



# *Collaboration*

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The Mother "at rest," in the 1960s. Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

This issue of *Collaboration* has been guest-edited by Lynda Lester, a sadhika from California who has been spending several months at Matagiri. She has selected passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother dealing with the gnostic consciousness and the supramental transformation which form the opening section. The subject is the core of the message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and we hope readers will find that it gives a special focus in these troubling and often confusing times.

This issue also contains the first instalment of those portions of the Mother's *Agenda*, about which we have written in these pages in the past, that the Mother released for publication in the Ashram's *Bulletin*. We feel readers will find what she has to say fascinat-

ing and full of the force for progress which She carried with Her.

Also we wish to thank our readers for their response to our appeal for financial support in our last issue. The donations we received have been most generous and helpful.

Readers are invited to submit poetry and articles relevant to Sri Aurobindo's vision and Mother's work for consideration for inclusion in *Collaboration*. We have received a number of poems and are still looking for nonfiction of interest.

We are trying out a new format, of three columns per page, in this issue which we feel will give us greater flexibility in our layout. Readers' views are invited.

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Before deciding that something is wrong in others or in circumstances, you must be quite sure of the correctness of your judgment—and which judgment is correct so long as one lives in the ordinary consciousness that is based on ignorance and filled with falsehood? Only the Truth-Consciousness can judge. So it is better, in all circumstances, to leave the judgment to the Divine. —*The Mother*

## CONTENTS

The Evolution of the Gnostic Consciousness, Sri Aurobindo	2
The Supramental Transformation, The Mother	4
Integral Psychology (13), Sri Aurobindo	6
The Ego, Sri Aurobindo	7
Letters from Abroad, Sri Aurobindo	7
The Mother's Agenda, The Mother	10
The Employer to the Employee, The Mother	11
About Religion, The Mother	11
Sri Aurobindo and Spiritual History, The Mother	12
Intuition, Transformation and Sri Aurobindo (2), Lloyd Fellows	12
Expressions of Auroville	
The Mother on Auroville	14
Matrimandir Appeal	15
Progress (3)	15
Unity in Diversity: The Implications, Tim Wray and Pierre	18
Observations on Auroville, Michael and Gail Shaw	20
Interview with the Dalai Lama	20
Today's Challenge, Pierre	21
Guests in Auroville	22
News	22
Whose Child Are You?, Andal Mira Tomás	23
Book Review, Charles Maloney	23
Auroville Sequence (poems), Roger Harris	24
O Child of the Future (poem), Alehu	24
Ecstasy (poem), Erika Renon	24

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

Recently something is afoot.

Wandering down the road one notices a substantial difference in the terrestrial atmosphere, perceives just the other side of wood fence a vast and formidable Power waiting, beyond the meadow a Truth-Creation drawing near, almost impinging, exerting an increasing pressure toward manifestation.

Late nights alone in the dark one feels the change running through underground rivers, touching secret chambers, blazing from within, carrying the transformation: it comes with love and truth and sweetness; with young gold, the thrill of hope, the breaking joy of future . . . a bright arc of light that leaps from heart to heart, straight to the center of the atom.

Evolution accelerates. There is the presence of another vibration, the dynamo of a new energy which calls to That which must be, summoning with a fire of imperative need.

One finds the ego outmoded, false. One finds it insupportable to be human anymore. One finds, fronting the myriad circumstances of ignorance, that the old way must cease, the next level of consciousness arrive.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE Gnostic CONSCIOUSNESS

*Sri Aurobindo*

As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for this new transformation. It will also receive into itself from above, progressively, from its own domain of perfect light and power and beauty all that is ready to descend from that domain into terrestrial being. [1]

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For the full and perfect fulfilment of the evolutionary urge, illumination and change must take up and re-create the whole being, mind, life and body: it must be not only an inner experience of the Divinity but a remoulding of both the inner and outer existence by its power; it must take form not only in the life of the individual but as a collective life of gnostic beings established as a highest power and form of the becoming of the Spirit in the earth-nature. For this to be possible the spiritual entity in us must have developed its own integralised perfection not only of the inner state of the being but of the outgoing power of the being and, with that perfection and as a necessity of its

It becomes a matter of the entire earth, more than an affair of individual or collective. A process is seen at work everywhere, one action notable in all parts—wearing different aspects and disguises, but unmistakably That: the emergence of a new terrain, a new environmental substance, a new order of being.

It is the time.

*The Force is here.* Rejoice, O you who are waiting and hoping: the new manifestation is sure, the new manifestation is at hand.

*The Force is here ...* Arise and live; arise and be illuminated; arise and battle for the transfiguration of all:

*The Force is here.* The Mother

This issue of *Collaboration* features material apropos the supramental transformation, the evolution into what Sri Aurobindo calls the gnostic consciousness, the appearance of what Mother calls the new world.

—LL

complete action, it must have evolved its own dynamis and instrumentation of the outer existence.

There can undoubtedly be a spiritual life within, a kingdom of heaven within us which is not dependent on any outer manifestation or instrumentation or formula of external being...but for a greater dynamic change in earth-nature itself, a spiritual change of the whole principle and instrumentation of life and action, the appearance of a new order of beings and a new earth-life must be envisaged in our idea of the total consummation, the divine issue. Here the gnostic change assumes a primary importance; all that precedes can be considered as an upbuilding and a preparation for this transmuting reversal of the whole nature. For it is a gnostic way of dynamic living that must be the fulfilled divine life on earth, a way of living that develops higher instruments of world-knowledge and world-action for the dynamisation of consciousness in the physical existence and takes up and transforms the values of a world of material Nature. [2]

\* \* \* \* \*

In life on the supramental plane all the Divine is possessed, and when the Supermind descends on earth, it must bring the Divine with it and make that full possession possible here.



The divine life will give to those who enter into it and possess it an increasing and finally a complete possession of the truth-consciousness and all that it carries in it; it will bring with it the realisation of the Divine in self and the Divine in Nature. All that is sought by the God-seeker will be fulfilled in his spirit and in his life as he moves towards spiritual perfection. He will become aware of the transcendent reality, possess in the self-experience the supreme existence, consciousness, bliss, be one with Sachchidaanda. He will become one with cosmic being and universal Nature: he will contain the world in himself, in his own cosmic consciousness and feel himself one with all beings; he will see himself in all and all in himself, become united and identified with the Self which has become all existences. He will perceive the beauty of the All-Beautiful and the miracle of the All-Wonderful; he will enter in the end into the bliss of the Brahman and live abidingly in it and for all this he will not need to shun existence or plunge into the annihilation of the spiritual Person in some self-extinguishing Nirvana. As in the Self, so in Nature, he can realise the Divine. The nature of the Divine is Light and Power and Bliss; he can feel the divine Light and Power and Bliss above him and descending into him, filling every strand of his nature, every cell and atom of his being, flooding his soul and mind and life and body, surrounding him like an illimitable sea and filling the world, suffusing all his feeling and sense and experience, making all his life truly and utterly divine. This and all else that the spiritual consciousness can bring to him the divine life will give him when it reaches its utmost completeness and perfection and the supramental truth-consciousness is fulfilled in all himself; but even before that he can attain to something of it all, grow in it, live in it, once the Supermind has descended upon him and has the direction of his existence. All relations with the Divine will be his: the trinity of God-knowledge, divine works and devotion to God will open within him and move towards an utter self-giving and surrender of his whole being and nature. He will live in God and with God, possess God, as it is said, even plunge in him forgetting all separate personality, but not losing it in self-extinction. The love of God and all the sweetness of love will remain his, the bliss of contact as well as the bliss of oneness and the bliss of difference in oneness. All the infinite ranges of experience of the Infinite will be his and all the joy of the finite in the embrace of the Infinite.

The descent of the Supermind will bring to one who receives it and is fulfilled in the truth-consciousness all the possibilities of the divine life. It will take up not only the whole characteristic experience which we

recognise already as constituting the spiritual life but also all which we now exclude from that category but which is capable of divinisation, but excluding whatever of the earth-nature and the earth-life can be transformed by the touch of the Supermind and taken up into the manifested life of the Spirit. For a divine life on earth need not be a thing apart and exclusive having nothing to do with the common earthly existence: it will take up human being and human life, transform what can be transformed, spiritualise whatever can be spiritualised, cast its influence on the rest and effectuate either a radical or an uplifting change, bring about a deeper communion between the universal and the individual, invade the ideal with the spiritual truth of which it is a luminous shadow and help to uplift into or towards a greater and higher existence. Mind it will uplift towards a diviner light of thought and will, life towards deeper and truer emotion and action, towards a larger power of itself, towards high aims and motives. Whatever cannot yet be raised into its own full truth of being, it will bring nearer to that fullness; whatever is not ready even for that change, will still see the possibility open to it whenever its still incomplete evolution has made it ready for self-fulfilment. Even the body, if it can bear the touch of Supermind, will become more aware of its own truth,—for there is a body-consciousness that has its own instinctive truth and power of right condition and action, even a kind of unexpressed occult knowledge in the constitution of its cells and tissues which may one day become conscious and contribute to the transformation of the physical being. An awakening must come in the earth-nature and in the earth-consciousness which will be, if not the actual beginning, at least the effective preparation and the first steps of its evolution towards a new and diviner world order.

This would be the fulfilment of the divine life which the descent of Supermind and the working of the truth-consciousness taking hold of the whole nature of the living being would bring about in all who could open themselves to its power or influence. Even its first immediate effect would be on all who are capable the possibility of entering into the truth-consciousness and changing all the movements of the nature more and more into the movements of the supramental truth, truth of thought, truth of will, truth in the feelings, truth in the acts, true conditions of the whole being even to the body, eventually transformation, a divinising change. [3]

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What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its pos-

sibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and in Nature.

The answer might, indeed, be only individual; it might result in a multiplication of spiritualised individuals or even, conceivably though not probably, a gnostic individual or individuals isolated in the unspiritualised mass of humanity. Such isolated beings must either withdraw into their secret divine kingdom and guard themselves in a spiritual solitude or act from their inner light on mankind for what little can be prepared in such conditions for a happier future. The inner change can begin to take shape in a collective form only if the gnostic individual finds others who have the same kind of inner life as himself and can form with them a group with its own autonomous existence or else a separate community or order of being with its own inner law of life... An entirely new consciousness in many individuals transforming their whole being, transforming their mental, vital and physical nature-self, is needed for the new life to appear; only such a transformation of the general mind, life, body nature can bring into being a new worthwhile collective existence. The evolutionary nisus must tend not merely to create a new type of mental beings but another order of beings who have raised their whole existence from our present mentalised animality to a greater spiritual level of the earth-nature.

Any such complete transformation of the earth-life in a number of human beings could not establish itself altogether at once; even when the turning-point has been reached, the decisive line crossed, the new life in its beginnings would have to pass through a period of ordeal and arduous development. A general change from the old consciousness taking up the whole life into the spiritual principle would be the necessary first step; the preparation for this might be long and the transformation itself once begun proceed by stages. In the individual it might after a certain point be rapid and even effect itself by a bound, an evolutionary saltus; but an individual transformation would not be the creation of a new type of beings or a new collective life. One might conceive of a number of individuals thus evolving separately in the midst of the old life and then joining together to establish the nucleus of the new existence. But it is not likely that Nature would operate in

this fashion, and it would be difficult for the individual to arrive at a complete change while still enclosed in the life of the lower nature. At a certain stage it might be necessary to follow the age-long device of the separate community, but with a double purpose, first to provide a secure atmosphere, a place and life apart, in which the consciousness of the individual might concentrate on its evolution in surroundings where all was turned and centred towards the one endeavour and, next, when things were ready, to formulate and develop the new life in those surroundings and in this prepared spiritual atmosphere. It might be that, in such a concentration of effort, all the difficulties of the change would present themselves with a concentrated force; for each seeker, carrying in himself the possibilities but also the imperfections of a world that has to be transformed, would bring in not only his capacities but his difficulties and the oppositions of the old nature and, mixed together in the restricted circle of a small and close common life, these might assume a considerably enhanced force of obstruction which would tend to counterbalance the enhanced power and concentration of the forces making for the evolution. This is a difficulty that has broken in the past all the efforts of mental man to evolve something better and more true and harmonious than the ordinary mental and vital life. But if Nature is ready and has taken her evolutionary decision or if the power of the Spirit descending from the higher planes is sufficiently strong, the difficulty would be overcome and a first evolutionary formation or formations would be possible.

But if an entire reliance upon the guiding Light and Will and a luminous expression of the truth of the Spirit in life are to be the law, that would seem to presuppose a gnostic world, a world in which the consciousness of all its beings was founded on this basis; there it can be understood that the life-interchange of gnostic individuals in a gnostic community or communities would be by its very nature an understanding and harmonious process. But here, actually, there would be a life of gnostic beings proceeding within or side by side with a life of beings in the Ignorance, attempting to emerge in it or out of it, and yet the law of the two lives would seem to be contrary and to offend against each other. A complete seclusion or separation of the life of a spiritual community from the life of the Ignorance would then seem to impose itself: for otherwise a compromise between the two lives would be necessary and with the compromise a danger of contamination or incompleteness of the greater existence; two different and incompatible principles of existence would be in contact and, even though the greater would influence the lesser, the smaller life would also have its effect on the greater, since such mutual impact is the law of all contiguity and interchange. It might even be questioned whether conflict and collision would not be the first rule of their relation, since in the life of the Ignorance there is present and active the formidable influence of those forces of Darkness, supporters of evil and violence, whose interest it is to contaminate or destroy all higher Light that enters into the human existence. An opposition and in-

tolerance or even a persecution of all that is new or tries to rise above or break away from the established order of the human Ignorance, or if it is victorious, an intrusion of the lower forces into it, an acceptance by the world more dangerous than its opposition, and in the end an extinction, a lowering or a contamination of the new principle of life, have been a frequent phenomenon of the past; that opposition might be still more violent and a frustration might be still more likely if a radically new light or new power were to claim the earth for its heritage. But it is to be supposed that the new and completer light would bring also a new and completer power. It might not be necessary for it to be entirely separate; it might establish itself in so many islets and from there spread through the old life, throwing out upon it its own influences and filtrations, gaining upon it, bringing to it a help and illumination which a new aspiration in mankind might after a time begin to understand and welcome.

