



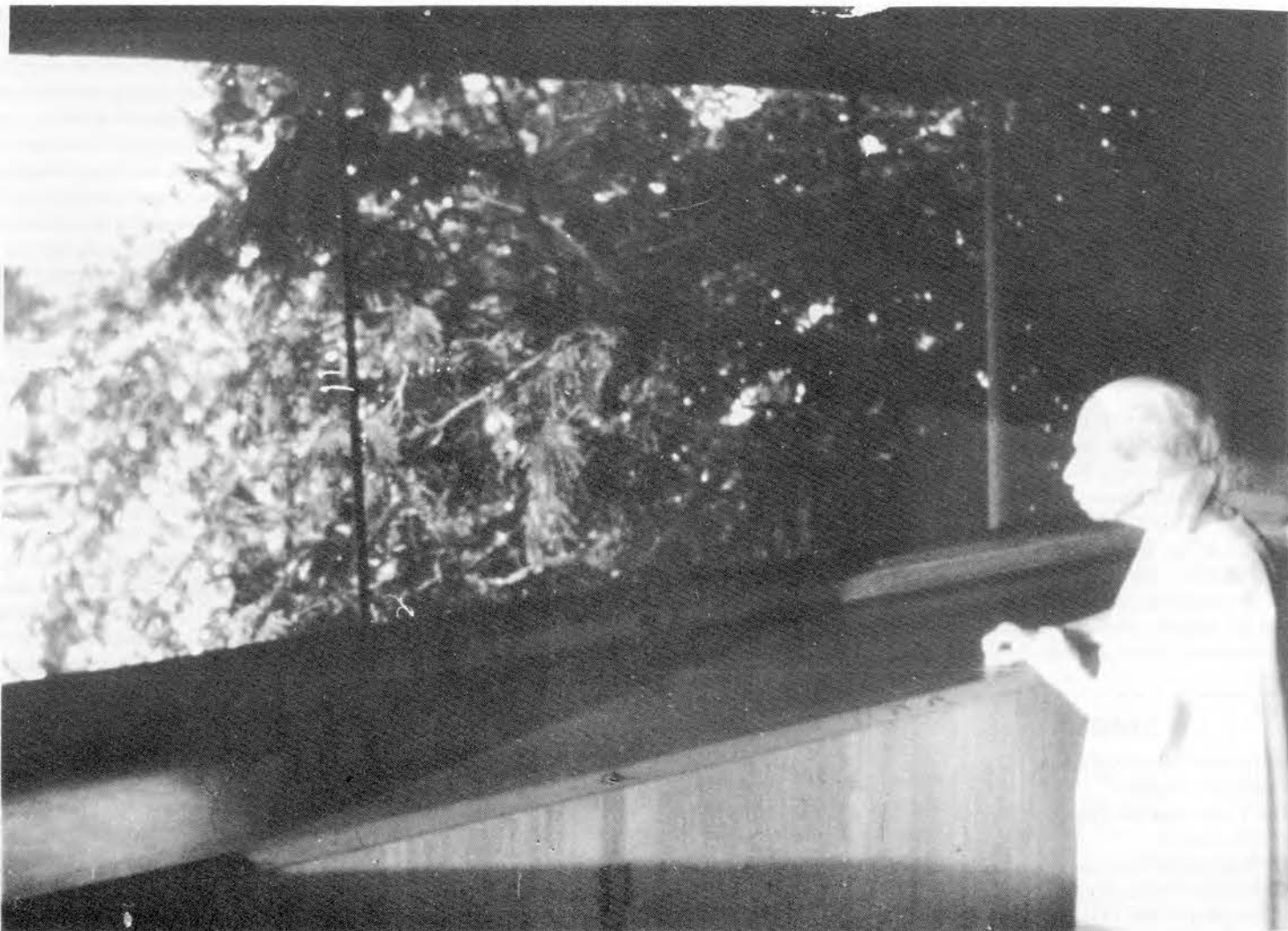
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The Mother in her room, 1959/60. Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH OM NAMO BHAGAVATEH

This issue brings to a close *Collaboration's* seventh year. The next issue will be a double one, combining the Fall 1981 and Winter 1981-82 issues.

We are continuing in this issue to present various passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother concerning the Yoga of Self-Perfection, the yoga of physical transformation which the Mother speaks of at length in the *Agenda*. We hope that it will help guide readers of the *Agenda* in coming to understand the revolutionary work the Mother was doing and is still doing. Most of the passages we have

chosen from their works for this issue throw some light on this complex issue in one way or another. We hope to continue to do so in future issues, particularly various aspects of this "mysterious" yoga of self-perfection, or the "yoga of the cells," such as the change in the sense of time, the identification of the individual physical consciousness with all physical consciousness, the implications of the "oneness of Matter," the conquering of illness and death, etc.

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION (2)

Sri Aurobindo

Intellectual, volitional, ethical, emotional, aesthetic and physical training and improvement are all so much to the good, but they are only in the end a constant movement in a circle without any last delivering and illumining aim, unless they arrive at a point when they can open themselves to the power and presence of the Spirit and admit its direct workings. This direct working effects a conversion of the whole being which is the indispensable condition of our real perfection. To grow into the truth and power of the Spirit and by the direct action of that power to be made a fit channel of its self-expression,—a living of man in the Divine and a divine living of the Spirit in humanity—will therefore be the principle and the whole object of an integral Yoga of self-perfection.

In the process of this change there must be by the very necessity of the effort two stages of its working. First, there will be the personal endeavour of the human being, as soon as he becomes aware by his soul, mind, heart of this divine possibility and turns towards it as the true object of life, to prepare himself for it and to get rid of all in him that belongs to a lower working, of all that stands in the way of his opening to the spiritual truth and its power, so as to possess by this liberation his spiritual being and turn all his natural movements into free means of its self-expression. It is by this turn that the self-conscious Yoga aware of its aim begins: there is a new awakening and an upward change of the life motive. So long as there is only an intellectual,

ethical and other self-training for the now normal purposes of life which does not travel beyond the ordinary circle of working of mind, life and body, we are still only in the obscure and yet unilluminated preparatory Yoga of Nature; we are still in pursuit of only an ordinary human perfection. A spiritual desire of the Divine and of the divine perfection, of a unity with him in all our being and a spiritual perfection in all our nature, is the effective sign of this change, the precursory power of a great integral conversion of our being and living.

By personal effort a precursory change, a preliminary conversion can be effected; it amounts to a greater or less spiritualising of our mental motives, our character and temperament, and a mastery, stilling or changed action of the vital and physical life. This converted subjectivity can be made the base of some communion or unity of the soul in mind with the Divine and some partial reflection of the divine nature in the mentality of the human being. That is as far as man can go by his unaided effort, because that is an effort of mind and mind cannot climb beyond itself permanently: at most it arises to a spiritualised and idealised mentality. If it shoots up beyond that border, it loses hold of itself, it loses hold of life, and arrives either at a trance of absorption or a passivity. A greater perfection can only be arrived at by a higher power entering in and taking up the whole action of the being. The second stage of this Yoga will therefore be a persistent giving up of all the action of the nature into the hands of this greater Power, a substitution of its influence, possession and working for the personal effort, until the Divine to whom we aspire becomes the direct master of the Yoga and effects the entire spiritual and ideal conversion of the being.

This double character of our Yoga raises it beyond the mundane ideal of perfection, while at the same time it goes too beyond the loftier, intenser, but much narrower religious formula. The mundane ideal regards man always as a mental, vital and physical being and it aims at a human perfection well within these limits, a perfection of mind, life and body, an expansion and refinement of the intellect and knowledge, of the will and power, of ethical character, aim and conduct, of aesthetic sensibility and creativeness, of emotional balanced poise and enjoyment, of vital and physical soundness, regulated action and just efficiency. It is a wide and full aim, but not yet sufficiently full and wide, because it ignores that other greater element of our being which the mind vaguely conceives as the

spiritual element and leaves it either undeveloped or insufficiently satisfied as merely some high occasional or added derivatory experience, the result of the action of mind in its exceptional aspects or dependent upon mind for its presence and persistence. It can become a high aim when it seeks to develop the loftier and the larger reaches of our mentality, but yet not sufficiently high, because it does not aspire beyond mind to that of which our purest reason, our brightest mental intuition, our deepest mental mental sense and feeling, strongest mental will and power or ideal aim and purpose are only pale radiations. Its aim besides is limited to a terrestrial perfection of the normal human life.

A Yoga of integral perfection regards man as a divine spiritual being involved in mind, life and body; it aims therefore at a liberation and a perfection of his divine nature. It seeks to make an inner living in the perfectly developed spiritual being his constant intrinsic living and the spiritualised action of mind, life and body only its outward human expression. In order that this spiritual being may not be something vague and indefinable or else but imperfectly realised and dependent on the mental support and the mental limitations, it seeks to go beyond mind to the supramental knowledge, will, sense, feeling, intuition, dynamic initiation of vital and physical action, all that makes the native working of the spiritual being. It accepts human life, but takes account of the large supraterrrestrial action behind the earthly material living, and it joins itself to the divine Being from whom the supreme origination of all these partial and lower states proceeds to that the whole of life may become aware of its divine source and feel in each action of knowledge, of will, of feeling, sense and

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body the divine originating impulse. It rejects nothing that is essential in the mundane aim, but enlarges it, finds and lives in its greater and its truer meaning now hidden from it, transfigures it from a limited, earthly and mortal thing to a figure of intimate, divine and immortal values.

The integral Yoga meets the religious ideal at several points, but goes beyond it in the sense of a greater wideness. The religious ideal looks, not only beyond this earth, but away from it to a heaven or even beyond all heavens to some kind of Nirvana. Its ideal of perfection is limited to whatever kind of inner or outer mutation will eventually serve the turning away of the soul from the human life to the beyond. Its ordinary idea of perfection is a religio-ethical change, a drastic purification of the active and the emotional being, often with an ascetic abrogation and rejection of the vital impulses as its completest reaching of excellence, and in any case a supraterritorial motive and reward or result of a life of piety and right conduct. In so far as it admits a change of knowledge, will, aesthesis, it is in the sense of the turning of them to another object than the aims of human life and eventually brings a rejection of all earthly objects of aesthesis, will and knowledge. The method, whether it lays stress on personal effort or upon divine influence, on works and knowledge or upon grace, is not like the mundane a development, but rather a conversion; but in the end the aim is not a conversion of our mental and physical nature, but the putting on of a pure spiritual nature and being, and since that is not possible here on earth, it looks for its consummation by a transference to another world or a shuffling off of all cosmic existence.

But the integral Yoga founds itself on a conception of the spiritual being as an omnipresent existence, the fullness of which comes not essentially by a transference to other worlds or a cosmic self-extinction, but by a growth out of what we now are phenomenally into the consciousness of the omnipresent reality which we always are in the essence of our being. It substitutes for the form of religious piety its completer spiritual seeking of a divine union. It proceeds by a personal effort to a conversion through a divine influence and possession; but this divine grace, if we may so call it, is not simply a mysterious flow or touch coming from above, but the all-pervading act of a divine presence which we come to know within as the power of the highest Self and Master of our being entering into the soul and so possessing it that we not only feel it close to us and pressing upon our mortal nature, but live in its law, know that law, possess it as the whole power of our spiritualised nature. The con-

version its action will effect is an integral conversion of our ethical being into the Truth and Right of the divine nature, of our intellectual into the illumination of divine knowledge, our emotional into the divine love and unity, our dynamic and volitional into a working of the divine power, our aesthetic into a plenary reception and a creative enjoyment of divine beauty, not excluding even in the end a divine conversion of the vital and physical being. It regards all the previous life as an involuntary and unconscious or half-conscious preparatory growing towards this change and Yoga as the voluntary and conscious effort and realisation of the change, by which all the aim of human existence in all its parts is fulfilled, even while it is transfigured. Admitting the supracosmic truth and life in worlds beyond, it admits too the terrestrial as a continued term of the one existence and a change of individual and communal life on earth as a strain of its divine meaning.

