



Collaboration

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Playground meditation, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Photo by Kiran Kakad.

Our feature articles in this issue concern the psychic being, a fundamental concept in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga. The subject, and most of the quotations, were suggested by Prem Sobel of Los Angeles, who is now in the Ashram. We are grateful for his inspiration.

We conclude our long series on Integral Psychology and continue with Mother's "Notes on the Way," drawn from Her Agenda. We also wish to thank Dr. Joan Price for permission to use her article "Philosophy of Integral Yoga."

We are also very happy to publish here a chapter from a new book by Savitra, an American Aurovilian, "A Trust for the Earth," taken from his book *Auroville: Sun-Word Rising*. We hope our readers will find it as inspiring as we do.

This issue closes with a beautiful poem by Aaron Miller, who has been teaching at Northern Kentucky University and is now at the Lindenwood Colleges in Missouri. Readers are invited to submit both nonfiction and poetry for consideration in *Collaboration*.

Ordinarily, all the more inward and all the abnormal psychological experiences are called psychic. I use the word psychic for the soul as distinguished from the mind and vital. All movements and experiences of the soul would in that sense be called psychic, those which rise from or directly touch the psychic being; where mind and vital predominate, the experience would be called psychological (surface or occult). "Spiritual" is not a necessary connection with the Absolute. Of course the experience of the Absolute is spiritual. All contacts with self, the higher consciousness, the Divine above are spiritual. [1]

A distinction has to be made between the soul in its essence and the psychic being. Behind each and all there is the soul which is the spark of the Divine—none could exist without that. But it is quite possible to have a vital and physical being without a clearly evolved psychic being behind it. . . .

The inner being is composed of the inner mental, inner vital, inner physical—but that is not the psychic being. The psychic is the inmost being and quite distinct from these. The word "psychic" is indeed used in English to indicate anything that is other or deeper than the external mind, life and body, anything occult or supra-physical, but that is a use which brings con-

fusion and error and we entirely discard it when we speak or write about yoga. In ordinary parlance we may sometimes use the word "psychic" in the looser popular sense or in poetry, which is not bound to intellectual accuracy, we may speak of the soul sometimes in the ordinary and more external sense or in the sense of the true psyche.

The psychic being is veiled by the surface movements and expresses itself as best it can through these outer instruments which are more governed by the outer forces than by the inner influences of the psychic. But that does not mean that they are entirely isolated from the soul. The soul is in the body in the same way as the mind or vital—but the body it occupies is not this gross physical frame only, but the subtle body also. When the gross sheath falls away, the vital and mental sheaths of the body still remain as the soul's vehicle till these too dissolve.

The soul of a plant or an animal is not altogether dormant—only its means of expression are less developed than those of a human being. There is much that is psychic in the plant, much that is psychic in the animal. The plant has only the vital-physical evolved in its form, so it cannot express itself; the animal has a vital mind and can, but its consciousness is limited and its experiences are limited, so the psychic essence has a less developed consciousness and experience than is present or at least possible in man. All the same, animals have a soul and can respond very readily to the psychic in man.

The ghost is of course not the soul. It is either the man appearing in his vital body or it is a fragment of his vital that is seized on by some vital force or being. . . . [2]

The psychic being is in the heart centre in the middle of the chest (not in the physical heart, for all the centres are in the middle of the body), but it is deep behind. When one is going away from the vital into the psychic, it is felt as if one is going deep deep down till one reaches that central place of the psychic. The surface of the heart centre is the place of the emotional being; from there one goes deep to find the psychic. The more one goes, the more intense becomes the psychic happiness you describe. [3]

They [the psychic being and the Divine Presence in the heart] are quite different things. The psychic being is one's own individual soul-being. It is not the Divine, though it has come from the Divine and develops towards the Divine. [4]

The psychic is the support of the individual evolution; it is connected with the universal both by direct contact and through the mind, vital and body. [5]

The contribution of the psychic being to the sadhana is: (1) love and bhakti, a love not vital, demanding and egoistic but unconditioned and without claims, self-existent; (2) the contact or the presence of the Mother within; (3) the unerring guidance from within; (4) a quieting and purification of the mind, vital and physical consciousness by their subjection to the psychic influence and guidance; (5) the opening up of all this lower consciousness to the higher spiritual consciousness above for its descent into a nature prepared to receive it with a complete receptivity and right attitude—for the psychic brings in everything, right thought, right perception, right feeling, right attitude. [6]

The soul and the life are two quite different powers. The soul is a spark of the Divine Spirit which supports the individual nature; mind, life, body are the instruments for the manifestation of the nature. In most men the soul is hidden and covered

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over by the action of the external nature; they mistake the vital being for the soul, because it is the vital which animates and moves the body. But this vital being is a thing made up of desires and executive forces good and bad; it is the desire-soul, not the true thing. It is when the true soul (psyche) comes forward and begins first to influence and then govern the actions of the instrumental nature that man begins to overcome vital desire and grow towards a divine nature. [7]

* * * * *

You take the outer waking consciousness as if it were the real person or being and conclude that if it is not this but something else that has the realisation or abides in the realisation, then no one has it—for there is no one here except the waking consciousness. That is the very error by which the ignorance lasts and cannot be got rid of. The very first step in getting out of the ignorance is to accept the fact that this outer consciousness is not one's soul, not the real person, but only a temporary formation on the surface for the purposes of the surface play. The soul, the person is within, not on the surface—the outer personality is the person only in the first sense of the Latin word *persona* which meant originally a mask. [8]

* * * * *

The European mind, for the most part, has never been able to go beyond the formula of soul plus body—usually including mind in soul and everything except body in mind. Some occultists make a distinction between spirit, soul and body. At the same time there must be some vague feeling that soul and mind are not quite the same thing, for there is the phrase “This man has no soul,” or “he is a soul” meaning he has something in him beyond a mere mind and body. But all that is very vague. There is no clear distinction between mind and soul and none between mind and vital and often the vital is taken for the soul. [9]

* * * * *

... The soul is at first but a spark and then a little flame of godhead burning in the midst of a great darkness; for the most part it is veiled in its inner sanctum and to reveal itself it has to call on the mind, the life-force and the physical consciousness and persuade them, as best they can, to express it; ordinarily it succeeds at most in suffusing their outwardness with its inner light and modifying with its purifying fineness their dark obscurities or their coarser

mixture. Even when there is a formed psychic being, able to express itself with directness in life, it is still in all but a few a smaller portion of the being—“no bigger in the mass of the body than the thumb of a man” was the image used by the ancient seers—and it is not always able to prevail against the obscurity and ignorant smallness of the physical consciousness, the mistaken sureness of the mind or the arrogance and vehemence of the vital nature. This soul is obliged to accept the human mental, emotive, sensational life as it is, its relations, its activities, its cherished forms and figures; it has to labour to disengage and increase the divine element in all this relative truth mixed with the continual falsifying error, this love turned to the uses of the animal body or the satisfication of the vital ego, this life of an average manhood shot with rare and pale glimpses of Godhead and the darker luridities of the demon and the brute. Unerring in the essence of its will, it is obliged often under the pressure of its instruments to submit to mistakes of action, wrong placement of feeling, wrong choice of person, errors in the exact form of its will, in the circumstances of its expression of the infallible inner idea. Yet is there a divination within it which makes it a surer guide than the reason or than even the highest desire, and through apparent errors and stumblings its voice can still lead better than the precise intellect and the considering mental judgment. This voice of the soul is not what we call conscience—for that is only a mental and often conventional erring substitute; it is a deeper and more seldom heard call; yet to follow it when heard is wisest: even, it is better to wander at the call of one's soul than to go apparently straight with the reason and the outward moral mentor. But it is only when the life turns towards the Divine that the soul can truly come forward and impose its power on the outer members; for, itself a spark of the Divine, to grow in flame towards the Divine is its true life and its very reason of existence.

At a certain stage in the Yoga when the mind is sufficiently quieted and no longer supports itself at every step on the sufficiency of its mental certitudes, when the vital has been steadied and subdued and is no longer constantly insistent on its own rash will, demand and desire, when the physical has been sufficiently altered not to bury altogether the inner flame under the mass of its outwardness, obscurity or inertia, an inmost being hidden within and

felt only in its rare influences is able to come forward and illumine the rest and take up the lead of the Sadhana. Its character is a one-pointed orientation towards the Divine or the Highest, one-pointed and yet plastic in action and movement; it does not create a rigidity of direction like the one-pointed intellect or a bigotry of the regnant idea or impulse like the one-pointed vital force; it is at every moment and with a supple sureness that it points the way to the Truth, automatically distinguishes the right step from the false, extricates the divine or Godward movement from the clinging mixture of the undivine. Its action is like a searchlight showing up all that has to be changed in the nature; it has in it a flame of will insistent on perfection, on an alchemic transmutation of all the inner and outer existence. It sees the divine essence everywhere but rejects the mere mask and the disguising figure. It insists on Truth, on will and strength and mastery, on Joy and Love and Beauty, but on a Truth of abiding Knowledge that surpasses the mere practical momentary truth of the Ignorance, on an inward joy and not on mere vital pleasure—for it prefers rather a purifying suffering and sorrow to degrading satisfactions—on love winged upward and not tied to the stake of egoistic craving or with its feet sunk in the mire, on beauty restored to its priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal, on strength and will and mastery as instruments not of the ego but of the Spirit. Its will is for the divinisation of life, the expression through it of a higher Truth, its dedication to the Divine and Eternal.

But the most intimate character of the psychic is its pressure towards the Divine through a sacred love, joy and oneness. It is the divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal, its star of Truth shining over the luminous cave of the nascent or the still obscure cradle of the new-born godhead within us. In the first long stage of its growth and immature existence it has leaned on earthly love, affection, tenderness, goodwill, compassion, benevolence, on all beauty and gentleness and fineness and light and strength and courage, on all that can help to refine and purify the grossness and commonness of human nature; but it knows how mixed are these human movements at their best and at their worst how fallen and stamped with the mark of ego and self-deceptive sentimental falsehood and the lower self profiting by the imitation of a soul movement. At once,

emerging, it is ready and eager to break all the old ties and imperfect emotional activities and replace them by a greater spiritual Truth of love and oneness. It may still admit the human forms and movements, but on condition that they are turned toward the One alone. It accepts only the ties that are helpful, the heart's reverence for the Guru, the union of the God-seekers, a spiritual compassion for the ignorant human and animal world and its peoples, the joy and happiness and satisfaction of beauty that comes from the perception of the Divine everywhere. It plunges the nature inward towards its meeting with the immanent Divine in the heart's secret centre and, while that call is there, no reproach of egoism, no mere outward summons of altruism or duty or philanthropy or service will deceive or divert it from its sacred longing and its obedience to the attraction of the Divinity within it. It lifts the being towards a transcendent Love and Beatitude to deliver and transform this world of hatred and strife and division and darkness and jarring Ignorance. It opens to a universal Divine Love, a vast compassion, an intense and immense will for the good of all, for the embrace of the World-Mother enveloping or gathering to her her children, the divine Passion that has plunged into the night for the redemption of the world from the universal Ignorance. It is not attracted or misled by mental imitations or any vital misuse of these great deep-seated Truths of existence; it exposes them with its detecting search-ray and calls down the entire truth of divine Love to heal these malformations, to deliver mental, vital, physical love from their insufficiencies or their perversions and reveal to them their abounding share of the intimacy and the oneness and the ascending ecstasy and the descending rapture.

[10]

Disciple: What is the best way of preparing ourselves . . . in order to make true progress in the direction you expect from us?

Mother: Naturally it is to widen and illumine your consciousness . . . but how to do it! . . . your own consciousness . . . to widen and illumine it. And if you could find, each one of you, your psychic, and unite with it, all problems would be solved.

The psychic being is the representative of the Divine in the human being. This is it, you see . . . the Divine is not something remote or inaccessible. The Divine is in you but you are not wholly conscious of it. Rather, you have . . . it acts now as an influence rather than as a Presence. It must be a conscious . . . you must be able at every moment . . . to ask yourselves . . . what is . . . how . . . how the Divine sees. This is how it is—first how the Divine sees . . . and then how the Divine wills . . . and then how the Divine acts. And that does not mean going away into inaccessible regions, it is right here. But for the time being, all the old habits and the general in-conscience . . . put a sort of cover which prevents us from seeing and feeling. One must . . . one must lift . . . one must remove this.

In short, we must become conscious instruments . . . conscious . . . conscious of the Divine.

Usually it takes a whole lifetime, or sometimes, for some, it takes several lifetimes. Here, in the present conditions, you can do it . . . in a few months. For those who are . . . who have an ardent aspiration . . . in a few *months* . . . they can do it. [silence]

. . . Do you know what the fourth dimension is? Do you know what it is?

Disciple: We have heard about it.

Mother: Do you have the experience?

Disciple: No, Sweet Mother.

Mother: Ah! But it is indeed the best approach of modern science . . . the fourth dimension. For us, the Divine is the fourth dimension . . . it is . . . within the fourth dimension.

And . . . it is everywhere . . . you see . . . everywhere, always. It does not come and go . . . it is there always . . . everywhere. It is we . . . it is our foolishness which prevents us from feeling. It is not necessary to go off . . . not at all, not at all, not at all.

To be conscious of your psychic being,

you must have once been capable of feeling the fourth dimension, otherwise you can not know what it is . . . My God! [silence]

Indispensable! Indispensable! Life begins with that. Otherwise, one lives in falsehood . . . in a mess and in disorder and in darkness.

Otherwise, in order to be conscious of your own consciousness, you have to mentalise it. It is dreadful! Dreadful!

There, you see!

Disciple: The new life, Mother, is not the continuation of the old, is it? It is a bursting forth from within.

Mother: Yes! Yes!

Disciple: There is nothing common between . . .

