirty, and noisy, a place where materials are hurled together, experimented upon, pounded into or out of shape, ripped apart, discarded, fused together, and, even-

tually, transformed. Like an ordinary force, it is often not a particularly pleasant place to be. We may hope that eventually what will emerge will also be in its way an inspiration and model; certainly the Mother saw Auroville becoming that and in certain areas it is already happening. But it is likely that even so things will not appear externally in the ways we might expect.

The laboratory is living not only in the sense of being dynamic and experimental, but in the fact that it deals with real, pressing, and pivotal concerns affecting all life on the planet. As a result, its methods and approach are integral, cover many different fields and are worked on simultaneously.... To such a place one doesn't come to learn how or what one should think. It is assumed that one carries upon entering a certain orientation; it is not the community's work to instruct or educate in that sense. So again, the focus in Auroville is different from, to continue the example, that of Findhorn. Being a "University," Findhorn has a clearly defined educational objective: "Findhorn is a training center for people who will be the inspiration of the new world. It educates them, through spiritual principles and discipline, to become one with their higher natures. It trains them in human relationships, in working cooperatively with others. It helps them to unfold themselves mentally, spiritually and physically, through lectures, discussions, sports, arts and crafts, and through their involvement in all aspects of building a community and making it work." Again, there is a shared sentiment here: an important part of Auroville's metaphysical underpinning is a view of all life as education in its widest sense: the evocation of the highest and deepest in the individual, including his inmost spiritual being, and in the collectivity, the unfolding, integral development and perfection of all human and presently suprahuman faculties. But in Auroville this will not be effected through seminars, lectures, workshops, or encounter groups. In keeping with the community's nature, it will happen for the most part invisibly, through the actual work, and in silence....

"Crucible" is a word which has also begun to appear frequently in references of Aurovilians to Auroville and, like "laboratory" and "forge," it is a precise and effective metaphor. Crucible here in both senses of the word: a rough vessel used for combining and, through the intensity of fire, melting, purifying, and fusing elements, and as a severe trial, a test. Auroville is a vessel which contains fundamental earth elements called upon to be new-fashioned, obliterated, or transformed; it holds the world in miniature and this fact defines both the work and the nature of the community. The most pressing, basic aspects of the contemporary human dilemma are contained materially in the body of Auroville—almost, it seems, they have been given or inherited as a birth-right. They are problems, intractable knots that humanity must in a general way solve; they are dilemmas which manifest here specifically and either we solve them practically or quite literally we don't survive.

It is important that people in India and abroad recognize Auroville as such a place, engaged in such a work. Quite outside any metaphysical implications, Auroville represents a microcosmic environment where research essential to the resolution of key global problems can be effected.

Auroville serves as a catalyst for change on all levels: change in the purely external domains of land use and development, energy, construction, etc., and change in the areas of social structures, economics, and politics. While Auroville is a laboratory in the most material sense, it is a laboratory also in the more interior work of transmuting superannuated concepts, atavistic mores, and obsolescent structures and evolving new ones. But such concerns, while important, are finally secondary, derivative: the most essential aspect of the community's work and being lies behind or underneath them. Auroville is not only or even primarily an ecological experiment, nor is its work to provide finished New Age

and socioeconomic structures. It is necessary to sense the deeper reality behind, supporting and inspiring the community, and it is to this, the most important aspect and source of all that we have touched on until this point, that we should turn now.

* * * * *

Auroville is increasingly included as part of a vast contemporary psychospiritual New Age smorgasbord that embraces everything from guided astral excursions and biofeedback to Kabalism, Zen, and the Divine Light Mission. The heaping together on the same table of anything of this kind tends to create not a remarkable new synthetic blend but an indigestible mush. In the attempt to find a common ground where all paths are one, wholly different elements are mixed indiscriminately, unique characteristics are pasted over, and things tend to sag toward their lowest common denominator; the truth suffers inevitable diminution and authenticity is cheapened. In the midst of this welter, it seems appropriate for Auroville to try to clarify and widen its process of self-definition for both itself and others. One way of approaching the community's inner work would be to look at it in the context of these other movements.

There is a shared general orientation. "To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this integrated completeness is the divine living." These words of Sri Aurobindo, while directly applicable to Auroville, could apply as well to the work of many other groups all over the world. For those who share such a general orientation to unite, share their experiences, outlooks, and work, and affirm their solidarity in aspiration for a higher truth is good; such a linking can clarify the role of each within the larger network and can help create a powerful collective force to hasten the advent of the new creation we all want. The difficulty comes when things simply remain on this level.

The aim of the Integral Yoga, which we may presume most Aurovilians are in Auroville to work out, includes the program indicated above, but it also includes something more. The nature and goal of Auroville's interior work, while superficially similar to that of other spiritual and yogic groups, on a deeper level differs significantly in scope of vision, goal, and mode of practical effectuation. Terms such as "transformation" and "spiritual," used by others in a general way, have a very precise definition for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: "Purification of the nature by the 'influence' of the spirit is not what I mean by transformation; purification is only a part of a psychic change or a psychospiritual change—the word besides has any senses and is very often given a moral or ethical meaning which is foreign to my purposes.... By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature—I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or yogic siddhis (like the Tantric's) or a transcendental...body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfillment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demands I make on life and yoga."

Catchwords such as "God realization" and "transformation" are used as general phrases to include many quite different movements. At best, sloppy and indiscriminate use of language results in the obscuration of important distinctions and eliminates the need to think. Perhaps it is still necessary to affirm that all those who are seeking "God realization" are in fact often not seeking the same thing at all nor are they necessarily moving in the same

direction. There is an almost infinite number of spiritual realizations, many of which differ radically, and the one sought will determine the nature of the path. To link the "God realization" of Yogananda, for example, with that of the Mother is a misleading simplification, to say the least.