To open oneself to the supracosmic Divine is an essential condition of this integral perfection; to unite oneself with the universal Divine is another essential condition. Here the Yoga of self-perfection coincides with the Yoga of knowledge, works and devotion; for it is impossible to change the human nature into the divine or to make it an instrument of the divine knowledge, will and joy of existence, unless there is a union

with the supreme Being, Consciousness and Bliss and a unity with its universal Self in all things and beings. A wholly separative possession of the divine nature by the human individual, as distinct from a self-withdrawn absorption in it, is not possible. But this unity will not be an inmost spiritual oneness qualified, so long as the human life lasts, by a separative existence in mind, life and body; the full perfection is a possession; through this spiritual unity, of unity too with the universal Mind, the universal Life, the universal Form which are the other constant terms of cosmic being. Moreover, since human life is still accepted as a self-expression of the realised Divine in man, there must be an action of the entire divine nature in our life; and this brings in the need of the supramental conversion which substitutes the native action of spiritual being for the imperfect action of the superficial nature and spiritualises and transfigures its mental, vital and physical parts by the spiritual ideality. These three elements, a union with the supreme Divine, unity with the universal Self, and a supramental life action from this transcendent origin and through this universality, but still with the individual as the soul-channel and natural instrument, constitute the essence of the integral divine perfection of the human being. [*Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), pp. 592-96.]

THE LOWER AND THE HIGHER PERFECTION

The Mother

"A divine life in a material world implies necessarily a union of the two ends of existence, the spiritual summit and the material base. The soul with the basis of its life established in Matter ascends to the heights of the Spirit but does not cast away its base, it joins the heights and the depths together. The Spirit descends into Matter and the material world with all its lights and glories and power and with them fills and transforms life in the material world so that it becomes more and more divine. The transformation is not a change into something purely subtle and spiritual to which Matter is in its nature repugnant and by which it is felt as an obstacle or as a shackle binding the Spirit; it takes up Matter as a form of the Spirit though now a form which conceals and turns it into a revealing instrument, it does not cast away the energies of Matter, its capacities, its methods; it brings out their hidden possibilities, uplifts, sublimates, discloses their innate divinity. The divine life will reject nothing that is capable of divinisation; all is to be seized, exalted, made utterly perfect....

"In the pursuit of perfection we can start at either end of our range of being and we have then to use, initially at least, the

means and processes proper to our choice. In Yoga the process is spiritual and psychic; even its vital and physical processes are given a spiritual or psychic turn and raised to a higher motion than belongs properly to the ordinary life and Matter, as for instance in the Hathayogic and Rajayogic use of the breathing or the use of Asana... On the other hand, if we start in any field at the lower end we have to employ the means and processes which Life and Matter offer to us and respect the conditions and what we may call the technique imposed by the vital and the material energy. We may extend the activity, the achievement, the perfection attained beyond the initial, even beyond the normal possibilities but still we have to stand on the same base with which we started and within the boundaries it gives to us. It is not that the action from the two ends cannot meet and the higher take into itself and uplift the lower perfection; but this can usually be done by a transition from the lower to a higher outlook, aspiration and motive: this we shall have to do if our aim is to transform the human into the divine life. But here there comes in the necessity of taking up the activities of human life and sublimating them by the

power of the spirit. Here the lower perfection will not disappear; it will remain but will be enlarged and transformed by the higher perfection which only the power of the spirit can give." [Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, pp. 5-8.]

Disciple: Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo speaks of "the higher perfection" and "the lower perfection."

Mother: The higher perfection is the spiritual perfection, integral union with the Divine, identification with the Divine, freedom from all the limitations of the lower world. That is spiritual perfection, the perfection that comes from yoga—quite independent of the body and the physical world—which, in ancient times, meant first rejecting the body and the physical life so as to have a relation only with the higher world and finally with the Divine. That is the higher perfection.

And the lower perfection is to be able to make the human being in his present form and in his body, in his relation with all terrestrial things, do the utmost he can. This is the case of all great men of genius: literary genius, genius in organisation, the great rulers, those who have carried physical capacities to their maximum perfection, human development to the limit of its possibilities; and, for instance, all those who have complete control over their bodies and succeed in doing miraculous things, as we saw, for example, during the war, with the airmen: they made their bodies do things which at first sight seemed quite impossible, they obtained from them an endurance, a skill, a power which were almost unthinkable. And from every point of view: from the point of view of physical strength, of the physical qualities of energy and courage, of disinterestedness, goodness, charity; all human qualities carried to their utmost limits. That is the lower perfection.

The higher perfection is spiritual and superhuman. The lower perfection is human perfection carried to its maximum limits, and this may be quite independent of all spiritual aspiration. One can have all the most extraordinary moral qualities without having any spiritual life. And even, usually, those who have a very great power of human realisation are satisfied—more or less satisfied—with their condition. They feel they are self-sufficient, that they carry in themselves the source of their realisation and their joy, and it is usually very difficult to make them understand and feel that they are not the creators of their own creations, whatever they may be. Most of them, with

your business! Therefore, these two perfections are really divergent in ordinary life. It was said in the old yoga that the first condition for doing yoga was to be disgusted with life. But those who have realised this human perfection are very rarely disgusted with life, unless they have met with personal difficulties such as the ingratitude of people around them, the lack of understanding of their genius which was not sufficiently appreciated—so all this disgusts them, but otherwise, so long as they are in their period of success and creation, they are perfectly satisfied. So, as they are satisfied—above all, self-satisfied—they don't need to seek anything else.

It is not essentially true, but this is usually how things happen, and unless there is in this genius a soul which is perfectly conscious of itself and has come to accomplish a specific work on earth, he may very well be born, grow up and die without knowing that there is anything other than this earthly life. And above all it is this, you see, this feeling of having achieved the utmost realisation which gives a satisfaction that keeps one from needing anything else.... If they have a soul that's fully conscious of itself and fully conscious of its purpose in the physical world, there could be a vague feeling that all this is pretty hollow, that all these achievements are a little too superficial and that something is lacking; but that comes only to those who are predestined, and after all, in the mass of humanity, there are not very many of them.

Only those who are predestined can combine these two perfections and realise something integral.... This is quite rare. The great spiritual leaders have very rarely been great realisers in the physical world. It has happened, but it is very rare. Only those who are conscious incarnations of the Divine naturally carry in themselves the possibility of the two perfections, but this is exceptional. People who had a spiritual life, a great spiritual realisation, were able at certain exceptional moments to have a capacity for outward realisation; this also was exception, but it was intermittent and never had the integrality, the totality, the perfection of those who concentrated on material realisation. And this is why those who live only in the external consciousness, for whom the earthly material life is all that really exists, concrete and tangible, perceptible to all, always feel that spiritual life is something hazy, something almost mediocre from the material point of view.

I have met many people—"many," well, quite a number—who wanted to demonstrate that spiritual powers give a great capacity for outer realisation and who tried in certain exceptional spiritual states or conditions, to paint or to compose music or write poetry; well, everything that they

produced was thoroughly second-rate and could not be compared with the works of the great geniuses who had mastered material nature—and this of course gave the materialists a good opening: "You see, your so-called power is nothing at all." But this was because in their external life they were ordinary men; for the greatest spiritual power, if it enters material that's not educated, will produce a result far superior to what that individual would have been able to achieve in his ordinary state, but far inferior to what a genius who has mastered matter can produce. It is not enough that "the Spirit bloweth," the instrument must also be capable of manifesting it.

I believe that is one of the things Sri Aurobindo is going to explain [further on in his essay]: why it is necessary to give to the physical, external being, its full development, the capacity of controlling matter directly; then you put at the disposal of the Spirit an instrument capable of manifesting it, otherwise.... Yes, I knew several people who in their ordinary state could not write three lines without making a mistake, not only spelling mistakes but mistakes of language, that is, who could not express one thought clearly—well, in their moments of spiritual inspiration, they used to write very beautiful things, but all the same these very beautiful things were not so beautiful as the works of the greatest writers. These things seemed remarkable in comparison with what they could do in their ordinary state; it was true, their present possibilities were used to the maximum, it was something that gave a value to what otherwise would have had none at all. But supposing you take a real genius—a musician or artist or writer of genius—who has fully mastered his instrument, who can use it to produce works that express the utmost human possibility, if you add to this a spiritual consciousness, the supramental force, then you will have something truly divine.

And this is precisely the key to the effort Sri Aurobindo wanted us to make.

And your body, if you draw from it all the possibilities it holds, if you educate it by the normal, well-known, scientific methods, if you make this instrument into something as perfect as possible, then, when the supramental truth manifests in that body, it will become *immediately*—without centuries of preparation—a marvellous instrument for the expression of the Spirit.

That is why Sri Aurobindo used to repeat and has always said: You must work from both ends, not let go of one for the other. And certainly, if you want to have a divine consciousness, you must not give up spiritual aspiration; but if you want to become an integral divine being on earth, take good care not to let go of the other end, and make your body the best possible instrument.

er than you and you
"they would dislike
will send you about

[Extracts from a talk of Sri Aurobindo with a French scientist disciple, May 8, 1926]

In the West the highest minds are turned not towards spiritual truth but towards material science. The scope of science is very narrow, it touches only the most exterior part of the physical plane.

And even there, what does science really know? It studies the functioning of the laws, builds theories ever renewed and each time held up as the last word of truth! We had recently the atomic theory, now comes the electronic.

There are, for instance, two statements of modern science that would stir up deeper ranges for an occultist:

1. Atoms are whirling systems like the solar system.

2. The atoms of all the elements are made out of the same constituents. Different arrangement is the only cause of different properties.

If these statements were considered under their true aspect, they could lead science to new discoveries of which there is no idea actually and in comparison with which the actual knowledge is poor.

According to the experience of ancient Yogis, sensible matter was made out of five elements, Bhutani: Prithivi, Apas, Agni (Tejas), Vayu, Akasha.

Agni is threefold:

1. Ordinary fire, Jala Agni,
2. Electric fire, Vaidyuta Agni,
3. Solar fire, Saura Agni.

Science has only entered upon the first and the second of these fires. The fact that atom is like the solar system could lead it to the knowledge of the third.

Beyond Agni is Vayu of which science knows nothing. It is the support of all contact and exchange, the cause of gravitation and of the fields (magnetic and electric).

The Lower and the Higher Perfection

[Continued from preceding page]

It is a disease of the ordinary human intellect—which comes, moreover, from separation, division—to make a thing always either this or that. If you choose this, you turn your back on that; if you choose that, you turn your back on this.

It is an impoverishment. One must know how to take up everything, combine everything, synthesise everything. And then one has an integral realisation....

It is much better to do than to say. Now I have given you some encouragement. [From Mother's Collected Works, vol. 9, *Questions and Answers 1957-58* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977), pp. 89-94.]

By it, the action of Agni, the formal element, the builder of forms, is made possible.

And beyond Vayu is the ether: Akasha.

But these five constitute only the grossest part of the physical plane. Immediately behind is the physical-vital, the element of life buried in matter. J.C. Bose is contacting this element in his experiments. Beyond is the mind in matter. This mind has a far different form than the human mind, still it is a manifestation of the same principle of organisation. And deep below there are two more hidden layers...

That is the occult knowledge concerning the physical plane only. Science is far behind this knowledge.

The Hindu Yogis who had realised these truths did not elaborate them and turn them into scientific knowledge. Other fields of action and knowledge having been open before them, they neglected what for them was the most exterior aspect of the manifestation.

There is a difference between the scientific mind and the cast of mind of an occultist. There is little doubt that one who could unite these two groups of faculties would lead science towards great progress. [First published in *France-Asie*, no. 83 (April 1953); *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1968, pp. 45, 47.]

NOTES ON THE WAY (5)

The Mother

[Readers should bear in mind that the experiences Mother speaks of in this series "Notes on the Way," drawn from Mother's Agenda, are experiences of the body consciousness, not the mind or vital "aware of" the body.]

22 January 1966

I experienced this morning, for two hours, a kind of blissful state in which there was such a clear consciousness that all the forms of life, in all the worlds and at all moments, are the expression of a choice—one chooses to be like that.

It is very difficult to say with words.... The kind of obligation in which one believes oneself to be living, to which one believes oneself to be submitted, had completely disappeared, and it was quite a spontaneous and natural perception that life upon earth, and the life in other worlds, and all kinds of life upon earth and all kinds of life in other worlds are simply a question of choice: you have chosen to be like that and you choose constantly to be like that; and you choose also to believe that you are submitted to a fatality or to a necessity or to a law which compels you—everything is a question of choice. And there was a feel-

ing of lightness, of freedom, and then a smile for everything. At the same time it gives you a tremendous power. All feeling of compulsion, of necessity—of fatality still more—had disappeared completely. All the illnesses, all the happenings, all the dramas, all that: disappeared. And this concrete and so brutal reality of the physical life: gone completely.