But these are evidently problems of the transition, of the evolution before the full and victorious reversal of the manifesting Force has taken place and the life of the gnostic being becomes as much as that of the mental being an established part of the terrestrial world-order. [4]

#### References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970), p. 967.
2. *Ibid.*, p.
3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), pp. 45-48.
4. *The Life Divine*, pp. 1060-63.

## THE SUPRAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

### *The Mother*

#### *The Descent of Supermind into the Earth-Atmosphere*

On February 29, 1956 there occurred the first manifestation of the supermind in the earth atmosphere, toward which the Mother and Sri Aurobindo had been working for more than thirty years. The Mother announced the event in these two messages:

Lord, Thou has willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it. [1]

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The superman is now in the making and a new consciousness has very recently manifested on earth to bring this process to perfection. [30 August 1969] [2]

\* \* \* \*

16 April 1958

We have the proof that in certain conditions the ordinary state of humanity can be exceeded and a new state of consciousness worked out which enables at least a conscious relation between mental and supramental man.

It can be asserted with certainty that there will be an intermediate specimen between the mental and the supramental being, a kind of superman who will still have the qualities and in part the nature of man, that is, who will still belong in his most external form to the human being with its animal origin, but will transform his consciousness sufficiently to belong in his realisation

and activity to a new race, a race of supermen.

This species may be considered a transitional species, for one can foresee that it will discover the means of producing new beings without going through the old animal method, and these beings—who will have a truly spiritual birth—will constitute the elements of the new race, the supramental race.

So we could call supermen those who, in their origin, still belong to the old method of generation but in their achievement are in conscious and active contact with the new world of supramental realisation.

It seems—it is even certain—that the very substance which will constitute this intermediate world that is already being built up, is richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its

degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance, the ordinary mental substance. There is a subtlety of vibration which makes global, universal perception a spontaneous and natural thing. The sense of division, of separation, disappears quite naturally and spontaneously with that substance. And that substance is at present almost universally diffused in the earth atmosphere. It is perceptible in the waking state, simply with a little concentration and a kind of absorption of consciousness, if this is retracted, withdrawn from the ordinary externalisation which seems more and more artificial and false. This externalisation, this perception which formerly was natural, now seems false, unreal and completely artificial; it does not at all answer to things as they are, it belongs to a movement which does not correspond to anything really true.

This new perception is asserting itself more and more, becoming more and more natural, and it is even sometimes difficult to recapture the old way of being, as though it were vanishing into a misty past—something which is on the point of ceasing to exist.

One may conclude from this that the moment a body, which was of course formed by the old animal method, is capable of living this consciousness naturally and spontaneously, without effort, without going out of itself, it proves that this is not one single exceptional case but simply the fore-runner of a realisation which, even if it is not altogether general, can at least be shared by a certain number of individuals who, besides, as soon as they share it, will lose the perception of being separate individuals and become a living collectivity.

This new realisation is proceeding with what one might call a lightning speed, for if we consider time in the ordinary way, only two years have passed—a little more than two years—from the time the supramental substance penetrated into the earth atmosphere to the time the change in the quality of the earth atmosphere took place.

If things go on advancing at this speed, it seems more than possible, almost evident, that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter is a prophetic announcement: The supramental consciousness will enter a phase of realising power in 1967. [3]

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That is to say, the universal movement is like that...certain individuals, who are the pioneers, the vanguard, through inner effort and inner progress enter into communication with the new Force which is to manifest and receive it into themselves. And then, as there are calls of this kind, the thing

is made possible; and the age, the time, the moment of the manifestation comes. [4]

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Only the like can know the like, only the supramental Consciousness in an individual can perceive this Supermind acting in the earth-atmosphere. Those who, for some reason or other, have developed this perception, can see it. [5]

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Well, for a developed consciousness, the Supermind is already realised somewhere in a domain of the subtle physical, it already exists there visible, concrete, and expresses itself in forms and activities. And when one is in tune with this domain, when one lives there, one has a very strong feeling that this world would only have to be condensed, so to say, for it to become visible to all. What would then be interesting would be to develop this inner perception which would put you into contact with the supramental truth which is already manifested, and is veiled for you only for want of appropriate organs to enter into relation with it.

It is possible that those who are conscious of their dreams may have dreams of a new kind which put them into contact with that world, for it is accessible to the subtle physical of all those who have the corresponding organs in themselves. And there is necessarily a subtle influence of this physical on outer matter, if one is ready to receive impressions from it and admit them into one's consciousness. [6]

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*Disciple:* But if the physical transformation is so difficult, would it not be preferable to act in an occult way, to materialise something, to create a new body by occult processes?

*Mother:* The idea is that first of all some beings must reach a certain realisation here in the physical world that would give them the power to materialise a supramental being. [7]

### World Transformation—Infiltration of the New Vibration

And this has been my experience all this time, with a vision and a conviction—the two vibrations are like that [*gesture indicating superimposition and infiltration*], all the time. All the time, all the time.

Perhaps the feeling of wonder comes when the amount of infiltration is great enough to become perceptible. But I have the impression—and a very acute impression—that this phenomenon is taking place all the time, all the time, everywhere [*gesture indicating dots of infiltration*], in a minute, infinitesimal way; and in certain circumstances, certain conditions which are visible, visible to that vision—it is a kind of lumin-

ous expansion, I cannot explain—there, the mass of infiltration is great enough to give the impression of a miracle. But otherwise it is something that occurs all the time, all the time, ceaselessly, in the world [*same gesture of dots*], like an infinitesimal quantity of Falsehood being replaced by Light, Falsehood being replaced by Light . . . constantly.

And this vibration—which I feel and see—gives an impression of fire. This is what the Vedic Rishis must have translated as the “Flame”—in the human consciousness, in man, in Matter; they always spoke of a Flame. It is in fact a vibration which has the intensity of a higher flame.

Several times, when the work was very concentrated or condensed, the body even felt that it was the equivalent of a fever.

Two or three nights ago, something like that happened; there was this descent of Force, a descent of this Truth-Power with a special intensity . . . Well, that is what is happening—happening everywhere, all the time. So, if it happens in an agglomerate that is large enough, it appears to be a miracle—but it is the miracle of the whole earth.

One must hold firm, because it has its consequences, it brings a sensation of Power, and very few people can feel it, experience it, without their balance being more or less disturbed, because they do not have a sufficient basis of peace, of vast and very, very quiet peace. Many times I have said: There is only one answer, one single answer: one must be quiet, quiet, and even more quiet, more and more quiet, and not trying to find a solution with the head, because it cannot. One must only be quiet—quiet, quiet, immovably quiet. Calm and peace, calm and peace—that is the only answer.

I do not say that it is the cure, but it is the only answer: to endure in calm and peace, to endure in calm and peace . . . Then something will happen. [8]

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Like a sun Thy splendour descends upon the earth and Thy rays will illumine the world. All those elements which are pure enough, plastic enough, sufficiently receptive to manifest the very splendour of the central fire-nucleus are grouping themselves together. This grouping is not arbitrary and does not depend on the will or aspiration of one element or another, it depends on what it is, it is independent of any individual decision. Thy splendour wants to radiate; what is capable of manifesting it manifests it, and these elements gather together to re-constitute as perfectly as possible in this world of division the divine Centre which has to be manifested. (June 16, 1914) [9]

1. The Mother's Collected Works, Vol. 8, *Questions and Answers 1956* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), p. 127.
2. Ibid., Vol. 10, *On Thoughts and Aphorisms* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), p. 249.
3. Ibid., Vol. 9, *Questions and Answers 1957-58* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), pp. 313-15.
4. Ibid., Vol. 8, *Questions and Answers 1956* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), p. 133.
5. Ibid., p. 128.
6. Ibid., pp. 292-93.
7. Ibid., Vol. 10, *On Thoughts and Aphorisms* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), p. 119.
8. Ibid., pp. 194-95.
9. Ibid., Vol. 1, *Prayers and Meditations* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1979), p. 172.

## INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY (13)

### Sri Aurobindo

#### *The Subconscious*

This concealed self and consciousness is our real or whole being, of which the outer is a part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a surface use. We perceive only a small number of the contacts of things which impinge upon us; the inner being perceives all that enters or touches us and our environment. We perceive only a part of the workings of our life and being; the inner being perceives so much that we might almost suppose that nothing escapes its view. We remember only a small selection from our perceptions, and of these even we keep a great part in a store-room where we cannot always lay our hand upon what we need; the inner being retains everything that it has ever received and has it always ready to hand. We can form into co-ordinated understanding and knowledge only so much of our perceptions and memories as our trained intelligence and mental capacity can grasp in their sense and appreciate in their relations: the intelligence of the inner being needs no training, but preserves the accurate form and relations of all its perceptions and memories and—though this is a proposition which may be considered doubtful or difficult to concede in its fullness—can grasp immediately, when it does not possess already, their significance. And its perceptions are not confined, as are ordinarily those of the waking mind, to the scanty gleanings of the physical senses, but extend far beyond and use, as telepathic phenomena of many kinds bear witness, a subtle sense the limits of which are too wide to be easily fixed. The relations between the surface will or impulsion and the subliminal urge, mistakenly described as unconscious or subconscious, have not been properly studied except in regard to unusual and unorganised manifestations and

to certain morbidly abnormal phenomena of the diseased human mind; but if we pursue our observation far enough, we shall find that the cognition and will or impulsive force of the inner being really stand behind the whole conscious becoming; the latter represents only that part of its secret endeavour and achievement which rises successfully to the surface of our life. To know our inner being is the first step towards a real self-knowledge.

If we undertake this self-discovery and enlarge our knowledge of the subliminal self, so conceiving it as to include in it our lower subconscious and upper superconscious ends, we shall discover that it is really this which provides the whole material of our apparent being and that our perceptions, our memories, our effectuations of will and intelligence are only a selection from its perceptions, memories, activities and relations of will and intelligence; our very ego is only a minor and superficial formulation of its self-consciousness and self-experience. It is, as it were, the urgent sea out of which the waves of our conscious becoming arise. But what are its limits? how far does it extend? what is its fundamental nature? Ordinarily, we speak of a subconscious existence and include in this term all that is not on the waking surface. But the whole or the greater part of the inner or subliminal self can hardly be characterised by that epithet; for when we say subconscious, we think readily of an obscure unconsciousness or half-consciousness or else a submerged consciousness below and in a way inferior to and less than our organised waking awareness or, at least, less in possession of itself. But we find, when we go within, that somewhere in our subliminal part—though not co-extensive with it since it has also obscure and ignorant regions—there is a consciousness much wider, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our surface and is the percipient of our daily hours; that is our inner being, and it is this which we must regard as our subliminal self and set apart the subconscious as an inferior, a lowest occult province of our nature. In the same way there is a superconscious part of our total existence in which there is what we discover to be our highest self, and this too we can set apart as a higher occult province of our nature.

But what then is the subconscious and where does it begin and how is it related to our surface being or to the subliminal of which it would seem more properly to be a province? We are aware of our body and know that we have a physical existence, even very large identify ourselves with it, and yet most of its operations are really subconscious to our mental being; not only does the mind take no part in them but, as

we suppose, our most physical being has awareness of its own hidden operations (by itself, of its own existence; it knows rather feels only so much of itself, as is enlightened by mind-sense and observable intelligence. We are aware of a vitality working in this bodily form and structure as in the plant or lower animal, a vital existence which is also for the most part subconscious to us, for we only observe some of its movements and reactions. We are partly aware of its operations, but not by any means of all or most of them, and rather of those which are abnormal than those which are normal; its wants impress themselves more forcibly upon us than its satisfaction; its diseases and disorders than its health and its regular rhythm, its death is more poignant to us than its life is vivid; we know a much of it as we can consciously observe and use or as much as forces itself upon us by pain and pleasure and other sensations or as a cause of nervous or physical reaction and disturbance, but no more. Accordingly, we suppose that this vital-physical part of us also is not conscious of its own operations or has only a suppressed consciousness or non-consciousness like the plant or an inchoate consciousness like the incipient animal; it becomes conscious only so far as it is enlightened by mind and observable by intelligence.

This is an exaggeration and a confusion due to our identification of consciousness with mentality and mental awareness. Mind identifies itself to a certain extent with the movements proper to physical life and body and annexes them to its mentality, so that all consciousness seems to us to be mental. But if we draw back, if we separate the mind as witness from these parts of us, we can discover that life and body—even the most physical parts of life—have a consciousness of their own, a consciousness proper to an obscurer vital and to a bodily being, even such an elemental awareness as primitive animal forms may have, but in us partly taken up by the mind and to that extent mentalised. Yet it has not, in its independent motion, the mental awareness which we enjoy; if there is mind in it, it is mind involved and implicit in the body and in the physical life: there is no organised self-consciousness, but only a sense of action and reaction, movement, impulse and desire, need, necessary activities imposed by Nature, hunger, instinct, pain, insensibility and pleasure. Although thus inferior, it has this awareness obscure, limited and automatic; but since it is less in possession of itself void of what to us is the stamp of mentality, we may justly call it the submental, but not so justly the subconscious part of our being. For when we stand back from it, when we can separate our mind from its sensations, we perceive that this is a nervous

and sensational and automatically dynamic mode of consciousness, a gradation of awareness different from the mind: it has its own separate reactions to contacts and is sensitive to them in its own power of feeling; it does not depend for that on the mind's perception and response. The true subconscious is other than this vital or physical substratum; it is the Inconscient vibrating on the borders of consciousness, sending up its motions to be changed into conscious stuff, swallowing into its depths impressions of past experience as seeds of unconscious habit and returning them constantly but often chaotically to the surface consciousness, missioning upwards much futile or perilous stuff of which the origin is obscure to us, in dream, in mechanical repetitions of all kinds, in untraceable impulsions and motives, in mental, vital, physical perturbations and upheavals, in dumb automatic necessities of our obscure parts of nature. [The Life Divine (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), 1:556-559.]

Men see events as unaccomplished, to be striven for and effected. This is false seeing. Events are not effected, they develop. The event is Brahman, already accomplished from of old, it is now manifesting.