Mother: There is . . . there is . . . but you are not conscious of it. But . . . one must . . . one must . . . it is the mind which prevents you from feeling it. You see, one must be . . . You mentalise everything, everything . . . you . . . what you call consciousness is the thinking of things, this is what you call consciousness . . . but it is not that at all, this is not consciousness . . . Consciousness . . . it must be totally lucid *without* words! [silence]

There . . . all grows luminous and warm . . . *Strong!* And peace . . . the true peace, which is not inertia and which is not immobility.

Disciple: But Mother, can we give that as an aim to all the children?

Mother: All . . . no! They are not all of the same age, even when they are of the same age physically. There are some children who . . . who are of an elementary type. You see, you should . . . if you were fully conscious of your psychic, you would know which children have a developed psychic. There are some children . . . in whom the psychic is only embryonic. The age of the psychic is not the same, far from it. Normally the psychic takes several lifetimes to form completely, and it is the psychic which goes from one body to another and that is why we are not conscious of our past lives . . . it is because we are not conscious of our psychic. But sometimes, there is a moment when the psychic has participated in an event; it has become conscious, and that gives a memory. One sometimes has . . . one sometimes has a fragmentary recollection, the memory of a circumstance or an event or of a thought or even an act . . . like that . . . this is because the psychic was conscious. [silence]

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-95.
3. *Ibid.*, 3:1115.
4. *Ibid.*, 1:298.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-99.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
10. *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), pp. 144-47.

The body ... the body is a substance which is still very heavy ... and matter itself must change so that the Supermind may manifest. [1]

Thy voice is so modest, so impartial, so sublime in its patience and mercy that it does not make itself heard with any authority, any force of will but comes like a cool breeze, sweet and pure, like a crystalline murmur that brings a note of harmony to a discordant concert. Yet, for him who knows how to listen to the note, to breathe that breeze, it holds such treasures of beauty, such a fragrance of pure serenity and noble grandeur, that all foolish illusions vanish or are transformed into a joyful acceptance of the marvellous truth that has been glimpsed. [2]

There are so many things you think, feel, want, even do, without knowing it. Are you fully conscious of yourself and all that goes on in you?—Not at all! If, for example, suddenly, without your expecting it, at a certain moment I ask you: “What are you thinking about?” your reply, 99 times out of a hundred will be: “I don’t know.” And if in the same way I ask another question like this: “What do you want?” you will also say: “I don’t know.” And “What do you feel?”—“I don’t know.” It is only to those who are used to observing themselves, watching how they live, who are concentrated upon this need to know what is going on in them, that one can ask a precise question like this, and only they can immediately reply. In some instances in life, yes, one is absorbed in what one feels, thinks, wants, and then one can say, “Yes, I want that, I am thinking of that, I experience that,” but these are only moments of existence, not the whole time ...

Well, to find out what one truly is, to find out why one is on earth, what is the purpose of physical existence, of this presence on earth, of this formation, this existence ... the vast majority of people live without asking themselves this even once! Only a small elite ask themselves this question with interest, and fewer still start working to get the answer. For, unless one is fortunate enough to come across someone who knows it, it is not such an easy thing to find. Suppose, for instance, that there had never come to your hands a book of Sri Aurobindo’s or of any of the writers or philosophers or sages who have dedicated their lives to this quest; if you

were in the ordinary world, as millions of people are in the ordinary world, who have never heard of anything, except at times—and not always nowadays, even quite rarely—of some gods and a certain form of religion which is more a habit than a faith and which, besides, rarely tells you why you are on earth ... Then one doesn’t even think of thinking about it. One lives from day to day the events of each day. When one is very young, one thinks of playing, eating, and a little later of learning, and after that one thinks of all the circumstances of life. But to put this problem to oneself, to confront this problem and ask oneself: “But after all, *why* am I here?” How many do that? There are people to whom this idea comes only when they are facing a catastrophe. When they see someone whom they love die or when they find themselves in particularly painful and difficult circumstances, they turn back upon themselves, if they are sufficiently intelligent, and ask themselves, “But really, what is this tragedy we are living, and what’s the use of it and what is its purpose?”

And only at that moment does one begin the search to know.

And it is only when one has found ... that one has a divine Self and that consequently one must seek to know this divine Self ... This comes much later, and yet, in spite of everything, from the very moment of birth in a physical body, there is in the being, in its depths, this psychic presence which pushes the whole being towards this fulfilment. But who knows it and who recognises it, this psychic being? That too comes only in special circumstances, otherwise one goes on living unthinkingly. And in the depths of one’s being is this psychic being which seeks, seeks, seeks to awaken the consciousness and reestablish the union. One knows nothing about it. [3]

... So long as one asks oneself the question of whether one has or hasn’t realised this eternal soul in oneself, it proves that the *true* contact has not taken place. For, when the phenomenon occurs, it brings with it an inexpressible something, so new and so definitive, that doubt and questioning are no longer possible. It is truly, in the absolute sense of the phrase, a new birth.

You become a new person, and whatever may be the path or the difficulties of the path afterwards, that feeling never leaves you. It is not even something—like

many other experiences—which withdraws, passes into the background, leaving you externally with a kind of vague memory to which it is difficult to cling, whose remembrance grows faint, blurred—it is not that. You *are* a new person and definitely that, whatever happens. And even all the incapacity of the mind, all the difficulties of the vital, all the inertia of the physical are unable to change this new state—a new state which makes a *decisive* break in the life of the consciousness. The being one was before and the being one is after are no longer the same. The position one has in the universe and in relation to it, in life and in relation to it, in understanding and in relation to it, is no longer the same: it is a true reversal which can never be undone again. [4]

In fact, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it. ... Certainly there is a time when they don’t know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that “after all, it might be good,” there remains some fear: “What will happen when these doors and windows are opened? ...” and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call “themselves.” They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they could no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful—but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: “Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering there would be no joy.” That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit. [5]

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3. *Questions and Answers 1957-58* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1977, vol. 9 of Mother's Collected Works), pp. 15-17.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 336-37.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 431-32.

goes downward becomes increasingly sub-conscious, but the real seat of the sub-conscious is below the body, as the real seat of the higher consciousness (super-conscious) is above the body. At the same time, the sub-conscious can be felt anywhere, felt as something below the movement of the consciousness and, in a way, supporting it from beneath or else drawing the consciousness down towards itself. [2]

The sub-conscious is the support of habitual action—it can support good habits as well as bad. [3]

The human like the animal mind lives largely in impressions rising up from the sub-conscious. [4]

The sub-conscious has many more fears in it than those admitted or acknowledged by the waking consciousness. [5]

Your practice of psycho-analysis was a mistake. It has, for the time at least, made the work of purification more complicated, not easier. The psycho-analysis of Freud is the last thing that one should associate with yoga. It takes up a certain part, the darkest, the most perilous, the unhealthiest part of the nature, the lower vital subconscious layer, isolates some of its most morbid phenomena and attributes to it and them an action out of all proportion to its true role in the nature. Modern psychology is an infant science, at once rash, fumbling and crude. As in all infant sciences, the universal habit of the human mind—to take a partial or local truth, generalise it unduly and try to explain a whole field of Nature in its narrow terms—runs riot here. Moreover, the exaggeration of the importance of suppressed sexual complexes is a dangerous falsehood and it can have a nasty influence and tend to make the mind and vital more and not less fundamentally impure than before.

It is true that the subliminal in man is the largest part of his nature and has in it the secret of the unseen dynamisms which explain his surface activities. But the lower vital subconscious which is all that this psycho-analysis of Freud seems to know—and even of that it knows only a few ill-lit corners—is no more than a restricted and very inferior portion of the subliminal whole. The subliminal self stands behind and supports the whole superficial man; it

has in it a larger and more efficient mind behind the surface mind, a larger and more powerful vital behind the surface vital, a subtler and freer physical consciousness behind the surface bodily existence. And above them it opens to a higher super-conscious as well as below them to lower sub-conscious ranges. If one wishes to purify and transform the nature, it is the power of these higher ranges to which one must open and raise to them and change by them both the subliminal and the surface being. Even this should be done with care, not prematurely or rashly, following a higher guidance, keeping always the right attitude; for otherwise the force that is drawn down may be too strong for an obscure and weak frame of nature. But to begin by opening up the lower subconscious, risking to raise up all that is foul or obscure in it, is to go out of one's way to invite trouble. First one should make the higher mind and vital strong and firm and full of light and peace from above; afterwards one can open up or even dive into the subconscious with more safety and some chance of a rapid and successful change.

The system of getting rid of things by *anubhava* [experience] can also be a dangerous one; for on this way one can easily become more entangled instead of arriving at freedom. This method has behind it two well-known psychological motives. One, the motive of purposeful exhaustion, is valid only in some cases, especially when some natural tendency has too strong a hold or too strong a drive in it to be got rid of by *vicara* [intellectual reflection] or by the process of rejection and the substitution of the true movement in its place; when that happens in excess, the sadhak has sometimes even to go back to the ordinary life, get the true experience of it with a new mind and will behind and then return to the spiritual life with the obstacle eliminated or else ready for elimination. But this method of purposive indulgence is always dangerous, though sometimes inevitable. It succeeds only where there is a very strong will in the being towards realisation; for then indulgence brings a strong dissatisfaction and reaction, . . . and the will towards perfection can be carried down into the recalcitrant part of the nature.

The other motive for *anubhava* is of a more general applicability; for in order to reject anything from the being one has first to become conscious of it, to have the clear inner experience of its action and to discover its actual place in the workings of the

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY (15)

Sri Aurobindo

[This is the concluding installment in this series.]

The Sub-conscious and In-conscious (3)

The sub-conscious is a concealed and un-expressed inarticulate consciousness which works below all our conscious physical activities. Just as what we call the super-conscious is really a higher consciousness above from which things descend into the being, so the sub-conscious is below the body-consciousness and things come up into the physical, the vital and the mind-nature from there. . . .

Just as the higher consciousness is super-conscious to us and supports all our spiritual possibilities and nature, so the sub-conscious is the basis of our material being and supports all that comes up in the physical nature. . . .

The sub-conscious retains the impressions of all our past experiences of life and they can come up from there in dream forms: most dreams in ordinary sleep are formations made from sub-conscious impressions.

The habit of strong recurrence of the same things in our physical consciousness, so that it is difficult to get rid of its habits, is largely due to a sub-conscious support. The sub-conscious is full of irrational habits. . . .

When the physical consciousness is being changed, the chief resistance comes from the sub-conscious. It is constantly maintaining or bringing back the inertia, weakness, obscurity, lack of intelligence which afflict the physical mind and vital or the obscure fears, desires, angers, lusts of the physical vital, or the illnesses, dullnesses, pains, incapacities to which the body-nature is prone. [1]

The Muladhar is the centre of the physical consciousness proper, and all below in the body is the sheer physical, which as it

nature. One can then work upon it to eliminate it, if it is an entirely wrong movement, or to transform it if it is only the degradation of a higher and true movement. It is this or something like it that is attempted crudely and improperly with a rudimentary and insufficient knowledge in the system of psycho-analysis. The process of raising up the lower movements into the full light of consciousness in order to know and deal with them is inevitable; for there can be no change without it. But it can truly succeed only when a higher light and force are sufficiently at work to overcome, sooner or later, the force of the tendency that is held up for change. Many, under the pretext of *anubhava*, not only raise up the adverse movement, but support it with their consent instead of rejecting it, find justifications for continuing or repeating it and so go on playing with it, indulging its return, eternising it; afterwards when they want to get rid of it, it has got such a hold that they find themselves helpless in its clutch and only a terrible struggle or an intervention of divine grace can liberate them. Some do this out of a vital twist or perversity, others out of sheer ignorance; but in yoga, as in life, ignorance is not accepted by Nature as a justifying excuse. This danger is there in all improper dealings with the ignorant parts of the nature; but none is more ignorant, more perilous, more unreasoning and obstinate in recurrence than the lower vital subconscious and its movements. To raise it up prematurely

or improperly for *anubhava* is to risk suffusing the conscious parts also with its dark and dirty stuff and thus poisoning the whole vital and even the mental nature. Always therefore one should begin by a positive, not a negative experience, by bringing down something of the divine nature, calm, light, equanimity, purity, divine strength into the parts of the conscious being that have to be changed. [6]

The Chakras

The centres or Chakras are seven in number:

1. The thousand petalled lotus on the top of the head.
2. In the middle of the forehead—the Ajna Chakra—(will, vision, dynamic thought).
3. Throat centre—externalising mind.
4. Heart-lotus—emotional centre. The psychic is behind it.
5. Navel—higher vital (proper).
6. Below the navel—lower vital.
7. Muladhara—physical.

All these centres are in the middle of the body; they are supposed to be attached to the spinal cord; but in fact all these things are in the subtle body. . . , though one has the feeling of their activities as if in the physical body when the consciousness is awake. [7]

In the process of our yoga the centres have each a fixed psychological use and general function which base all their special

powers and functionings. The muladhara governs the physical down to the subconscious; the abdominal centre . . . governs the lower vital; the navel centre . . . governs the larger vital; the heart centre . . . governs the emotional being; the throat centre . . . governs the expressive and externalising mind; the centre between the eyebrows . . . governs the dynamic mind, will, vision, mental formation; the thousand-petalled lotus . . . above commands the higher thinking mind, houses the still higher illumined mind and at the highest opens to the intuition through which or else by an overflowing directness the overmind can have with the rest communication or an immediate contact. [8]

One can speak of the chakras only in reference to yoga. In ordinary people the chakras are not open, it is only when they do sadhana that the chakras open. For the chakras are the centres of the inner consciousness and belong originally to the subtle body. So much as is active in ordinary people is very little—for in them it is the outer consciousness that is active. [9]

References

1. *Letters on Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971), 1:356.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
6. *Ibid.*, 3:1605-08.
7. *Ibid.*, 1:364-65.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 365.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 369.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD (3)

Sri Aurobindo

[This is the third and final installment in the series of "letters" Sri Aurobindo wrote to a fictional correspondent.]