I lived this state for more than an hour and a half this morning. Afterwards I was obliged to return...to a state which appears to me artificial, but which is compulsory because of others, by contact with others and with things, and the innumerable quantity of things to be done. But all the same, in the background the experience remains. And there remains a kind of amused smile for all the complications of life—the state in which one finds oneself has been the fact of a choice, and for the individual the freedom of choice is there, and people have forgotten it.

I saw at the same time the whole tableau of human knowledge (because when those states are there, all human realisations, all human knowledge, come like a panorama before the new state and are put each in its place—always, always when an experience comes, it is as though retrospective) and I saw all the theories, the beliefs, the philosophies, the way they link themselves with the new state; it was amusing.

And that does not call for a rest. These experiences are so concrete, so spontaneous and real (they are not the result of a will, still less of an effort) that they do not call for a rest.

But those who managed to have this experience for whatever reason, and who had not a thorough philosophical and mental preparation (the saints or in fact all those who led a spiritual life) had then a very acute impression of the unreality of life and the illusion of life. But it is only a narrow view. It is not that, it is not that. *Everything* is a choice! Everything, everything. The Lord's choice, but *in us*, not there! [gesture upward]: here. And we do not know it, it is quite within the heart of ourselves. And when we know it, we can choose—we can choose our choice, it is wonderful.

And this sort of fatality and bondage and hardness of existence, all have disappeared. It was light blue, light rose, all luminous and limpid and light.

I conceive very well that this is not an absolute thing; it was only a way of being, but a very charming way of being.... Usually those who have not a sufficient intellectual preparation, when they have an experience of this kind, they believe they have caught the sole truth. And then with that, they dogmatise. But I saw quite well that it is not that, it is *one* way of being, although it

is a fine way of being, well, infinitely superior to what we have here. And we can have it here: I have had it. I have had it in an altogether concrete way. And there is always something that is not all right, wrong here or wrong there, or this or that, and then circumstances also that are not all right; always there are difficulties—all that ...that changes colour. And it becomes light, light—light, supple. All the hardness and stiffness: gone.

And the feeling also that if you choose to be like that, you can continue to be like that. And it is true. It is all the wrong habits—evidently millennial habits upon earth—all the wrong habits that prevent you. But there is no reason why this should not be a permanent state. Because this changes everything! Everything changes!... It is evident that if one becomes master of that state, one can change all the circumstances round oneself.

In recent times (for a rather long time), there was this same difficulty with the body, which is not limited and shut up in a shell as is generally the case, and which receives spontaneously, not even with the feeling of "receiving," which *has* the vibration of all that surrounds it. And then, when all that surrounds it is, from the mental and moral point of view, closed, uncomprehending, it is a little difficult; that is to say, they are elements that come and must be transformed. It is a kind of totality, a very multiple and very unstable totality, representing your field of consciousness and action, and upon which you must work all the time to reestablish a harmony, a minimum of harmony. And when around you something goes "wrong" according to the ordinary idea, it makes the work a little difficult. It is at the same time tenuous and persistent and obstinate. I remember, just before the experience, there was in the body an aspiration for harmony, for light, for a kind of smiling peace. The body aspired above all for a harmony, because of all these things that grind and scrape. And probably the experience has been the result of this aspiration.

Only, I have noted that in the life of this body I have never had the same experience twice—I may have the same kind of experience in a higher degree or in a much vaster degree, but never identically the same. And I do not retain the experience; I am all the while, all the while [*gesture forward*], all the while on the march. Yes, the work of transformation of the consciousness is so rapid, must be done so quickly that there is no time to enjoy or dwell upon an experience or get some satisfaction in it for any length of time—it is impossible. It comes forcefully, very forcefully; that is to say, it changes everything. And then something else comes. It is the same with regard to the

transformation of the cells. All kinds of small disorders come, but they are visibly, for the consciousness, disorders of transformation; and then one is busy with that point, one wants to reestablish the order. And at the same time there is something that knows pertinently that the disorder has come to make the transition from the ordinary automatic functioning to conscious functioning under the direct guidance and the direct influence of the Supreme. And the body itself knows it; all the same it is not amusing to have pain here or pain there, or to have this or that get out of order, but it *knows*. And when that point has arrived at a certain degree of transformation, one passes on to another point, then another, then yet another; so nothing is done, no work is done definitively until... everything is ready. Then the same work has to be begun again on a higher or vaster level or with greater intensity or more in detail (that depends upon the case), until the *whole* is brought to a point homogeneous and ready in a similar way.

ONE'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSAL MANIFESTATION

The Mother

[A disciple asks Mother what he must do and what his place in the universal manifestation is.]

Mother: In all religious and especially occult initiations, the ritual of the different ceremonies is prescribed in every detail; all the words pronounced, all the gestures made have their importance, and the least infraction of the rule, the least fault committed can have fatal consequences. It is the same in material life—if one had the initiation into the true way of living, one could transform physical existence.

If we consider the body as the tabernacle of the Lord, then medical science, for example, becomes the initiatory ritual of the service of the temple, and doctors of all kinds are the officiating priests in the different rituals of worship. Thus, medicine is really a priesthood and should be treated as such.

The same can be said of physical culture and of all the sciences that are concerned with the body and its workings. If the material universe is considered as the outer sheath and the manifestation of the Supreme, then it can generally be said that all the physical sciences are rituals of worship.

We always come back to the same thing: the absolute necessity for perfect sincerity, perfect honesty and a sense of the dignity of all we do so that we may do it as it should be done.

If we could truly, perfectly know all the details of the ceremony of life, the worship of the Lord in physical life, it would be wonderful—to know, and no longer to err,

As I see it, it is moving as fast as it can, but it takes a long time. And everything is a question of changing the habit. The entire automatic habit of thousands of years has to be changed into a conscious action directly guided by the supreme Consciousness.

One is inclined to say that it is much longer and much more difficult because one is surrounded by people and one acts in the world, but if one were not in such conditions, many things would be forgotten, many. Many things would not be done. There are all kinds of vibrations that have no affinity with this aggregate [Mother is referring to her body] and which would never have the occasion to touch the transforming Force if I were not in contact with everyone.

It is very evident—it is very evident—that one is placed in the best of conditions and has the maximum possibilities for action... when one wants it sincerely. [Mother's Collected Works, vol. 11, *Notes on the Way* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1980), pp. 30-34.]

never again to err. To perform the ceremony as perfectly as an initiation.

To know life utterly... Oh, there is a very interesting thing in this regard! And it's strange, but this particular knowledge reminds me of one of my Sutras (which I read out, but no one understood or understood only vaguely, "like that"):

"It is the Supreme Lord who has ineluctably decreed the place you occupy in the universal concert, but whatever be this place, you have equally the same right as all the others to ascend the supreme summits right to the supramental realisation."

There is one's position in the universal hierarchy, which is something ineluctable—it is the eternal law—and there is the development in the manifestation, which is an education; it is progressive and done from within the being. What is remarkable is that to become a perfect being, this position—whatever it is, decreed from all eternity, a part of the eternal Truth—must manifest with the greatest possible perfection as a result of evolutionary growth. It is this junction, the union of the two, the eternal position and the evolutionary realisation, that will make the total and perfect being, and the manifestation as the Lord has willed it from the beginning of all eternity (which has no beginning at all!).

And for the cycle to be complete, one cannot stop on the way at any plane, not even the highest spiritual plane nor the plane closest to matter (like the occult plane in the vital, for example). One must

descent right into matter, and this perfection in manifestation must be a material perfection, or otherwise the cycle is not complete—which explains why those who want to flee in order to realize the divine Will are in error. What must be done is exactly the opposite! The two must be combined in a perfect way. This is why all the honest sciences, the sciences that are practiced sincerely, honestly, exclusively with a will to know, are difficult paths—yet such sure paths for the total realization.

It brings up very interesting things. (What I am going to say now is very personal and consequently cannot be used, but it may be kept anyway.)

There are two parallel things that, from the eternal and supreme point of view, are of identical importance, in that both are equally essential for the realization to be a true realization.

On the one hand, there is what Sri Aurobindo—who, as the Avatar, represented the supreme Consciousness and Will on earth—declared me to be, that is, the supreme universal Mother; and on the other hand, there is what I am realizing in my body through the integral Sadhana. I could be the supreme Mother and not do any sadhana, and as a matter of fact, as long as Sri Aurobindo was in his body, it was he who did the sadhana, and I received the effects. These effects were automatically established in the outer being, but he was the one doing it, not I—I was merely the bridge between his sadhana and the world. Only when he left his body was I forced to take up the sadhana myself; not only did I have to do what I was doing before—being a bridge between his sadhana and the world—but I had to carry on the sadhana myself. When he left, he turned over to me the responsibility for what he himself had been doing in his body, and I had to do it. So there are both these things. Sometimes one predominates, sometimes the other (I don't mean successively in time, but...it depends on the moment), and they are trying to combine in a total and perfect realization: the eternal, ineffable and immutable Consciousness of the Executive of the Supreme, and the consciousness of the Sadhak of the integral Yoga who strives in an ascending effort towards an ever-increasing progression.

To this has been added a growing initiation into the supramental realization which is (I understand it well now) the perfect union of what comes from above and what comes from below, or in other words, the eternal position and the evolutionary realization.

Then—and this becomes rather amusing like life's play... Depending upon each one's nature and position and bias, and because human beings are very limited, very partial and incapable of a global vision, there are

those who believe, who have faith, or to whom the eternal Mother is revealed through Grace, who have this kind of relationship with the eternal Mother—and there are those who themselves are plunged in sadhana, who have the consciousness of a developed sadhak, and thereby have the same relationship with me as one has with what they generally call a "realized soul." Such persons consider me the prototype of the Guru teaching a new way, but the others don't have this relationship of sadhak to Guru (I am taking the two extremes, but of course there are all the possibilities in between), they are only in contact with the eternal Mother and, in the simplicity of their hearts, they expect Her to do everything for them. If they were perfect in this attitude, the eternal Mother would do everything for them—as a matter of fact, She does do everything, but as they aren't perfect, they cannot receive it totally. But the two paths are very different, the two kinds of relationships are very different; and as we all live according to the law of external things, in a material body, there is a kind of annoyance, an almost irritated misunderstanding, between those who follow this path (not consciously and intentionally, but spontaneously), who have this relationship of the child to the Mother, and those who have this other relationship of the sadhak to the Guru. So it creates a whole play, with an infinite diversity of shades.

But all this is still in suspense, on the way to realization, moving forward progressively; therefore, unless we are able to see the outcome, we can't understand a thing. We get confused. Only when we see the outcome, the final realization, only when we have *touched there*, will everything be understood—then it will be as clear and as simple as can be. But meanwhile, my relationships with different people are very funny, utterly amusing!

Those who have what I would call the more "outer" relationship compared to the other (although it is not really so)—the relationship of yoga, of sadhana—consider the others superstitious; and the others, who have faith or perception, or the Grace to have understood what Sri Aurobindo meant (perhaps even before knowing what he said, but in any event, after he said it), discard the others as ignorant unbelievers! And there are all the gradations in between, so it really becomes quite funny!

It opens up extraordinary horizons; once you have understood this, you have the key—you have the key to many, many things: the different positions of each of the different saints, the different realizations and...it resolves all the incoherencies of the various manifestations on earth.

For example, this question of Power—

the Power—over Matter. Those who perceive me as the eternal, universal Mother and Sri Aurobindo as the Avatar are surprised that our power is not absolute. They are surprised that we have not merely to say, "Let it be thus" for it to be "thus." This is because, in the integral realization, the union of the two is essential: a union of the power that proceeds from the eternal position and the power that proceeds from the sadhana through evolutionary growth. Similarly, how is it that those who have reached even the summits of yogic knowledge (I was thinking of Swami) need to resort to beings like gods or demigods to be able to realize things?—Because they have indeed united with certain higher forces and entities, but it was not decreed from the beginning of time that they were this particular being. They were not born as this or that, but through evolution they united with a latent possibility in themselves. Each one carries the Eternal within himself, but one can join Him only when one has realized the complete union of the latent Eternal with the eternal Eternal.