—Sri Aurobindo

## THE EGO Sri Aurobindo

Ordinarily, we conceive of ourselves as a separate "I" in the universe that governs a separate body and mental and moral nature, chooses in full liberty its own self-determined actions and is independent and therefore sole master of its works and responsible. It is not easy for the ordinary mind, the mind that has not thought nor looked deeply into its own constitution and constituents, it is difficult even for minds that have thought but have no spiritual vision and experience, to imagine how there can be anything else in us truer, deeper and more powerful than this apparent "I" and its empire. But the very first step towards self-knowledge as towards the true knowledge of phenomena is to get behind the apparent truth of things and find the real but masked, essential and dynamic truth which their appearances cover.

This ego or "I" is not a lasting truth, much less our essential part; it is only a formation of Nature, a mental form of thought-centralisation in the perceiving and discriminating mind, a vital form of the centralisation of feeling and sensation in our parts of life, a form of physical conscious reception centralising substance and func-

tion of substance in our bodies. All that we internally are is not ego, but consciousness, soul or spirit. All that we externally and superficially are and do is not ego but Nature. An executive cosmic force shapes us and dictates through our temperament and environment and mentality so shaped, through our individualised formulation of the cosmic energies, our actions and their results. Truly, we do not think, will or act but thought occurs in us, impulse and act occur in us; our ego-sense gathers around itself all this flow of natural activities. It is Nature that forms the thought, imposes the will, imparts the impulse. Our body, mind and ego are a wave of that sea of force in action and do not govern it, but by it are governed and directed. The Sadhaka in his progress towards truth and self-knowledge must come to a point where the soul opens its eyes of vision and recognises this truth of ego and this truth of works. He gives up the idea of a mental, vital, physical "I" that acts or governs action; he recognises that Prakriti, Force of cosmic Nature following her fixed modes, is in him and in all things and creates the one and only worker. [Synthesis of Yoga (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), pp. 202-203.]

## LETTERS FROM ABROAD Sri Aurobindo

[In this issue we begin to publish a series of "letters" written by Sri Aurobindo to a fictional correspondent, presenting his ideas on Indian and European cultures; the ideas contained in them seem as applicable today as when Sri Aurobindo first wrote them, in Bengal just prior to his departure for Pondicherry. They were probably intended for publication in the *Karmayogin*, but never appeared there. It should be borne in mind that these were written to arouse an India ruled by Great Britain, which explains many of the references and stress of the pieces.]

Dearly beloved,

You, my alter ego, my second existence, now sitting comfortably at home and, doubtless, reading the romantic fictions of the *Empire* by the light of heavily priced kerosine; I, who roam uncomfortably in foreign climes, sighing for the joys of the Press Act and the house-search; these faces, white and unfamiliar, that surround me; these miles of soulless brick and faultless macadam, the fitting body for a point-device and dapper civilisation which has lost sight of grandeur, beauty and nobility of life—are we, I wonder, flitting visions of a nightmare that passes or real men and women made in God's image? Was life always so trivial, always so vulgar, always so loveless, pale and awkward as the Europeans

have made it? This well-appointed comfort oppresses me, this perfection of machinery will not allow the soul to remember that it is not itself a machine.

Is this then the end of the long march of human civilisation, this spiritual suicide, this quiet petrification of the soul into matter? Was the successful businessman that grand culmination of manhood toward which evolution was striving? After all, if the scientific view is correct, why not? An evolution that started with the protoplasm and flowered in the ourangoutang and the chimpanzee, may well rest satisfied with having created hat, coat and trousers, the British Aristocrat, the American Capitalist and the Parisian Apache. For these, I believe, are the chief triumphs of the European enlightenment to which we bow our heads. For these Augustus created Europe; Charlemagne refounded civilisation, Louis XIV regulated society. Napoleon systematised the French Revolution. For these Goethe thought, Shakespeare imagined and created, St. Francis loved, Christ was crucified. What a bankruptcy! What a beggary of things that were rich and noble!

Europe boasts of her science and its marvels. But an Indian cannot content himself

with asking like Voltaire, as the supreme question, "What have you invented?" His glance is at the soul: it is that into which he is accustomed to enquire. To the braggart intellect of Europe he is bound to reply, "I am not interested in what you know, I am interested in what you are. With all your discoveries and inventions, what have you become? Your enlightenment is great—but what are these strange creatures that move about in the electric light you have installed and imagine that they are human?" Is it a great gain for the human intellect to have grown more acute and discerning, if the human soul dwindles?

But Science does not admit the existence of soul. The soul, it says, is only an organised republic of animalcules, and it is in the mould of that idea Europe recast herself;—that is what the European nations are becoming, organised republics of animalcules,—very intelligent, very methodical, very wonderful talking and reasoning animalcules, but still animalcules. Not what the race set out to be, creatures made in the image of the Almighty, gods that having fallen from heaven remember and strive to recover their heritage. Man in Europe is descending steadily from the human level and





*Sri Aurobindo*

**Sri Aurobindo, about 1920.**



and leanness to her Eastern seas. The body is bound to its surroundings, but the heart exceeds them, and I carry the love of India with me even to the coldest climes. The soul is yet more free. It will be well when every Indian, instead of taking a waxlike stamp from his foreign surroundings is able to carry India with him wherever he goes. For that will mean that India is destined to conquer and place her stamp upon the whole world. [SABCL, 3:454-60.]

## THE MOTHER'S AGENDA

[For some 20 years, from 1951 to 1973, the Mother kept a "log" of her work of transformation. This was of mostly recorded conversations with Satprem, a French disciple. These conversations are in the process of being published by the Institut de Recherches Evolutives in Paris. So far several volumes (in French only) have been issued. However, portions of these conversations the Mother allowed to be published, in both English and French, in the *Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*. The material appeared sometimes in short extracts on a particular subject of special interest, sometimes in the form of commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, but mostly in two series appearing almost simultaneously, one entitled "Apropos," which were issued more or less regularly from the November 1965 to the April 1969 issues; and the series entitled "Notes on the Way," which appeared from the February 1965 to the April 1973 issues. With this issue of *Collaboration* we are beginning to publish these remarkable conversations, more or less in chronological order. We open with an editorial note which appeared with the first installment of "Notes on the Way."]

We begin under this title [Notes on the Way] to publish some fragments of conversations with the Mother. These reflections or experiences, these conversations, which are very recent, are like landmarks on the way of Transformation; they were chosen not only because they illumine the work under way—a yoga of the body of which all the processes have to be established—but because they can be a sort of indication of the endeavour that has to be made.

October 7, 1964

*Mother:* Things have clearly taken a turn for the better, not from the ordinary point of view but from the higher. But the material consequences are still there—all the difficulties are as though aggravated. Only, the power of the consciousness is greater—clearer, more precise; and also the action upon those that are of good will; they make quite considerable progress. But the material difficulties are as though aggravated, that is to say, it is...to see if we can stand the test!

It is like that.

Not long ago (since yesterday), something has cleared in the atmosphere. But the way is still long—long, long. I feel it is

very long. One must last, hold on, above all that is the impression—one must have endurance. These are the two absolutely indispensable things: endurance, and a faith that nothing can shake, even an apparently complete negation, even if you suffer, even if you are miserable (I mean to say in the body), even if you are tired—must endure, must last. That is it.

But on hearing what I have been told, I mean by people who listen to the radio, read newspapers (all the things that I do not do), the whole world seems to be undergoing an action...which for the moment is upsetting. It seems that the number of the "apparently mad" is increasing considerably. In America, for example, the entire youth seems to have been taken up with a sort of curious brain-wave which would be disquieting for reasonable people, but which is certainly an indication that an unusual force is at work. It is the breaking up of all habits and all rules—it is good. For the moment, it is rather "strange," but it is necessary.

*Disciple:* The true attitude, at present, is it not to try to be as transparent as possible?

*Mother:* Transparent, receptive to the new force.

*Disciple:* I put myself the question, because the impression is that this transparency is transparent, but it is somewhat like nothingness, a nothingness that is full, all the same it is nothingness, one does not know. One does not know if it is a kind of higher *tamas*, or...

*Mother:* Above all to be confident. The big difficulty in Matter is that the material consciousness (that is to say, the mind in Matter) has been formed under the pressure of difficulties—difficulties, obstacles, sufferings, struggles. It has been, so to say, "worked out" by these things and that has left upon it a stamp, almost of pessimism, defeatism, which is certainly the greatest obstacle.

It is of this that I am conscious in my work. The most material consciousness, the most material mind is accustomed to act, to make an effort, to advance through whippings; otherwise, it is *tamas*. And then, so far as it imagines, it imagines always difficulty—always the obstacles, always the opposition,—and that slows down the movement terribly. Very concrete, very tangible and often repeated experiences are needed to convince it that behind all its difficulties there is a Grace, behind all its failures there is the Victory, behind all its pains and sufferings, all these contradictions there is Ananda. Of all efforts it is this one which has to be repeated most often; all the while you are obliged to stop or remove, to convert a pessimism, a doubt, or an imagination altogether defeatist.

I am speaking exclusively of the material consciousness.

Naturally, when something comes down from above, that makes, well...a crash, like that [*gesture of flattening*], then all is silent, all stops and awaits. But...I understand well why the Truth, the Truth-Consciousness does not express itself more constantly, because the difference between its Power and the Power of Matter is so great that the power of Matter is as it were cancelled—but then that does not mean Transformation, that means crushing. That is what they used to do in ancient times—they crushed all this material consciousness under the weight of a Power against which nothing can struggle, which nothing can oppose. And then one had the impression: "There you are! It has been done." But it has not been done, not at all! for, the rest, down below, remained as before, without changing.

Now, it is being given its full possibility to change; well, for that, you must allow it full play and not interpose a Power that crushes it—this I understand very well. But that consciousness has the obstinacy of the imbecile. How many times during the suffering, for example, when the suffering is there, acute and one has the impression that it is going to be unbearable, there is just a little inner movement (within the cells) of Call—the cells send their S.O.S.—everything stops, the suffering disappears and often (now more and more) it is replaced by a feeling of blissful well-being; but the very first reaction of this imbecile material consciousness is: "Ah! We shall see how long that lasts" and naturally, by this movement it demolishes everything—one must begin all over again.

I believe, for the effect to be lasting—not a miraculous effect that comes, dazzles and goes away—it must really be the effect of a transformation. One must be very, very patient—we have to deal with a consciousness very slow, very heavy, very obstinate, that is not able to advance rapidly, that clings to what it has, it clings to that and does not want to move. Then to cure that, one must have much patience, much patience.

The whole thing is to hold on, endure,

Sri Aurobindo said that many times in many forms: "Endure and you will conquer ... Bear—bear and you will vanquish."

Triumph comes to the most enduring.

And then that seems to be the lesson for these conglomerates [i.e., "aggregates" is meant] here [*Mother points to her body*])—bodies appear to me simply as conglomerates and just so long as there is a will behind to keep that together for some reason or other, it remains together. These days, yesterday or the day before, there was this experience: a kind of consciousness wholly decentralised (I am speaking always of the physical consciousness, not of the higher



satisfy—all, a decentralised consciousness which happened to be here, there, there, in this body, in that body (in what people call “this person” or “that person,” but this notion does not exist any more very much), then there was a kind of intervention from a universal consciousness with regard to the cells, as though it asked those cells for what reasons they wanted to keep that combination, of if one can say so, that conglomerate. Indeed, they were made to understand or feel the difficulties coming from the number of years [i.e., the age of her body], the wear and tear, the external difficulties, in sum, all the deterioration caused by friction and usage—but that seemed to them quite indifferent. The answer was rather interesting in the sense that they did not attach importance to anything other than the *capacity to remain in conscious contact with the higher Force*. It was like an aspiration (not formulated in words, naturally), what is called in English “yearning,” “longing” for this contact with the divine Force, the Force of Harmony, the Force of Truth, the Force of Love. And it is because of that that they appreciate the present combination [i.e., they value the body they form now].

It is altogether another point of view.

I express it with the words of the body, for there is no other way, but it was in the domain of sensation rather than anything else. And it was very clear—it was very clear and very continuous, there were no fluctuations. At that moment, the universal consciousness intervened saying, “There are the obstacles,” and those obstacles were clearly seen (the kind of pessimism of the mind—a formless mind that is about to be born and organise itself in the cells), but the cells themselves cared nothing for it; it appeared to them as a kind of disease (the word is “deformation,” but they had the impression as of an accident or an inevitable illness or something which did not form a normal part of their development and which was imposed upon them). Then at that moment there was born a kind of “lower” power to act upon these things (this physical mind); that gave a material power to separate itself from that and reject it. It is after that that there was that turning of which I spoke just now, the turning in the circumstances as a whole, as if truly something decisive had happened. There was confident joy: “Ah! We are free from this nightmare.”

At the same time, a relief—a physical relief, as though the air was easier to breathe—yes, a little like being closed up in a shell—a suffocating shell—and that...in any case an opening was made within. And you breathe. I do not know if it was more than that, but it is as though a clearing was made, a tear and you breathe.

And it was an altogether material, cellular action.

But as you descend into that domain, the domain of the cells, even the very constitution of the cells seems as if less heavy. That sort of heaviness of Matter disappears—it begins again to be fluid, vibrant. That would tend to prove that heaviness, thickness, inertia, immobility, is a thing *added*, it is not a quality essential to...it is the false Matter, that which we think and feel, but not Matter itself, as it is. It was clearly felt. [silence]

The best one can do is not to take sides, not to have preconceived ideas or principles—Oh! the moral principles, the set rules of conduct, what one must do and what one must not do and the preconceived ideas from the moral point of view, from the point of view of progress and all the social and mental conventions...no worse obstacles than that. There are people, I know people who lost decades in surmounting *one* such mental construction!... If one can be like this, open—truly open in simplicity, the simplicity that knows that it is ignorant—like this [*upward gesture of self-abandon*], ready to receive whatever comes. Then something can happen.

And naturally the thirst for progress, the thirst for knowledge, the thirst for transformation and, above all, the thirst for Love and Truth, if one keeps that, one goes quicker. Truly a thirst, a need, a need.

All the rest has no importance, it is *that* one has need of.