There are moments in the career of peoples, empires, continents, orders of things when the forces of life pause between a past vitality and a rapidly advancing decay, atrophy or dissolution. You have often heard me say this of our still persistent and reluctant mediaeval system in India and you have not wondered, but you are surprised when I give the same description of this vaunting and dominant Europe. Why? Because it is vaunting and dominant? I think so. There are two hypnotisms that work with an almost miraculous power upon men's minds, the suggestion of the habitually repeated word and the suggestion of the long-established or robustly

accomplished fact. Men are almost entirely led or stayed by blind hopes or blind hopelessnesses. They are ever ready to cry, "As it was yesterday, as it is now, so it shall be forever," or to sigh, "This thing is, has been, promises to be; how can I ever overcome it? In the centuries to come perhaps, but for me my limits are set and a wall has been built around me." My friend, the thing that looks so huge, mighty and impressive from without wears a very different appearance when you look into its secret places and sound its walls and foundations. There are certain edifices, characteristic of European modernity, which lift a tremendous height and showy

mass to the sky,—therefore they are called vulgarly skyscrapers . . . —but some houses very showily built have an ugly habit of descending suddenly in ruin without any previous warning either to their inmates or to the envious huggers of the plain in the vicinity. Then they are said to have been jerry-built. Now, modern European civilisation is just such a jerry-built skyscraper.

You have not misapprehended my meaning, though you wonder at it. These hollow worm-eaten outsides of Hinduism crumbling so sluggishly, so fatally to some sudden and astonishing dissolution, do not frighten me. Within them I find the soul of

a civilisation alive, though sleeping. I see upon it the consoling sentence of God, "Because thou hast believed in me, therefore thou shalt live and not perish." Also, I look through the garnished outsides, gaudy, not beautiful, pretentious, not great, boastful, not secure, of this vaunting, aggressive, dominant Europe and I have seen written on the heart of its civilisation a sentence of death and mounting already from the heart to the brain an image of annihilation.

O this Europe with its noise, its childish vanity, its barbarous material pomp and show, its puerile clashing of sabres and rattling of wheels, its foam and froth of a little knowledge, its mailed fist, its heart of lead, its tremulous, crying nerves, its sinews all unstrung with a luxury and debauch it is not great enough of soul to indulge itself in with the true ancient Titanism. One notes too its fear of the darkness of death, its clinging to life, its morbid terror of pain, its braggart tongue and coward action, its insincerity, dishonesty, unfaith, its romantic altruistic dreams so soon ended and changing into a selfish and cynical proclamation of interest, power and pleasure—one sees its increasing brain, its perishing will. It is not in noble figures that she presents herself to my imagination, this sole enlightened continent, it is not fear or respect that they awaken in my mind, these civilised superior nations. I see a little girl wearing a new frock and showing herself off to Mamma and all the world, unable to conceal her pride and delight in the thought that never was a frock so new and nice or a little girl so pretty—never was and never will be! I think of a very small boy to whom somebody has given a very big cane—one can see him brandishing it, executing now and then an exultant war-dance, tormenting, tyrannising over and plundering of their little belongings all the smaller boys he can get within his cane's reach, not displeased if they show a little fight so that he can exhibit his heroic strength of arm by punishing them. And then he adorns himself with glittering Victoria crosses and calls on all his associates to admire his gallant and his daredevil courage. Sometimes it reminds me of an old man, a man very early old, still strong in his decrepitude, garrulous, well-informed, luxurious, arrogant, intelligent, still busy toddling actively from place to place, looking into this, meddling in that, laying down the law dogmatically on every point under the sun; and through it all the clutch already nearing the brain,

HELPING HUMANITY

The Mother

For those who practise the Integral Yoga, the welfare of humanity can be only a consequence and a result, it cannot be the aim. And if all the efforts to improve human conditions have miserably failed in the end in spite of all the ardour and enthusiasm and self-consecration they have inspired at first, it is precisely because the transformation of the conditions of human life can only be achieved by another preliminary transformation, the transformation of the human consciousness or at least of a few exceptional individuals capable of laying the foundations for a more widespread transformation.

But we shall return to this subject later on; it will form our conclusion. First of all, I want to tell you about two striking examples chosen from among the adepts of true philanthropy.

Two outstanding beings at the two extremes of thought and action, two of the finest human souls expressing themselves in sensitive and compassionate hearts, received the same psychic shock when they came into contact with the misery of men. Both devoted their whole lives to finding the remedy for the suffering of their fellowmen, and both believed they had found it. But because their solutions, which may be described as contraries, were each in its own domain incomplete and partial, both of them failed to relieve the suffering of humanity.

One in the East, Prince Siddhartha, later known as the Buddha, and the other in the West, Monsieur Vincent, who came to be called Saint Vincent de Paul after his death, stood, so to say, at the two poles

of human consciousness, and their methods of assistance were diametrically opposite. Yet both believed in salvation through the spirit, through the Absolute, unknowable to thought, which one called God and the other Nirvana.

Vincent de Paul had an ardent faith and preached to his flock that one must save one's soul. But on coming into contact with human misery, he soon discovered that in order to find one's soul one must have time to look for it. And when do those who labour from morning till night and often from night till morning to eke out a living really have time to think of their souls? So in the simplicity of his charitable heart he concluded that if the poor were at least assured of the barest necessities by those who possess more than they need, these unfortunate people would have enough leisure to lead a better life. He believed in the virtue and efficacy of social work, of active and material charity. He believed that misery could be cured by the multiplication of individual cures, by bringing relief to a greater number, to a very large number of individuals. But this is only a palliative, not a cure. The fullness of consecration, self-abnegation and courage with which he carried on his work has made of him one of the most beautiful and touching figures in human history. And yet his endeavour seems to have rather multiplied than diminished the number of the destitute and the helpless. Certainly the most positive result of his apostleship was to create an appreciable sense of charity in the mentality of a certain section of the well-to-do. And because of this, the work was truly more useful to those who were giving charity than to those who were the object of this charity.

At the other extreme of consciousness stands the Buddha with his pure and sublime compassion. For him the suffering arising out of life could only be abolished by the abolition of life; for life and the world are the outcome of the desire to be, the fruit of ignorance. Abolish desire, eliminate ignorance, and the world will disappear and with it all suffering and misery. In a great effort of spiritual aspiration and silent concentration he elaborated his discipline, one of the most uplifting and the most effective disciplines ever given to those who are eager for liberation.

Millions have believed in his doctrine, although the number of individuals capable

the shaking of the palsy already foreshadowed in tremulous movement and uncertain nerve. Very true, Europe, your frock is the cleanest and newest, for the present, your stock the biggest, your war-dance a very frightening spectacle—frightening even to yourselves—with Krupp and Mauser and machine gun what else should it be, you are indeed for a while the robust, enlightened oldster you seem. But afterwards. Well, afterwards there will be a newer frock, a bigger stick, a war-dance much more terrible and a real Titan grasping at the earth for his own instead of the sham. *[Written around 1910 and later. Reprinted from Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research 3, 2 (December 1979): 199-201.]*

into practice has been very small. But the condition of the earth has remained practically the same and there has been no appreciable diminution in the mass of human suffering.

However, men have canonised the first and deified the second in their attempt to express their gratitude and admiration. But very few have sincerely tried to put into practice the lesson and example that were given to them, although that is truly the only effective way of showing one's gratitude. And yet, even if that had been done, the conditions of human life would not have been perceptibly improved. For to help is not the same as to cure, nor is escaping the same as conquering. Indeed, to alleviate physical hardships, the solution proposed by Vincent de Paul can in no way be enough to cure humanity of its misery and suffering, for not all human sufferings come from physical destitution and can be cured by material means—far from it. Bodily well-being does not inevitably bring peace and joy; and poverty is not necessarily a cause of misery, as is shown by the voluntary poverty of the ascetics of all countries and all ages, who found in their destitution the source and condition of a perfect peace and happiness. Whereas on the contrary, the enjoyment of worldly possessions, of all that material wealth can provide in the way of comfort and pleasure and external satisfaction is powerless to prevent one who possesses these things from suffering and sorrow.

Neither can the other solution, escape, the solution of the Buddha, present a practical remedy to the problem. For even if we suppose that a very large number of individuals are capable of practising the discipline and achieving the final liberation, this can in no way abolish suffering from earth and cure others of it, all the others who are still incapable of following the path that leads to Nirvana.

Indeed, true happiness is the happiness one can feel in any circumstances whatsoever, because it comes from regions which cannot be affected by any external circumstances. But this happiness is accessible only to a very few individuals, and most of the human race is still subject to terrestrial conditions. So we can say on one hand that a change in the human consciousness is absolutely indispensable and, on the other, that without an integral transformation of the terrestrial atmosphere, the conditions of human life cannot be effectively changed. In either case the remedy is the same: a new conscious-

ness must manifest on earth and in man. Only the appearance of a new force and light and power accompanying the descent of the supramental consciousness into this world can raise man out of the anguish and pain and misery in which he is submerged. For only the supramental consciousness bringing down upon earth a higher poise and a purer and truer light can achieve the great miracle of transformation.

Nature is striving towards this new manifestation. But her ways are tortuous and her march is uncertain, full of halts and regressions, so much so that it is difficult to perceive her true plan. However, it is becoming more and more clear that she wants to bring forth a new species out of the human species, a supramental race that will be to man what man is to the animal. But the advent of this transformation, this creation of a new race which Nature would take centuries of groping attempts to bring about, can be effected by the intelligent will of man, not only in a much shorter time but also with much less waste and loss.

Here the Integral Yoga has its rightful place and utility. For Yoga is meant to overcome, by the intensity of its concentration and effort, the delay that time imposes on all radical transformation, on all new creation.

The Integral Yoga is not an escape from the physical world which leaves it irrevocably to its fate, nor is it an acceptance of material life as it is without any hope of decisive change, or of the world as the final expression of the Divine Will.

The Integral Yoga aims at scaling all the degrees of consciousness from the ordinary mental consciousness to a supramental and divine consciousness, and when the ascent is completed, to return to the material world and infuse it with the supramental force and consciousness that have been won, so that this earth may be gradually transformed into a supramental and divine world.

The Integral Yoga is especially intended for those who have realised in themselves all that man can realise and yet are not satisfied, for they demand from life what it cannot give. Those who yearn for the unknown and aspire for perfection, who ask themselves agonising questions and have not found any definitive answers to them, they are the ones who are ready for the Integral Yoga.

For there is a series of fundamental questions which those who are concerned by the fate of mankind and are not satis-

fied with current formulas inevitably ask themselves. They can be formulated approximately as follows:

Why is one born if only to die?

Why does one live if only to suffer?

Why does one love if only to be separated?

Why does one think if only to err?

Why does one act if only to make mistakes?

The sole acceptable answer is that things are not what they ought to be and that these contradictions are not only not inevitable but they are rectifiable and will one day disappear. For the world is not irremediably what it is. The earth is in a period of transition that certainly seems long to the brief human consciousness, but which is infinitesimal for the eternal consciousness. And this period will come to an end with the appearance of the supramental consciousness. The contradictions will then be replaced by harmonies and the oppositions by syntheses.

This new creation, the appearance of a superhuman race, has already been the object of much speculation and controversy. It pleases man's imagination to draw more or less flattering portraits of what the superman will be like. But only like can know like, and it is only by becoming conscious of the divine nature in its essence that one will be able to have a conception of what the divine nature will be in the manifestation. Yet those who have realised this consciousness in themselves are usually more anxious to become the superman than to give a description of him.

However, it may be useful to say what the superman will certainly not be, so as to clear away certain misunderstandings. For example, I have read somewhere that the superhuman race would be fundamentally cruel and insensitive; since it is above suffering, it will attach no importance to the suffering of others and will take it as a sign of their imperfection and inferiority. No doubt, those who think in this way are judging the relations between superman and man from the manner in which man behaves towards his lesser brethren, the animals. But such behaviour, far from being a proof of superiority, is a sure sign of unconsciousness and stupidity. This is shown by the fact that as soon as man rises to a little higher level, he begins to feel compassion towards animals and seeks to improve their lot. Yet there is an element of truth in the conception of the unfeeling superman: it is this, that the higher race will not feel the kind of egois-

tic, weak and sentimental pity which men call charity. This pity, which does more harm than good, will be replaced by a strong and enlightened compassion whose only purpose will be to provide a true remedy to suffering, not to perpetuate it.

On the other hand, this conception describes fairly well what the reign of a race of vital beings upon earth would be like. They are immortal in their nature and much more powerful than man in their capacities, but they are also incurably anti-divine in their will, and their mission in the universe seems to be to delay the divine realisation until the instruments of this realisation, that is to say, men, become pure and strong and perfect enough to overcome all obstacles. It might not perhaps be useless to put the poor afflicted earth on guard against the possibility of such an evil domination.

Until the superman can come in person to show man what his true nature is, it might be wise for every human being of goodwill to become conscious of what he can conceive as the most beautiful, the most noble, the truest and purest, the most luminous and best, and to aspire that this conception may be realised in himself for the greatest good of the world and men. [Mother's Collected Works, Vol. 12, *On Education* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1978), pp. 95-101.]

NOTES ON THE WAY (3) (From The Mother's Agenda)

21 August 1965

Since the 15th there has been a whole work of preparation for the transformation. How could one call it? ... a transfer of power.

The cells, the whole material consciousness obeyed the inner individual consciousness—most often the psychic or the mental (but the mind has been silent for a long time). But now the material mind is busy organising itself like the other or rather like the others, like the mind in all the states of the being.

It is as it were a displacement of the directing will. And there it is something like a material, physical surprise; there is a need for identification with the new guidance—that is a little difficult. It is difficult also to explain. ... It is no more the same thing which makes you act—"act" means everything, move, walk, anything. It is no more the same centre. And then if, through habit, you try to cling to the old centre,

oh, it makes a great disorder and you must be very careful not to let the habit, the old habit express itself, manifest itself.

It is difficult to say. It is yet too much an action only.

Thought here, in this brain, finds it difficult to adapt itself.