In the same way, the meaning of "new consciousness" implies something other here than that put forward by psychotherapy, est, psychosynthesis and the like. Auroville has in fact very little to do with the human potential movement. What is shared is a quest for rebirth. But whereas in the therapy-and-awareness orientation birth occurs generally within the confines of the human personality, in the Integral Yoga birth is sought through the superseding of the human ego altogether. There may, of course, be a point where the two are coterminous, but in any case Aurovilians would not tend to accept the definition of spiritual as meaning our development as loving, whole, fulfilled, aware, sensitive people *only*, or even people cognizant of and aspiring to enter into relation with a higher reality or God—more general terms which can be taken to mean almost anything. All this may be desirable, may come as part of the path, but the real work lies elsewhere.

In communities with a psychological or psychospiritual orientation importance is given to working through personal or collective blockages through workshops, encounter groups, body therapies, or general collective living. A conscious attempt is made to provide a supportive, affirmative atmosphere so that people feel able to express themselves freely and release old mental-emotional patterns. It is an atmosphere characterized above all by acceptance: members are encouraged to accept and "be themselves," affirming their wholeness as potentially divine, or at any rate potentially "self-realized" beings. This is a necessary step. "To be oneself" is indeed the rule of divine living, but all hinges on the understanding of self, for to live solely for and to oneself in the name of something higher can be a disastrous misapplication. The "acceptance of oneself," if not used as a springboard for something beyond, merely plumps us down in the morass of the ego: the outer nature, which from the point of view of the Integral Yoga must be completely transformed, is merely coddled and pampered and we end with indulgence rather than transcendence.

Part of the reason for such a demise is the mistaken identification of, in Sri Aurobindo's terminology, the vital being for the soul, the true inner or psychic being. "The soul and the life are two quite different powers. The soul is a spark of the Divine Spirit which supports individual nature. In most men the soul is hidden and covered over by the action of the external nature; people mistake the vital being for the soul because it is the vital which animates and moves the body. But this vital being is a thing made up of desires and executive forces, good and bad; it is the desire-soul, not the true thing. It is when the true soul (psyche) comes forward and begins first to influence and then govern the actions of the instrumental nature than man begins to overcome vital desire and grow towards a divine nature.... By psychic I mean something different from a purified mind and vital. A purified mind and vital are the result of the awakened and liberated psychic being but it is not itself the psychic."

In Auroville, a supportive atmosphere in the contemporary sense is notably absent. Rather than being nurtured and soothed, the ego moorings tend to be constantly assailed, battered, smashed, and whirled apart. Auroville's affirmation is frequently couched in the negative form of a denial: misaligned forms or inferior realizations are rejected until the other thing, as yet invisible, is gained. On the external level this often manifests in a recurrent breaking of forms, an apparent destructiveness, negativity, a peripatetic restlessness that takes up and discards, accepts and rejects in perpetual search of that something else: Auroville is characteristically in a constant state of change, ferment, and reshuffling, routines are constantly broken. From one side this can be experi-

enced as frightful chaos; from another, a fecund churning which prepares the ground for a larger life....

Importance is placed in other communities on group unity and solidarity. From Auroville's point of view, however, what passes for unity is largely an outer, mental or mental-emotional bond frequently contrived and artificially maintained, mixed with a variety of perhaps not entirely desirable elements. True unity, on the other hand, comes from another center and need not act or seek form in an outer arrangement at all. It does not need to be imposed, can be very powerful and genuine, but quiet, invisible to the outer eye. The other unity—attractive, compelling—can too easily congeal in a husk, a form with a formula and thus a snare. There is no attempt therefore to *create* harmony in Auroville or enforce unity: when they come, they will come naturally, without effort, as the result of an extended interior process. And it is in this context that we can speak meaningfully of the "City of Human Unity"—though perhaps not a unity (much less a city) as understood by the mind. Auroville is not programmed in the way of other communities: no attempt is made to *hold* things together: the community is not contrived or specially organized in that sense. Life in Auroville is what it is—just life, without cosmetics, warts and all.

While the life of the collective is, of course, important, it is not the overriding consideration as it is elsewhere. The essential work toward the realization of true unity is the unification done by each individual within him or herself, and this is best accomplished in a wide framework that allows for the maximum of individual freedom. Particular emphasis has been given in the Yoga to this need: "Man as he grows in his being must have as much free space as possible for all its members to grow in their own strength to find themselves and their potentialities. In their freedom they will err, because experience comes through many errors, but each has in itself a divine principle and they will find it out, disengage its presence, significance and law as their experience of themselves deepens and increases.... Each part of man's being has its own dharma which it must follow and will follow in the end, put on it what fetters you will." At the same time it must be said that the process is reciprocal: "The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs, and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of a united humanity."

Because individual needs and natures vary widely, rules, norms, and standards are at a minimum. There is no model in Auroville for the way people "should be" and there are no expectations (beyond the most fundamental necessary for collective living) regarding behavior or attitude. There is freedom from social expectations as old forms and standard modes become no longer relevant or necessary. There is no homogeneity in Auroville and no attempt toward it: the community contains the most contradictory approaches, the most diverse views and divergent ways of being. Even the vision of Auroville itself differs widely depending on whom you talk to. No one is interviewed or screened to see if he fits the Auroville image or will be disruptive. Either he finds his own place or he doesn't, the process is worked out by itself: "You know, I do not believe in outer decisions, I simply believe in one thing only," the Mother said, "the force of consciousness which is making a pressure like that [*crushing gesture*] and the pressure goes on becoming greater, which means that it will separate out the people."