To stick to something one believed that one knows, to stick to something that one feels, to stick to something that one loves, to stick to one's habits, to stick to one's so-called needs, to stick to the world as it is, it is that which binds you. You must undo all that, one thing after another. Undo all the ties. And it has been told thousands of times and people continue to do the same thing... Even they who are most eloquent and preach that to others s-t-i-c-k. They stick to their way of seeing, their way of feeling, their habit of progress, which seems for them the only one.

No more bonds—free, free, free. Always ready to change everything, except one thing: to aspire, that thirst.

I understand well, there are people who do not like the idea of a “Divine,” because it mixes immediately with all those European or Occidental conceptions (which are horrible), and then that brings some complication into their life—but you are not in need of that! It is the “something” one is in need of, the Light one is in need of, the Love one is in need of, the Truth one is in need of, the supreme Perfection one is in need of—and that is all. The formulas—the fewer formulas there are the better. But that, a need, which *the* thing alone can

satisfy—nothing else, no half-measure, only that. And then you go!...Your way will be your way, that has no importance—whatever it is, the way does not matter, even the extravagance of modern American youth can be a way, that has no importance.

As Sri Aurobindo says: “If you cannot make God love you, make Him fight you. If He will not give you the embrace of the lover, compel Him to give you the embrace of the wrestler” [*Thoughts and Aphorisms*] (...for surely he will conquer). [From *Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1965, pp. 77-87.]

Those who are deficient in the free, full and intelligent observation of a self-imposed law, must be placed in subjection to the will of others. This is one principal cause of the subjection of nations. After their disturbing egoism has been trampled under the feet of a master, they are given or, if they have the force in them, attain a fresh chance of deserving liberty by liberty. —Sri Aurobindo

## THE EMPLOYER TO THE EMPLOYEE

Nothing lasting can be established without a basis of trust. And this trust must be mutual.

You must be convinced that it is not only my good that I am aiming at, but also yours. And on my side I must know and feel that you are here not merely to profit but also to serve.

There is no welfare of the whole without the welfare of each part. There is no harmonious growth of the whole without the progress of each one of its parts.

If you feel to be exploited, I also will feel that you are trying to exploit me. And if you fear to be deceived, I also will feel that you are seeking to deceive me.

It is only in straightforwardness, sincerity and confidence that human society can grow. —*The Mother*

## ABOUT RELIGIONS

Why do men cling to a religion?

Religions are based on creeds which are spiritual experiences brought down to a level where they become more easy to grasp, but at the cost of their integral purity and truth.

The time of religions is over.

We have entered the age of universal spirituality, of spiritual experience in its initial purity. —*The Mother*

[Following are the Mother's comments on an outline for a study project on the spiritual history of India intended for the Ashram Centre of Education.]

No! It won't do. It is not to be done that way. You should begin with a big *bang*!

You were trying to show the continuity of History, with Sri Aurobindo as the outcome, the culmination. It is entirely false.

Sri Aurobindo does not belong to History; he is outside and beyond History.

Till the birth of Sri Aurobindo, religions and spiritualities were always centred on past figures, and they were showing as "the goal" the negation of life upon earth. So, you had a choice between two alternatives: either

—a life *in* this world with its round of petty pleasures and pains, joys and sufferings, threatened by hell if you were not behaving properly, or

—an escape *into* another world, heaven, nirvana, moksha...

Between these two there is nothing much to choose, they are equally bad.

Sri Aurobindo has told us that this was a fundamental mistake which accounts for the weakness and degradation of India. Buddhism, Jainism, Illusionism were sufficient to sap all energy out of the country.

True, India is the only place in the world which is still aware that something else than Matter exists. The other countries have quite forgotten it: Europe, America and elsewhere.... That is why she still has a message to preserve and deliver to the world. But at present she is splashing and floundering in the muddle.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that the truth does not lie in running away from earthly life but in remaining *in* it, to *transform* it, *divinise* it, so that the Divine can manifest

*here, in this physical world.*

You should say all this at the first sitting....

Then, when this is told, strongly, squarely, and there is no doubt about it—and then only—you can go on and amuse them with the history of religions and religious or spiritual leaders.

Then—and then only—you will be able to show the seed of weakness and falsehood that they have harboured and proclaimed.

Then—and then only—you will be able to discern, from time to time, from place to place, an "intuition" that something else is possible; in the Vedas, for instance (the injunction to descend deep into the cave of the Panis); in the Tantras also...a little light is burning. [From *Mother's Collected Works*, Vol. 12, *On Education* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1979), pp. 212-13.]

## INTUITION, TRANSFORMATION AND SRI AUROBINDO (2)

*Lloyd W. Fellows*

[This is the conclusion of a talk given by the author at the August 1979 meeting of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in Princeton, N.J. The first part appeared in our last issue.]

The development of an intuitive mind's a gradual process. It operates at first imperfectly and is experienced as an awareness of knowledge gained beyond possible inferences from the senses. It is observed in uncanny hunches and the operation of coincidences beyond rational comprehension. M. P. Pandit describes the nature and process of intuition:

"This faculty of knowing the truth in a flash obtains on all levels of the being. Even the body has its own intuition. We call it instinct. The mind needs to be quieted before a regular working of intuition can start. Till then, it is sporadic. One must have the conviction that there is this intuition and wait upon it. It is only when one shifts the centre of reference and functioning from the ego...[toward superconsciousness] that the passage is made" [15].

The process of change in the direction of developing intuition, a right-brain functioning, is typically resisted by the rational, left-hemisphere processes of the brain. Humanity in its evolved mental capacity has developed a sense-linked mind, a reasoning intelligence, which, however inadequate, is the trusted foundation and habitual mode of manipulation of perceived reality. Attempts at expanding this limited perception toward a higher principle, necessitates a feared and difficult conversion or reversal

of the rational mind and intelligence. Relying on information intuition involves trusting a different starting place, a changed set of assumptions and world view.

This transformation can only be undertaken securely, Sri Aurobindo says, when the mind has become aware of the greater "Self" within; when it is confidently secured in, and enamored with the presence and guidance of the infinite energy of kundalini shakti. The working of this force is necessary as a reasoning mind does not overcome its limitations through logic. It does not understand what is beyond it. The difficulty of moving beyond rationality, however, can be surmounted by using the intermediary process of intuition, as it emerges out of the movement of kundalini shakti. Intuition is a primal power already active in the human mind, in which we can recognize the presence and working of a force beyond the understanding of analysis of our reason.

"For intuition is as strong as nature herself from whose very soul it has sprung and cares nothing for the contradictions of reason or the denials of experience. It knows what is because it is, because itself it is of that and has come from that, and will not yield it to the judgment of what merely becomes and appears" [16].

When the faculty of intuition acts, we are impressed by its superior efficiency, direct inspiration and force operating beyond the workings of our rational mind and intelligence.

Typically intuition occurs intermittently

and gives only partial and fragmentary revelations. Its potential force, however, is usually limited as it is at the mercy of our life-mind-oriented reason and intelligence, which rejects, adapts, and manipulates it for its own purposes.

"For if we examine carefully, we shall find that intuition is our first teacher. Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operations. Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher Knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest" [17].

Through time, however, the whole reach and purity of our thought, will, feeling, and action can be extended as one practices the intervention of heightened intuitive awareness in daily mental operations. Then we can learn to distinguish the pure intuitive-mind awareness. "For the highest intuitive Knowledge sees things in the whole, in the large and details only as sides of the indivisible whole; its tendency is towards immediate synthesis and the unity of knowledge" [18].

For intuition to develop, it needs to be made a normal and intimate aspect of our experience of being. It must increasingly take over the actions now done by the ordinary mind. Also, it is necessary to transform the conclusions from our reason in the light of intuition. The higher mentality thus puts pressure on the lower processes. Any particular method or combination of

methods of evoking and training intuition are not necessarily adequate or prescribed for a specific person, as the unfolding of the divine kundalini shakti energy proceeds according to the nature and needs of each individual.

Sri Aurobindo describes four basic means by which the functioning of the intuitive mind is accomplished and enhanced:

1. The tradition of meditation offers an avenue toward the development of intuition. Silencing the chattering mind, its intellect, will, desire, emotion, and sensation allows the disclosure of the infinite, as a manifestation of the perfect Self within. In this, however, even if the thought is predominantly intuitive, upon returning to our regular worldly consciousness our inferior mentality has a tendency to mix in. It questions, obstructs, or distorts the intuition. So with meditation there remains the necessity of a process of change in the inferior mentality, so that the intuitive thought can be received as pure knowledge, as the pure movement of the kundalini shakti. As meditation becomes a habitual constant mental condition, rather than involving a few periods of quiet, then this purity can develop.

2. The way of devotion or bhakti yoga is natural to many mystical, religious or other like persons who reject the rule of the intellect and its actions. They listen for the voice of the Divine or secret self, and wait upon its command. This is the approach which uses the intuition of the heart or emotions as the means of infinite awareness. "It is possible then by referring back all the initiation of our action to this secret intuitive Self and Spirit, the ever-present Godhead with us, and replacing by its influences the initiations of our personal and mental nature to get back from the inferior external thought and action to another, internal and intuitive, of a highly spiritualized character" [19]. When under the control of a master teacher, or Guru, it is a powerful and effective avenue of transition. But when left to one's own inferior processes, problems with irrational thoughts and behavior may arise. This is because our thinking-desiring mind is strongly affected by our emotions, which largely control what we think, and greatly influences our perception and awareness. Sri Aurobindo feels that the result of this is not complete, as our emotions are not directly controlled by the infinite Superconsciousness. Since our heart is not the highest center of our being, our experience would be greatly vulnerable to distortion. The function of the Guru in this method is to lift and soothe the dissonant and limiting influences within his own more perfected force of kundalini shakti. This way a powerful change can take place in the seeker without major distortion.

3. A method of intuition practiced by some persons who are sufficiently spiritually developed involves lifting the center of consciousness and its resultant stimulus of behavior beyond the physical brain, to feel it going on outside and immediately above the head, beyond the limitations of the physical mind. From this vantage, communication is more open and facile with the infinite Superconsciousness. Though there will remain the press of warping influences arising in intuition, it is easier with this to arrive at a swift and subtle discrimination of the difference between the pure substance of the intuitive truth from its mental coatings. "It will be easier to discern rapidly the higher planes of the true supramental being and call down their power to effect the desired transformation and to refer all the lower action to the superior power and light that it may reject and eliminate, purify and transform and select among them its right material for the truth that has to be organised within us" [20]. This involves invoking the shakti, opening up to higher and higher planes of the supramental with the consequent reformulation of our whole consciousness, which becomes molded into a more luminous capacity.

4. A method suited naturally to those thinking persons of developed intelligence involves seeking to perfect the intellect rather than eliminate it: "To heighten its capacity, light, intensity, degree and force of activity until it borders on the thing that transcends it and can easily be taken up and transformed into that higher action" [21].

This is an aspect of the process described by Sri Aurobindo as a complete method of self-perfection. It involves the heightening of the action of all human instruments, mental and physical, toward their own essential completeness. This is a preparation for the normal movement of kundalini shakti. However, of all the instruments in the developed human being, reason and intelligent will is the most capable of aiding and helping develop all other attributes. The transformation of intellect can be accomplished by eliminating the distorting or perverting elements which limit it. This cannot be accomplished by heightened intellectual activity alone, as that activity is always limited by the original inherent defects of mental intelligence. It is necessary to open up to supramental levels; to call down the intervention of the divine Shakti, so that those higher levels can break through the veils of separation, and can manifest as higher intuition. With the intervention of supramental shakti, a process occurs which gets rid of deficiencies of thought, will, and feeling. The intellect becomes transformed and is raised to its fullest and most heightened powers of intuition.

The natural action of infinite energy, kundalini shakti, purposively orders and combines all of these methods according to the personality and needs of the individual. Where one person may find the door to higher intuition in silence, another discovers it in an emotional link with the heart's love, or variously through heightened faculties. Then, when the shakti has sufficiently worked, the divine energy raises the center of its operations beyond the body. It develops and perfects the further powers of intelligence and will, and other natural powers such as the intuitive mind.

The first result of intuitive mind is not the creation of the true supermind, but rather the emergence of a faculty sufficiently well developed to take the place of the ordinary human mentality, logical reason, and intellect. The intuitive mind is a powerful instrument. It proceeds directly and joyfully to the things to be done. It accomplishes them completely, rapidly, and efficiently. With its development, feelings also become intuitive, so that right relations are accomplished by the feel of the correct *rasa*, mood-essence of things. Spontaneous desires and emotions become appropriate to their situation. "And usually there will be some development also of psychic faculties, powers and perceptions of the inner mind and its senses not dependent on the outer sense of reason" [22].

However, even when the mind has acquired this action of intuitive ability and is in the most part free from added inferior elements, it is still mind and not gnosis. It is still subject to error and relapse, so the growing intuitive mind needs to be watchful and move always toward the full light of the supramental being. To avoid unnecessary mental and social disruption or estrangement, it is also necessary to temper one's behavior with "good old-fashioned" common sense.

This new capacity of mentality, however remarkable, operates with a certain range of capacity. The mind opened to the infinite, to progress, change, and enlargement, is by nature involved in an oscillating tendency, which also seeks a return to the level of the customary human mind. The intuitive mind, the first spiritual mind, dwells between the poles of the intellectualized human mentality and the greater supramental knowledge.