Because, for two days (two days continuously, I mean) there was all the while an aspiration: "How will this new world be?" And then that put me so much "within" that I was ... I was not far, but there was a kind of thick blanket of haze between me and the world as it is. It was there even today. [silence]

This morning, for example, several times, for some time (I do not know how long, but not very short, a quarter of an hour, half an hour, I do not know), the cells of the body, that is to say, the form of the body had the experience that to remain together or to dissolve depended on a certain attitude—an attitude or a will; something of both will and attitude. And with the perception (sometimes double, at the same time, one being rather a memory and the other a thing lived) of what makes you move, act, know; the old way, as a memory and the new in which evidently there is no reason for dissolving unless one chooses it—that has no meaning, it is a meaningless thing: why dissolve?

And if, at the time when one falls back. ... It is not exactly that; when the old consciousness comes back to the surface, if one is not very careful, that produces naturally a swoon.

During, oh, it was long, the whole time between 5 o'clock and a quarter to 6, it was like that.

That gives, *at the same time*, the feeling of the unreality of life and of a reality which one might call eternal: the feeling of death does not exist, that means nothing. It is merely a choice. And dislocation has no meaning, that has no reason to be there, it is a fancy.

And then all the old way of seeing, feeling, perceiving is there behind like a kind of blanket—a blanket of haze, which renders the contact wooly, imprecise.

Now that I have found again the ordinary consciousness, I can express the thing; otherwise it is difficult to express. And the contrast or the opposition is a suffering, a pain; both complain, the other feels that it swoons, and the new that it is not let quiet. When you are either in the one or the other, it is all right; but when the two are together, it is not very pleasant. And there is a feeling of uncertainty;

you do not know very well where you are, whether you are here or you are there, you do not know exactly.

But this change of initiating power, if one might say, this transfer of power, had upon me the effect of a unique experience, of something that had never taken place before. Unhappily that did not last long. But the experience has left a kind of certitude in the body—it is less uncertain of the future. It came to it as if to tell it, "It will be like this."

If that remains, it is evident immortality.

Disciple: How do you define this physical mind, which was the object of the transfer of power?

Mother: It is not the physical mind. It is a long time since the physical mind has changed ... it is the material mind, not even the material mind; it is *the mind of Matter*. It is the mental substance that belongs to Matter itself, to the cells. That is what was once called "the spirit of the form," when it was said that the mummies kept their body intact as long as the spirit of the form persisted. [In a talk of 10 March 1951, Mother had said in connection with the violation of tombs in Egypt: "In the physical form there is the spirit of the form and this spirit of the form persists for some time, even when externally people say that the person is dead. And as long as the spirit of the form persists, the body is not destroyed. In ancient Egypt, they had this knowledge; they knew that if they prepared the body in a certain way, the spirit of the body would not go out and would not get dissolved."] It is that mind, that wholly material mind. The other, the physical mind was organised long ago.

Disciple: Then, what is the difference between this material mind and the physical mind?

Mother: The physical mind is the mind of the physical personality formed by the body. It grows with the body, but it is not the mind of Matter: it is the mind of the physical being. For example, it is the physical mind that gives character—the bodily character, the physical character—and which is in a large measure formed by atavism and by education. All that is called the "physical mind." Yes, it is the result of atavism, of education, of the formation of the body; that forms the physical character. For example, there are people who are patient, people who are strong, etc., physically, I mean, not for vital or mental reasons, but purely physi-

cally; you have a character. It is the physical mind. And that is part of all integral yoga; you go through a discipline of this physical mind. Some sixty years ago I did it.

Disciple: But then, for example, this mind which is spontaneously defeatist, having all sorts of fears, apprehensions, always seeing the worst, repeating always the same things, is it the physical mind or the material mind?

Mother: That is the most unconscious part of the physical mind and that is the link joining the physical mind and this material substance. But it is already an organised mind, you must understand. It is the most material part touching the mind . . . how can one call this mind? You cannot even call it the bodily mind—it is the mind of the cells, it is cellular mind.

This cellular mind exists in animals, and even a little beginning (very little, however, as a promise) in the plant—they respond with a mental action. They do respond. As soon as Life manifests, there is already a promise of the mind, of the mental movement. And in animals it is clear. Whereas the physical mind truly begins to exist only in man. It is that which quite little children already have; they already have a physical mind; that is to say, two babies are not the same, their reactions are not the same, there is already a difference. It is this above all which is given to you with the special *form* of your body, by atavism and then fully developed by education.

No, the physical mind, as soon as you take up an integral yoga, must be dealt with, but the material mind, the cellular one, I assure you, is altogether new, yes, altogether new.

It is the mind which was like an uncoordinated substance, which was constantly active, but not organised [*Mother makes a gesture of continuous trepidation*]. It is that which is now being organised. It is this which is important, for Sri Aurobindo had said that it was unorganisable and it had only to be thrown out of existence. And I too had the same impression. But when the action for transformation upon the cells is constant, this material mind begins to be organised, that is wonderful—it begins to be organised. And as it is being organised, it learns to keep silent—that is most remarkable! It learns how to keep quiet, keep silent and allow the supreme Force to act without intervening.

The greatest difficulty is in the nerves, because they are so accustomed to the ordinary conscious will that when this stops and the direct action from what is quite above is asked for, they go mad. The other day I had this experience, which lasted more than an hour and it was difficult; but that taught me many things—many. And all that is what can be called the “transfer of power”; the former power withdraws; and then before the body adapts itself to the new power, there is a period which is critical. As all the cells are in a state of constant aspiration, the thing goes relatively quick, but all the same . . . the minutes are long.

But more and more there is a kind of certitude in the cells that whatever happens is in view of this transformation and this transfer of directing power. And even at the time when it is materially painful (not even physically; but materially painful) the cells keep this certitude. Then they resist, they endure the suffering without depression, without being affected in any way, with this certitude that it is for the sake of the transformation, the process of transformation and of the transfer of the directing power. As I said, it is in the nerves that the experience is most painful—naturally, because they are the most sensitive cells, those that have the most acute sensation. But they have very considerable, very spontaneous, spontaneously strong receptivity—with no effort to make—to the harmonious physical vibration (which is very rare, but still it exists in some individuals), and this physical vibration—which might be called a physical *force*, a harmonious physical vibration (spontaneously harmonious, without the necessity of a mental vibration, like the vibrations of a flower, for example. There are physical vibrations like that that carry in themselves a harmonious force) and the nerves are extremely sensitive and receptive to this vibration, which puts them right immediately.

It is very interesting, it explains much, explains many things. A day will come when all that will be explained and put in its place. It is not yet time to reveal it, but it is very interesting.

I have truly the impression that it is being organised, the work has begun to be organised.

Naturally one must carefully avoid making the mental organisation intervene, that is why I do not try to explain too much, the mind would come in and then it is no

longer that. [From Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, November 1965, pp. 83-91.]

PHILOSOPHY OF INTEGRAL YOGA

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“To be one with all Nature and all beings, this is Yoga.”

—Sri Aurobindo

Classical definitions of yoga most often include the idea of uniting or yoking the lower human nature of body, life, and mind to the higher divine nature of knowledge, will, and bliss by means of certain methods of discipline. Sri Aurobindo expands the ideal of yoga to include not just human nature, but all nature:

“All life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos. But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature attempting to realise her perfection in an ever increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality” [1].

The main difference between human beings and the rest of nature is degree of consciousness. Man has reached the evolutionary stage where he must consciously participate in his own spiritual growth and Sri Aurobindo suggests the method of Integral Yoga for this process. Integral Yoga (also called Purna Yoga) synthesizes the three paths of love, knowledge, and works and at the same time transcends each of these three methods. This masterful synthesis is based upon Sri Aurobindo's hierarchical scheme of involution (descent of Spirit into Matter) and evolution (ascent of Matter into Spirit).

The fundamental premise of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is that Matter as well

as Spirit is real. They are two aspects of the supreme Reality. Matter is imperfect, but it is divine, because out of Matter, Spirit "weaves his forms and figures." The movement of Matter toward realizing her own divine reality is part of the whole yoga process.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of integral yoga is based upon his own experience of a spiritual consciousness beyond mind. He found that every step in the evolution is directed by the involution of the Spirit into lower states of consciousness. Without the descent of Spirit into the world, there cannot be any ascent of the world into Spirit and to the same extent which the Spirit has involved into the world, the world can evolve into the Spirit, i.e., the evolution of Matter, Life, and Mind is possible only because there has been an involution of the Spirit into Matter, Life, and Mind.

In the process of evolution every step is directed by the Spirit; every step is a spiral upward. The first step is the evolution of Matter out of the Nescience. The involution into Nescience pushes the evolution upward, resulting in organized Matter, in which each atom holds infinite potential energy.

The second step in evolution is Life. As Matter evolves into Life, it does not reject its old basis; rather, new impulses appear that were implanted in it. Each cell or unit of life holds within itself the power of becoming.

The third step is evolution of Mind. With Mind in man came the mental or intellectual consciousness; it does not leave Matter and Life behind, but governs and assimilates both. With Mind in man come the questions Who am I? What created the world? When the principle of Mind comes into play, man becomes aware of his limitations, i.e., he realizes he is unable to answer with the reasoning mind these metaphysical questions. That is why, according to Sri Aurobindo, "Man is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations."

The Mind principle is not the last or highest rung on the evolutionary ladder for the very reason that it cannot answer the most pressing questions about Spirit and Matter. Mind is a subordinate power to Supermind (Supramental Truth-Consciousness) just as soul is a subordinate power to Bliss. The order of this involutionary descent and the evolutionary ascent is as follows:

Brahman		
Sat (Being & Existence)	Chit (Consciousness- Force)	Ananda (Bliss, Delight)
<i>Higher Maya (Unity)</i>	Supermind (Supramental Truth-Consciousness)	
<i>Lower Maya (Multiplicity)</i>	Mind	
	Psyche or Soul	
	Life	
	Matter	
	Nescience	

For Sri Aurobindo, evolution reproduces in the reverse order the process of involution. Just as Being exists potentially in Matter, Supermind exists potentially in Mind. It is through the method of integral yoga that one consciously, step by step, moves from mind to supermind. The knot between higher and lower maya or unity and multiplicity is exactly where mind and supermind meet. This knot is man's ego, which perceives subject and object as separate, which makes men feel isolated from each other and nature. The ego is a sort of veil between knowledge and ignorance. Removing the veil through integral yoga is the condition of the divine life in humanity.

"The universal Purusha (Spirit) dwells in all these planes in a certain simultaneity and builds upon each of these principles a world or series of worlds with its beings who live in the nature of that principle. Man, the microcosm, has all these planes in his own being, ranged from his subconscious to his superconscious existence. By a developing power of Yoga he can become aware of these concealed worlds hidden from his physical, materialised mind and senses which know only the material world, and then he becomes aware that his material existence is not a thing apart and self-existent, as the material universe in which he lives is also not a thing apart and self-existent, but is a constant relation to the higher planes and acted on by their power and beings. . . . His most important capacity is that of developing the powers of the higher principles in himself, a greater power of life, a purer light of mind, the illumination of supermind, the infinite being, consciousness and delight of spirit. By an ascending movement he can develop his human imperfection towards that greater perfection" [2].

As the participant in yoga ascends, he or she prepares the field through an aspiration to truth, a rejection of falsehood and a surrender in all parts of the being to the Divine. When the stage of surrender reached, the supreme Grace guides the aspirant, for man is incapable, without Grace, of reaching the supreme Reality. The divine Grace is always present, but one must surrender before it can be recognized.

Sri Aurobindo explains the order of ascent from mind to supermind as level of consciousness increasing in intensity. Beginning with ordinary mind the stages are Ordinary Mind, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind, Supermind.

The function of man's ordinary mind is to divide, limit, separate one object from another, one person from another, one idea from another. The ordinary reasoning mind is an instrument for analysis, which must separate one thing from another for study and observation. It is a mind that perceives only the particular and not the universal. Because the ordinary mentality concentrates on the external world of objects and facts, it is also called the sense-mind.

Higher Mind, on the other hand, has a sense of unity as well as a sense of multiplicity. This is the luminous thought mind of conceptual knowledge where one is able to understand apriori the relation of idea with idea, of truth with truth. Higher Mind is the philosophic mind of pure reason and rational moral values.

The next level of mind evolution is Illumined Mind, which works by vision (spiritual sight). There is usually a downpour of visible light (not the same light as seen by the physical eye) followed by an enthusiasm and inner power which replaces the ordinary mind level. If a person keeps his higher mind open to illumination, he can experience inner revelatory ideographs, but the more closed the lower states of mind are to revelation, the more reduced such illuminations will become.

Intuitive Mind brings an even higher and more expansive state of consciousness into revelation and higher levels of knowledge. "It brings to man these brilliant messages from the unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge." Intuition gives us the idea of something behind and beyond all that we know and seem to be." There are, according to Sri Aurobindo, four powers of the intuitive mind: (1) Revelation (truth-seeing); (2) Inspiration (truth-hearing); (3) Sense of significance

(truth-touch); (4) Discrimination (orderly relation of truth to truth).

The faculty of intuition can easily use supralogical intelligence and has the ability, when not rejected by the lower mind levels, to transform one's heart, mind, life, and senses into a harmonious integration. As with all evolution, intuition does not leave behind apriori concepts or spiritual sight, but carries them with it into higher consciousness.

From the intuitive mind the yogi moves into the Overmind, where one now perceives the universe as integrally one with many aspects and potentials. The answer to the age-old questions How can the One become the Many and the Many remain the Many without diminishing the oneness of the One? is known at the Overmind level, because here one knows the divine personality and the divine impersonality as two aspects of the one supreme Reality—the unity upon which all multiplicity is based: "If we regard the Powers of the Reality as so many Godheads, we can say that the Overmind releases a million Godheads into action, each empowered to create its own world, each world capable of relation, communication, and interplay with the others" [3].