And...this explains everything, absolutely everything: how it works, how it functions in the world. [Mother added: "The most beautiful part of the experience is missing.... When I try to formulate something in too precise a way, all the vastness of the experience evaporates. The entire world is being revealed in all its organization down to the minutest details—but *everything* simultaneously—how can that be explained? It's not possible."] I was saying to myself, "But I have no powers, I have no powers!" Several days ago, I said, "But after all, I *know who* is there, I know, yet how is it that...? There, up to there [the level of the head], it is all-powerful, nothing can resist—but here...it is ineffective." So those who have faith, even an ignorant but real faith (it can be ignorant but nevertheless it is real), say, "What! How can you have no powers?"... Because the sadhana is not yet over.

The Lord will possess this universe only when the universe will have consciously become the Lord. [Mother's Agenda (Paris: Institut de Recherches Evolutives, 1979), 1:207-212 (October 10, 1958).]

It is a lesson of life that always in this world everything fails a man—only the Divine does not fail him, if he turns entirely to the Divine. It is not because there is something bad in you that blows fall on you—blows fall on all human beings because they are full of desire for things that cannot last and they lose them or, even if they get them, it brings disappointment and cannot satisfy them. To turn to the Divine is the only truth in life.

—Sri Aurobindo

ON THE "YOGA OF SEXUALITY" *Satprem*

[The following letter was written by Satprem in 1967 to a friend who had asked questions about the place of sex in yoga. The subject came up again, nearly a year later, when another man came to the Ashram and spoke to Satprem about the "Tantra of the left hand." Satprem gave a copy of this letter to the second man, and spoke about the subject with the Mother. The conversation appears in vol. 9 of Mother's Agenda. Satprem has kindly given us permission to reprint this letter, in our own translation, here. It is followed by a letter of Sri Aurobindo on the subject which Satprem attached to the letter to his friend. We thought readers would find it of some interest, since questions about sex and yoga are among the most frequently asked, and there are misguided people who periodically put sex forward dressed in "spiritual" attire. Several issues ago we did a feature on the subject, but this letter perhaps adds another dimension.]

I'm going to try to answer your questions as simply as possible, that is, without clouding the problem up in the Sibylline vapors of the mystery traditions, but directly using my own experience. And after all, that's the best way to rediscover the truth of traditions, which themselves are born of experience. All those experiences meet on a simple plane of truth.

We can begin by looking at the problem in a wide sense, that of evolution. Species have evolved from the mineral to the vegetable and to the animal and then to man. Everything indicates that the progress of evolution is not a progress in forms but a progress of consciousness. Forms are only a support better and better adapted for the progress of consciousness. We have reached the human stage, but there is no reason to suppose that it is final and supreme (or else there isn't any evolution), no more than an objective observer would have had reason to suppose, a hundred million years ago, that the chameleon or the baboon was the highest term of evolution. We have simply reached the decisive evolutionary state where we can consciously intervene to accelerate the natural process, which could otherwise last another few million years with a lot of mess. Yoga and all spiritual disciplines are in the end nothing but processes of conscious acceleration of evolution in the true meaning.

Here, there may be some debate over that "true meaning," some people tell you (with the religions which we're familiar with) that the true meaning is not here, but in some heaven beyond. That's one point of view, but if this material evolution does not carry its meaning in itself, we are in the presence of a sinister farce invented by some divine masochist. If God exists, he must be a little less stupid than that and we can think that this material evolution has a divine meaning and that it is the place of a divine manifestation in Matter. Our spiritual

discipline, consequently, must aim at attaining that divine man or perhaps that other, still unknown being which will arise from us as we arose from the stammering hominids. What is the place of the sexual function in this evolution? Up to now, the progress of consciousness has made use of the progress of the species, that is, sexual reproduction was the key to the multiplication of species so as to reach the most appropriate form to manifest consciousness. Since the appearance of man 2 or 3 million years ago, Nature has not produced any new species, as if she had found in man the most appropriate mode of expression. Now, evolution cannot remain stagnant, or else it's not evolution. Therefore the key to evolution is no longer in the multiplication of species through sexual reproduction but directly through the very power of consciousness. Up to man, consciousness was still too embedded in its material support; with man, it has been sufficiently released to assume its true mastery over material Nature and operate its own mutations by itself. From the viewpoint of evolutionary biology, that is the end of sexuality. We reach the stage where we must pass from natural evolution through sexual power to spiritual evolution through the power of consciousness. Nature does not generally waste her time developing functions and organs which have finished serving her evolutionary plan; we can therefore foresee that the sexual function will atrophy in beings who will know who to channel their energy not for reproducing, but for developing their consciousness. It is very obvious that we are not all there and that for a long time yet Nature will need the sex power to pursue her evolution within the human species, that is, to lead the rather brutish man we still are to a more conscious man, more capable of grasping the true meaning of his evolution and at last quite capable of passing on from natural evolution to spiritual evolution. The inequality of the development of individuals is the obvious reason we can't make general rules and hand out infallible prescriptions. The law is suited to each stage. But whatever the delays, it is also obvious, from the biological viewpoint of evolution, that the sexual function comes to an end when it has fulfilled its ends, that is, when it has succeeded in putting a sufficiently conscious man into the world. Therefore we cannot reasonably establish a spiritual discipline of accelerated evolution on a principle which goes against the evolution. Moreover, it is enough to have gone just a very little way over the difficult line, point X in the passage from natural evolution to spiritual evolution, to see that *all* pseudomystical attempts to glamorize the sexual relations of man and woman are illusions. I have

nothing against sexual relations (God knows!), but to want to cover them up in a yogic or mystical phraseology is a false illusion, a self-deception. Therefore there isn't any "key to be rediscovered" in that sense, it doesn't exist.

There is a key in the relations of man and woman, but not in their sexual relations. The so-called Tantrics of the left hand (the Vama Marga) are, to true Tantrism, what the tales of Bocaccio are to Christianity, or the Roman Bacchus fermenting his wine to the Dionysus of the Greek mysteries. I'm familiar with Tantrism, that's the least I can say. As for the Cathari [i.e., the Albigenses], for whom I have the highest esteem, it would do them little honor to believe that they were doing a sort of "yoga of sexuality." Through my own experience, it has often seemed to me that I found the experience of the Cathari again and I see very well that if some of them tried to mix the sexual relation into the true relation between man and woman, they quickly realized their error. It is a way without issue, or rather its only issue is to make you see that it leads nowhere forward. The Cathari were men too sincere and too conscious to persist in a dulling [alourdissante] experience. For, in the end, that's really what it is a question of, the sexual experience by its very nature (whether there is a "reflux" or not and whatever the mode) is an automatic hooking on to the old animal vibrations—you can do nothing about it, you can put all the love you like into it, but the function itself is tied to thousands of years of animality; it's as if you wanted to dive into a swamp without getting muddy. It's not possible, the "milieu" is like that. And so, when you know what transparency, what sifting out, what inner stillness is needed in order to move slowly on to a higher consciousness, or to permit a higher light to come into our waters here without being immediately obscured, you don't at all see how sexual activity can take you into that still limpidity where things can begin to happen??? Union, the unity of two beings, the true and total meeting of two beings does not occur on that level and by those means. That's all I can say. But I have seen that in the silent tranquillity of two beings who have the same aspiration and have overcome the difficult transition, little by little something quite unique occurs, which you can't suspect so long as you're still in the "debates of the flesh," to use the language of the father confessor! I believe that the experience of the Cathari begins *after* that transition. *Afterwards*, the man-woman couple takes on its true meaning, its "effectivity," if I can say so. Sex is only a first mode of meeting, it is the first means invented by Nature to break the shell of in-

dividual egos—afterwards, you grow and discover something else, not through inhibition or repression, but because something else, infinitely richer, takes its place. Those who want to cling preciously to sex and mystify it in order to pass on to the second stage of evolution make me think of children who cling to their scooter, it's no more serious than that, there's no way to do a yoga with that, nothing either to be indignant about or raise your eyebrows over. So I have nothing to criticize, I just observe and put things in their place. Everything depends on the stage you're at. And those who want to use sex for whatever more or less sublime reason, my god, let them have their experience. As Mother told me no later than yesterday in this same regard, "To tell the truth, the Lord uses everything. One is always on the way toward something." One is always on the way, by no matter what means, you have to keep as much as possible a clear mind and not deceive yourself.

I'm going to try to find one or two passages by Sri Aurobindo to give you his point of view.

A Letter by Sri Aurobindo on Sex and Yoga

"But no error can be more perilous than to accept the immixture of the sexual desire and some kind of subtle satisfaction of it and look on this as a part of the sadhana. It would be the most effective way to head straight towards spiritual downfall and throw into the atmosphere forces that would block the supramental descent, bringing instead the descent of adverse vital powers to disseminate disturbance and disaster. This deviation must be absolutely thrown away, should it try to occur and expunged from the consciousness, if the Truth is to be brought down and the work is to be done.

It is an error too to imagine that, although the physical sexual action is to be abandoned, yet some inward reproduction of it is part of the transformation of the sex-centre. The action of the animal sex-energy in Nature is a device for a particular purpose in the economy of the material creation in the Ignorance. But the vital excitement that accompanies it makes the most favourable opportunity and vibration in the atmosphere for the inrush of those very vital forces and beings whose whole business is to prevent the descent of the supramental Light. The pleasure attached to it is a degradation and not a true form of the divine Ananda. The true divine Ananda in the physical has a different quality and movement and substance; self-existent in its essence, its manifestation is dependent only on an inner union with the Divine. You

have spoken of Divine Love; but Divine Love, while it touches the physical, does not awaken the gross lower vital propensities; indulgence of them would only repel it and make it withdraw again to the heights from which it is already difficult enough to draw it down into the coarseness of the material creation which it alone can transform. Seek the Divine Love through the only gate through which it will consent to enter, the gate of the psychic being, and cast away the lower vital error. [*Letters on Yoga* 3: 1507-1508.]

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS (2)

Dick Batstone

[This is the second instalment in the series taken from the diary kept by an English disciple of Sri Aurobindo and Mother during his visit to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1959-60.]

24 February 1960: I am in two minds. Should I stay here altogether, or should I go back? To have seen the greatness of Sri Aurobindo's life and thought, to have sensed in them the qualities and power that drew the disciples to Christ, to have come to a community where the members are filled with the purpose of perfecting human existence on earth, where they are centered on a person who is living in union with the Divine...how can I leave?

February 21st was the Mother's birthday. There was a special "Darshan"—literally "sight" or "vision." N. explained that to have the Darshan of a person who has realized a high state of consciousness is to pass in front of him or her, and receive something of their spiritual power during the silent contact that occurs.

Aware of a feeling of peace and serenity, I joined a long line of people waiting to see Mother. We moved slowly upstairs and through the dim but splendid rooms where she lives. I felt a tremendous expectancy. Then someone called out, like a footman at a ball, "Mr. David Batstone from London," getting the name wrong. I was in front of Mother, who moved, holding out her hand to me, smiling almost, it seemed, diffidently, a humble old lady. Suddenly I was utterly confused. I neither spoke nor bowed, nor took her hand, nor made pranam as the others before me had done, but stood, the image of awkwardness, hardly seeing her, then passed on.

Why was I so disturbed? I felt insincere. I have come here, attracted by the ideas but not to the extent of making a serious sacrifice. The Mother must see this, and so what place have I before her or at her Ashram? The same thing holds me back from asking to meet her, though she does grant interviews to visitors from abroad.

I am extraordinarily divided; the wish to

give myself and stay is offset by the inability to abandon family, friends and country. I do not really want what I want to want. Indeed, my motive for coming here—was it one of genuine search, or did I come as a break, to escape from some personal relationships I could not sort out?

Yesterday I experienced a great feeling of relief when the man in charge of the sleeping quarters down here at Parc a Charbon [an Ashram guest house] said, "Oh, you are a visitor. I thought you were one of us." Yes, I am only a visitor. Let me enjoy my stay, and see what time leads to.