There is a strong tendency among groups who are affirming the positive potential and divine nature of the human being to disregard the dark and the demonic. But this element must be faced and again the guidelines given to Aurovilians have been clear. "It is good that we should be reminded of it [*the dark aspect*]. First,

because to see it has for every strong soul a tonic effect which saves us from the flabbiness and relaxation encouraged by a too mellifluous philosophic, religious or ethical sentimentalism, that which loves to look upon Nature as love and life and beauty and good, but turns away from her grim mask of death, adoring God as Shiva, but refusing to adore him as Rudra; secondly, because unless we have the honesty and courage to look existence straight in the face, we shall never arrive at any effective solution of its discords and oppositions." The tendency to "look existence straight in the face" is particularly characteristic of Auroville—problems and difficulties are yanked out, shaken, and held up for all to see so that their deformity may the more swiftly be removed. For people coming to Auroville in search of a New Age center of love and light, this can be disconcerting. What appears from that perspective as an incoherent and unpleasant tangle of problems, conflicts, and struggle is, from another, a stark confrontation of basic realities and a joyfully vehement clearing of old debris. In all the "seriousness" of Auroville there is a light, there is profound love and tenderness, a deep well of delight and a bed-rock sense of unity. But one has to look for them—or rather not look but quietly attune, for it is likely they won't manifest in expected ways.

Auroville has behind, supporting and guiding it, a vast metaphysical vision and a precise system of realizing it. Because of this, there has been a tendency in the community to view other movement as spurious, puerile, or at any rate insufficient. This is unfortunate, for it is a false and egoistic movement and works to Auroville's detriment in a number of ways.... It is necessary to affirm Auroville's uniqueness, the distinctive power and truth of its vision and goal, but at the same time it is important for this community (as well as for others) not to close in upon itself or arrogate an unwarranted position. Above all, it is essential for Auroville not to fall into the trap of moving toward sectarianism, dogmatism, a religious attitude toward Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In fact, given the most adamant and categorical injunctions of these two regarding religion and the religious consciousness, and given the breadth, acuity, and catholicity of their works, it would be hard to see how such a movement would be allowed to go unchecked for long. In regard to Auroville, the Mother was emphatic: "Programme: research through experience of the Supreme Truth, a life divine but NO RELIGIONS." It is not a question of Auroville or other communities being "higher" or "lower," more or less important: such thinking is intrinsically false. It is not a question of judging but of seeing, clearly, the work and role of each within the network....

Satprem ... explain[s] [in *The Adventure of Consciousness*] why realizations which for others may be desirable are, for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, insufficient: "These 'miracles with a method,' or the intervention of higher powers of consciousness only sugar the pill without affecting the essence. They are futile from the point of view of transforming the world. The real problem, *the real thing* as the Mother says, is not to modify Matter from outside by fugitive so-called supernatural intervention but to modify it from within, lastingly; to establish a new physical basis.... We have lived long enough under the sign of the gods and religions: 'I have no intention of giving my sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco,' said Sri Aurobindo, 'a partial and transient spiritual opening with no true and radical change in the law of the external nature.' Levitation, the conquest of sleep and hunger and even of illness only touch the surface of the problem, it is a negative work *against* an order of things, it means still recognizing, though negatively, the old law, whilst it is the order itself which must change."

It is for this reason that one will not find in Auroville much emphasis given to transmissions from the Masters or conversations with devas: the work lies elsewhere.... Auroville is wholly lacking

in glamor: its work is not conspicuous but "modest, humble, patient, like a scientist before his test tubes."

We have returned now to our point of departure—Auroville in its truest sense as a laboratory for inner change. And here we touch once more upon the truth of miniaturization and symbolic representation. Auroville is a point of concentration, a symbolic center that contains not only outer elements to be worked on and newly made, but corresponding and originating inner elements. As overgrazed wastelands represent and embody the essence of a much vaster global problem, so does the primary inner landscape of the individual represent and embody larger, eroded consciousness patterns and formations which must be transformed. Each individual represents a concatenation of vibrations which corresponds, on the deepest level, to a certain universal pattern or type: "Each one is an instrument for controlling a certain aggregate of vibrations which represents his particular field of work." The Ashram (and we may say this more so now of Auroville) was referred to by Sri Aurobindo as a "laboratory" that contained all the necessary elements to be worked on to effect an earth "cure": "It is necessary or rather inevitable that in an Ashram which is a 'laboratory' ... for a spiritual and supramental yoga, humanity should be variously represented. For the problem of transformation has to deal with all sorts of elements favourable and unfavourable. The same man indeed carries in him a mixture of these two things. If only sattwic and cultured men came for yoga, men without very much of the vital difficulty in them, then, because the difficulty of the vital element in terrestrial nature has not been faced and overcome, it might well be that the endeavour would fail."

"Without knowing it at all or imagining it very well," the Mother told the children of the Ashram, "each of you represents one of the difficulties that must be conquered for the transformation. And that makes quite a few difficulties. I had even written somewhere that it was more than a difficulty: I had said that each one represents an impossibility to be resolved. And it is all those impossibilities together that can be transformed into the Work. They are no longer isolated difficulties: they are collective difficulties. Because you are not doing your yoga for yourselves alone, you are doing the yoga for everyone—without wanting it, automatically."

So it is that the primary, the fundamental work of Auroville is on an inner level. The outer work, whether planting trees, conducting business or building the Matrimandir, is only a medium and a symbol....

...Battlefield, crucible, force, laboratory—all those indicate much of Auroville's nature and work. And because such is the focus, the difficulties that manifest here take on at times a seemingly exaggerated, certainly an obdurate character. "This Yoga is a spiritual battle; its very attempt raises all sorts of adverse forces," Sri Aurobindo warned. And indeed, it seems that each step forward in Auroville in whatever area must be wrestled out in the face of fierce opposition and obstructions—the weight of the world, resisting. And these forces come not only from "outside" but from within the community itself and its members, a battlefield indeed. Yet it is important to stress that wherever the difficulties come from, whether the result of a large cosmic working or as a result of our own excrescent impurities, all serve to lead us toward the only place where they can be resolved, the psychic being and the collective psychic consciousness. It should be stressed again that the dark and the difficulties are not embraced as the ultimate way, do not in any way preclude delight, love, and lightness nor do they indicate that the path Auroville is to follow is one of travail and woe. In fact, the very opposite is true. Contrasting the negative and affirmative ways, Sri Aurobindo writes: "The dark path is there and there are many who make, like the Christian, a gospel of spiritual suffering.... It is a dark and difficult

way which nobody should follow on whom the necessity does not lie.... Yoga can be done without the rejection of life, without killing or impairing the life-joy or the vital force.”...