Overmind, says Sri Aurobindo, is a principle of Cosmic Truth, but the truly perfect integral knowledge of Truth belongs only to Supermind, which is the highest faculty possible for man's perfection. Supermind is the principle of "active will and knowledge" and has the ability to retain the true nature of Being, Consciousness-Force, and Bliss without distorting or destroying it. Because of its ability to know perfectly the unity and the multiplicity, Supermind functions as the bridge between Higher Maya and Lower Maya. The Supramental Truth-Consciousness is Brahman in man—the Kingdom of God within.

Supermind as the sole cause of cosmic existence has three movements:

1. It is the comprehending unity of all things.
2. It supports the manifestation of the One in the Many and the Many in the One.
3. It projects itself into the individual movement in order to become involved in it.

The purpose of man then, as a transitional being, is to evolve more and more consciously towards his highest faculty, the Supermind. Beyond ordinary human life based on ignorance, separation, and

alienation from Truth, lies a destiny of divine supermanhood rooted in the unity of knowledge, love, wisdom, and divine power. Integral Yoga is the method Sri Aurobindo chooses as the liberating key to man's troubled and mundane existence. It was his experience that the task at hand is for mankind to bridge the gigantic gulf between the ordinary reasoning mind and supermind—to open the passages of ascent and descent where presently there are none. He calls this process through the use of integral yoga the "triple transformation".

"There must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation—there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental consciousness into our entire being and nature" [4].

Psychic change is effected in yoga when the sadhaka (disciple) becomes an instrument capable of receiving and expressing the soul-force in thought and action. This transformation of the psychic being is the first prerequisite to a total surrender to the divine Reality. Since, however, the psychic being is becoming and does not suddenly emerge full-grown, its awakening to the Divine is usually accomplished slowly and imperfectly through several lifetimes.

"It is only when man awakes to the knowledge of the [Divine] soul and feels a need to bring it to the front and make it the master of his life and action that a quicker conscious method of evolution intervenes and a psychic transformation is possible" [5].

There are three approaches of yoga that can be used to reach for this soul contact—Jnana (Knowledge), Bhakti (love), and Karma (works). Jnana yoga would lead one to an impersonal realization of the supreme Truth, Good, Beauty, Delight, and Purity where the mind becomes aware of the unchanging Self, "the formless Infinite and the nameless Absolute" [6]. A second approach may be through the heart path of Bhakti yoga, "when the mind goes beyond impersonality to the awareness of a supreme Personal Being" [7] and opens to

"the love of God and men and all creatures" [8]. In the third method, Karma yoga, the yogin uses the will to eliminate the ego by the guidance of a "Force or Presence acting within and moving and governing all the actions" [9]. In Karma yoga the personal ego is surrendered completely to the divine Will.

Any one of these methods can be used by the aspirant, but Sri Aurobindo suggests that an integration of all three approaches—mind, heart, will—create more of a spiritual or a psychic condition by opening oneself more completely and totally to the psychic light and spiritual Self.

The psychic change makes possible the second stage of the triple transformation—the spiritual transformation. Sri Aurobindo experienced spiritual transformation as the descent of the Overmind, which brought with it a new consciousness of truth, vision, and power which replaced any belief systems such as the belief in immortality, with the direct experience of the Divine Soul (the Self—which is immortality in itself).

The spiritual change prepares one for the third and most perfect stage of the triple transformation, the descent of the Supramental Consciousness: "The whole radical change in the evolution from a basis of ignorance to a basis of Knowledge can only come by the intervention of the supramental Power and its direct action in earth existence" [10].

The third transformation completes the movement of the soul through ignorance into knowledge, but before the Supermind can emerge, one must have a solid second stage basis. The psychic transformation and the first stages of the spiritual transformation are within man's realm of conception, but the supramental consciousness lies so far beyond the conception of the human mind that "it is only when we have already had experience of a higher intermediate consciousness that any terms attempting to describe supramental being could convey a true meaning to our intelligence" [11].

Since the supermind consciousness is a state which takes place in perfect knowledge well beyond the levels of man's ordinary consciousness, its realization is only possible through "the surrender of the whole being to the light and the power that come from the Supernature" [12].

"For a real transformation there must be a direct and unveiled intervention from above; there would be necessary too a total submission and surrender of the lower consciousness, a cessation of its insistence. . . .

If these two conditions can be achieved even now by a conscious call and will in the spirit ... the evolution, the transformation can take place by a ... conscious change" [13].

However, this movement to the higher Truth can only be accomplished when "the psychic change has been complete or the spiritual transformation has reached a very high state of achievement" [14].

Integral Yoga is not an easy path; man's nature and the nature of the world cannot be changed effortlessly or in a day. But that is no reason to become discouraged, the path is worth the taking and the goal is worth the striving. If the aspirant does become discouraged in his or her practice of Yoga, Sri Aurobindo is the first to give reassurance: "Imperfections, even many and serious imperfections, cannot be a permanent bar to progress in the Yoga. ... If imperfections were a bar, then no man

could succeed in Yoga; for all are imperfect, and I am not sure, from what I have seen, that it is not those who have the greatest power for Yoga who have very often, or have had, the greatest imperfections" [15].

References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1962), p. 4.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 589.
3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (New York: India Library Society, 1965), pp. 256-57.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 793.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 797.
- 6-9. *Ibid.*, p. 803.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 816.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 818.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 826.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 820.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 826.
15. Sri Aurobindo, *Bases of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1960), p. 60.

PRAYER The Mother

I turn towards Thee who are everywhere and with all and outside all, intimate essence of all and remote from all, centre of condensation for all energies, creator of conscious individualities: I turn towards Thee and salute Thee, O liberator of the worlds, and, identified with Thy divine love, I contemplate the earth and its creatures, this mass of substance put into forms perpetually destroyed and renewed, this swarming mass of aggregates which are dissolved as soon as constituted, of beings who imagine that they are conscient and permanent individualities and who are as ephemeral as a breath, always alike or almost the same, in their diversity, repeating indefinitely the same desires, the same tendencies, the same appetites, the same ignorant errors.

But from time to time Thy sublime light shines in a being and radiates through him over the world, and then a little wisdom, a little knowledge, a little disinterested faith, heroism and compassion penetrates men's hearts, transforms their minds and sets free a few elements from that sorrowful and implacable wheel of existence to which their blind ignorance subjects them.

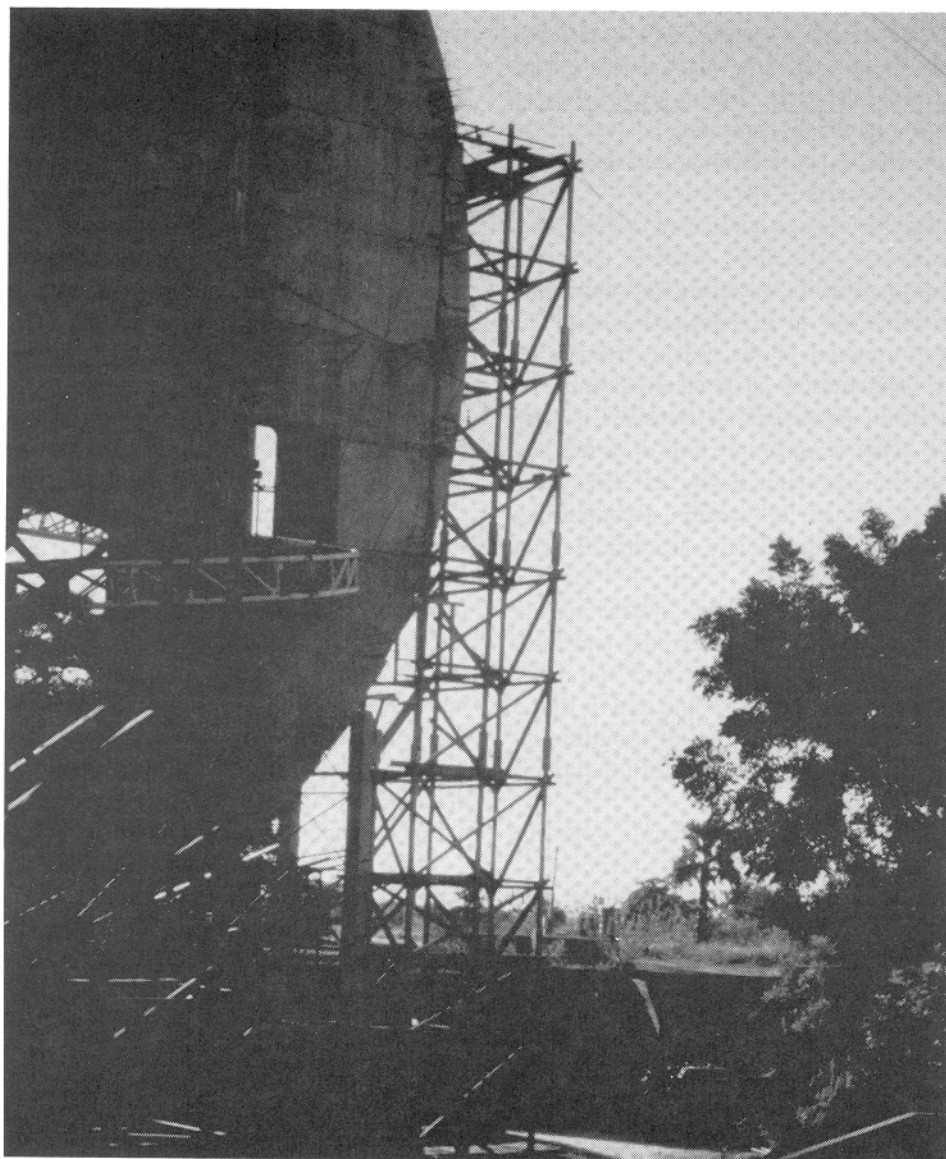
But how much greater a splendour than all that have gone before, how marvellous a glory and light would be needed to draw these beings out of the horrible aberration in which they are plunged by the life of cities and so-called civilisations! What a formidable and, at the same time, divinely sweet puissance would be needed to turn aside all these wills from the bitter struggle for their selfish, mean and foolish satisfactions, to snatch them from this vortex which hides death behind its treacherous glitter, and turn them towards Thy conquering harmony!

O Lord, eternal Master, enlighten us, guide our steps, show us the way towards the realisation of Thy law, towards the accomplishment of Thy work.

I adore Thee in silence and listen to Thee in a religious concentration. [1 February 1914; *Prayers and Meditations* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1979).]

What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

—Sri Aurobindo



A view of the Matrimandir.

THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

No big creation is possible without discipline—
individual discipline
group discipline
discipline towards the Divine.

To all those who want to live for the future:

A physical work is as indispensable to the balance of the body as food.

To eat without working causes a serious imbalance.

True spirituality lies in the service of the divine work.

To refuse to work for all is only a demonstration of selfishness and has no spiritual value at all.

The first thing to do to be able to live in Auroville is to consent to free oneself from one's ego.

In our smallest action we can serve the Divine if we have the right attitude.

It is in work done as an offering to the Divine that the consciousness develops best.

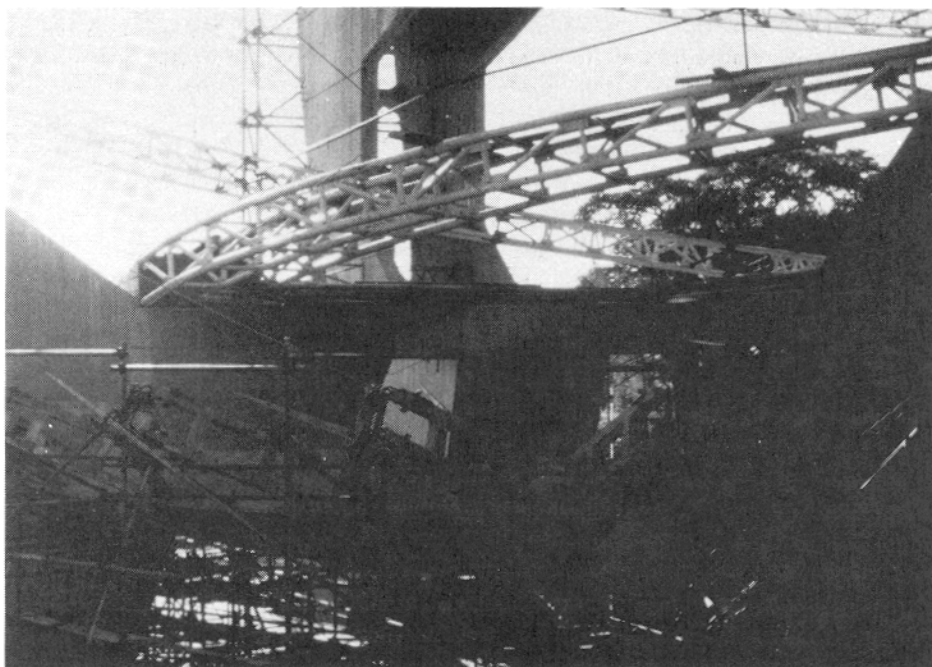
Indolence and inaction result in *tamas* [inertia] which is a fall into inconscience and the very opposite of progress and light.

To surmount one's ego and to live only in the service of the Divine, that is the ideal and the shortest way to acquire the true Consciousness.

"As for the principle that everyone should be allowed to do according to his nature, that can apply only where people do independent work by themselves; where many have to work together, it cannot always be done—regularity and discipline are there the first rule.

"The Mother refuses to yield to complaints and clamour born of desire and ego." [A quotation of Sri Aurobindo sent to all Aurovilians in 1971.]

Question: For those in Auroville who want to be true servitors, is Sunday a holiday?



A view of the Matrimandir ramp.

Mother: In the beginning the organisation of the week was conceived in this way: six days of work for the collectivity to which the individual belonged; the seventh day of the week was reserved for the inner quest for the Divine and the offering of one's being to the divine will. This is the only meaning and the only true reason for the so-called Sunday rest.