Developing an intuitive mind has been discussed here, following the thought of Sri Aurobindo, as a viable and powerful initial means of progress toward a revolutionary human transformation, a condition of being based upon Spirit. Intuition was seen as an intermediate process, derived from the psychic being, allowing the not quite immediate presence of supermind. A completely integral relationship with super-



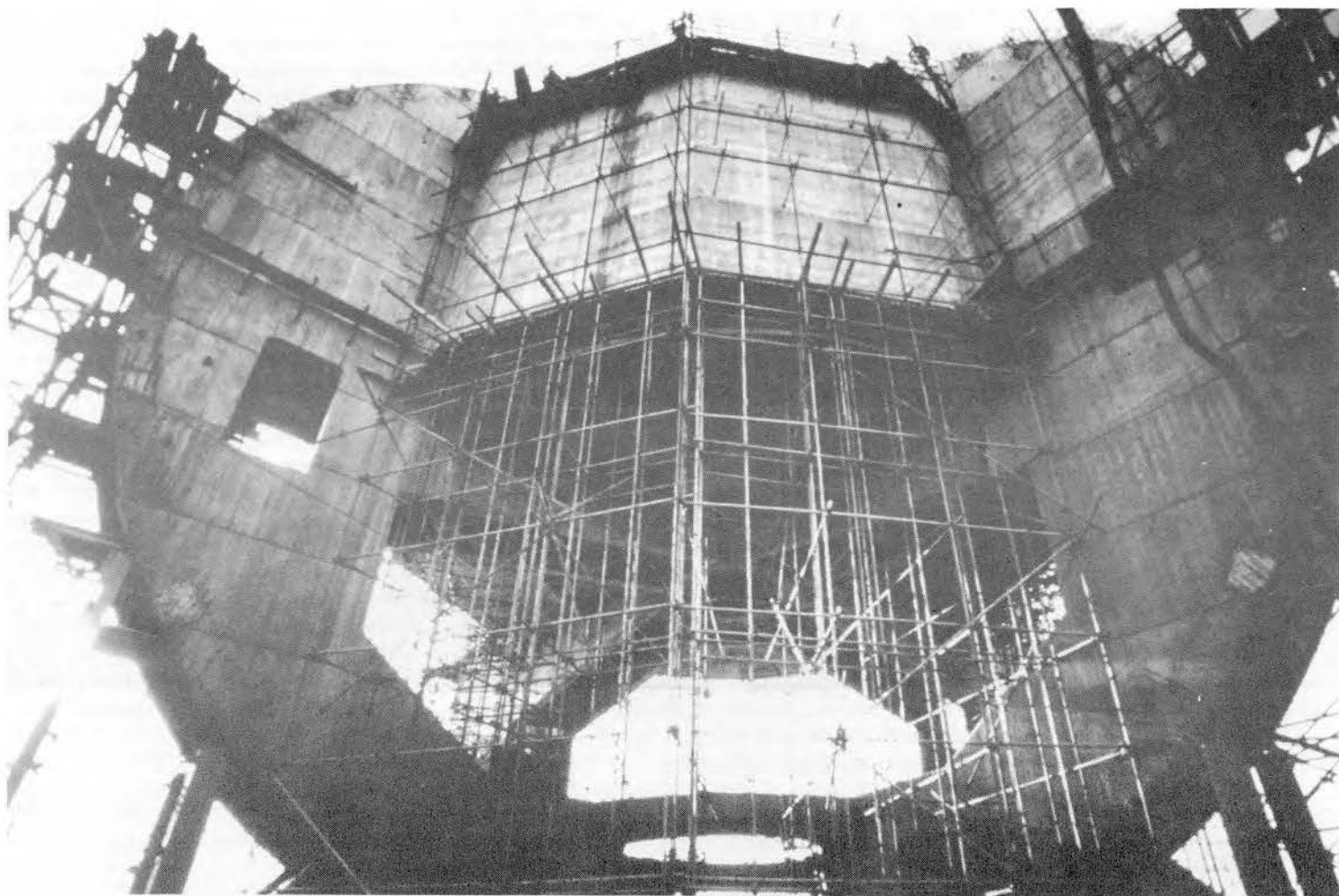
mind was seen to require a further evolutionary development. That complete human transformation was thought to be inevitable, and to be provided by the working of the kundalini shakti. [Editor's note: Sri Aurobindo's view is that the transformation will be effected not by the kundalini shakti, the latent energy in the embodied being, but by the descent of the supramental energy.] "As the intuitive mind grows in us,

as our whole being grows more molded to an intuitive substance, we feel a sort of half transformation of our members into the nature of this greater self and spirit. All our thought, will, impulse, feeling, even in the end our more outward vital and physical sensations become more and more direct transmissions from the spirit and are of another and more and more pure, untroubled, powerful and luminous nature" [23].

#### Notes

15. M.P. Pandit, personal correspondence to the writer, Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, June 1979.
16. *The Life Divine*, p. 67.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
19. *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 774.
20. Ibid., p. 775.
21. Ibid., p. 776.
22. Ibid., p. 778.
23. Ibid., p. 781.

## EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE



A view of the Matrimandir. Photo by Dominique Darr.

### THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE *The Matrimandir*

- The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville.

The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody and especially for the Aurovilians. [15.11.1970]

- There is only one Matrimandir, the Matrimandir of Auroville.

The others must have another name. [5.10.1971]

- The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection.

Union with the Divine manifesting in a progressive human unity. [14.8.1970]

- The Matrimandir is directly under the influence of the Divine and certainly He arranges things better than we could do ourselves. [October 1971]

- Significance of the four pillars: North, Mahakali; South, Maheshwari; East, Mahalakshmi; West, Mahasaraswati.

- Significance of the twelve rooms: Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equality, Peace. [July 1972]

## MATRIMANDIR APPEAL

The Matrimandir is in need of funds. Construction has continued but slowly. Here is a list of priority requirements for Matrimandir construction in 1980:

### A. Construction

For construction of the space frame of the sphere:

1. Cement, 1,000 bags at Rs 27/bag Rs 27,000
2. Steel 152,000

For the ferrocement covering of the two spiral ramps to the inner chamber 20,000

### B. Gardens

1. A diesel engine for pump located in the Maheshwari area 8,000
2. Contouring and garden work 40,000
3. Nursery maintenance and research 30,000

### C. Maintenance and Running Expenses

1. General—workshops, replacement and maintenance of tools and materials, transport, electricity, telephone 50,000
2. Wages 30,000
3. Matrimandir workers' maintenance 50,000

TOTAL Rs407,000

(Approximately \$51,000)

Contributions from India (checks drawn in favor of "Auroville Fund") to Auroville Fund, % Matrimandir Office, Auroville 605101.

Contributions from abroad (checks in favor of "Auroville Pour Tous Fund") to Auroville Pour Tous Fund, % Matrimandir Office, Auroville 605101, India.

Contributions may also be made through Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457; Auroville Association, 212 Farley Drive, Aptos, CA 95003; East West Cultural Center, 2865 W. 9 St., Los Angeles, CA 90006, all tax deductible; or through Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306.

**Note:** When sending money to India, please send by registered airmail.



John Harper and Ruud Lohman, two Matrimandir workers, at work on one of the ramps. Photo by Bill Sullivan.

## PROGRESS (3)

[Following is the third installment from the Auroville report *Progress*, concerned with "the physical work and manifestation in Auroville with an aim to providing regular information about communities and projects for friends around the world."]

### Services (2)

**The Bakery:** Traditional Indian cooking includes several delicious types of flat unleavened breads including the whole-wheat chapatti, but the yeast breads are invariably white and as tasteless and unnutritious as their Western counterparts. Many years ago in the Ashram the Mother installed a bakery and personally gave the recipe for whole-wheat bread. In the early days of Auroville bread from the Ashram bakery was brought out daily by bus, but as Auroville grew, this arrangement became impractical. In June

1975, Larry and Sundaranaicken, an American and a Tamil Aurovilian, built the first wood oven in Kottakarai to bake bread for their community and a few neighbors. The original requirement of 15-20 loaves three times a week gradually grew to include buns for Matrimandir workers, cakes for birthdays, cookies and about 80 loaves of both yeast and sour-dough bread at each baking. During this period the bakery was supported partly by contributions of wheat and firewood from the communities supplied and partly by sales of bread in Pondicherry and nearby villages.

In February 1977 the work moved into a new building (again of temporary construction) and a collaboration with Pour Tous provided necessary supplies through the general fund. A few months later, in

August, with the discontinuation of the bakery in Aspiration, the Kottakarai bakery began supplying all of Auroville, around 1,000 loaves per week. Though there was a number of visitors and other part-time helpers, the bulk of the work was carried out by Larry and Sundaranaicken, assisted by three paid helpers, two young boys and a woman.

Just over a year ago [1978] experiments in the making of tofu (soybean curd) resulted from the simultaneous arrival of a small donation and a visitor who had learned about tofu making in Taiwan. Supply of small quantities to several communities began slowly, but demand soon exceeded supply until a donation of a large quantity of soybeans near the end of the year made it possible to produce enough for everyone.

Tofu has now become as much a staple food as the bread, is a major source of protein and has inspired many imaginative recipes.

At this time the existing facilities are barely able to support production, with hygiene a major problem due to the deteriorating conditions of the building. In August the situation was discussed at one of the general meetings with the resulting proposal for a shift to the old Takshanalaya building formerly used as a carpentry workshop. This building seems ideal as it is in an accessible central location, is constructed of permanent materials and has the necessary electrical supply for milling machinery. The idea has received enthusiastic community support and a number of volunteers, but so far the plan has not been effectuated for lack of funds.

With the possibility of adequate space, many ideas have come for other types of food processing such as drying, pickling and preserving, milling of our own grains, and for other uses of soybeans such as soy sauce and miso, which require fermentation. The building is large enough to house additionally the food-distribution functions of Pour Tous.

Toujours Mieux started somewhat unusually with the arrival in late 1969 of a caravan from France bringing tools and machinery and Vincenzo, whose idea it was to set up a mechanical workshop in Auroville. At first it was a workshop in name only, for due to a lack of facilities work had to be carried on out of doors. They were soon able to move into a small keet and bamboo structure, then later into a somewhat larger one. The type of work undertaken in these early days varied from auto repair to manufacture of metal parts for the construction of huts in Aspiration, carpentry and electrical work.

In March 1972 a fire in the night destroyed all—except for a few hand tools and the will to continue. After the fire Vincenzo and Jean, who had joined Toujours Mieux in 1971 primarily to do bookkeeping, took up the work again and with the help of a bank loan were able to purchase new equipment. They were also able to design and construct a new workshop, an experimental dome with a steel framework and translucent polyester panels.

Even while construction was proceeding, work began on the development of a leather-buffing machine that was miraculously completed in just 3 weeks, in time to be exhibited in Madras at the annual (1974) International Leather Fair. The response was equally miraculous—125 orders were received. To facilitate construction of the machines and leave themselves free to concentrate on designing, the work of building the machines was given under license to an

Indian company. This eventually proved to be a costly mistake as the company's dealings were extremely unethical and they were turning out faulty machines. During this year Toujours Mieux worked with Auroelectronics on a prototype leather-measuring machine which was shown at the 1975 leather fair. The measuring machine was an obvious success but the reluctance of customers to place orders gave the first indication that something was wrong. When they realized that the source of the problem was the low-quality machinery being sold by the Indian company in the name of Toujours Mieux, they spent the next year breaking their contract, following up complaints and recalling all faulty machines for repair or replacement. After a year of refinement, the machines for buffing and measuring were shown again at the 1976 fair, winning first prize and restoring their reputation. Orders came in and confidence grew but could not offset the financial difficulties caused by the earlier setback in connection with the Indian company and by the production of too many design prototypes in a short time. This strain coupled with internal problems caused a split with Auroelectronics and a time of introspection for Toujours Mieux.

Meanwhile, it had become necessary for Vincenzo to leave Auroville, and Toujours Mieux was mainly in Jean's hands. He was basically satisfied with past achievement in terms of technical development but felt he had to question seriously the purpose of the workshop. The outcome was a complete change of direction away from efforts to make money and towards providing service for Auroville with an absolute dedication to perfection in the work.

After about 6 months of working alone, Jean was joined by Serge, who had had considerable mechanical experience in France. At first they had to charge for work based on local prices in order to bring the workshop out of debt, but this was gradually modified until at present the arrangement is completely impersonal and functions entirely through the envelopes. Projects or individuals are informed of the cost of labor (everyone is asked to provide whatever materials are necessary), and all payment goes to the envelopes.

Since the "rebirth" of Toujours Mieux, work has included repairing and building bullock carts, wheelbarrows and similar transport equipment, preparing shuttering for cementing the inner chamber of Matrimandir, designing and building water tanks and such unusual items as a dough mixer for the bakery, a shearing machine for incense sticks and molds for making candles. One day someone asked them to build a windmill. This took a long time, involved considerable study and was the catalyst

that sparked interest in developing alternate energy systems. The workshop is offered for use by anyone interested in building alternate-energy equipment and for any other kind of mechanical work. There are some supplies available and communities having extra usable materials are invited to bring them to Toujours Mieux to be available for others—a sort of mechanical free-store. Jean offers to share whatever experience and knowledge he has, including what is being learned at Djaima, where he lives and is most likely to be found. When he is at Djaima, Rajamani, a young Tamil Aurovilian who has been with Toujours Mieux since he was a boy, is in the workshop. Rajamani has become expert in all aspects of mechanics and in fact, according to Jean, is the one really in charge—Jean is only a "consultant."

**Abri Mechanical Workshop:** The history of Abri actually goes back as far as 1971, when Pieter, a young man from Holland, took over responsibility for the tractor service. His idea was to provide maintenance for vehicles such as a lorry, bus and several vans that were then operating in Auroville. A centralized location was chosen for a garage and the main building constructed with funds from the German FAO. Upon completion in 1972, Mother gave the name Abri, meaning "shelter."

In the years that followed, Abri gradually passed through several phases, becoming for some time a training center and labor pool for Tamil workers, especially for construction skills and mechanics, which necessitated expansion of the building. Later on, an emphasis on the construction and training aspect diminished, the mechanical side developed into a workshop for repair and servicing of vehicles of all kinds and sizes from tractors to bicycles. At this time, a good basis for the present work was established by Jack, an American who was instrumental in locating the best available skills and equipment for mechanical work that had to be done outside of Auroville. Some training also continued, especially of one young Tamil, Mani, who by now has probably repaired just about everything in Auroville!

When Jack left for the States about 2 years ago, Pieter returned, having worked elsewhere in Auroville during Abri's "construction period," and together with Mani took up the vitally necessary work of repair and maintenance of Auroville's pumps and water-supply systems, with a secondary emphasis on vehicles. Unfortunately, repair has so far taken precedence over maintenance for several reasons. Partly, many pumps were not in good condition due to previous lack of regular servicing, but mainly there haven't been sufficient funds for parts and additional experienced help



to break the cycle of costly and time-consuming breakdowns which result from lack of regular servicing (which in turn cannot be done because funds and time are going into repairs). At present Abri is supported by direct payment at cost for parts and labor, when possible through the individual or project concerned, otherwise through the envelopes.