“It’s an image of the future that is leading everyone on in Auroville...and giving him his identity,” says William Irwin Thompson. “It’s a whole different kind of transformation. You feel you are playing out the cultural evolution of mankind and there are no models. You have to move into a wholly new kind of world; to explain it in old terms is utterly impossible.” In the

Mother’s words, “Finally, all that one says, all that one has said and all that one will say, is nothing but an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which can be lived but never described.” Many things to many people, Auroville is perhaps finally, beyond all definitions and labels—beyond and yet including them all—what the Mother saw so clearly when she said: “Auroville: a center of accelerated evolution. It gives me the feeling of an accelerated evolution, it is a little overwhelming.” [Abridged from the original, which appeared in *Auroville Notes*.]

PROGRESS

Auroville at birth, 11 and a half years ago, was a wide expanse of barely productive farmland and overgrazed fields dotted here and there with a few isolated trees, patches of scrub jungle and cashew groves, and scored with deepening canyons. But there was a feeling of pregnancy in the land, people began to arrive drawn by some deep inner response to the promise and challenge of an ideal, and the manifestation of Mother’s Dream began.

The span of time from the beginning to the present has been full—of comings and goings, of discovery, experimentation, learning, and growth—the future constantly races to become the present and the pages often turn faster than we can read. It is this perpetual motion and its expression, often called the “process,” which serves as the touchstone for our individual and collective progress, the amorphous and unique “Auroville experience.” The process, like a multifaceted mirror constantly merging and diffracting the images, is too elusive to be caught in its entirety and too ubiquitous to be encapsulated by our limited world of words.

“Finally, all that one says, all that one has said and that one will say is nothing but an extremely clumsy and limited way of expressing something which can be lived but never described” (The Mother).

We are left then with some necessary humility in our clumsy attempts at description, our reflections of reflections, or one or perhaps a few facets of the mirror at a time, and with the hope that the very real underlying unity of Auroville will shine through.

Progress will concern itself with the physical work and manifestation in Auroville with an aim to providing regular information about communities and projects for friends around the world whose contact with Auroville may be limited. It is hoped that a broader understanding of the various areas of work and how they relate to each other, the challenges and how they are met, and the progress through the work from one point to another will generate a greater feeling of participation and appreciation of that of which the work is one reflection....

Progress is a service. In order for it to be more effective, we welcome your comments, questions, suggestions, references. Correspondence may be addressed to Mary Helen, Peace, Auroville P.O. 605101, India.

[Note: *Collaboration* will publish the slightly abridged reports from *Progress*, beginning with this issue:]



Mary Helen and Dee preparing *Progress*.

Matrimandir Construction: To begin with the soul...: "The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody, and especially for Aurovilians." —The Mother, 15/11/70.

The foundation stone for the Matrimandir was laid at dawn on February 21, 1971, with the following message given by the Mother: "Let the Matrimandir be the living symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine." A small group of Aurovilians, joined at times by helpers from the Ashram and other areas of Auroville, began on March 14, 1971, the enormous task of excavating the crater from which the base of the sphere would rise. With no more sophisticated tools than crowbars and mumpitis (the local short-handled shovels), even with the eventual hiring of Tamil workers, it required a full year to complete the excavation of the 20,000 cubic meters of earth.

The following years saw a long succession of concretings highlighted by some especially memorable moments—the beginning of the first layer of the foundation on February 29, 1972, the first pillar (Mahalakshmi, on the east) rising above the rim of the crater, the culmination of the four arching pillars in the ring beam at the summit, the continuous 72-hour concreting of the first slab, and on April 8, 1978, the placing of the final chetty of cement on the roof of the inner chamber. On January 21, 1978, the marble for the inner room arrived from Italy, each piece unloaded by hand and stored beneath the amphitheater. During all of this time, though the faces often changed, the work force remained between 15 and 40 Aurovilians with a few hired laborers assisting in the workshops.

With the major concreting completed, energy centered on construction of the ramps which now spiral gracefully through the spaces between the pillars. Simultaneously, another group worked daily to complete the arduous task of chipping the ceiling of the inner room in preparation for the final plastering. From early 1979 the next phase of the work was taken up, the formation of the "space frame" for the skin, the outer visible layer of the sphere. This "space frame," which will eventually support the solid outer precast cement places, is composed of interconnecting triangles of precast reinforced cement beams. A total of 1,000 beams are needed of which only 40 have so far been completed. It is estimated that with the work force remaining about the same, the completion of the skin will require from 3 to 5 years.

Several other aspects of the work in preparation for the future are studies in the development of an alternate-energy-powered air-conditioning system (perhaps solar), a search for a glass company to form the 70-cm. diameter crystal, and research into a means of reflection and projection for the single ray of light that will fall on the crystal in the center of the inner room.

Matrimandir Gardens and Nursery: In preparation for the future gardens, the nursery was begun on February 21, 1970, in an area of about 3 acres west of the Center. In the first months water was supplied by bullock cart until a pipeline was laid to the nearest well, about 1,000 feet away. The water system gradually expanded...to include 2 large storage pools,...a number of vertical gravity-feed tanks, and an underground pipeline system covering the total area, which had grown to about 5 acres.