Needless to say, sincerity is the essential condition for realisation; all insincerity is a degradation.

[In response to a question regarding spontaneity vis-à-vis organisation in work:]

Spontaneous work can be done only by a man of genius.

Is there anyone claiming to be a genius?

...

Auroville is created to realise the ideal of Sri Aurobindo, who taught us the Karma Yoga. Auroville is for those who want to do the Yoga of Work.

To live in Auroville means to do the Yoga of Work. So all Aurovilians must take up a work and do it as Yoga. [From *The Mother on Auroville* (Auroville: Auro-publications, 1977), pp. 45-47.]

PROGRESS (5)

Samridhi, started 2½ years ago, concentrates its work on afforestation, agriculture, bunding and the care of a cashew grove. The main task involves trees—collecting seeds from Auroville forests, from India, and from other countries with similar climates. Trees from Samridhi's nursery are distributed amongst Aurovilians and villagers. About 5,000 trees have been planted in the area, which totals about 27 acres. Experiments have been made on some species which were not watered at all, had not been composted, and which survived the dry seasons. In 1979 a second well was drilled and hand-pump installed.

"The growing process in Samridhi goes slowly and almost naturally—nature takes care of itself and us along with it. We would like to see Auroville as a forest to provide us with shade, building materials for houses, tools, musical instruments, toys, etc."

The Meadow: A year and a half ago Daniel and Amalia and Sara took over The Meadow, where a large cashew grove with a handpump already existed. The Meadow is about 12 acres, half of which is for

afforestation, partly planted, and half for agriculture. Amalia also does handloom work.

Peter's Place: Peter came one year ago and settled on 3 acres of land toward the head of the catchment area between The Meadow and the Matrimandir; he was later joined by Robbie and Erica. With a handpump for water, they have planted trees, a fruit orchard and a vegetable garden. In addition, bunding work has been done over a large section of the catchment area starting from the casuarinas around the Matrimandir and working downwards. Robbie is building his house singlehanded and then will start to work on a hydraulic windmill to replace the handpump. This year bunding is continuing and afforestation is in progress on land already banded.

Michael's Place: In June [1979] Michael moved onto 6½ acres of land located in the palmyra forest between Two Banyans and Samridhi. Inheriting a handpump, a half-completed house, and a number of young trees from a succession of three previous occupants, he is now planting hedges, windbreaks, and fruit trees. Emphasis is on food production, erosion control, and afforestation of the surrounding area. Dreams for the future include a windmill for water supply.

Utilité: Eight years ago only two mango trees stood on the several acres of severely eroded land that the Mother named Utilité (she indicated that the name should be kept in French). Bordered on one side by a rapidly growing canyon, much of the early work concentrated on bunding and intensive plantation of fast-growing drought-resistant shrubs and vines to control erosion.

In many ways Utilité developed as a very intensive experiment. Always small both in area and population, growth was more in terms of concentration and refinement than in enlargement and spreading out. There is an awareness of the necessity of balance, especially in the ratio of village workers to Aurovilians and between the elements of beauty and practicality.

On the practical side, work is being done in animal husbandry, fruit, vegetable and crop farming, and in alternative solar and wind technology. Most impressive visually is the neatness and organization of everything from the pumphouse to the flower-lined paths.

Utilité has always been a nearly self-sufficient community. It was started by Mali, who is still there, and he has been joined over the years for different lengths

of time by a constant flow of visitors and newcomers to Auroville. Utilité sees itself in part as a training ground with a conscious aspiration for beauty, harmony, and perfection.

Northwest

Revelation was originally settled in 1973 by Paul (now at Charanalayas). Though originally interested in doing carpentry, he gradually became more involved in work on the land putting in about 6,000 forest trees. Later on others came to live and work there—in 1979 the community consisted of 4 adults and 2 children.

In the past 2 years a lot of energy has gone into erosion control on about 100 acres. This work includes a large dam that retains water and topsoil from 3 separate canyons. An experimental poultry was started a few months ago with about 40 hens. Plantation on the land includes totally about 19,000 forest trees, 50 fruit trees, 15,000 sisal plants (a thorny agave), and 5,000 thorny shrubs (the last two used as fencing). The present water supply is insufficient for both work and domestic needs, but the community is expecting the arrival of some funds to remedy the situation. Other plans include extension of the windbreaks and fencing, planting of more fruit trees, improvement of the community area and planting of 11 acres with casuarina for the dual purpose of erosion control and firewood for the bakery.

Discipline: The Discipline adventure started in early 1964 with a group of 7 people who put in 2 open wells and did some preliminary landscaping and planting. An American couple built the only surviving structure, a unique house in the shape of a ring with a tree in the center. For a while there was a succession of short-term occupants until February of 1976, when by coincidence Meike, Joster and Edsat arrived just as the previous people were ready to leave. The family moved into the ring house and discovered the pros and cons of the design—the cons being the misconstruction of the roof, which provided the luxury of indoor running water during the monsoon.

When Joster arrived, there were 2½ acres being cared for in 2 separate plots, one plot with an open well and the other with a handpump. From that beginning, starting with the handpump-bucket method for watering the first trees, little by little, a 4-year plan crystallized and the following work has been completed: extension of the protected area from 2½ to 22 acres, development of the monsoon crop area to 3 acres, irrigated vegetables and crops to 2½ acres—all made possible by the installation of a diesel pump on the open well. In addition there has been the development of an irrigation system involving 2 pressure tanks, pipes, channels, bullocks, a bullock cart and water tank, construction of a cowhouse and storeroom,



Djaima farm, 1979, seen from the windmill. Photo by AuroImage

plantation of mango and coconut trees, and continuous erosion control and afforestation work on 22 acres adjoining the area with the neighboring communities of Kottakarai, 9 Palms and Revelation. Further erosion-control efforts will involve some difficult and delicate canyon areas.

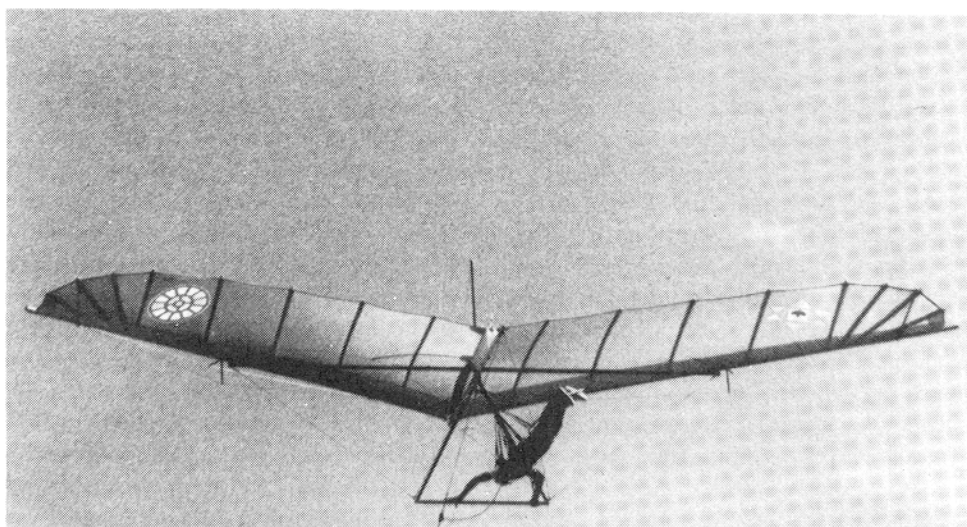
Recently another open well was begun and completed to a depth of 6½ meters. This will make possible the development of more acreage for irrigated crops in the dry season and for the maintenance of fish ponds.

9 Palms: Late in 1973 Klaus and Ingrid (they now have 3 children) moved to an area near Discipline and with the winter monsoon began developing an area of about 6 acres by digging a well, bunding, planting trees, windbreaks, rice fields, and putting in flower and vegetable gardens. From the beginning, except for some cement used in constructing the well, they have chosen to experiment with and rely solely on the locally available natural materials for every aspect of their life and work; in every respect they truly live "off the land." In 1975, with help from funds generated through the greenwork collective, they were able to develop an additional 10 acres, adding more acreage each year until they now care for about 40 acres. About 3 acres is devoted to monsoon rice crops, 3 acres to other local grains and 25 acres is mixed forest and fruit trees. The remaining 9 acres are badly eroded canyon areas which require considerable reclamation work. About a third has already been bunded and planted to retain soil and water. This year, as proof of the success of the previous bunding, the house is being flooded with all the conserved water and will have to be moved.

West

Existence and (New Name) (formerly Kaliland). These two small greenwork projects are located in garden-park areas at the outer edge of the Matrimandir Gardens. The emphasis of the work is land care and ecological regeneration; bunding, planting and protection tending toward integrated rural development with a "township" future.

Existence began in November 1977 with intensive afforestation and protection of 2 acres of previously fallow land. It soon expanded to a little over 8 acres and was joined by another new area of about 7 acres now awaiting a new name. There have been about 400 forest and flowering trees, 6,000 casuarinas and 40 fruit and nut trees



Joel and Gaetan's hang glider over Auroville. Photo by AuroImage.

planted. At present the trees are watered from 2 handpumps and a windmill is being worked on. Additional lands are now being conserved and planted.

Kottakarai was founded in 1971 by a group of about 7 people, mostly American and Dutch, who had been living in the area where Bharat Nivas is being constructed. After moving to Kottakarai the first work was to dig a well and grow tree seedlings which were to be planted around Bharat Nivas. Later they were told that trees were not wanted there as they would spoil the view of the buildings, so they planted them around Kottakarai and thus got involved in afforestation.

The community has always supported a variety of activities: several crafts, the bakery, an ayurvedic village dispensary, a library and pottery, to name a few. But afforestation and agriculture, carried out mainly by Jaap, has always remained a focal point. This year the barn is being shifted to a new area, a borewell has just been completed and a causeway and road have been constructed. There are plans to convert the silkscreen workshop into a community kitchen and, of course, erosion work continues, bunds made, trees planted.

At present Kottakarai looks like this: total area is approximately 60 acres, of which 25 acres is agricultural land (red rice, varagu, kambu, ragi, grams, sesame), 12 acres are planted with casuarina (for building and firewood for the bakery), 8 acres are young cashews, 5 acres are fruit trees, 2½ acres are irrigated land and the rest is gardens and afforested area. There are 6 open wells, 1 borewell, 3 cistern wells for

domestic purposes, 6 bullocks, 5 milk cows and heifers, 16 adults, 6 children, and 20 Tamil Aurovilians.

Southwest

Aurodam is a young community that takes its name from the large (30 meters across) earth dam built across a deep canyon to the southwest of the Matrimandir. The dam was completed in August 1978 and was the first stage of the continuing work of soil and water conservation in this severely eroded area. Since that time the community (now about 8 people) has planted many trees in this vicinity, introduced a number of water-tolerant plants around the catchment area behind the dam and completed some bunding, but work has progressed slowly for lack of funds. A small area is devoted to agriculture but the most pressing work is conservation and it is hoped that much more bunding can be completed in the next year before the monsoon.

Charnalayam is the most recently started community in Auroville. Begun in April 1979 by Paul, who was previously at Revelation, it is located in an area that the Mother once considered for the center of the city and which may eventually become a forest reserve and botanic garden. The contours of the land offer interesting possibilities but at the moment such dreams require a vivid imagination as the area is seriously eroded, much is a desert where only a few thorny shrubs struggle to survive. The District Forest Officer has estimated that if steps are not taken soon, the entire region will be totally uninhabitable.

Paul has so far planted more than 200 trees on about 5 acres, a tree nursery and erosion-control work are underway. A second open well has been started to enable part of the land to be irrigated and Paul plans to begin some agriculture as well.

Auro-Orchard: In 1968 Mother asked Gerard to come from Mountain Paradise, an Ashram orchard in the north of India, and take up the work of developing 50 acres that was one of the first pieces of land purchased for Auroville. He was joined by Mercier, who had considerable background in agriculture, to complement Gerard's experience in fruit trees and working in India.

After the first few months the project had no financial support and when Gerard asked Mother how they should manage, she said that they should sell the produce and use the earnings to develop further. But this did not solve the immediate problem of capital, so Gerard then asked her if he should borrow some money. Her answer was very interesting and bears repeating. First she said, "Yes, it is all right. If you like, I will speak to some people about helping you." Then she was silent for some time. When she looked up, she said, "Do you want my true advice? Don't borrow money! You will see that if you work with concentration, sincerely and efficiently, you will always automatically have a little surplus. With this surplus you will be able to develop the place." Gerard said, "But, Mother, it will take such a long time..." She answered, "Yes—we are not in a hurry, if it takes time it is not important."

It has taken nearly 10 years to bring the 50 acres under cultivation. Two borewells were added to the existing one and a system combining channel irrigation and sprinklers covers about one third of the total area. The irrigated land is planted primarily in vegetables, lemons, and some intensive crops, the remaining land is taken up with mango, cashew and casuarina trees and seasonal agriculture. All of the land is bunded and broken into small plots intermixing with trees for better balance and wind protection.

The original aim of both Gerard and Mercier (who left in 1974) was to develop an organic farm, but though they tried many experiments, they found they could not make it work. The reasons are primarily financial, having always been dependent on the sale of the produce, and the cost of organic fertilizers has increased

prohibitively. Another factor is that for a farm of this size a tremendous quantity of organic matter is needed. Gerard feels that to purchase large amounts of compost from the surrounding villages contributes to a situation where the people, often ignorant of the value of the compost to their own crops, prefer to sell it. They then buy the government-subsidized chemical fertilizers and pesticides (in India DDT is still used extensively) which are applied to land in the Auroville area. They are naturally carried by the wind and water throughout the vicinity, a problem which increasingly concerns many people.

In addition to farming, a small herd of cows is kept as much for the manure as for the milk, and in 1976 a poultry was introduced, now with the maximum of 1,200 birds.

At this stage of development Auro-Orchard has been able to give Rs 1,000 to 1,500 monthly in produce to Auroville.