One of Pieter's dreams is to have a bullock cart equipped as a traveling workshop complete with tripod for lifting. At present he and Mani travel to pump sites by motorcycle (averaging around 300 kms. a week just within Auroville), carrying heavy tools and parts with them, often having to make several trips back to Abri for additional equipment.

Even if everything was running smoothly, however, Pieter is under no illusion that all his problems would be solved—in Auroville nothing is predictable, not even machines. He sees the real challenge as being aware at each moment of every detail of the work.

**Abri Electrical Workshop:** The first workshop in Auroville specifically for electricity was set up at Matrimandir in 1973 and was originally intended only for service to the construction site. It was organized by Toine, who had studied electrical engineering in Holland, and he began by training several young Tamil men in basic electrical technology while he himself studied local Indian regulations. Electricity in rural areas of India is still something of a "luxury," not in any sense the taken-for-granted commodity to which one is accustomed in the technically affluent West. Since in these areas there is usually a lack of qualified electricians, much of the early installation in Auroville was not of a high standard. Breakdowns were (and still are) a common occurrence and Toine soon found his services in great demand all over Auroville. He and his helpers began the slow process of improving the existing connections in one area or community at a time, a work which was later aided by a donation from Holland. This improvement is still going on, the community of Aspiration was completed in August of this year and work is now in progress at the Matrimandir Nursery.

In 1976 part of the electrical workshop moved from Matrimandir to Abri; the final move, except for equipment necessary for Matrimandir construction, came in August 1978. At Abri the electrical workshop occupies an office and two storerooms, sharing the building with the mechanical workshop. In the more convenient space it has been possible to do additional training of local people, several of whom have become sufficiently qualified to work as electricians in their own villages maintaining and repairing connections, especially pumpsets. A few

of the trainees have remained at Abri—there are now six paid helpers, all having come as unskilled laborers—but much of the work still falls to Toine and Dakshinamurti, a Tamil Aurovilian. To keep pace with Auroville's growth two more qualified electricians are needed, but they are difficult to find and command high salaries.

At present the electrical workshop operates on a financial basis similar to the mechanical workshop. But the financial bind which touches all Auroville's services also prevents the ideal from being achieved in terms of preventive maintenance and a more rapid upgrading of electrical materials and equipment.

Still, there has been time for invention .... In an effort to introduce more modern techniques and equipment, Toine has designed a simple compact panelboard for pumpsets that is now being tried out in Auroville. This device prevents overloading of the motor and has already received much attention and praise from the local electrical authorities. The electrical service has also contributed towards the improvement of the fuse-protection systems on the distribution transformers used by the Electrical Board. This improved design is now adopted widely and has improved reliability of electrical supply.

**Multipurpose Health Center:** Until recently the main medical facility actually located in Auroville was the Health Center near Aspiration. The original intention of this center was to provide health care to all residents of Auroville and to aid integration of Tamil Aurovilians, but it has gradually come to serve mainly the Tamil community and villagers. The only other clinic is a small one in the village of Kottakarai, which, though aided and partly staffed by Aurovilians, also primarily serves the villagers.

Early in 1977 Dr. Kamala Tewari came to Auroville and began working at the Aspiration Health Center, with one morning a week at Kottakarai and one morning at Matrimandir. Though her training was in allopathic medicine, especially obstetrics and gynecology, she is knowledgeable in the field of homeopathy, which she prefers. As she came into contact with more Aurovilians and developed a deeper understanding of their problems, nutritional needs and particularly their attitudes and feelings about health and medicine, an idea began to evolve for a "multipurpose" health center.

The basic idea is to have a place (a room is presently being prepared in Certitude) where all kinds of health care can be offered such as homeopathy, acupuncture, polarity, ayurveda, physiotherapy, nature cure, etc. Anyone with experience and training in these techniques is welcome to use the center. A schedule will probably be arranged

on a rotating basis so that someone would be on hand or on call at all times. As special importance is given to prevention, there will also be offered the possibility of self-help and active participation by Aurovilians as part of the growth towards increased consciousness of the body, of its particular needs, sensitivities and responses in the totality of the being. A library is being amassed of books and information pertaining to all kinds of medicine as well as nutrition and exercise. Dr. Tewari hopes that in the future special emphasis can be given to nutrition and child care, two aspects she feels to be of particular importance in Auroville.

**Maison d'Auroville:** Though located in Pondicherry, the new Maison d'Auroville is precisely what the name suggests—a house for Auroville. Initiated by Ramesh (who also does purchasing for Pour Tous), it opened on the 6th of January 1979, with the aim of providing a place where Aurovilians can go for something cool to drink, a wholesome but inexpensive meal, or just to relax for an hour or two in the heat of the day. A variety of hot and cold drinks is offered and the vegetarian food is simple but varied, delicious and thoughtfully prepared. The atmosphere is relaxed, the decor is quietly pleasing, the kitchen is clean, and everybody wonders how we did without it before!

Open only to Aurovilians and their guests, Maison serves an average of 50 people a day between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. At present all food purchasing, preparation and service is carried out by Ramesh, 4 paid workers and several helpful volunteers.

Plans for the future involve opening a house with a similar arrangement where Aurovilians could stay overnight or for short periods—a welcome idea.

### *Research and Education*

Djaima, one of the newest communities in Auroville, is the first ecological experimental farm devoted to research and applications in alternative energy. In April 1978 twelve people (three with engineering and one with scientific background) took up 17 acres of eroded, ecologically devastated land to see how they could work towards this idea which was described by the Mother:

"We are told that in a few billions of years, earth will have become a kind of moon. The movement must be the opposite, earth must become more and more like a resplendent sun, but a sun of life. Not a sun which burns: a sun which illumines—a radiating glory." [*Agenda*, 4 October 1958]

The first year with its unprecedented sand storms and then torrential, record-breaking rains provided a vivid sample of



of the forces of nature which they had set out to turn to the advantage of the land. But it was all taken with a positive attitude and preclude the considerable progress they were able to achieve. The work that has been done so far is in some ways similar to that which is necessary to the establishment of any new community in Auroville, i.e., digging a well, installing pumps and water systems, fencing, planting of trees, construction of living space—but in Djaima it has all been done in a relatively short time and there are many aspects which pertain especially to the ecological experiment being made. These aspects include bunding for boundaries and erosion control, use of natural plant material for fencing, road repairs, a nursery for all types of plants from forest trees to vegetables, a bamboo grove for future use in construction in Auroville, orchards, vegetable gardens, grain cropping, poultry (on a small scale), fish ponds, algae cultivation especially for poultry feed, construction in collaboration with Toujours Mieux of several tools of innovative design such as wheelbarrows, sprinklers, etc., and preliminary work on a wind generator.

Two projects central to the purpose of Djaima are more technically complex and require a longer period for development. One is a building which originally served as a combined shower, toilet, laundry, kitchen, dining room, rest room and office which has now come to be known as the "solar laboratory." Without altering the basic design of the building, every opportunity has been taken to support each function by some method of alternate energy. It is expected that the solar laboratory will be functioning fully on alternate energy sometime in 1980.

The other long-term project and one which has already attracted interest from visiting experts is the development of a totally new windmill design which involves a "timer" connected to the hydraulic circuit. This timer automatically adjusts the volume of water pumped to the velocity of the wind, enabling the blades to turn at a very low wind speed.

As the first community in Auroville specifically oriented toward alternate-energy research, Djaima has been the recipient of a number of bits and pieces of alternate-energy experiments from other communities which for some reason had either failed or were never completed. At Djaima this material is all put to use and the results of their research and practical experiments will be of inestimable value to Auroville's overall development in the future.

So far, most of the development has been financed personally by members of the community, except for one donation from friends of Auroville in the U.S. Future progress, however, will have to depend more

on outside help until the project achieves one of its goals, which is self-sufficiency. Work underway, which they hope will near completion by the end of this, their second year, includes repair and installation of a second windmill, continued work on the wind generator, and research on enriched water as well as the constant efforts toward conservation and conscious utilization of the land and natural energy sources.

**Auroelectronics**, as the name implies, is a research and production unit in the field of electronics, a work that is unique in Auroville's development. But technologically sophisticated as this field may be, it began in Auroville as humbly as most of the other units.

In preparation, one of the founders, André, worked as a teacher in Pondicherry for some time, accumulating the capital necessary to begin. Joined in December 1973 by Kalya, they decided to try generating additional funds by building electronic metronomes, a product that was relatively simple to construct, did not involve too much outlay for materials and which they felt would have a ready market. The metronome sales did not achieve the success they had hoped for, but in 1974 they became involved in a more ambitious project in collaboration with Toujours Mieux—research into the construction of a machine for electronic measurement of hides for tanneries.

Export of leather is a big business in India and measurement of the skins is a problem because the shape is irregular and because large quantities must be processed at the same time. The first machine designed and produced by Auroelectronics and Toujours Mieux was basically a chassis with rollers which passed the skins beneath an electronic scanner. The total area of each skin was then computed and recorded by the scanner. When the first prototype was completed in February 1975, it was shown at a leather-machinery fair in Madras resulting in the first sale in June to one of the largest tanneries in India. The sale price was Rs 68,000 [about \$8,500] (as compared with the metronome price of Rs 200 [about \$25]) and the profit from this first sale supported continued research and refinement of the machine. Subsequent models include the use of a conveyor belt instead of rollers and optional features such as attachments for counting, flattening, batch printing and stamping. To date over 60 have been built and sold to tanneries all over India.

In 1976 the Indian government granted Auroelectronics status as a research and development project, which accords tax exemption and permission to import relevant materials. During that year they were also joined by Ulli, who had come to Auroville from Germany with a background in electronics and computer science. He began

working to build from scratch, as funds were not available for purchase of a prototype, a small computer system of sufficient capacity for use by medium-sized businesses. In February 1978 a microprocessor was completed and attached to the leather-measuring machine to provide instant print-out of all information from the scanner and a memory to preserve the data in case of power failure. A few months later Ulli was able to attend a computer fair in the U.S. which contributed to the final completion of the microcomputer system prototype.

Up to this time Auroelectronics had been located in Fraternity, with a business office in Pondicherry. In November 1978 they were able to move into a newly constructed building that provided an air-conditioned laboratory necessary for further development and refinement of the computer system. At present one model is being tested in Auroelectronics, programmed for inventory, bookkeeping and a number of games such as Star Trek and 3-D Tic Tac Toe, which they hope to make available to Auroville children as a way of introducing them to computer and electronic technology in the future. Projected use for production units is as data-entry stations, which prepare data for larger computers as well as for business use as mentioned earlier. It is hoped that sales can begin by the end of the year. [*In our next issue: Center Playground/School, Ami, Gratitude, Greenwork.*]

## UNITY IN DIVERSITY: THE IMPLICATIONS

[This essay and the rebuttal which follows it appeared originally in *Auroville Notes* 132. It reflects two of various views among Aurovilians which Auroville is attempting to synthesize and harmonize. We thought our readers would find this much of the process interesting.]

If human unity were easy to achieve, there would be no need for Auroville. It is exactly because it is so difficult and has never yet been achieved that this crucial ongoing human experiment has to be allowed to flourish freely, and not be restricted or manipulated.

The problems currently besetting Auroville are *precisely* those which it was established for, and which should be accepted—even welcomed—by all with a sincere interest in the project. To be surprised by them, to fear them or to try to limit them is to shrink down in the face of them. And to use the old solutions—whether they be law courts, rules, ruling groups, money power, or actions of division or exclusion—is to lower the whole experiment and its participants to the same old consciousness, the same level of action and the same failures as have occurred in the past.

Auroville is a unique arena, where for the first time in the history of the world an opportunity exists to resolve human difficulties and conflicts in a *new* way. Such difficulties and conflicts must be expected and permitted to exist within Auroville. They are an integral part of the milieu for the experiment. To limit or confine the experiment to just those who will conform to the desires of a small part of humanity—whether Sri Aurobindo Society, existing Aurovilians, or others—would be to limit the possible solutions. Superficially such a selected population might have a better chance of achieving harmony and unity because of a common identity, but Auroville could no longer then be what it has to be—representative of all mankind, in all its beauty, its ugliness and its wonderful diversity. It would only be a collection of people conforming to the imposed ideas of one group, one small unrepresentative section of the human spectrum. Or even worse, and more dangerous, the imposed ideas of one person.

To achieve Auroville's ideal of unity in diversity, the fullest diversity has to be present. That means that even those elements we don't like, or we distrust, or disagree with, or find difficult to work with, have to be here. However, it doesn't mean that such elements should be allowed to hold exclusive sway over others, or in any way dominate the life of Auroville; only that they are as welcome and necessary a part as every other part. All must be within the crucible; all must accept that the others have as much "right" as they have and are here for the same ultimate purpose—to realise the ideal.

It has to be understood that those who seek to impose limits; who see good or bad, right or wrong; who think they know who should or shouldn't be here, and so feel to support or suppress or exclude certain people or groups, have those same limitations and divisions strongly entrenched within them. They should see that they themselves also have to change, perhaps even more than the ones they condemn or divide against. The alternative—seeking to eliminate problems, counterviewpoints or different ways of being and living by eliminating the opposition, beating it in a competitive sense, or ostracising it—is one of the oldest continuing failures of man. It is because man has always done that and failed that Auroville was created. If we do it yet again, within Auroville, just what chance has the ideal of manifesting? Just what validity has Auroville as an experiment in unity *in diversity*?

No one and no group, whether majority or minority, within or outside Auroville, should underestimate or fear the immensity of this experiment now begun, or seek to

direct its course. If it seems too big, out of control or containing unacceptable elements, it is only because we ourselves are still too small and narrow, still needing to control, or are unable to accept anything different from ourselves. These are our weaknesses and to be dealt with, and surely the reason we are here.

We should have faith that the Mother has drawn here—and keeps here—the people *She* wants and needs for Auroville. Her

choice may surprise us or present difficulties for us, but that is because Her ultimate purpose and the part each has to play is unknown to us. We should trust Her and remember, with humility, that Auroville exists ultimately to realise Her will, the will of the Supreme, not the will of any man, woman or group, no matter how powerful, enlightened or convinced of their right. Nothing else is relevant. Nothing else can prevail. Nothing else can be Auroville.