26 February 1960: It seems harder to find the place and the opportunity for stillness—for sitting and trying to go inwards—than it usually is. There is certainly an atmosphere of peace, and people I speak to say, "Don't concentrate on the surface, the activities of the Ashram and all that, but try to feel the deeper spiritual current that is here." Also N. speaks of "the very strong atmosphere of this place. The Mother will not allow newborn or very young children to live here. It is too strong for them." But I seem so far not to have made use of this milieu, as, for instance, I have made use of the gym for exercises. However, I've only been here a week.

The more I think of questions like marriage and family life, the Mother, a new job and so on, the more I discover that thinking, after a point is reached, is futile. N. was talking today of becoming silent inwardly, and waiting, listening, attending, still as a rock, until more light came on a problem. Now is certainly a time for learning to do this. As it is I can find reasons for so many contrary attitudes to situations, but I don't hear any categorical imperative. Answers must come from a higher or deeper level of consciousness to have real authority.

But there are other reasons too for trying to "be still." Sri Aurobindo, in his letters, constantly stresses the importance of "quiet in the mind." It is the first thing needed in his yoga. "I mean," he writes, "a mind free from disturbance and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to open to the Force that will change the nature. The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it difficult for the Force to work; when the mind is quiet and at peace, the Force can work more easily." He recommends a standing back and dissociation by one's true being from all the surface movements of one's consciousness. And if one can't do this? Then he says aspire, "call very quietly and steadily," and cultivate a strong "pressure of understanding and will in the mind."

6 March 1960 [from a letter to friends]: So far I've said nothing about the essence of the Ashram, what it is doing and why. Let me try.

Sri Aurobindo, as you know, began his rise to fame in India as the leader of Indian nationalism in Bengal. He really got the "Free India" line going, in Edwardian times. Then he took to yoga, frankly to increase his own energy and capacity for work as a political leader. Then he got shut up by the British, and had various experiences of a spiritual nature while in prison, which quite changed his purpose. He left politics and took to yoga, full time. At first he said his was the "yoga of humanity," because all the emphasis in previous Indian yogas had been on saving the individual and had left the rest of the world where it was, in wretchedness, whereas he was not concerned with his own salvation but with "changing human nature." He proposed a synthesis of the best elements in the 3 main traditional yogas of India, and explored and expounded this synthesis in a modern, unobscure, experimental way, making it acceptable to the scientific mind. He found that the Bhagavad Gita had attempted a similar synthesis in the past, which had been lost sight of. So he expounded the Gita, in a series of essays, showing how the yoga of Knowledge, the yoga of Love or Devotion and the yoga of Works could all be combined to lead the individual soul towards the realization of its true nature, and also that this was compatible with activity and enterprise in this world.

By now he had become convinced that Indian political freedom was assured, in due time, but he was concerned about how it would be used. He saw that otherworldliness had been a cause of India's social stagnation and economic apathy, and began building a new cultural philosophy. His aim was still probably "for humanity." Later this changed and he stated that his yoga was "for the sake of the Divine," when his own experience deepened. But he always maintained his opposition to the escape into Nirvana or bliss in the beyond—though he recognized the validity of the experience these words represent. His point was that one should certainly find Nirvana or Moksha or the Kingdom of Heaven, but not stay there or even get other people to stay there. Rather, bring back that consciousness into the world to transform it. And here he went further than the Gita, saying that not only the mind and heart but also the material body of man must be transformed.

Ethics based on love and right thinking are fine, but are always fighting so precariously and inconclusively that people, as you know, can doubt whether humanity has really progressed at all except technologically and in the accumulation of know-

ledge. So Sri Aurobindo maintained that the root of the trouble lay in the inconscient part of man, and particularly in the body itself, which he saw as the last stronghold of the old selfish impulses and obscurities. These are still latently there even in the saints, ready to attempt a comeback whenever the chance offers. If the Kingdom was ever to be realized on earth, Sri Aurobindo insisted, man would have to change integrally, so there was no longer this conflict between "higher" and "lower" within him, but rather the whole being—right down to the cells of the body—consciously collaborated with the Divine Will.

Transformation is, then, one of the emphases in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

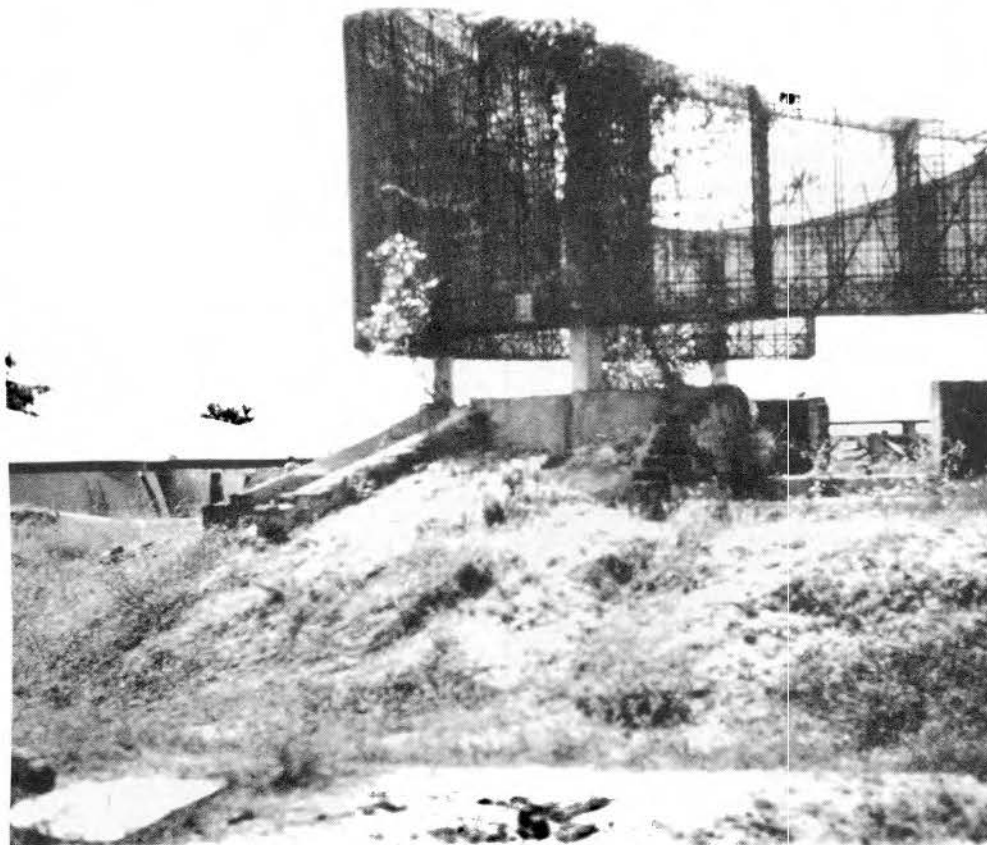
Another is the evolutionary element he brings in. He sees all creation as the involution of divine power, consciousness, delight, into unconscious matter, and the history of the world as the gradual emergence of these qualities back into the light, as it were. Thus there has been an observable progress from matter to life, from life to mental activity, and, he says, there is no reason why it should stop there, and that there is another step—to supermind. This is not just mind in an exaggerated form, but something quite unthinkable by anything below its level; just as unintelligible to man as man is to an animal. (It is quite different from

Nietzsche's exuberant egotism.) This supermind would have, at last and for the first time, the power to deal with the inconscience of the body.

Anyway, Sri Aurobindo, in an inner obedience to the Divine to whom he had surrendered, was led to contact this power of supermind outside creation, waiting for embodiment; and the Mother, his helper, was led to contact it latent in creation. It is claimed that between them they have been instrumental in making the descent of the supermind possible, that some fundamental change has taken place in the nature of mankind, in its possibilities of consciousness and future development.

Sri Aurobindo says that yoga, which is literally "union," or a discipline or askesis leading to union with the Divine (in oneself, in the world and transcendentally) is a conscious hastening of the evolutionary process, which, without our cooperation, might take some millions of years to get to the same point that a yogi might reach in a few years or a lifetime.

As things are the world is in a transitional stage, full of imperfections, suffering and frustration. But this is not to say that this world is irremediably evil or should be written off. Rather, press on to the next more perfect stage, when illness and misery and even death will disappear through the power of the divine manifestation.

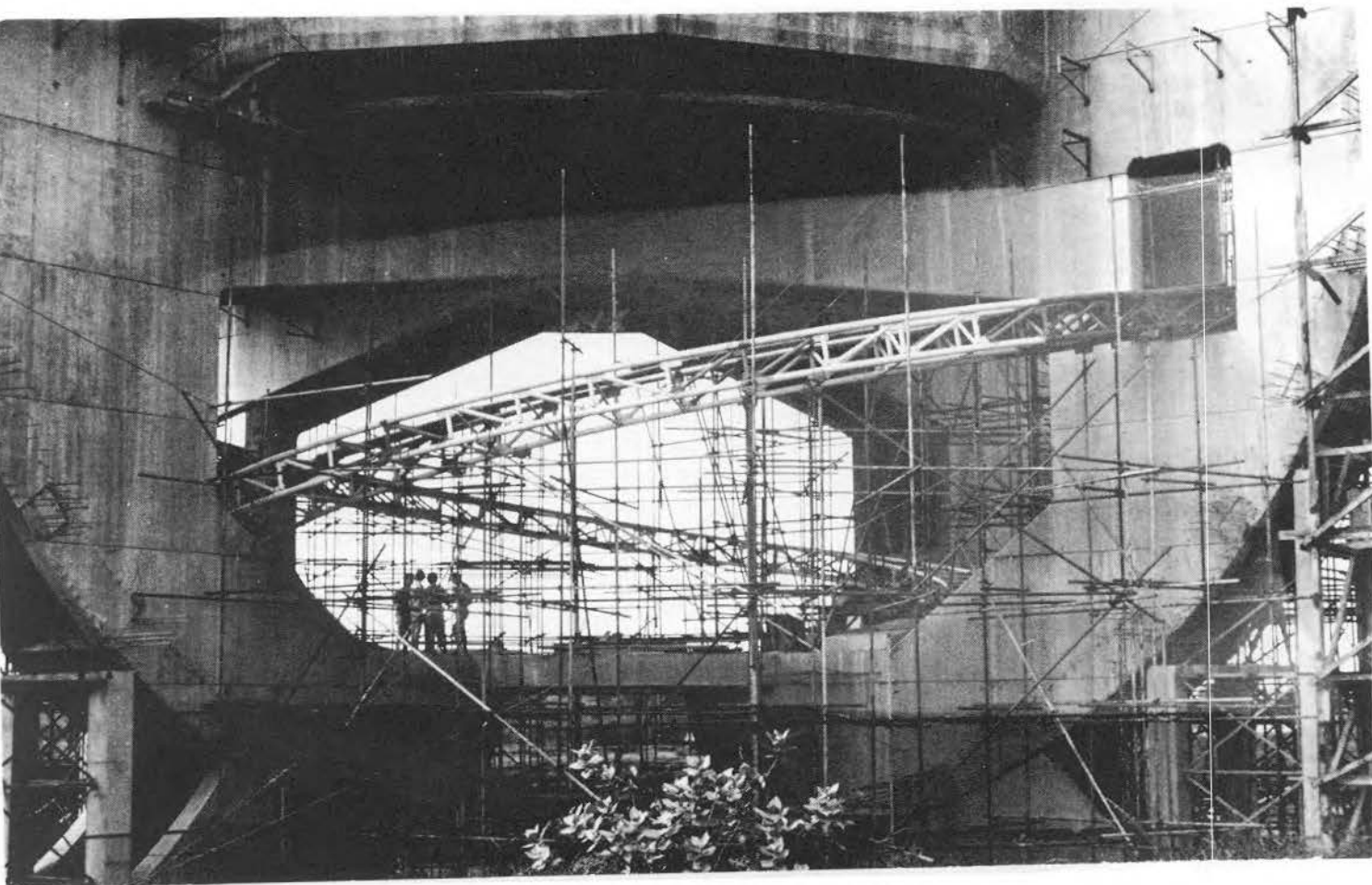


Aster's house at Auromodel. Photo by Dominique Darr.



Sri Aurobindo

EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE



Side view of the Matrimandir. Photo by Bill Sullivan.

MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

The task of giving a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's vision was entrusted to the Mother. The creation of a new world, a new humanity, a new society expressing and embodying the new consciousness is the work she has undertaken. By the very nature of things, it is a collective ideal that calls for a collective effort so that it may be realised in the terms of an integral human perfection.