South

Forecomers is, as the name suggests, the first community founded in Auroville. Perhaps symbolically, the first settlers, Bob and Deborah, having the pick of all Auroville land, chose one of the most inhospitable and eroded parts, though also one of the most beautiful. Forecomers was then a cluster of mango trees and some cashews surrounded by rocky ground with no topsoil, burned by the sun and scored with deep canyons.

At first, transportation to and from Pondicherry for needed materials was by bicycle over nearly impassable rocky and sandy roads. Slowly new people came to live in the community and help in the work, trees were planted, agriculture was begun and the first cultural events in Auroville took place at an open-air theater. One of the major undertakings was the construction of a large earth dam across a deepening canyon, but the first one proved to be one of those "learning opportunities," when it went down with the first monsoon rains. Another "first" for Auroville was experimentation with algae for animal and human consumption.

In the intervening years Bob and Deborah eventually left and there has been a succession of occupants in the Forecomers area, which has grown from about 20 acres to about 100 acres. Hundreds of trees have been planted, a considerable proportion of the land developed for crops, vegetables, and flowers, and extensive erosion-control work has been done. In 1976 Obi arrived

and has been a permanent presence ever since. Planting and conservation work has continued, including the construction of another small dam and the area now under control totals about 150 acres. Just recently a vertical-axis windmill made of oil drums was erected. Five people now live and work in the community.

Pitchandikulam: From its inception in 1973 Pitchandikulam has been an experiment moving in a number of directions simultaneously. Located near a natural, monsoon-filled pond, one of the continuing works has been water and erosion control. As with many greenwork communities, the land is divided between farming, afforestation and living space, with an emphasis on tree planting. One particular aspect of the work has been the development of close relationships with the Tamil villagers, encouraging imagination and creativity in their work and daily life. Another has been the experimental plantation of large areas with forest trees that were then left on their own except for protection. Early results show natural grasses beginning to return and some indigenous trees germinating naturally.

Sharnaga, the Sanskrit word for the bow of Krishna, began with the digging of the first well and fencing of the first acres to be developed during the summer of 1976. In February 1977 Bernard, Claude, and their two children moved into a storeroom bringing with them from Auromodel the beginning of a dairy—10 milk cows. During this year trees were planted (watered by bullock cart until the pump was installed and electricity connected), and construction was completed of their unique water-surrounded house.

Part of the work on the land has been afforestation and conservation. But as the aim has always been to develop the area into a farm, there has been much energy directed towards animal breeding, first of dairy cows in a mutually beneficial collaboration with the government artificial-insemination program and lately with horses. After the completion of the second well, ponds were dug as part of a fish-breeding experiment. Though this has not been continued due to lack of necessary equipment, the ponds attract many wild birds and Auroville children who enjoy fishing. Recently funds were received to develop a poultry for about 60 birds. Eggs, lemons, and milk are regularly contributed to Pour Tous.

In addition to the Aurovilian family, there are also 2 Tamil families living on the farm and sharing the work.

Aspiration Farm: The first development of this region as a farm was in 1976, when an American named Jim came to work near an old grove of large mango trees located by a deep canyon at the southern edge of Aspiration. Calling the area Mango Grove, he did some decorative planting and limited agriculture on nearby fields, but concentrated mainly on algae-culture experiments and research in areas such as composting.

When Jim left for the U.S. in 1978, a team of people from Aspiration took charge of the 10 acres; 4 people live there now and 3 others come over from Aspiration to work. The main 10 acres, which is located along the canyon descending to the sea, is linked by a small bridge to 5 acres of monsoon-crop fields and another 5 acres that may later be developed as a meadow. An irrigation system is being improved for the compound and should be operating by the end of this year [1979]. At present there is a jet pump, a centrifugal pump which delivers water from 4 open water tanks, and 2 engines, one electric and one diesel.

The activities developed over the past year are planting of windbreaks and hedges for beauty and protection, bunding and other conservation efforts to stabilize the canyons, cultivation of monsoon crops and cow grass, experimentation with adaptability of different vegetables, creation of a henhouse with 62 hens and 7 cocks (producing 230 eggs per week) under natural conditions, maintenance and harvesting of mango, cashew, and other fruit trees, care of ornamental trees and flowers, compost-

ing with an innovative 3-story device and stocking of urine from 6 animals.

Plans for the future include replacing the irrigated-crop area (except for the cow grass) with an orchard, production of algae for animal consumption and establishment of a dairy both for milk production and for valuable manure.

Amba Garden is another project that has as its originating impulse Auroville's need to develop self-sufficiency. In April 1978 Krishna Tewari, a retired Indian Army officer, took up an area of about 20 acres near Auromodel and began the work of soil and water conservation, afforestation and agriculture which includes cultivation of cereals, fruits, and vegetables. The fruit and vegetable section has been quite productive in spite of the lack of adequate water. Application for a power connection, made nearly 16 months ago, is still to materialize, though the borewell is all set to take the submersible pump. The fund situation has not permitted a diesel pump to be procured in the interval.

Nearly 200 coconut seedlings are ready to be put in soon. A fencing of barbed wire on granite stones is also being put up to enclose about 5 acres of land initially. Preparations were made during the summer [of 1979] for the planting of about 500 trees during the present monsoon. Continuation of the contour bunding and the construction of a dam on a canyon in the eastern corner of the garden are part of the soil and water conservation work. Future plans are for the addition of a dairy and poultry, hopefully before the end of the

year. Drew, an American who lived for several years in the Ashram, has moved to Amba Gardens and is helping in the work.

A TRUST FOR THE EARTH *Savitra*

[Following is the final chapter of a new book on Auroville, *Auroville: Sun-Word Rising* by Savitra, author of *Auroville: The First Six Years*. The new book chronicles the history of Auroville up to 1980 and details its struggle for group unity and identity as well as its struggle with the land and with the Sri Aurobindo Society. The book has been published in India and is expected to be published later in the U.S. Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of the Indian edition may do so by sending \$7.00 (which includes airmail postage) to Auroville Review/Revue, % Unity Resources, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, India, specifying that you wish a copy of *Auroville: Sun-Word Rising*. The book is not available from Matagiri.]

Somehow in this moment, in the face of all that denies and resists in our humanity, all that doubts in us and our world blindly driven to destroy, possessed by the law of division, we of the Earth must make a gesture—one simple, unprecedented and unauthorized gesture of Trust. We, who despite ourselves, despite our gravities, our hereditary habits and our paralytic fears, must affirm this need which burns in us and our Earth that labors to become something else, that labors to become one.

In this global moment which seems to contradict the very need of its own being, this world berserkly bound in the escalations of its own Ego, up against a last terrestrial wall madly fighting *not* to let go, *not* to become one, Auroville aspires to be a point of Trust for the Earth, a point where the Earth can affirm its trust in itself and its future, a point of trust which will one day grow to englobe a Whole Earth that no longer resists, that allows a Power—an evolutionary Fire—to enter and to transform this Tale of the No into the YES of a New World.

And this Trust for the Earth that Auroville aspires to be, it calls for your trust, our trust, you who are not *other*, all of us who are inseparable points of this Trust for the Earth, this process of change.

Somehow all of us, we must begin, we must make that gesture, that simple and unequivocal gesture. For Nobody in Particular, for Humanity as a whole.

Let a point of Earth be given, be acknowledged for the Trust that we must share. Let all of the lands of Auroville be that beginning, that conscious offering. Let



Sharnaga farm, Auroville. Photo by AuroImage.

them be taken from the exclusive ownership of anyone who would claim them, even those of us who would live there. Let them be held in Trust for Humanity as a whole and let them be declared a Sanctuary, freed from the mercantile motives that exploit our earth.

And the assets and funds given for Auroville, let them too be held in Trust for Humanity as a whole, freed from the proprietary motives of greed and possession. And let all of the facilities be granted to allow these materials and funds to flow freely and unimpeded for the purposes to which they are given.

Let this simple Trust materialize, this simple, indivisible Charter for a New Earth and a New Humanity.

Let the Earth give its sanctions, participate consciously in its own evolution; and let India play her true and active role, fulfill her true destiny in the evolution of the Earth, let India's true being respond, awaken and give its faith to this experiment of Auroville that She shares.

Let us make the passage, the opening. Together.

Let this Trust for the Earth be. Let Auroville be. Let a New World be.

MITRA Pierre

Sometimes—and quite often with a definite and unpleasant skeptical tone—we are asked about Education in Auroville and we either smile, keep silent, try to reply or simply digest this skeptical note before counterattacking. Although I replied two days ago—and very seriously—that “we were aiming at removing all the barriers between child and adult, so as to evolve a total learning environment where, naturally and spontaneously, one will have no choice but to grow and enlarge,” I could not help feeling someone in me helplessly giggling.

But lo, yesterday I encountered a pure product of that “environment,” a free child grown organically in this living environment and transplanted in tough America ... for this is also the usual argument: “Yes, your system might work in your community, but what about the child who will have to face the world” (as if we were not facing it—but this is another matter).

So here was Mitra, an old friend of mine, son of space and freedom, who, in Auroville, used to wander from one Tamil



At the Aspiration (Auroville) kitchen: Marie-Helene, Grand Michel, Gerard, Petit Michel. Photo by AuroImage.

village to another, from one community to another, at home everywhere (he used to sleep at one point in a discarded food safe, in Unity kitchen).

He was there counting his marbles. “Hello. How do you do?”

“Well. How is the Matrimandir growing?”

“Eh, slowly, slowly,” and trying to evade the question, “How do you feel here? Better than in Auroville?”

“Yes, I think I learn more. There is no soccer in Auroville.”

Then, feeling that we were beginning to tread a very boring ground, he asked abruptly: “You want to play marbles?” (No words—acts.)

“Yes.” (Ha, ha, ha, I am very good at marbles.)

Of course, I won the first game (I told you, I am very good at marbles), 8 to 2. Realizing that he had no chance in being straight, he found a trick for the second game and even now, although it had all the appearance of sheer cheating, I hesitate to label it so harshly. Maybe it was only inner opportunism? Cunning? Strategic swiftness? For the second game, we were even, 5 to 5. We were equal. Face to face.

“Let’s go to the river,” said he, eager to show me his boat.

We had to cross a field of garlic.

“I will be in charge of the harvest.”

“You will have to pull all these plants?”

“No, no. In charge—like in India: I will sit on a high stool and watch the others.” India has so much to teach.

Yes. His was a beautiful boat. Although it had a marked tendency to capsize, that was not a problem at all. The only thing to do, he explained to me, was simply to take out the deck, to carve the hull, to put some stabilizers, to weigh the keel, to change the sails, to fix the rudder—and clear the river. Simple, no? I had a thrill, recognizing at once the typical Aurovilian determination, the will to go through the most obvious denials. A faith, sure of itself, a pure life force.

“Your boat is very nice.”

“Of course. It’s mine.”

“Who gave it to you?”

He then stood up proudly: “No one. I bargained for it.”

“How?”

Then with a wonderful mischievous smile: “I traded it for a chicken which is not yet born. Not even laid.”

No, no, we should not worry any more: our children are very well equipped to face Life, with all its intricacy and even when they do not know what 2 and 2 are (who cares after all?), with that inner strength, who will dare to resist them?

—Aptos, Calif., July 1980

Auroville Review

The long-awaited fourth issue of the *Auroville Review* is at last available, after having overcome a great many difficulties. The *Review* has a new format and is entirely in English. A separate French-language edition is also being published. The *Review*, with a new team of editors, has news on Auroville, articles on its internal organization and its Envelope system of finance, regenerating the land, random notes, etc. A one-year airmail subscription to this quarterly is offered for \$12.00. Send check or international money order by registered airmail to Auroville Review/Revue, Unity Office, Center, Auroville 605101, India.

NEWS OF AUROVILLE

Matrimandir: Work continues on the precast steel-reinforced beams that will form the support for the Matrimandir's outer "skin." The crane for hoisting the beams into position now rises above the whole structure. The inner chamber is ready and accessible.

Gaia is a new community in Auroville. Peter Clarence-Smith, an English Aurovilian, has worked to reclaim and regenerate a piece of relatively high and barren ground and now has three resident helpers. Tree planting and bunding have been carried out and many villagers near Gaia have been persuaded to allow Peter to bund their fields.

Sports in Auroville

Sport activities play an important role in the experiment which Auroville is now living. As a matter of fact, from the point of view of both physical exercise and health, sports brings a balance which in itself is extremely necessary to the body. And above all, sports are an important element in bringing together the Aurovilians through the practice of sport activities.

Team sports such as basketball, volley ball, football have contributed greatly to breaking some barriers erected between Aurovilians, be it geographical barriers (Auroville is quite spread out), or cultural barriers (between nationalities, in particular), or even between children and adults.

For example, the high and long jumps, shotput, sprint, long-distance race and hurdles; team sports such as basketball for which many teams can be constituted with as many combinations as participants. And also Cabbadi, an Indian game, and football.



Pour Tous meeting in Auroville. Photo by AuroImage.

The Olympic games are a marvellous pretext to gather over a full day at least a hundred Aurovilians and can be organized every 3 or 4 months.

Meetings are also organized outside. Thus, Auroville's basketball team met a few times with the Jipmer team and other teams from Pondicherry. It is also planned to organize similar meetings for football. In April 1980 a football match took place with a Pondicherry team.

At the end of 1979 four young Aurovilians of about 17 years of age were selected to play in Pondicherry's basketball team to participate in an all-India basketball tournament in Calcutta.

Sport activities take place daily. Each day is more specifically oriented toward

one activity: football, for example, is practiced every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon. Volley ball is on Monday and Saturday afternoon, and basketball on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

With this minimum coordination as a base, all sports can be practiced every day, depending on the availability of grounds and players.

There is at present the following infrastructure in Auroville: 1 football ground (near Centre), 1 tennis court (in Certitude), 1 basketball ground (Certitude), 1 basketball ground and 1 volley ball ground (in Aspiration), 1 track for athletic training, and high and long jumps, and shotput (in Aspiration) and 1 Cabbadi ground.