—Tim Wray

## IMPLICATIONS OF "UNITY AND DIVERSITY"

Reading the preceding article, I could not help having an itchy feeling: words, beautifully woven, yes, but words, words, a tapestry set somewhere, completely out of context. I went to speak to the writer and some points came during the discussion which can be of some interest:

- We cannot deny that there is at present a state of war. The last weeks [this article was written around December 1979] have shown ample evidence of this fact, and one has to be blind not to see it. It is a war between two parties: on one hand, a large number of individuals who do not pretend to hold the only truth but who simply try as much as possible to work out the challenges that circumstances present to them; they are well aware of many of their shortcomings but are confident that by working more and more together, aspiring, things new will establish themselves. On the other hand, there is a constituted body, a bureaucratic hierarchy which has tried to impose itself by any means (blackmail, expulsions, defamatory articles, financing trouble through villagers, false accusations) which, when seeing the impossibility of imposing itself, tries now to stop and suffocate AV ["AV" is a widely used abbreviation for Auroville] (visas, money, cement, steel, transportation, etc.) with the whole arsenal of legalities, lobbying and so on.

- Some do not see the need of war, do not like it, are afraid of it, and refuse to take sides, aspiring only for "peace." Strangely, this is the main reason this battle is still going on, with the issue delayed, delayed endlessly. If there could be a sufficient unity on this necessity, war would be over. So the very elements who aspire the more for peace are in fact perpetuating the present state.

- In spite of the evident, a certain number of Aurovilians do not see the need to react, to fight, etc. The main topic of the discussion with Tim was: what should be the attitude of the community towards these elements? Tim advocated good will

for all, etc. The past has shown the necessity to act with the only weapon we can possibly use: boycott, total, of the SAS [Sri Aurobindo Society], SAS money, and SAS supporters. The past two years has also shown that there was no permanent hatred involved in such a boycott and many elements, after years of "mistakes" or active collaboration, or "blindness," have been welcomed in the midst of the larger group once their stand became clear.

- The fact that there is a stand brings "the danger of conformity." Obviously the writer is reflecting his own isolation. One has simply to move around AV, to work with different people, to share ideas in the Green Belt, Aspiration, Center, etc., to see how diverse and rich is the present population. No, there is only one reply to such an insinuation: go and see for yourself!

- Still, some are suffering from the present situation, confuse issues, saying the Pour Tous meetings, for example, are also a danger—and so is the present Envelope System, the Coop, etc. No one will claim that such organizations are perfect, but they are evolving, open to any change, and the way to change them is certainly not through nonparticipation, bitterness, gossip and paranoia. All these have to change, yes, but most probably by a generous participation, a courageous plunge, a patience, a good will.

We can speak for hours exchanging ideas, opinions, quotations, etc. What are we here for? Is the goal so far away? Have we no experience at all? We are here for a new consciousness. Many have had glimpses of a different state, happy, light, clear, simple, where, yes, there is a deep unity which accepts, oh yes, diversity, but does not "try" to embrace. It is, that's all, and quite often it discriminates very well what is going in its direction or what is contrary to this subtle vibration. In fact, this is closely associated: the experience and, at the same time, the clarity to preserve it against any intrusion, a natural repulsion, without

words, against what is crude, vulgar, or "too sweet." This unity goes very well with a clear discrimination; to approach unity through the mind, with a big array of quotations, is simply to make a big soup.

Auroville is growing, living, getting more and more strength, unity, clarity, and we just have to keep on, to grow, to be ourselves. It is not our business to try convincing others, to get everyone: the train is going, life is there. A door is open. Whoever wants to join the train is free to do so.  
—Pierre

## OBSERVATIONS ON AUROVILLE

*Michael and Gail Shaw*

[The following observations on Auroville were made by Michael and Gail Shaw in a report on their trip to Auroville and Arcosanti. Reprinted from *Auroville Notes* 132.]

1. There is little social protocol and therefore less expectation on individuals. There is a high tolerance rather than pressure to conform.

2. The governance is more "divine anarchy" than centralised control. This leads to many opportunities for exploring new avenues of governance, although certain functions which would normally be formalised in an organisation remain undone.

3. There is an emphasis on individual effort, both economic and spiritual.

4. There is an attempt to build a solid interface with the local (Tamil) population, with one full-time person working in this field.

5. Different communities within Auroville perform different functions and have different purposes, with little if any central monitoring. This results in a wide diversity of effort, etc.

6. Although the community is as a whole essentially at a survival level, all sections seem to be generating income to some extent. The Envelope System...is a way of ensuring participation in financial decision making.

7. Auroville presents many situations which are seen by the community as "perfect learning situations." A good example is the idea that the community is an experiment in unity and the great diversity of political viewpoints is seen as the perfect challenge in developing this central idea of unity.

8. The community is almost 80% self-sufficient in food and has achieved this within four years. [sic?]

9. The community is obviously in the Third World, and being in an arid region, there are large spatial relationships making communication more difficult and also creating a more peaceful environment. Members appreciate the internal space.



Picnic at Aurobeach, Auroville. Photo by Dominique Darr.

10. There is no dependence on visitors for income.

11. There is a general lack of interest in (and knowledge of) group process.

12. There is a very strong and evident devotion to the Mother and the philosophical basis of the community being very obvious with the writings of Sri Aurobindo, makes for a very powerful philosophical underpinning.

13. Perhaps because of the physical environment and also because of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, the internal relationship milieu is less sexual than Findhorn.

14. There is considerable difference in political opinion within the community about major issues. The political atmosphere in relation to the Sri Aurobindo Society tends to be a major form-level influence on policy.

15. Because of the low volume of incoming funds, there has been a withdrawal of support from Pour Tous by a number of communities [sic?] with the result of an ever-decreasing volume of income and expenditure going through the central financial pot.

16. The community has developed many crafts to form a strong commercial base.

17. Although commitment remains a problem in Auroville, we were struck by the number of members who had been there for over 8 years and who were very committed to the building of the community.

18. A great degree of spirituality was experienced. Enlightenment is seen not so much as a study of external works but more as an experienced way of being. The vast works of Sri Aurobindo actually give a feel-

ing of saturation in the mental approach and many members experience their spirituality as more loving God in everything.

19. There remains the central idea of building the city which is still inspirational. 23/10/79. (The editor of the Notes has questioned two statements, indicated by [sic].)

## INTERVIEW

### WITH THE DALAI LAMA

[On 14 November 1979, several Aurovilians, who had been in Delhi on Auroville business, were granted an interview with the Dalai Lama at Dharmasala. The Aurovilians were Tasbi, Kesang, Tapas, Peter, Claude, Frederick, and Lobsang. Following is a transcript of the interview, recalled from memory, and published in *Auroville Notes* 132.]

[A scarf, perfumed candles and incense are offered. Lobsang prostrates himself twice as the Dalai Lama tries to stop him.]

**Dalai Lama:** What is the progress?

**Fred:** There is progress and also problems.

For the progress we are working mainly on the land, planting trees, etc.... For the problems, it is the same fight as you people against territorial claims. They claim Auroville is their private property.

**D.L.:** [laughter] It is a good idea [i.e., Auroville].

**Claude:** But realisation is difficult.



**D.L.:** Each time that you want to materialise a good idea, you find barriers. Everywhere where there are broadminded people, narrowminded people try to stop their work. The implantation of a good idea is a long process. You have to be courageous, perseverant, an inner strength is needed. It takes time. It is a good idea, good idea [Auroville].

**Fred:** We feel that there is an inner connection between Auroville and Tibet. That brings the question and the importance of a Tibetan presence in Auroville. The problem is that the parents want to take back their children from Auroville, mainly because of the lack of Tibetan education in Auroville.

**Claude:** The result is that if they are in Auroville without a teacher, they are cut off from their culture and if they are here [in Dharmasala], they are cut off from Auroville, but still they are Tibetan and Aurovilian at the same time. Do you feel it will be possible to arrange for a teacher?

**D.L.:** There is no problem. We can send somebody. [He asks his secretary to see for arranging the thing.] How many children were in Auroville?

**Lobsang:** Twelve, at the beginning; then all the parents took the children back because there is no school as such in Auroville, but the children can still learn a lot. There are a lot of good teachers, but no Tibetan ones. If there are no more Tibetans in Auroville, how can we start the Pavilion? Even if we could build it, it would be useless without Tibetans in it. [The Dalai Lama agrees and laughs.] Same problem with a handicraft center; we need somebody really educated as a teacher.

**D.L.:** Yes... We can send 10, 15, or 20 children there, with a teacher for looking

after them. After some time, we'll see if the community can accept them or not.

**Fred** [gives the Dalai Lama various brochures on Auroville and an invitation to come to Auroville]: We explain the progress of Auroville: barren land, dry, without water.

**Claude:** The struggle helps us to grow. To quote you from your own American tour, "Our enemy can be our best friend because he helps us to grow."

**D.L.:** Easy living is not helping to grow. If you are too satisfied, you don't grow. [To Lobsang, in Tibetan:] Which are the standards of Tashi and Kesang?

**Lobsang:** Seventh standard. [Lobsang explains that he himself is doing electronics but that he is lazy.]

**D.L.:** Ha, ha! [laughter] How many people are living there?

**Someone:** 500 to 550 people.

**D.L.:** Which is the largest community?

**Claude and Fred:** French.

**D.L. [laughter]:** [Aside to his secretary in Tibetan]: French domination.

**Claude:** No, no! [The Dalai Lama laughs.]

**Someone:** Next, American.

**Claude:** No, actually first Indian.

**D.L.:** Have you any Japanese?

**Fred:** Yes, one Japanese-American.

**D.L.:** And from eastern Europe?

**Fred:** One Czech.

**Claude:** It seems it is more difficult for people from the communist countries to know about Auroville and come for practical and financial reasons.

**Fred:** Auroville is like an ideal communism. We put it into practice.

**Claude:** With the difference that in Auroville the main ideal is spiritual and after we have to bring this ideal on the material plane.

**D.L.:** Yes, yes. In Auroville there is a complete freedom.

## TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Pierre

In the Agenda of 1963 (I recall from memory), Mother explains after a "sickness" how she understood the "process": the cells have to call the Supreme to be healed. The first time, this thing comes through the mind, and then the cells realize the efficacy of this call. The second time the mind intervenes less, and the cells, a little more...and finally, the cells spontaneously call directly to the Supreme as the supreme and only healer. So this is the "necessity" of the sickness, to teach the cells to call on every point, all the time, the Supreme. And this is the first step in the transformation.

Auroville is the progressive formation of a collective body, and a body which learns also the process of transformation through "sicknesses" which affect this part, then that part... And the cells are you and I and he and she.

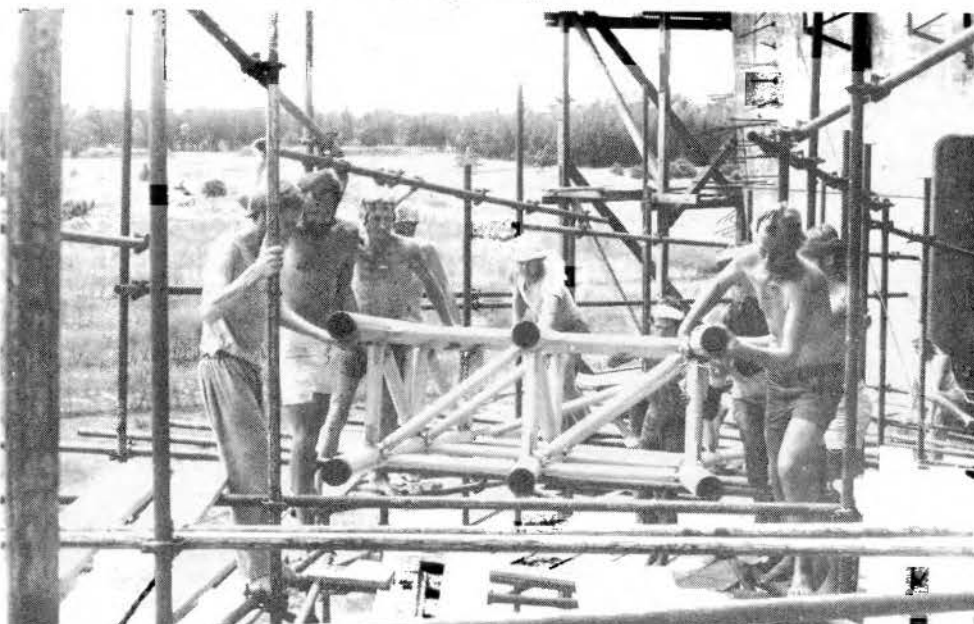
Yesterday a rampant sickness revealed itself in the open: we have failed to get a "stay order"; today the carpenters [of the Sri Aurobindo Society] will have to be "allowed" in the Matrimandir compound. All the "usual" ways have failed; advocates, lawyers, law, government officials, the other helpers are out of reach, the issue is now.

How long are we going to continue to try these old medicines? As Satprem puts it in his book (I recall again from memory): "We speak and aspire for transformation, but, at the slightest unease, we rush to the doctor..." (here the doctor is the lawyer, the government officials, etc.). When, as the cells of this collective body, are we going to learn the process? Namely, to call, spontaneously, the Supreme, on the sick point? We don't understand the situation, it is too complicated, too thick, too inextricable... But HE surely knows better. If we could only try, collectively, simultaneously, to call on the sick point... That means first to be aware of this sick point. And the question now is no more of a division between "physical fighters" and "no fighters," but of those who are aware of the situation, and call silently all the time, from all their being, THE Mother to heal this point, and those who are unaware or, worse, being aware, choose to go on as if nothing mattered to the daily tasks.

To call... There. We don't know, all our ideas are so childish! To realise the impotence of our means, and call Her, only Her, on all these points She points out...in smiling, maybe!

Perhaps that does not prevent all the other "means." If only we could keep this call in the foreground and the other means as merely tools for that Call...

"Or we may find when all the rest has failed  
Hid in ourselves the key of perfect change."



Matrimandir workers placing a section of the ramp into place.