The Ashram founded and built by the Mother was the first step towards the accomplishment of this goal. The project of Auroville is the next step, more exterior, which seeks to widen the base of this attempt to establish harmony between soul and body, spirit and nature, heaven and earth, in the collective life of mankind.

The city will be built by what is invisible to you. The men who have to act as instru-

ments will do so despite themselves. They are only puppets in the hands of larger Forces. Nothing depends on human beings—neither the planning nor the execution—nothing! That is why one can laugh.

* * *

You say that Auroville is a dream. Yes, it is a "dream" of the Lord and generally those "dreams" turn out to be *true*—much more true than the human so-called realities! [*The Mother on Auroville* (Auroville: Auropublications, 1977.)]

Change yourself if you wish to change the world. Let your inner transformation be the proof that a truth-consciousness can take possession of the material world and that the Divine's Unity can be manifested upon earth.

—The Mother

PROGRESS (7)

Handicrafts

Fraternity. In the community of Fraternity something always seems to be happening. The pottery has been relocated in Aspiration and the woodcraft section has joined with a group from New Creation (including André from Boutique d'Auroville in Pondy) that has been working with papier maché to form a new unit under Artisans Trust called New Creation Fraternity Crafts. Always a natural stop for visitors to Auroville, the community is now looking for new and more satisfactory ways of receiving and accommodating guests. Two guest rooms (and occasionally other more informal accommodation) are available for those interested in participating in the activities of the community during their stay. The Boutique is open to those passing through and an Indian-style snackbar-tea-shop has opened recently for Fraternity workers and visitors. The new attractive community kitchen is functioning smoothly

for Aurovilians from Fraternity and Auro-electronics with the cooking shared among those participating.

Artisana Trust has recently purchased 2.15 acres of land (another piece of approximately 2 acres is in process of being purchased) adjacent to Fraternity. Part of the land is a lovely area with several huge banyan trees and has been suggested as a possible future site for a school. Blueprints are being prepared for a new complex of workshops near this area, one structure to initially house a weaving unit of four looms is now under construction. A well has been dug and is temporarily in use with a hand-pump; a submersible pump will be installed when electric connections are completed. With this well and others in Fraternity, water supply will be adequate to permit extensive planting during the coming year of windbreaks and forest trees.

One challenging project for Fraternity— and Lisa from Auro-Sarjan, who is living and participating in the community—is to provide for the children of the Tamil workers. A school is the most obvious answer but not a simple one as the villages from which most of the children come are extremely impoverished even by Indian standards. Before teaching, or learning, can even be attempted, basic needs such as a reasonably adequate diet and personal cleanliness must be provided. In the past few weeks efforts have been made to improve the program involving about 52 children between the ages of 2½ and 11 years. All receive a noon meal (the youngest also receive a cup of milk), a daily bath, help in keeping their hair clean and combed, and are gradually being outfitted with T shirts and shorts or dresses. All participate in a sports program each afternoon, an art class is given once a week by Lisa and on Saturdays the whole group goes to Last School in Aspiration for music, body movement, rhythm and games.

For other activities, the children are divided into four groups according to age: the creche for ages up to 3½; kindergarten for ages 3½ to 6, where the children begin learning simple language and physical skills and participate in organized games; the 6 to 8 year old group begins reading and writing in Tamil and English, also some botany and zoology, and all will be given an opportunity to learn to ride a bicycle, a seemingly simple skill but one that can mean a great deal to a child with almost no other possibility of moving out of his own village.

The program for the older children is more demanding. One Tamil teacher has been giving some regular classes in Tamil medium and a new teacher has arrived. Here again, basic subjects such as language and math are offered, but there is special emphasis on helping the children develop an

interest and skill in crafts. Fraternity workshops offer a variety of possibilities and collaboration with other communities could open up still more as well as help the children integrate more easily into Auroville. Several children from Aspiration and a group of boys from Udayam also come regularly to the school. It is hoped that a more integrated program can grow to involve more Auroville children and children from the village whose parents do not work at Fraternity. The only condition set for these other village children would be that their parents make contact with the school once a month so that they will have an opportunity to learn more about Auroville, the aims of the school and the activities of the children. At the same time the school can better understand the children's backgrounds and learn where there may be health or other problems.

The result so far has been good—but much more is needed. The diet could still be improved—it would be especially interesting to see what could be done with a basis of soya—and the hygiene efforts would be much more effective coupled with regular, periodic medical assistance. Development of the sports ground and track (which would also provide a safe place for learning bicycle riding) would help to stimulate interest in physical fitness and invite more possibilities for integration with Aurovilians through sports. People, supportive materials and funds are necessary; so far, financial support covering basic maintenance has come from Artisana Trust, but this is not sufficient for further development or large expenses. Classes are now being held in unused corners of the workshops but simply constructed, separate rooms are needed. A library is being started and any appropriate materials would be appreciated, especially magazines for children or ones with photos that can be cut out. Participation by more Aurovilians, even on a part-time basis, is welcomed.

Varuna has gone through a succession of temporary workshops; the most recent location is also too small for 3 crocheting ladies, one cobbler and two or three Aurovilians so they are still looking for a better place. Two new shoe styles have evolved—one is fully crocheted for women and the other is a crochet-and-leather combination for men. They would like to make more leather sandals as the cobbler does this work very well, but the price of leather is becoming prohibitive.

Santosham. Valerie has added two tailors to her workshop and is making a new overblouse style from soft Kashmir wool decorated with her characteristic delicate cross-stitch embroidery. For Aurovilians—who aren't planning a trip to the Himalayas this year—she is also making the new blouse in cotton!

Bellaura Craft (by Dee). The leather-work and belt-weaving workshop at Fertile Windmill suffered the loss of two of its best boys: our most talented carver followed his managerial aspirations and joined the office at Encens d'Auroville in Aspiration; our most nimble apprentice was caught using his clever hands to make a hole in the storeroom and reach into the cashbox! However, new trainees are learning quickly, and with the two remaining skilled, all-round craftsmen, we're developing a special book cover for the precious but fragilely bound volumes of *Mother's Agenda*.

Export orders from Findhorn contacts for rainbow belts have allowed us to give nonstrenuous home-loom work to our very good kitchen amah, who's pregnant but still needs a job. Balasundaram's wife also is learning to weave cotton and jute belts on these simple looms.

One of the nice things about the integration of a small workshop with a forest farm is that the boys do get called out occasionally for hard work and don't grow weak sitting all day. We talk a lot about health, diet and exercise—and instead of tea, we give guavas from the orchard and alundu sprouts (surprisingly relished).

Greenwork

Greenworkers were paid a visit [in 1979] by Alan Grainger, secretary of the International Tree Crops Institute of Braintree, England. Alan spent a lot of time and energy trudging through infant and adolescent forests, over bunds and along windbreaks and living fences with enthusiastic evaluation. To repeat two of his more memorable statements: "I regard Auroville as one of the most advanced tree-planting schemes in the entire world," and "There are more tree freaks per square kilometer in Auroville than anywhere in the world." He also recognized that Auroville has evolved several promising new planting combinations and conservation methods and suggested that although the tree-crop-farming method is now well known, Auroville is one of the few places in the world practicing it extensively. But before we burst our buttons, we should consider somewhat seriously and a little humbly the things he suggested about Auroville becoming a site for visiting foresters, a demonstration center for India and the world, a model for forest farms, etc.—things which are already beginning to happen on a small scale.

During his visit Alan met individually with many Aurovilians and there were two general meetings in the Matrimandir Nursery (where he stayed much of the time). At these meetings it was agreed with several community members to establish a branch of the International Tree Crops Institute in Auroville and correspondence will be

handled through Unity Office. Alan plans on returning once a year to help evaluate our progress and development, to help facilitate contacts with other tree-planting projects and to see where the I.T.C.I. may be able to provide practical assistance such as seed exchange, possibly including some long-sought-for seeds of the Carob tree.

New Name is (at time of writing) the affirmed new name of Joel's place. He has planted 12 ornamental trees as part of the outer periphery of the Matrimandir Gardens and also a new area of about 1,000 casuarina trees. Some adjacent land has been bunded and seeds are being collected for future planting of windbreaks and live fences. Some of this new land is being developed for monsoon agriculture using improved local methods in collaboration with the villagers. Another much-needed well is planned. In addition, several alternate-energy experiments are in various stages of completion. In one, eight pressboard (something like masonite) gores have been sewn together into a parabolic dish for a solar cooker and a search is being made for a reflective covering material. Another project is an experimental roof of pressboard in a geometric configuration like the roofs of the huts in Aspiration (the corner of a cube composed of three square surfaces) and is presently being tested by and over Joel.

Discipline. Like everybody else, the residents of Discipline are back into a heavy watering and irrigating schedule. In a renewed effort towards more efficiency, organization and refinement the area is being worked sectionally with more intensive care. Ways are being implemented to upgrade the irrigation system and the practice of mixed planting of vegetables is being changed. Previously they had experimented with alternating rows of several different vegetables in each plot but now find it more simple and effective to plant only one variety at a time in a plot and then rotate the plots to maintain the soil balance.

Amba Garden (by Krishna). In Amba Garden contour bunding has been recently completed on almost 80% of the total 35 acres (not 20 acres as originally mentioned) and old bunds have been repaired since the end of the monsoon rains. Nearly six acres have been fenced with a combination of barbed wire with granite posts and plantations of acacia and cactus. The plan is to move the wire and posts to a new area as soon as the live fence is established. Agricultural work has been affected adversely this season for two reasons—one, that there was agitation by the Tamil community which more directly affected Amba Garden as it is nearest to the village of Kulilayapalayam; and second, that the long-awaited electrical connection for the borewell has not materialized so far. In addition, the

supply to the existing domestic well in Auromodel is one-third of what it was last year because construction has suddenly picked up and more residents are now living in this area. Planting vegetables has been curtailed for the present in order to concentrate on the existing fruit trees, which include 225 pineapple plants, 220 dwarf cavendish bananas and 250 papayas that are fruiting and over 100 custard apples, 50 guavas, 15 nellikai, 15 sapota and a large number of others.

Fertile Windmill (by Vijay). An old water tank rusting in Abri and at the Center has been recovered and made into a good water cart which is now in use 6 days a week. The bottom had to be replaced with new sheet metal and new wheels, tires and tubes had to be bought. Our previous water tank, very old and falling apart, was being carried on the tire cart and the inevitable water spillage damaged both wood and steel.

A house which had been built in the place by someone else during the absence of Fertile Windmillians was deemed over the years both unnecessary and unfit to live in. The roof was taken down and the materials used to repair other buildings, the doors and windows were walled in, chicken mesh and waterproof plaster added to the inside walls, 60 cubic meters of soil packed on the outside, and now when at night there is a lot of wind and the windmill tank overflows, it overflows into...this new water tank! (Kids love to hop in it when it's hot, too.)

A REPORT ON THE PRESENT SITUATION IN AUROVILLE

Larry Tepper

[The author works with Sri Aurobindo's Action Center in Boulder, Colo. He visited Auroville in November-December 1980 and prepared this report on his return.]

...It should be understood at the outset that Auroville is and has always been in a state of transition; therefore, much of this information represents a snapshot in its unfolding.

I spent much time bicycling around Auroville..., and had the opportunity to meet many Aurovilians. I was impressed with their sincerity, openness, aspiration and their hard work in establishing a conscious community. Mother has said regarding Auroville, "Auroville wants to be a universal township where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony, above all creeds, all nationalities," and "Auroville should be at the service of the Truth." I found these approaches to be true not only on a collective but on an individual basis. In Auroville no one is telling people what to do. Each person instead is working to open to the inner teacher, so that motivation comes from the

On the Hexiad-Communications-Greenways project 1,000 trees have been planted along the road from the Two Banyans' "kolam" to the Matrimandir. One day you will cycle in the shade around here when you come to visit. A Hexiad-paid watchman protects them from desertmakers. His name is Cullappan and he has come to live there in that hut with his wife, Vashunta.