There was a meeting at the end of 1979

to try to work out an all-Auroville project for sports, and it was estimated that the minimum cost to restore to good condition the existing grounds and to create new grounds.

The purchase of new balls and minimum sports equipment was envisaged as well as the necessary regular maintenance of the various facilities.

There is a proposal for constructing a new tennis court at Auromodele (near Aspiration), as the only existing one is at Certitude and it is sometimes necessary to cycle a few kilometers to play.

Similarly, the creation of a new football ground in Aspiration is envisaged, which would not have regular dimensions (since the earmarked field would not allow it), but which would be sufficient for training. Centre's football ground also is a few kilometers away from most of the players. The field in question will have to be leveled and will require considerable work.

The present project therefore includes on one hand the renovation of the already existing infrastructure and on the other the creation of new fields and facilities: football and handball fields, tennis court at Auromodele, and a special site for a Ping Pong table; also purchase of new balls and other accessories.

Estimate:

1. <i>For Certitude and Ami:</i>	Rs.
Leveling of a basketball field	500
Walls for basketball field enclosure	500
Basketballs	450
Leveling of a tennis court	1,500
Tennis court fencing	500
Tennis balls	400
Maintenance of fields for 1 year	1,500
5 mats for gymnastics 2m x 1m	250
Volley balls	280
2. <i>For Aspiration and Auromodele</i>	
Repair of basketball field	3,000
Repair of volley ball field	200
Leveling and work for a football field	2,000
Fittings for a football field	1,000
Fittings for a handball field	1,000
Leveling and repair of track	2,300
Basketballs	450
Volley balls	280
Footballs	500
Building for Ping Pong table & fittings	2,500
Construction of tennis court	3,000
Tennis net and fence	600
Tennis balls	400
Maintenance of fields for 1 year	1,500

Sports equipment (shoes, etc.) 1,500
Grand total Rs 26,110
(About \$3,263.75)

All financial contributions may be sent by international check (dollars or pounds) in the name of "Auromitra—Friends of Auroville" and mailed registered to: Auromitra Centre, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakupam 605104, Tamil Nadu, India along with a covering letter indicating the name of the project "Sport 1980."

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*
Mt. Tremper, NY 12457

Auroville Association*
212 Farley Drive
Aptos, CA 95003

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

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

In India:
To send donations directly or within India:

For the Matrimandir and all Auroville projects:

Auroville Pour Tous Fund
% Myrtle Fator
Tapaloka at Certitude
Auroville 605101
India

For all Auroville projects but *not* the Matrimandir:

Auromitra—Friends of Auroville
Auromitra Centre
Aspiration, Auroville
Kottakupam 605104
INDIA

*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, Centre, Auroville 605101, India, expressing your interest and asking for a list of guesthouses and charges, and other relevant information.

GENERAL AND CENTER NEWS

Centers are invited to submit reports on their activities which would be of interest to those interested in Sri Aurobindo, for inclusion in *Colaboration*. We receive inquiries from all over asking about such activities and meetings of Sri Aurobindo groups. When sending such material to us, please give full details, including complete address and phone number, dates and hours of regular and special events and meetings. Other news items of interest to our readers are also welcomed.

• **East West Cultural Center** (2865 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; tel. 213-480-8325) observed Sri Aurobindo's birthday with a special program that included a tribute to Sri Aurobindo by Prem and Jyoti Sobel and a dramatic presentation from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* with Trudi, Mitra, Dick, Loretta, Robert and Jyotipriya.

Jyotipriya (Dr. Tyberg) is at home in the library to share the wisdom and yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Thursday evenings from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. For information regarding other programs at the center and Dr. Tyberg's Sanskrit and other classes, call or write the center.

• **M.P. Pandit and Vasanti Rao** are planning to be in the United States in 1981. They will be in California in July and August, in the Seattle (Wash.) area in September (when they may also visit Canada). They will then travel to the East and South. Anyone interested in having them appear in their community, please write directly to M.P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605002, India.

• **Chitta R. Goswami**, author of *Sri Aurobindo's Concept of the Superman* and other works, and director of the Human Potential Center (1011 S. Ridgewood, Daytona Beach, FL 32014), has begun to publish a newsletter, *Continuum: Bulletin of Human Potential*, in conjunction with Mark C. Kaspro, a practitioner of psychophysical therapy. Anyone interested in the bulletin, please write directly to Dr. Goswami.

• **Liberating the Soul of the Child** is the title of a traveling presentation of spiritual books for children. It is being offered by Mary Saint-Marie (Rt. 1, Box 619, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067) to interested communities across the nation. The purpose is to let others know of the large number of inspirational children's books which simply and beautifully share the ideas of how one may live to create a Divine Life on earth now. The (growing) collection of 125 books also includes esoteric educational books for adults. In the collection are many of Sri Aurobindo's educational works.

• **Gorden McAllen**, Ph.D., a deep student of Sri Aurobindo and a radiation specialist, is interested in collaborating with a similarly backgrounded catalytic chemist on a minerals-research project suggested by Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of cosmic science. Interested qualified individuals, please contact Dr. McAllen at Tower International, P.O. Box 1315, Lynnwood, WA 98036.

• **Magic Circle**, a new publication for children, has just published its first issue. It contains poems, articles and illustrations by children from all over the world as well as photographs. A year's subscription (6 issues) is available for \$3.60. For more information or to contribute material to this venture, write to the editor, Beatrice Timson, 1106 Irving Ave., Dayton, OH 45419.

• **Gene Maslow**, who lived in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and in Auroville for a number of years, is having a one-man exhibition of sculpture, drawings and collages at the RR Gallery, 149 Mercer St., New York City, from November 22 to December 5. Maslow also teaches at the New School in New York.

• **Auroville International—U.K.** (82 Bell St., London NW 1, England) participated in the fifth Festival for Mind-Body-Spirit in June, at Olympia. They also had a booth at the 3-day Co-op Fair in Leeds, organized by the Institute for Co-operative Ownership and Management. Malcolm Richards of the center manned the booth.

• **White Roses**, a collection of letters written by the Mother to Huta, an Ashram painter who worked closely with Mother for many years doing paintings illustrating *Savitri*, is being reissued after being out of print for some time. It is now in one large

volume and presents photocopies of the Mother's original letters. The book will be available from Matagiri.

• **Mrs. Suvarna P. Shukla** (102 Sangam, 15A Pedder Road, Bombay; telephone 367 203) reports that there is a Sri Aurobindo center in her home, where regular meditation sessions and meetings are held. Mrs. Shukla and her husband visited Matagiri in September. Mrs. Shukla has been working with Huta on the publication of Huta's *White Roses*.

• **Richard Stein** and **Stan Andersen** announce that they have established the **Life Divine Center** (c/o Stan Andersen, 290 Circle Oaks Dr., Napa, CA 94558; tel. 707-226-9176), a nonprofit corporation (tax exemption pending). Their first undertaking is to sponsor the visit of M.P. Pandit and Vasanti to the U.S. in 1981. For further information or to find out more about Mr. Pandit's trip, call or write the center.

• **Ron Jorgensen** (700 14th Avenue W., Kirkland, WA 98033; 206-822-7201) has sent the following note: "I am suggesting this idea on behalf of about 20 co-workers in the Work who feel it will enable interested people to find information more readily, namely, that each center or group in a city list in their local telephone directory (yellow and white pages where appropriate) an entry such as "Sri Aurobindo Information Center" with their phone number. There seems to be a considerable number of people who have difficulty finding such information when first coming to a city and the local center doesn't contain Sri Aurobindo's name."

Ron has study groups in Kirkland and also is teaching courses at local colleges. For further information, call or write him directly.

• **Auroville International—Sweden** (Sri Aurobindo Forlag, Ravlunda 29, S-270 57 Kivik, Sweden) has published *Sangham-79*, a report on the "Art and Consciousness" forum they sponsored in 1979. The forum held exhibitions and concerts, lectures and workshops, and included painting, dance, music, film and poetry. The report is in both Swedish and English, and copies may be obtained directly from the center in Kivik.

There is too large a number of guides, founders of sects, heads of temples or monasteries, sadhus or saints who come between humanity and the supreme Lord under the pretext that they are intermediaries, and who keep for their little glorified person the waves of gratitude which should go right straight, right straight to their true goal: the supreme Lord. I always refrain from having anything to do with those people, whether they are on earth or in the subtle world. What the Lord wants for us, He will always give us, and I prefer to receive it directly rather than through intermediaries, however great they may be.

—The Mother

NEWS OF MATAGIRI

Classes in Sanskrit and Hindi are being offered at Matagiri. If you are interested, please write or call Gopal, Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457; telephone 914-679-8322.

On August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday was observed with a morning meditation which 59 people attended, followed by a picnic lunch. In the afternoon Jean and Gordon, former residents of Auroville, gave an Indian flute and bhajan concert. Among those attending were Drs. T.K. & Maya Sarkar, Mr. & Mrs. Pavan Talwar, Mr. & Mrs. Jurg Hunziker, Verne Henshall, Navaja Mitchell, Wally Russell, Margo Macleod, Yvonne Chotzen, Irene Jessen and family, and Julian and Lucy Lines.

Earlier in August, Matagiri had presented a lecture and slide show on Sri Aurobindo and Auroville to 27 Unitarian Universalists who were holding an international meeting nearby.

Other recent visitors included Angira Sokolowski, who is now in England with his family; Paul Edmonston, professor of art at the University of Georgia; Naren and Hema Bhatt, who have a center in Harrisburg and brought Nirmala and Nautam Bhatt, longtime residents of Sri Aurobindo Ashram; and Rusty Selhorst from Cleveland.

OCCASIONS

Aaron Miller

[Aaron Miller is currently teaching at the Lindenwood Colleges in St. Charles, Missouri. This poem first appeared in the summer 1980 issue of *Studia Mystica* (California State University, Sacramento), and is reprinted with the author's permission.]

Pour La Mère: La Presence qui ne change pas dans la presence du changement.

The northward drift of India exemplifies how far a land mass can be carried. Sliced away from Antarctica, rafted on an "ideal" plate, the Indian land mass completed its remarkable journey northward by colliding with the underbelly of Asia.

—Robert Dietz & John Holden

Peacock beside me
on the roof as I wake.

Jasmine morning: coral and pearl.

Murugan's peacock:
ancestral steed
for second sons,
whose birthright it is
to wander the earth
in search of earth.

His watch is ended,
but he holds me close.
One dark eye, fixed on the sea,
takes the color of the sea
girdled with light
as it glides like a queen
up the coast to Bengal,
long green fingers
taking tribute from the shore.

* * *

To drift, at morning,
in fragrance, in light,
borne on a languorous wave of sensation,
is to garland the mind,
to enter the voluptuous sea
—perfumed, heavy-laden,
sedate in its power—
in the perfect stillness
of a peacock's eye.

Here, appearance
of reality is
appearance: reality
taking shape
of its occasion,
as love shapes a smile,
the occasion itself
a celebration
of being's enormous,
momentous becoming.

* * *

One's own occasion
in question. Where
earth, sea and sky
converge in the depths
of a peacock's eye,
India answers:

India, now rousing itself
from languor at morning,
its colors overflowing
the limits of mind,
once was not: not this,
not that; other,

utterly frozen,
torn loose
from the pole
and cast adrift,
south to north,
ice to fire, until
it crashed into Asia,
became Asia.

* * *

At Mailam
the Brahmin with flagrant eyes
lights his ritual fire with a glance.
Down the beach
three sea-borne barques
lurch to a halt. Tamil Fishermen
haul on their net-ropes,
gathering, gathering,
in fragrance, in light,
chanting as they gather,
their song a celebration of sea,
the sea giving over what it will:
flittering fish, a freshening breeze.
lustre to the sky's glaze of blue
upon blue, deepening, moment by
moment,
like the smile of Krishna.

* * *

To wander the earth
in search of earth
is to surrender
the familiar ground of earth
to the compassing sea:
climate and rhythm of our days,
sibylline vessel of our nights,
refluent source of dream
at dawn, memory's dance,
in time, with blood, *La Mer*,
La Mère, *La Grande Mère*—

* * *

In dream I have been Her lover
in a cosmic celebration of life.
We have tumbled and surged
across the sky, lingered
to play on vast horizons,
risen, subsided and risen again,
substance/consubstance
transfigured, transfused,

divine hermaphrodite, death
and rebirth blazing
in ecstatic embrace—
On Her patio above Pondicherry
She waits, the dream of my being,
light as breath, on Her lips, the sea
that bore me cupped in Her hands,
the hands that await mine in welcome
to the reality of my life re-occasioned,
given breath, given light, given—

* * *

Strangers adrift
in a troubled world,
we know, at last,
what it is we seek
by what we find:
in the bud of morning
the silent song rising
—as a dream rises—
from the threshold of being
to make of the leap of our lives
a dance:

as Gita, gathering
shells on the beach, dances
to the fishermen's chant,
as Imba, biscuit in hand,
dances to the peacock
from the garden below,
as the peacock now lifts
his luminous tail
to the blossoming day—
Our journey ended,
the peacock departs.

The occasion of our company
—Murugan's birthday—
continues to unfold:

in the darting of sparrows
among the tamarind trees,
in the rattling of bullock-carts
heavy with hay, in the cries
of street vendors, puja drums
in the distance, the fluting
of the snake-charmer at the gate,
Imba dancing in the garden,
Gita dancing on the beach,
the galop of light
between sky and sea—

* * *

In the Himalayas
even the snow leopard
leaves flowers where he passes.

[*Author's note:* According to the legend, Siva had to choose which of his two sons would receive the traditional birthright, so he devised a contest: the first one of them to travel around the earth would be chosen. Murugan took off on his peacock at terrific speed; poor, fat Ganesh sat and thought for a while, then got up and walked a circle around his mother. Siva awarded Ganesh the birthright.]