During this time emphasis in the work of Aurovilians at the nursery centered on the collection of plants from different areas of India, participation in a seed-exchange program with other gardens throughout the world, germination and seedling trials, plantation of compatible species to serve as "mothering plants" for the later development of the gardens, recording and collating descriptions and cultural data on every plant introduced to the nursery, and collection of local endangered species. To date the total number of different species in the nursery and gardens is approximately 2,000.

In November 1973, the first trees were planted in the gardens area surrounding the Matrimandir. Over the next 3 years a total of nearly 700 trees was planted in a continuing belt but further development awaits land purchase, water supply and people to care for new areas. The existing water system consists of two wells (one of them shared by the communities of Sincerity and Fidelity, the workers camp, Unity office and Center kitchen, vegetable garden and Matrimandir), both with electric pumps, a storage tank with an electric pump and an inadequate underground pipeline system supplemented by hoses. Routine watering and bunding are carried out by 4 Tamil workers under the supervision of Aurovilians from the nursery.

...Other aspects of the work are a library of about 8,000 books on plants, gardening, ecology and related subjects and an extensive file of additional printed matter, an orchid collection of around 3,000 plants, experiments in pond construction, two small glass houses for seedlings and orchids and a fern house with a mist system. Studies in composting and organic pest control have been carried out and in the last 2 years concentrated efforts to control erosion and conserve rainfall have included construction of an earth dam and a cement-core dam, a series of small check dams, bunding and experimentation with a number of lawn grasses and groundcovers, both indigenous and from abroad.

To date, there are 5 Aurovilians living and working in the nursery and gardens. Heavy physical work and routine watering are carried out by Tamil men and boys from nearby villages. Major equipment includes a large and a small bullock cart and a tractor and trailer, all of which are available for use by other communities.

The most important event...this year was the long-awaited completion of the first well and pumpset actually on nursery land.... A small house has been constructed to protect the pump and serve also as a new storeroom.... In the same area, at a low point near the wadi where one of the dams was built last year, a new catchment pond is being dug. In addition to catching runoff from nearby fields, it will serve as the first large experiment in waterproofing using sodium tripolyphosphate as well as becoming the new home of an American lotus and other plants....

Matrimandir Office: The office space in the group of temporary workshop and storage buildings near the Matrimandir has housed a variety of occupants and functions over the years....

Beginning several months ago, workers at Matrimandir felt the need for a weekly meeting to coordinate the work, discuss problems relative to the work as a whole, introduce new ideas, etc. Around the same time there was a growing feeling among people in other parts of Auroville that there needed to be a central location for the Envelope group meetings, Co-op meetings, visa work, *Auroville Review*, the Guard and secretarial work, all of which is often overlapping. It felt right that this centralization...should actually happen at the Center so it was suggested that the 2 spacious rooms at Matrimandir be used for this together with the weekly Matrimandir meetings.

Several people began coming regularly to repair and refinish woodwork and windows, clean, paint and wax, more office furniture was collected and some secretarial work begun, though the permanent moving in awaits completion of the remodeling. One of the functions of the office will be to provide reception and information for visitors to the Matrimandir area and to be a place rather than an individual where people can write for information. It is hoped that funds can be collected to reinstall the telephone (a disproportionately expensive convenience in India)... So far, about 8 people have offered to spend several mornings or afternoons a week in the office....

Unity Resources and Land Service: Unity Resources came into being in late spring of 1979, spurred by the impetus of Hexiad.... Located above the kitchen in the building called Unity, near the Matrimandir, it is a central point for many Aurovilians. The aim of Unity Resources is to be simply a resource center for Auroville, a

• Auroville was invited to participate in an international conference on human ecology, focusing on Jaipur and its environs in Rajasthan, 2 to 9 November. The conference was part of the celebrations to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of Jaipur, one of the few planned cities in the world. The conference was sponsored jointly by the University of Rajasthan, the Indian Human Ecology Council, and the Jaipur 250th Anniversary Celebrations Committee and was supported by the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, London.

For more information on Auroville or to send financial or other help to Auroville, you can write to these centers:

Matagiri	Sri Aurobindo's Action Center
Mt. Tremper, NY 12457	P.O. Box 1977
	Boulder, CO 80306
East-West Cultural Center	
2865 W. 9th St.	Auroville Association
Los Angeles, CA 90006	212 Farley Drive
	Aptos, CA 95003

HEXIAD

Hexiad is a network organization designed to link 3 intentional communities on 3 continents with society-at-large through communications, administrative and program development functions carried out through U.S. organizations with related resources and interest.

The communities are Arcosanti, in Arizona; Findhorn, in Scotland; and Auroville, in south India. The 3 are strikingly different from each other in many ways.... There are, however, some fundamental commonalities. Each community is a living experiment, an attempt to develop and demonstrate new ways for human beings to live and work together. Each tries...to formulate the "how-tos" of an economically self-sufficient society where people can work together to achieve a healthy environment, emotional and social satisfaction, and spiritual fulfillment....

During an era when so-called alternative communities and organizations seem to come and go with each season, these 3 have existed for 10 to 17 years. While each was built to varying degrees upon the political and cultural energy of the 1960s, each is rooted in philosophical traditions thousands of years old. Each has its own international network of former participants, members, and supporters....

Hexiad believes that these 3 communities are important models for future societies. The purpose of the Hexiad Network is to help them strengthen internally, while improving their contact with, and impact upon, the rest of the world. Hexiad's intent is to bridge the communities, not to eliminate their differences. Community members who work with Hexiad report that part of the strengthening process is working with diversity: learning to communicate across barriers of personal belief and home-base "jargon"; learning from each other's differences; clarifying one's own strengths and weaknesses in light of others' views.

Communications, information, and resource exchange are the principal Hexiad activities. These are carried out through centers... on the Network, located in each community and at our office in Cambridge, Mass. The Cambridge office concentrates on the organizational functions of Hexiad: administration, communication, and program development. The community centers carry out the coordinative, training, and planning functions....