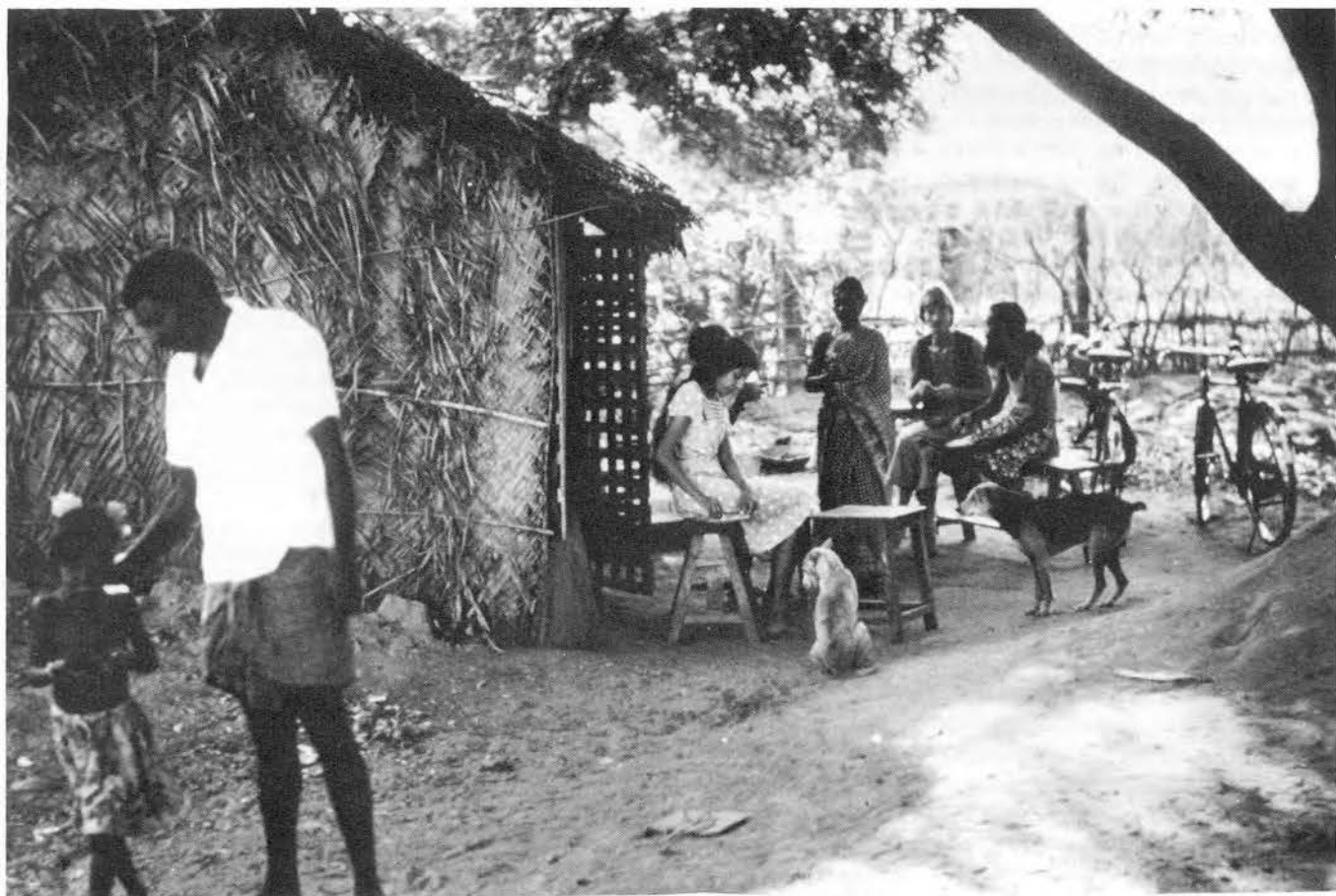
Balasundaram, a Tamil Aurovilian who lives here with us, got married recently to Puspa so now there are 11 people in the community; 9 Aurovilians and 2 paid workers.

Our cow had a calf and began giving about 5 liters of milk a day, plus what the calf gets. Perumal called us in the middle of the night and said worriedly that the placenta was out but the calf was *not*. Being half asleep, I didn't at the moment realize that this was a physical impossibility. Eventually we discovered the calf behind the compost pile, quite a distance from the barn. Five minutes old, he was prancing around and exploring the place. "Good heavens, where am I?" His name is Laxmanan.

The windmill broke down and, after 3 long waterless weeks, was at last repaired and now when the winds blow we smile. The fence was attacked by insects and we are experimenting with an organic pesticide made with flowers which Charlie got from Bombay. The trees keep growing all the time, to sum up.

spiritual rather than from the mental consciousness.

When I arrived, I found Auroville physically transformed from the early days when it was largely gully-washed and barren. Auroville has surpassed the figure of one million trees planted since its birth, nearly 13 years ago. In the Greenbelt, where afforestation has been proceeding at the most intense rate, the land has been covered with trees and bunds. Starting from the Matrimandir, the highest point of Auroville's plateau, a bund network fans out in all directions. When a new area has been bunded, it is planted with ground cover and two general kinds of trees: short-lived (25 years), fast-growing trees to reestablish the topsoil and stabilize the area; and long-lived trees with extensive root systems to reach deep into the earth and bring back to the surface the minerals bleached from the soil by the sun or washed away by the monsoons. The fast-growing trees, such as cashew or casuarina pines, have an additional benefit in that they provide a harvest, bringing in funds for the maintenance of an area while the slower trees are growing.



A Scene in Auroville. Photo by Dominique Darr.



Making incense in Auroville. Photo by Dominique Darr.

There are now over a thousand different varieties of trees in Auroville. Yet those working in afforestation feel that much research remains to find new types useful to the local population and especially beneficial in restoring the land. For instance, there are a thousand breeds of palm tree, bearing many different types of fruit and acclimated to many different climates; yet only two are native to Auroville.

The restoration of the land is not complete by any means. There are large areas, not owned by Auroville, remaining mostly unbunded. The native owners do not yet realize their own welfare is directly related to the health of the land. An effective bund network must completely interlock over the protected area, but these unbunded lands leave gaps which not only allow erosion, but let monsoon runoff gather force and break through downslope bunds.

This year's monsoon was mild, only about 50% of what is normally expected. Many people are planning to cut back on water-intensive crops this year, and plant only hearty varieties that survive well when water is scarce.

The Matrimandir is proceeding at a slow but steady pace. There haven't been any major concretings for a long time, since the concrete permit was blocked by the S.A.S. Although many people think this has completely stopped work on the Matrimandir, such is not the fact. The surrounding scaffolding has been completely taken down and is now being cleaned, refurbished and replaced for the work on the outer skin. The outer skin will be built from interlocking precast concrete forms, which consist of an inner frame of welded steel rod around which the concrete is cast. Each frame is about 6 feet long and, when cast with concrete, weighs about 1,000 pounds. Fabrication of the frames is also proceeding, for the day when concrete becomes more available. A large crane has been placed at the top of the Matrimandir to lift the precast concrete forms for the foundation of the of the outer skin. The crane was hauled to the top by a hand winch—raising the crane one half inch for each crank!

I attended a meeting for the plan of the Matrimandir gardens. There are several different proposals, all based upon a group of excavated lakes with a hill made from the displaced soil. The time is approaching when a decision must be made on the placement of roads, bicycle paths and habitats in the area around Matrimandir.

The Matrimandir has been receiving over 200 visitors and guests daily. Most of them come on private tourist buses. There is unfortunately no one at the moment to show them the work and explain the meaning of the Matrimandir. The result is that the bus

and taxi drivers give their own, distorted versions. Two such examples overheard one day were that the Mother was entombed inside Matrimandir, and that when complete, it would rotate like a carousel!

To remedy this situation, two information centers are being established. In Aspiration, the new Boutique d'Auroville held its grand opening in mid-December. In addition to providing a permanent home for the Auroville Exhibition with its many displays, it is a place where guests and visitors can view the many handicrafts made in Auroville. The second center will be a room under the amphitheater, for receiving the Matrimandir's many guests. There are also tentative plans for a third information service, in Pondicherry.

The Auroville Exhibition was in Calcutta during the first two weeks of my visit. After its return, several of the exhibition members spoke of their experiences during a Pour Tous meeting. Nearly everyone they met was open to the idea of Auroville, but because of the bad press that has been spread about, many expressed disappointment that Auroville "wasn't working." Fortunately, with just a few clear sentences describing Auroville as it really is, what it aspires to be for the world, and the daily work that has always persisted in spite of all attempts to halt it by the S.A.S., the negative aspects so long viewed as the truth could often be dispelled; and then, frequently, a dialogue would open up. Many Indians are inspired by Auroville, and asked how they could be part of it in their daily life. This is a positive development for Auroville in India.

The food supply in Auroville is still unsatisfactory. Although the diet could be sufficient for an adult, in my opinion growing children would do better with a wider selection of foods and a higher protein consumption. Each week a few meals were lacking in one way or another, although this was certainly not the case with every meal. My first supper in the Unity kitchen was potato soup (or rather, boiled potatoes, onions and carrots), bread, and cream of wheat. Chickory or herbal tea is served at all meals. Breakfast consists of a small bowl of yogurt, fruit and bread. Lunch and dinner are usually grains, vegetables, fruit and bread. Thank God for the bread! It's very substantial and really sustained me during my visit. There's plenty of it, too. Some Aurovilians feel there is a higher incidence of sickness there than in the West, and attribute it to the diet. There was hepatitis going around when I arrived, and it also seemed that many people had slowly healing cuts and bruises. If asked to make a recommendation as to which Pour Tous envelope money should be contributed, I would say send it to "Growing Food."

Auroville is now faced with a shortage of people. Its population, at one time over 500, is now around 400, 90 of them children. Many have left because of the conditions there: a harsh climate, a life-style that leaves little room for much more than necessities, and a tough psychological atmosphere due to all the difficulties created by the S.A.S. The impossibility of getting permanent visas stops most people outside of India from coming to Auroville, and the economics of India make it difficult for its own citizens, especially families, to locate there. These two factors prevent Auroville from maintaining or even increasing its population. Because Auroville has so few people for its needs, most residents must directly or indirectly work on the fundamentals of survival: growing food, afforestation, handicrafts or maintenance of buildings and equipment. Many important matters, such as education and communication, have been addressed only in a minimal fashion.

During my stay, the only school I was able to visit was at the Centre; however, I discussed the issue of education in Auroville with several people. From what I heard, there is next to nothing available for children in their teens, although at Centre School the attention given to children of preschool and early elementary school ages seemed very good. Yet as a child grows older, the complexity, intensity and quality of an educational system to provide for his learning needs increases dramatically.... The ideal, of course, would be a stimulating environment for even the very young, but in

their case many rudiments have yet to be developed; whereas with older children the basis already exists and a rich environment becomes an absolute necessity. It is this type of system that Auroville lacks. You can be sure Aurovilians are very aware of this need. Already plans have been made for an extensive education facility, for the time when more people and funds are available.

Fortunately, it now appears Auroville will be able to open its doors to many who aspire to participate in the experiment. In mid-December the Indian parliament passed into law a bill providing for the management of Auroville by the government, in the public interest. Mr. L.P. Nigam, a retired High Court judge, was appointed administrator of Auroville. His assistant, Mr. Ojha, is already living in Auroville. Under the bill's terms, the government administrator is entitled to the management of all Auroville property previously held by the S.A.S., and any powers of the Society over Auroville are vested in him.

Though many people are concerned that the bill constitutes a takeover, in fact Auroville remains self-governed internally. The bill provides a vehicle for holding the titles,

tax exemption and visa guarantees of Auroville. Additionally, with the government now taking an active interest in Auroville's welfare, many of the difficulties Auroville has faced in its interaction with the government, such as obtaining visa guarantees or steel and cement permits, should be removed. The bill effectively separates the S.A.S. from Auroville for a period of two years. After that time, the situation will be reexamined, and the government's management and powers can be extended for up to three more years if needed. To counteract the bill, the S.A.S. filed a petition with the Supreme Court claiming S.A.S. is a religious institution, and hence any interference by the government is unconstitutional. [The case was still pending before the court as of April 1981.]

In the face of all the difficulties and attacks by the S.A.S. over the past years, the Aurovilians have held their ground and gone beyond even that to establish a firm base on which the complete unfolding can take place. They have never given up their faith in the Mother's vision of Auroville as a place where men and women can live in a collective experiment, open to the Truth that is attempting to manifest, and establish on Earth the conditions needed for the advent of the next Man, the New Species.