### 1. Guests staying in guest houses:

There are three permanent places in Auroville that can accommodate guests: Centre guest house (6); Swagatam (5); and Fraternity (2). People in charge: Roger, Sam and Flore, Franz.

The price in guest houses is now fixed at Rs. 30 a day, which should be considered as a general contribution to Auroville. At least one third will be given direct to the Envelopes for food. The rest is for the maintenance and improvement of the guest house.

### 2. Guests staying in communities:

Some communities can occasionally receive visitors. Some (such as Discipline, Matrimandir Nursery, Forecomers) even have guest rooms that are mostly reserved for guests interested especially in those communities and their work.

The price in communities is fixed at Rs. 20 a day, at least half of which will go to the Envelopes for food, the rest to the community.

### 3. Newcomers (i.e., those who have decided to stay for good in Auroville and have been accepted by the community):

The price is also Rs. 20 a day, which corresponds to all the expenses involved in the maintenance of one Aurovilian; it is supposed to be paid during at least one year, and will all go to the Envelopes, specifically for food, maintenance and services.

### 4. Visas:

This is a very important work which should be done carefully.

All guests, visitors or newcomers should fill arrival forms the day they arrive, whether in guest houses or communities.

People on tourist visas who want to stay more than 3 months, or those who express the wish to stay for good, should get in touch with one member of the Cooperative, who will give them more information. [As the Coop members change periodically, we are not giving the list of names.]

The following Aurovilians are willing to receive visitors and provide them with information: Georges (Aspiration), Myrtle (Certitude), Roger (Centre guest house).

• Narad of the Matrimandir Gardens has requested back issues of the magazine *House Plants and Porch Gardens*, which he has found to have the best information concerning plants the Gardens are growing out of doors. Anyone who knows where we can obtain the back issues or who has them and would like to donate them, please contact Matagiri. The back issues wanted are those for 1976 through 1978.

• East-West Cultural Center (2865 W. 9th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90006; 213-480-8325) observed the Mother's birthday, 21 February, with a special reading of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's texts on "The Mother and Her Work of Transformation," accompanied by the music of Sunil and Mother. Dr. Vasant Merchant of Northern Arizona University spoke on "How the Mother Came to Me." On February 24, Fredric Ross, vice-president of the center, spoke on "Einstein and Yoga."

For the center's regular programs and special events, or to find out about classes and books for sale, call the center.

• Sri Aurobindo's Action Center (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306 (525 Hartford Drive; 303-499-3373) gave a number of slide presentations on Auroville recently: At the Boulder Free School as part of Douglas Rhodes' "Community for a Changing Earth," on February 20, and at the Aspen Community Center on March 21. On March 6, as part of Women's Week at the University of Colorado, a film, *Auroville: Dream of the Mother*, was shown, and on March 7 Seyril Rubin gave her dramatic reading "Savitri: Woman of the Future," which she also gave on March 15 for the benefit of the Community Free School in Boulder.

The center holds regular meditation-discussion meetings on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. For further information and to subscribe to the center's publication *Auroville Voice*, write or call the center.

• Sri Aurobindo Ashram—Delhi Branch (Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016, India) is organizing a meeting of all educational institutions operating along the principles of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, from 6 to 16 October 1980. They hope to establish a permanent link between these institutions so that they can help each other.

In addition, the Ashram holds a youth camp every year, from 1 to 15 June, in Nainital in the Himalayas. At the end of June this year there will also be a tour of the Himalayas for anyone interested, which will probably be going to Amarnath in Kashmir and Ladakh. Final details for this yearly tour had not been made available at press time.

For further details of the activities of the Ashram or of Mother's International School, write directly to Tara Jauhar at the Ashram.

• Dr. Joan Price of the Valley Center for Contemplative Studies (8409 Via Del Parque, Scottsdale, AZ 85258; 602-991-2072) held a seminar on the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on March 21-23. Dr. Price presented "Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother"; Mary Schnell led chanting; Ann Mahoney offered "Karma and Rebirth"; Helen Briggs, "The Bhagavad Gita and Karma Yoga"; Dorothy Young, "The Yoga of Devotion."

For details on the center's regular study meetings, call or write the center.

• The H.W. Wilson Company of New York, publishers of library reference works such as the *Readers' Guide*, has just brought out *World Authors 1970-1975* in that series. It contains a 3-page article on Sri Aurobindo, his life and his writings.

• Ron Jorgensen, who spent a number of years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and is now living back in his native state of Washington, where he has been teaching some courses on Sri Aurobindo at local universities, was interviewed by *Become* magazine, published in Seattle. The subject was Ron's experience in the Ashram and the Northwest tour of M.P. Pandit of the Ashram, which Ron had organized.

Ron conducts Sri Aurobindo study groups in both Seattle and Kirkland. For further details write or call him at 700 14th Avenue W., Kirkland, WA 98033; (206) 822-7201.

• Auroville International France (67 rue de Rome, 75008 Paris, France) reported a radio broadcast on *The Mother's Agenda* had been scheduled on France-Culture of Radio France for the end of last January or the beginning of February. A recording of the broadcast, entitled "Mere ou l'Aurore d'une humanité nouvelle," is available from Radio France or from the center.

An interview with Satprem, made during his stay in France in 1977, was published in the January 1980 issue of the magazine *Lui*.

### AUGUST 15 AT MATAGIRI

Matagiri will observe Sri Aurobindo's birthday on Friday, August 15, with a special program beginning at 10:00 a.m., and including lunch for all attending. Everyone is welcome to participate but should notify us by August 1 of their intention to do so.

[The following piece was written by a sadhika who lives in Portland, Ore.]

Very often, as we seem to whirl about in the maze of maya, we become the unwitting victim of our developmental upbringing: of parental and authoritative coercion, the influence of former peer pressures, the unpleasant and confining spaces in which we seemed helplessly trapped.

Sri Aurobindo tells us, "There are times when God seems to be sternly on the side of the past; then what has been and is, sits firm as on a throne and clothes itself with an irrevocable 'I shall be.'"

But he goes on to say, "Then persevere, though thou seem to be fighting the Master of all; for this is His sharpest trial" (*Thoughts and Aphorisms*). Thus we understand that our folly should not be considered mere human weakness, but rather one of the many universal earthly hurdles to overcome. No man stands alone in the struggle, although contemporary psychology would like to label such difficulties as "personal neuroses."

Each time I catch a glimpse of past remembrances—in the mirror, in another, in the atmosphere—I remind myself quickly, "Whose child are you?" Then a voice answers, "You are Mother's child," whereupon all becomes exclusively the instant

moment. In Divine Love, which radiates Mother's Consciousness to mine, I dwell securely, in tune with the Absolute, oblivious to all sensory or mental concepts—free from all associations save those which lead me to Mother's bosom—and thus to God.

As years progress, the past creeps up  
To greet me unsuspectingly.  
I see myself as I once was,  
Instead of as I want to be.

The soul-faith in me reaches out  
To reassure—to redirect  
The efforts I put forth to grow  
Which I must now perfect.

This hidden force weeds out the false,  
Brings Wisdom into focus;  
Transforms the struggling, thwarted growth  
Into the perfect Lotus.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Bhagavad Gita in the Light of Sri Aurobindo*. Edited by Maheshwari. 1978. 270 pp.; paper \$4.50; hardback \$9.50.

Is it possible that such an ancient scripture as the Bhagavad Gita can still speak a word of truth to not only present-day man but also to the man of the future? Of the many factors that one might consider, perhaps among the most important is the consciousness of the extractor of truth. Is he interested primarily in theological disputation, dogma, academics or faithfulness to the past? If these be the objects of the exploration, the outcome will inevitably appear as just another mental rendition earmarked to gather dust on either the library shelf or the shelves of a few kindred minds. Happily the prospector for truth in this case has uncovered the lodestone of the future. Sri Aurobindo, Mahayogi of India and the world, is the seer of a new world, not in some heaven beyond but here on the earth. It is the object of his yoga to lay the foundation for a race of beings higher than the mental being, man—what he termed "gnostic" or "supramental" beings. In this light it is most interesting that he devoted to the Gita a whole volume of his 30 volumes of writings.

In the opening chapter of his commentary he makes his objective very clear: "I hold it...of small importance to extract from the Gita its exact metaphysical connotation as it was understood by the men of the time—even it that were accurately

possible...what we can do with profit is to seek in the Gita for the actual living truths it contains, ... to extract from it what can help us or the world at large and to put it in the most natural and vital form and expression we can find that will be suitable to the mentality and helpful to the spiritual needs of our present-day humanity" (pp. 2-3). Living in a society where action is the key word and moreover one in which the conflicting forces seem to grow more complex and more gargantuan, modern man should find little difficulty in identifying with the setting of the Gita and its central figure. The dialogue that ensues between Arjuna and Krishna, through which Arjuna is led to a high state of spiritual realization by carrying out his duties in society, shatters a multitude of narrow conceptions about spirituality. In the very first chapter of the Gita Sri Aurobindo notes that the intimacy between God and man is not relegated to the ashram:

"Arjuna and Krishna, this human and this divine, stand together not as seers in the peaceful hermitage of meditation, but as fighter and holder of the reins in the clamorous field, in the midst of the hurtling shafts, in the chariot of battle. The Teacher of the Gita is therefore not only the God in man who unveils Himself in the world of knowledge, but the God in man who moves our whole world of action, by and for whom all our humanity exists and struggles and labours, towards whom all our life travels and progresses. He is the secret Master of works and sacrifice and the Friend of the human peoples" (p. 11).

This central theme of the Gita, namely, that God meets man at that point in time and space where his evolution has carried him, opens the way for a spirituality that does not shun the world. Just as Krishna comes to Arjuna in the very midst of the battle he is about to fight, commanding him to go through with it in spite of his fear, disgust and desire to run away, he also comes to so-called modern man whatever be his station in life. Developing this core of the message of the Gita, Sri Aurobindo offers in his commentary a guidance that casts both a direct and fresh light on the spiritual problems that we face today.

Working intimately with Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*, Maheshwari has given us a fresh translation of the Gita accompanied by Sri Aurobindo's own commentary. While many of the *slokas* had been translated by Sri Aurobindo, many were not and those which were often appeared with slightly different renderings according to the context. Maheshwari has faced all of these obstacles in a most admirable fashion, ever sustained by his objective—that the "work...becomes an occasion for a deep entry into the Gita through Sri Aurobindo and thence into Sri Aurobindo through the Gita." As an introduction and review of the Gita, Maheshwari has incorporated the first and last essays, "Our Demand and Need from the Gita" and "The Message of the Gita." These along with the detailed commentary elucidating each *sloka* offers to the reader a privileged point of entry into one of the most abundant sources of psychospiritual truths. —Charles Maloney

## AUROVILLE SEQUENCE

*Roger Harris*

[Roger Harris is a sadhak who recently returned to Boston after several months in Paris.]

This is our home.  
Born not of earth  
Though part of earth,  
But the sky.  
Of ethereal wind-swept whisperings  
And a race that borders night,  
Of thoughts and hopes and a strange gentle joy,  
Vaguely caught,  
Like twilight dancing on the leaves  
Of another forgotten day,  
(Though recalled where memory is Joy  
And foreknowledge of love to come)  
And a sense that we are one,  
That when we strive to hold we break  
Falling upon the barren canyon rocks.  
And then, releasing all, we are one again  
As laughter lights our eyes.  
And joy does fill our breasts,  
As if by an unseen hand caressed  
As if by some great presence blessed.

2

In fiefdom to an antique calm  
Down midnight canyons drawn,  
Our souls have seen the dawn.

And ravaged canyons razed  
Like ruins of another age  
Confront our eyes' deep gaze.

As we contemplate the sea,  
The trees that line the shore,  
And the night-time thunder's majesty.

And in rhythms of Love beneath the stars,  
Our lives like meteorites from another reign  
Grow into a chant of flame.

3

Matrimandir half-moon rising  
Like a cache of hidden light,  
Discovered casts its splendor  
On Auroville at night.  
And the wind half-moaning whispers  
Through the pine trees gently bent,  
A tale whose hidden harmonies  
Strangely sought are sent,  
To guide us on this journey,  
Our souls by lightning rent,  
O brothers, sisters, treading softly  
This road of her advent.

4

Ashes of Agni,  
A cement-splattered rod,  
What splendors unspoken  
Remind us of God?

O'er sea depths, our nature,  
She rests moored to hold,  
A pipeline's vast venture  
For Kali's dark gold.

And the sun west is setting  
As earth steers to the night  
And the stars through our rigging  
Of iron burn bright.

And the Silence descending  
Once more from above,  
Brings strife to an ending  
In the sweet rule of Love.

## O CHILD OF THE FUTURE

*Alehu*

[Alehu is a sadhak who has recently moved to San Francisco from Hawaii.]

O child of the future  
Struck from the lamp of the One  
To kindle this darkened house;  
Wide sunrise, vermillion-streaked with pale glory  
Receives the vastness of thy spirit  
Sparkling in its dewdrop birth.  
Resplendent jewel of dawn,  
Fluid diamond of life  
Set upon the finger of the Infinite;  
Inseparable companion of its acts,  
Jeweled delight of its repose,  
Vast thy universal home,  
Sublime thy earthly form.  
A child of an age that is itself a child,  
As frail and weak to see  
As truly thou art strong beyond  
Any strength yet known.

Thou art in me as I prepare thy birth  
For thou all that I am I sacrifice  
For this is the law and love of true birth;  
Death has no more a part to play with life  
Its empty shadow evaporates in light  
And all the iron laws are turned to living gold.

O child of the present now-born and real  
By thy tiny steps the firmament is cracked  
And all the ancient sleep that rushes out  
Cannot consume thy laughter and thy smile.

## ECSTASY

*Erika Renon*

[Erika Renon is a sadhika who lives in Menlo Park, Calif.]

I rushed around the house and tried to hide,  
and could not, for the flame leaped up inside  
and lit each corner, if there corners be,  
with this confounded leaping ecstasy.

I raised a hand to shield my flaming face  
which had been struck by such a hasty grace  
that it ignited unexpectedly  
infused with instantaneous ecstasy.

And yet, this miracle, divinely caustic  
occurred to one whose faith had been ill-bred,  
to one who held herself a true agnostic,  
The wound had ceased to bleed the while I bled.