Interactive Communications via Computer:...A Hexiad office is likely to contain a computer terminal.... Utilizing ordinary telephone lines, these terminals provide access to a central computer, which puts Hexiad centers in touch with each other and with a worldwide network of hundreds of other individuals and organiza-

tions. Hexiad is a member of Electronic Information Exchange System, which includes nearly 1,000 futurists, academics, professionals and activists representing a vast, varied field of knowledge....

...Computer conferencing has been established at Arcosanti, Findhorn and the Hexiad administrative center in Cambridge. Extensive efforts are underway to extend EIES to Auroville, though the logistical problems of locating in India are formidable....

Interactive Video Project: During 1978, each community was supplied with half-inch video tape equipment, with the request that each produce regular "letters" to the other two. No restrictions or guidelines were placed on content or style, nor upon the communities' other uses of the equipment. Some 16 half-hour tapes were recorded during the first year.... They are informative, humorous, exploratory.... A 37-minute composite tape, summarizing the first year and illustrating use of video as a communications tool...is available on loan.

Technical Assistance, Training, Resourcing: Hexiad has supported numerous projects to meet each community's specific needs, including construction of guest housing at Auroville; an intercommunity dance program at Arcosanti; and a limited number of exchange visits by individuals wishing to study and compare the 3 in certain interest areas, i.e., education, child rearing, marriage and family life, management and decision making, economic development....

Education: A major activity in this area is a series of Planetary Learning Teams. The first...was composed of 2 people chosen by each community, and an outside facilitator, who spent one month living and working together at each community during the winter and spring of 1979. Though group members originally came together with varying levels of skepticism and questioning..., they emerged from their experiences with the agreement that further networking could greatly benefit each community. They also felt that community members should play a more active role in planning and implementing this process....

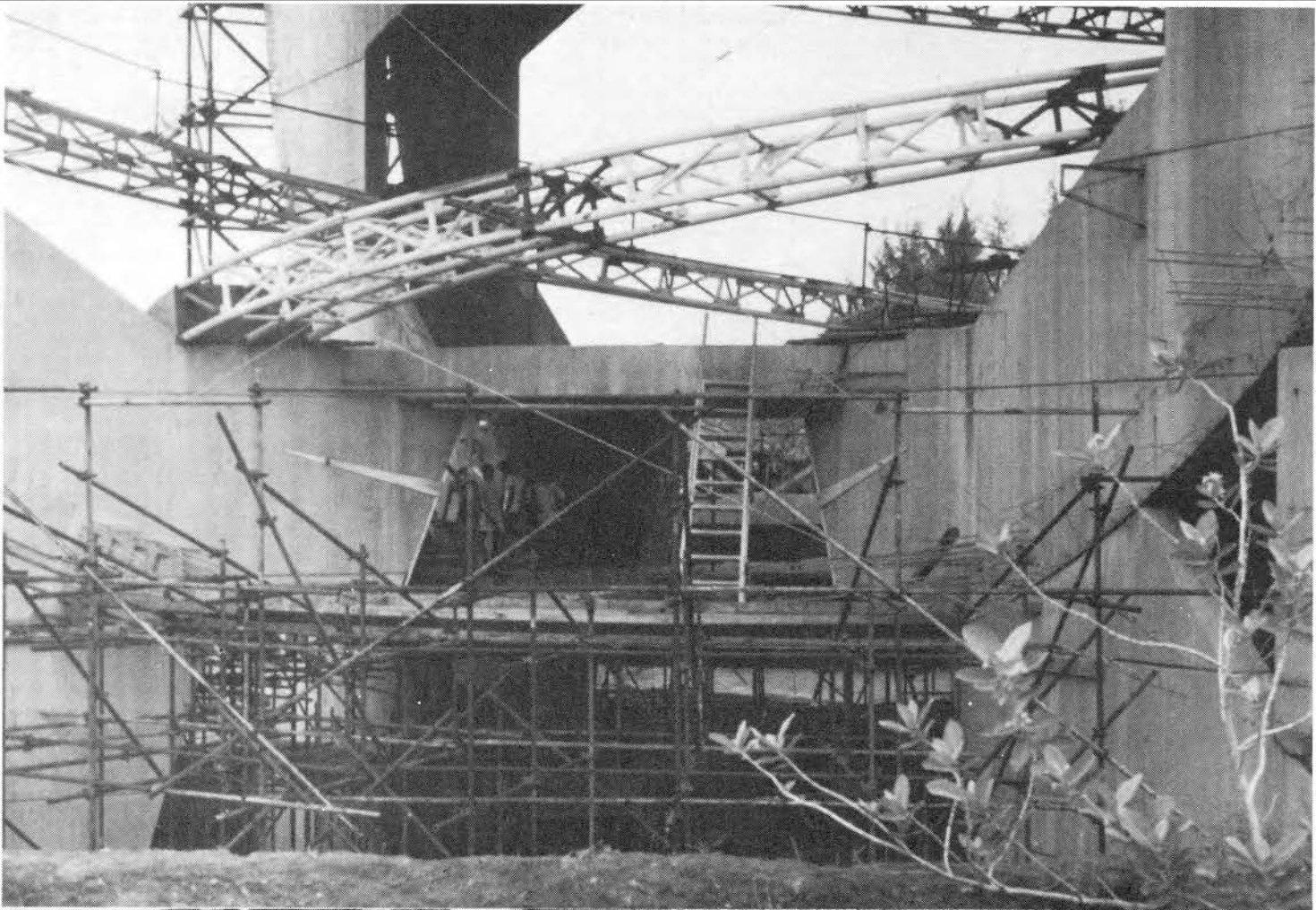
The PLT experience proved to be an innovative educational technique which facilitates learning on levels other teaching methods usually do not reach.... This experience altered or reached beyond members' assumptions, prejudices, languages, cultural differences, spiritual beliefs. Nonverbal and telepathic communications abilities were awakened and developed in some.... who had not previously believed they had such abilities.