NEWS OF AUROVILLE

The Indian Government, Auroville, and S.A.S.

On 10 November 1980 the government of Indira Gandhi issued an ordinance to take over the management of Auroville from the Sri Aurobindo Society. L. P. Nigam, a retired judge of the Allahabad High Court, was appointed administrator on 15 November. The S.A.S. obtained an anticipatory injunction from the Calcutta High Court against the ordinance, restraining the central government from taking over Auroville. The central government appealed and got the injunction vacated. Soon after, a bill was introduced into Parliament providing for "taking over in public interest the management of Auroville for a limited period" and "within one month from such commencement [of the ordinance], the Central Government shall constitute a council to be called the Auroville International Advisory Council." This council is to tender advice to the central government and "shall endeavour to secure that (a) the ideals for which Auroville has been established are encouraged, and (b) the members of Auroville are allowed freedom to grow and develop activities and institutions for the fulfilment of the aspirations and programmes envisaged in the Charter of Auroville."

The bill was debated on 2 and 9 December 1980 in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya

Sabha (upper and lower houses of Parliament) respectively. One member of Parliament referred to the bill as "conceivably the most important single bill ever passed by this House, because it deals not simply with material manifestation, not even with the collective human manifestation, but it deals with something which is still beyond the ken of human consciousness, it deals with an idea which is an arrow into the future."

The process of takeover by the administrator was adversely affected when the S.A.S. moved in the Supreme Court of India and managed to get a temporary partial injunction, by representing that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had founded a "religion with doctrines and beliefs" and that the members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Sri Aurobindo Society and Auroville believe in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and no other God, performing prescribed rituals and are thus members of a religious denomination and as such are protected under Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution of India.

A petition was filed in December on behalf of more than 90% of the resident Aurovilians. The petition was accepted by the Supreme Court over the objections of the S.A.S., on 19 December.

The Supreme Court accepted the Aurovilians as a party to the case, modifying its earlier temporary partial stay in favor of Aurovilians, ruling that the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court would hear the full case in January 1981, and directing that the International Advisory Council be constituted by the government of India. (The Council members are Dr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Director General of UNESCO; Mrs. Ludmila Zhivkova, Minister of Culture, Government of Bulgaria; Mr. Narasimha Rao, Minister for External Affairs, Government of India; and Mr. J.R.D. Tata, industrialist.) Aurovilians filed their papers in the Supreme Court on 2 February and as of this writing (March 1981) were awaiting a date to be fixed for the hearing. Aurovilians have pointed out that there are numerous statements by both Sri Aurobindo and Mother that their work does not represent a religion or that the Ashram and Auroville are not religious denominations. In *Mother's Agenda* of 1961 she says, "The Sri Aurobindo Society is something purely external, organised by businessmen for bringing in money: ex-clu-sive-ly." It has also been pointed out that the S.A.S. in their original application for government tax-exemption and to UNESCO for membership claimed that they did not represent a religion. [Adapted from an Auroville Co-operative report of 20 February 1981.]

• Mrs. Zhivkova, Minister of Education, Sciences and Culture of Bulgaria and a

member of the Auroville International Advisory Council, visited Auroville in February. She and her delegation, composed of about 20 scientists, poets, painters, and journalists, arrived on 25 February with a gift of 1,300 rose plants, several paintings, a series of icons, many books and toys for children. She was received first by the government administrators, then by the community at the Banyan Tree, and had lunch in Aspiration. She conveyed a strong message of true peace and unity in the light of Sri Aurobindo's work. She then went to Pondicherry, to Sri Aurobindo's room, visited Nolini Kanta Gupta, and returned to Madras.

• Cement permits for the Matrimandir, long blocked by the S.A.S., have been obtained with the help of the new government administrators of Auroville. Work has continued slowly throughout the period, on areas not requiring cement.

• Aurovilians discussed the matter of Michel Klostermann, a German engaged in parallel activities in the name of Auroville for purposes regarded as not compatible with those of Auroville, in the context of a "seminar" to be held by his group. A statement was made to oppose the holding of this seminar in Auroville and to make Auroville's position clear with regard to Klostermann's activities in general. Klostermann is reported to be engaged in active propaganda in Germany and also Italy, using the name of Auroville as well as of Mother and Sri Aurobindo, to get support for his proposed city of "Mirapuri." He has also written a book in German which severely distorts the message of Sri Aurobindo.

• Narad of the Matrimandir Gardens is currently on a six-month leave from Auroville, visiting the United States, his native country.

• Pour Tous Food Distribution Service has moved to another building, near Aspiration, leaving a building free for the new post office.

• Willie Ruebig is back in Auroville working on meteorological reports at the Weather Station. He is compiling records for monthly, annual, and 10-year reports, but is only going on half power because some instruments were stolen while he was back in his native Germany. The needed materials include weather charts and a hygrothermo graph. They are available for about \$400 from an American firm. Anyone interested in helping to obtain these materials is asked to send a donation to Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, specifying it is for "weather station material."

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR AUROVILLE

In the United States, contributions for various Auroville projects, including the Matrimandir, may be sent to the following centers:

Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc.*
Mt. Tremper, NY 12457

Auroville Association*
212 Farley Drive
Aptos, CA 95003

East-West Cultural Center*
2865 W. 9 St.
Los Angeles, CA 90006

Sri Aurobindo's Action Center
P.O. Box 1977
Boulder, CO 80306

*Indicates tax exempt organization. Donations sent directly to India from abroad should be sent by registered airmail.

To visit Auroville: If you are interested in visiting Auroville, please write directly to Unity Resources, Eco-House, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, India, expressing your interest and asking for a list of guesthouses and charges, and other relevant information.

GENERAL AND CENTER NEWS

- **Life Divine Center** (290 Circle Oaks Dr., Napa, CA 94588; tel. 707-226-9176) is now a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization. An open house was held on November 23, 1980, and starting last 21 February, gatherings are being held for Darshan days in the homes of different people in the San Francisco Bay area. Further information may be obtained by contacting the center directly. Also available from the center are cassettes of talks by M.P. Pandit, on *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Savitri*, etc. A catalog is available.

- Ruud de Vries has written from Holland about the activities of Tijdschrift Stichting Auroville (Prof. Horensstraat 23, 5027 NP Tilburg, The Netherlands), an Auroville group. Their newsletter *Auroville de Stad die de Aard Nodig Heeft* (in Dutch) is issued monthly. They are interested in being in touch with other Auroville centers.

- A committee to investigate the possibility of organizing a small Sri Aurobindo community is now being formed. Land is available in inland northern California. Prospective residents would need to build houses. Materials would be furnished. Interested individuals or families may write to Andal Tomas, P.O. Box 8, Middletown, CA 95461.

- Karlheinz Stockhausen's opera *Donnerstag aus Licht* was given its world premiere at La Scala in Milan, Italy, on 15 March 1981. Stockhausen, a controversial figure in the world of contemporary music, has said that he was deeply influenced by Sri Aurobindo.

- **Sept Jours en Inde avec Satprem** ("Seven Days in India with Satprem") has been published by Robert Laffont of Paris. The book is a series of interviews with Satprem (and Sujata) by Frederic de Towarnicki which were originally broadcast over French radio. Satprem talks about his colorful and adventurous past, his aspiration and seeking, and his long and intimate association with the Mother and her *Agenda*. The French edition is available from Institut de Recherches Evolutives, 32 avenue de l'Observatoire, 75014 Paris, France; there are hopes it will eventually be published in English.

- The Center for Theoretical Studies of the Esalen Institute of Mill Valley, Calif., has made arrangements with five human-potential research establishments in the Soviet Union to exchange publications on the subject. To this end the Center requested donations of specific books from American publishers and institutions. Matagiri is participating by supplying copies of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* and *The Human Cycle*, and Mukherjee's *The Destiny of the Body*.

- **Auroville International France** has moved to new quarters: 10 boulevard de Sébastopol, 75004 Paris, France. They continue to publish their newsletter, *Auroville ... Lien*. They also report that at the end of 1979 a follower arranged an Auroville exhibition in the Dunkerque area, with a slide show and a color film. Members also participated at Easter in a second Hatha Yoga course (the first was in late 1979) organized by Yannick and Annie Mercie, at Domaine du Roc in Bergerac, the home of Micheline Aiguier and her son Rakhal, an Aurovilian (whose photographic work has appeared in *Collaboration*).

- A newsletter called **Universal Child** has been initiated by Mary Saint-Marie (600 Chestnut St., Mt. Shasta, CA 96067), to serve as "a planetary linking letter to share children's spiritual education news," and "as a planetary educational network for those who feel moved to assist in the creation of the new humanity of the One, and who wish to provide for children a spiritual foundation based on Universal Laws and

Principles of Love and Light." The first issue contains lists of spiritual schools, toys, films, teacher and parent training workshops, children's summer programs, and books of related interest. For further information write directly to Ms Saint-Marie.

- **White Roses**, the deluxe edition of Mother's correspondence with Huta, an Ashram artist, won first prize in a book exhibition held recently in Madras, India. The 424-page large-format book is available from Matagiri for \$20.00.

- **Auroville: Sun-Word Rising**, A Trust for the Earth, by Savitra (author of *Auroville: The First Six Years*) is now available from Matagiri. A "personal history" of Auroville from its early days to 1980, it particularly details the protracted conflict with the Sri Aurobindo Society.

- Copies of **Auroville Review**, No. 4 (Fall 1980) are also available from Matagiri, for \$3.00 each. The issue was the first by the new editorial staff and contains articles on Auroville's internal organization, the envelope system, Djaima, Auroville and the villages, the Auroville Today exhibition, random notes, etc., with photographs.

- **East-West Cultural Center** (2865 W. 9 St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; telephone (213) 480-8325) offered a program on Cosmology, a comparative study of creation, in the light of the Hindu tradition and Western science, in February. It was presented by Dr. Frank Mathur, a scientist and devotee of Sri Aurobindo and Mother. The center also offers Sanskrit classes, taught by Kaivalya, using the texts of the late Dr. Judith Tyberg, founder of the center. For other programs and activities, call or write the center.

- The February 1981 issue of *Town and Country* magazine contains an article, "The Spirit of Nakashima," about the life and work of woodworker and designer George Nakashima. Nakashima spent a couple of years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram helping with the design and construction of the guesthouse Golconde, and has been a devotee of Sri Aurobindo ever since. Admiring customers of Nakashima-designed handmade furniture include Nelson Rockefeller. Nakashima was awarded the American Institute of Architects' gold medal for the design and construction of the Monastery of Christ in the Desert, near Taos, New Mexico, and Japan has given 4 exhibitions of his work in the past 12 years. Nakashima has written a book, *The Soul of a Tree*, which is to be distributed by Harper & Row.

ON HEAVEN'S FLAME-GOLD VERGE Roger Harris

[The author is a disciple currently living in Paris. His work has appeared previously in these pages.]

And I must now resolve
To offer all to you.
Condemned by fleeing winds
That vainly I pursue.
To live in deep regret
For that which I did lose
When from the golden lands
To wander I did choose.
Away from loving hands
And smiles that spoke the sun
Into the human depths
Of dark oblivion
From where I know I shall emerge
One day on Heaven's flame-gold verge.

Poverty is no more a necessity of
social life than disease of the natural
body; false habits of life and an ig-
norance of our true organisation are
in both cases the peccant causes of
an avoidable disorder.

—Sri Aurobindo

Nobody knows the exact truth
of things here [in the Ashram] and
each one speaks as if he knows but
in fact nobody knows.

If the truth were revealed one
day to all, most of the people here
and everywhere would be terrified
by the enormity of their ignorance
and of their wrong interpretation.

So I advise all to be in peace and
to abstain from judgment. It is the
safest.

3/22/67 —The Mother

When you are truly changed, everything
around you will also be changed.

—The Mother

Someone was laying down that
God must be this or that or He
would not be God. But it seemed to
me that I can only know what God
is and I do not see how I can tell
Him what He ought to be. For what
is the standard by which we can
judge Him? These judgments are the
follies of our egoism.

—Sri Aurobindo

If people could stop speaking of the work
as their work, it would put an end to a lot
of trouble. —The Mother



At the sports ground, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Photo by Kiran Kakad.



Matrimandir seen from the banyan tree. Photo by AuroImage.