...Hexiad will sponsor a series of PLTs, starting with a communications-oriented group in 1980....

Hexiad History and Governance: In June 1969, participants in PLT-1 and its sponsoring organization, the Karass Project of Interface Foundation, organized Hexiad and dissolved Karass. Karass, under the leadership of founder-director Peter Callaway, had been linking and providing technical assistance to the 3 communities since 1974. This effort was (and is) funded by gifts from a private benefactor....

At the same time as the project was reorganized as Hexiad, it moved to the Center on Technology and Society in Cambridge, Mass. Most Karass staff members were retained as Hexiad staff. Hexiad established a management board that includes 2 representatives from each community, several staff members, a representative from CTS, and representatives from other, affiliated groups....

Additional information on Hexiad and the 3 communities is available from Hexiad, 129 Raymond St., Cambridge, MA 02144, (617) 354-7134 and 7063; Unity Resources, Center, Auroville 605101, India; Arcosanti, Cordes Junction, Mayer, AZ 86333, (602) 632-7135; Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Forres IV 36 OTZ, Scotland. [Abridged from a Hexiad staff report.]



Matrimandir construction, September 1979.



GENERAL NEWS

- **Lloyd Fellows**, founder/director of the Institute of Integral Psychology and a clinical psychologist, and his wife, Kathryn Fellows, a marriage and family counselor and instructor at Ventura Community College, gave a workshop talk on "Intuition, Transformation and Sri Aurobindo" in August at the annual meeting of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in Princeton, N.J. The Institute of Integral Psychology was established this past year as a result of the visit of M.P. Pandit to the Ojai area.

- People interested in forming or participating in the planning of an Aurovilian-style community in the Oregon area are invited to contact **Joel and Evelyn Gross**, 980 Skipper Lane, Eugene, OR 97404, telephone (503) 689-4735.

- The September-October 1979 issue of *The Yoga Journal* contains an article on education by **Dionne Marx**, director of Integral and Interdisciplinary Studies and editor of the new journal *Integral View*, of the California Institute of Asian Studies in San Francisco. The article surveys educational trends and deals with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's system of integral education, as well as with the educational principles of Maria Montessori, Krishnamurti, and A.S. Neill. The issue also contains a guide to alternative education for children. The address of the magazine is 2054 University Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704.

- **Arabinda Basu**, longtime resident of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, author of numerous papers on Sri Aurobindo and an eminent teacher of philosophy, is currently in the United States. He is teaching courses on Sri Aurobindo and Hinduism at the University of Iowa in Dubuque until December 1979.

- **Arvind Devalia** of Sri Aurobindo Ashram recently spent 6 months touring Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, in India, where he addressed several Lion's Clubs, United Nations associations, and the University of Bombay on the subject of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In August he left India to visit a number of European countries on a similar tour.

- **SABDA** (the Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency, of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram) exhibited the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at the Frankfurt Book Fair in Frankfurt, Germany, in October. This fair is one of the largest international book fairs of the year. SABDA participates also in book fairs in India.

Matagiri, which represents SABDA in the United States, has also participated in a number of book exhibits in 1979. Among them were meetings of the New York, New England and Mid-Atlantic Region library associations, the 6th annual Lifestyles convention in Culver City, Calif., and at conventions of the Asian Studies Association, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the American Sociological Society, the convention of the Himalayan Institute, and a book exhibit sponsored by the *Boston Globe* in Boston, Mass.

- The Colorado Division of the U.N. Association has announced its second annual trip to India. One of the highlights of the 25-day trip will be a visit to Auroville. For further information, contact **Nancy Milligen**, U.N. Association, 980 Grant, Room 201, Denver, CO 80203.

- The February 1979 issue of *Humanity Calls*, a monthly journal published in New Delhi, contains extensive coverage of the 2nd annual convention of World Union centers in October 1978. Both **A.B. Patel**, founder of World Union, and **M.P. Pandit**, chairman of World Union International, spoke at the international convention.

I want three kinds of people, those who can work, those who do sadhana, those who have money. At least one of these things must be there in each. When I say sadhana, it is not a nominal sadhana, but the true sadhana.—The Mother
[In *Champaklal Speaks.*]

• Sri Aurobindo's Action Center/Association for Auroville (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306; 525 Hartford Drive, Boulder; telephone 303-499-3313) has rented an 8-room house as the apartment in which it began 3 years ago had become too small for the center activities. The new house is being shared by 4 people: Joseph and Muriel Spanier, founders of the center, Larry Tepper, and Lucille Massa. Living nearby is Seyril Rubin, who lived for a number of years in Auroville.

The center has a weekly meeting with reading from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, followed by tapes and meditation, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. There is a comprehensive library and a quiet room for reading and meditation.

In addition, the center publishes *Auroville Voice*, a quarterly, providing a link between Auroville and those who are interested in learning more about life in Auroville. A year's subscription is \$5.00. Order directly from the center.

Slide presentations on Auroville were given at the Community Center in Aspen, Colo., on September 21 and at the Senior Citizen Center in Boulder, on November 6. The center also participated in an international bazaar sponsored by the United Nations Association of the U.S., Colorado Division, held in Denver November 30-December 1, with a booth providing information on Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and Auroville and a display of books and Auroville products.

NEWS OF MATAGIRI

• Matagiri is offering a series of classes in integral philosophy and education and in Sanskrit and Bengali. Times can generally be arranged to meet the student's needs. Anyone interested, please call or write Gopal, at Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457, (914) 679-8322.

* * * * *

We recently received the following letter from a disciple who spent several weeks with us this summer:

"My visit to Matagiri has been a landmark in my spiritual journey. It revived some of the deepest feelings I have had and marked the beginnings of some new and deeper feelings. You are indeed blessed for having been chosen as an instrument for the Mother's work which is being accomplished so powerfully at Matagiri.

"Two particular experiences I had at Matagiri are worth mentioning. Though I sat in group meditations with the Mother for a number of years, it was at Matagiri that I first began to feel the difference between individual and group meditation. Secondly, for the first time I was able to experience some degree of a spiritual kinship with fellow disciples and have a feeling of belonging to a family.

"I was deeply happy to be amidst you all as well as the peaceful surroundings of Matagiri. I hope I can come there again for a longer visit in the near future. Thank you for your very kind hospitality."

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• Some 40 people attended Matagiri's observance of Sri Aurobindo's birthday on 15 August, which consisted of a meditation, reading from the Mother's Agenda and a picnic lunch.

Among recent visitors to Matagiri were Savitra, Francis and Lila, and Roy Chvat from Auroville; Parbati K. Sircar, associate professor of geography at the State University of New York at New Paltz, and his wife, Manjusri, a performer and teacher of classical Hindu dancing; and Peter S. Wright, a mentor in statewide programs of Empire State University, New Paltz; and Al Maher of the Auroville Association in Aptos, Calif.

Joe (Jyoti) Ferrara of Matagiri spent several weeks in the Ashram and Auroville in Sept. and Oct.

• Vashisht Sharma (21 Loubier Drive, Essex Junction, VT 05452) reports that the Sri Aurobindo Center (Vermont) Satsang meets about once a month. Several families come together and read from the Gita or Sri Aurobindo's or Mother's works. Anyone interested in participating, please contact Mr. Sharma at the above address.

• East-West Cultural Center (2865 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; 213-480-8325) hosted M.P. Pandit in October, who gave two evening seminars.

Other programs held at the center recently included talks by Tara Singh, a student of the Dalai Lama; and Michelina Foster, a metaphysician and singer.

There are also regular programs at the center, including a spiritual inquiry group led by Robert Dane and an Auroville group. Call or write for details.

Dr. Judith Tyberg, founder and head of the center, was hospitalized for several weeks this fall but is recovering well.

• Mahadev and Dipty Chakravarty (2226 Josephine St., Sudbury, Ont., Canada P3A 2N2; telephone (705) 560-1988) have established a Sri Aurobindo center, the Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Bhavan, at their home. Informal study meetings and meditations are held there. Interested persons are invited to join the group.

JOURNEY Erika Renon

[Poet Erika Renon, who lives in Menlo Park, Calif., has sent this rendering of her visit to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.]

I did go
to sit at her feet—
not believing.

I rose
and a seed had been planted
in barren soil.

While it germinated
I walked on air
and plunged to the pit.

But one day
the barren soil yielded
and grew surrender.

The mind turned
inward
facing luminosity.

And henceforth
at dawn
descent and ascent
spelled wondrous unfolding.

From attachment
I moved to detachment,
from narcissism toward selflessness;

From judgment
to acceptance,
from circumference toward center.

None of this
was my doing.
All of this
is my becoming.

POEMS FROM AN INDIAN JOURNAL

Hadassah Haskale

[The author of the following poems is an American living currently in Israel, where a small group of aspirants is forming. The poems were written in a journal kept by the author during her stay in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1978.]

January 20, 1978. Pondicherry

War drums compete with music of the spheres

India is a mirror I am a mirror

The madself is a mirror The holyself is a mirror

India is many things and One I am many things and one

God is in His Holy Temple God is in Her Holy Temple

God is in you God is in me

with devils which divide.

January 22, 1978

I listen to the din—

the rising of hopes

and the dashing of them:

waves

on this shore

January 24, 1978

The sea—ferocious under the moon

baring her gleaming teeth

January 26, 1978

The Gates are guarded by dragons

dragon of the lost key

dragon of the fever

dragon of the broken shoe

dragon of the infected eye

The eye that would see is persecuted

The foot seeking The Path is hindered

The being seeking balance is plagued by storms

And the door is barred to me

So I climb through the window

So I limp, give in to body's need

That I may pass through the window or Gate

With a shielded eye.

January 28, 1978

I see a man in a boat

with his fishing net

on a rough sea

philosophy?

February 10, 1978

Shaking the mist off

like a tree in the morning—

Cloud of flowers

cloud in the sky

February 20, 1978

To flower-noon solitude banished

where the presence invades—

Could it be Thee Could it be She

Inscribing the womb of peace?

February 26 (after hearing a reading of "Savitri Returns")

White birds—

crest of a wave

to some other

unearthly

shore.

Beyond and beneath our surface personalities I see the

Poles of Being.

Our dialogue—a screen for another profound one. The flow
of seasons, the

tides of emotion—ripples of speech between that which Is
and Origin.

All that passes between and flows around us invisibly
yet reflected

in shifting images and sensations of heat and cold, of
brown and green

mirrors the rapport between printer and imprinted. If we
could read

the trail—the shape and direction of giant steps in sand
which pattern

our thoughts: what then? The Giant is pacing through our
Body-Mind.

We feel the pressure of his heel but do not know the
substance roaming

the wheel of Being within the orbit of blood and in outer dark.

But reading that language—as it were a mirror image—on the
one side

Creator, the other Created—and between a Shape holding
question and answer, cipher of the secret of both in one

But capturing the trend of what movement moves us writ
large and write

small through caress and blow on world screen or in the
cave of the heart:

we turn from sand to wave; become mirror, reflector,
reflection, imprinter—

are seized by the Force, become its arm and leg tunneling
to give shape and meaning.

Who can read that Word speaking through us soundlessly?
Who can reach that Spirit pacing in solitude, still wrapped
in dream?

Who can examine her pores, his wishes, her fears, his
aspirations

for the Clue to the nature of the Wanderer of the Worlds?

Who can spell the word formed by the ascending rings of
a tree?

Who can reach beyond hunger and self-pride to see

Who is in need and Who is the doer,

to see where we begin to Be?