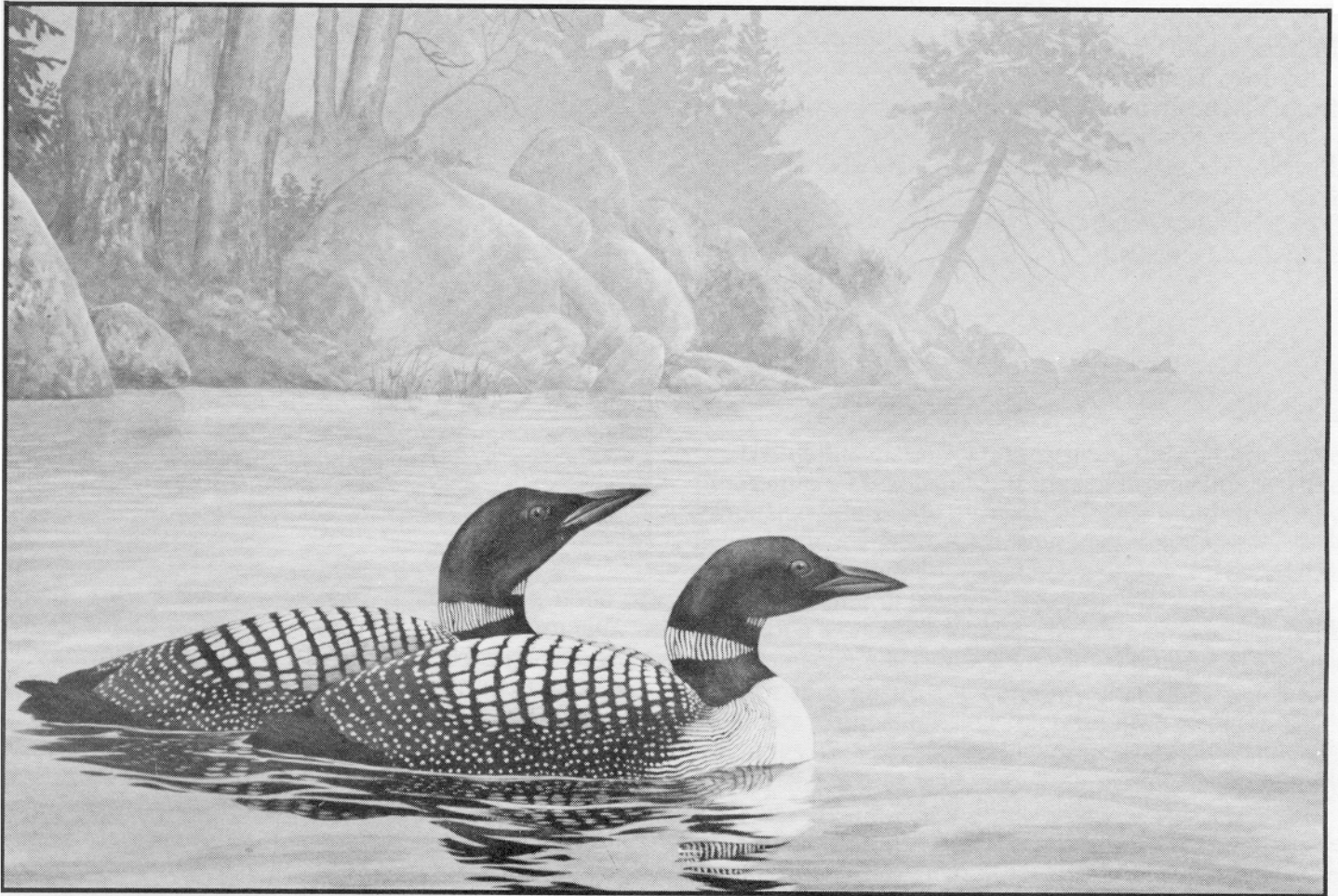


Collaboration

Summer 1988

Vol. XIV No. 3



*The smooth ripples of two loons
slide along the lake
and slap against the shore rocks*

Common Loons
by Michelle Mara

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Integral Yoga Enhances Creativity

by Michelle Mara

Sri Aurobindo has said that the Divine expresses itself through individuals and through nature. During the years in which I have been preparing for, and getting started in, a career as a wildlife ecologist and artist, these words have become increasingly important and meaningful to me. While I strived to develop skill, poured over textbooks and did field research, the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were always close by, inspiring me - a vitally important element in my education.

Everything that is essential to creative work is to be found in the practice of Integral Yoga: the quiet mind, the discipline, the concentration. And actually, almost every human pursuit involves some form of creativity; it is not just painters, sculptors and musicians alone who create! Life itself is a fine art. We are all creating something every second of every day.

It is wonderfully exciting to know that no matter what one's vocation or avocation, here is a source of knowledge which can truly enhance it. The concept of finding the divine reality within one's self and expressing it once seemed quite impossible to me personally. But I have found that not only is it possible, it is providing the greatest sense of fulfillment in my work and in all other aspects of living.

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A one-year subscription is \$12; airmail outside the USA and North America is \$22. All foreign subscription must be paid with a US dollar draft on a New York bank or an International Money Order.

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

Subscriptions should be sent to Sri Aurobindo Association, Inc., P.O. Box 372, High Falls, NY 12440.

Any editorial material should be sent to Jean Korstange, 8 Union St., Keene, NH 03431.

Printed in the United States of America.

The expressed opinions of the authors are not necessarily those of The Sri Aurobindo Association or the editors.

Haiku on the cover by Gordon Korstange

"Is This Some Kind of Cult?"

she asked suddenly. We were going through an Auroville slide show with a woman who had been to India and was, up to that point, enthusiastic about Auroville. As a slide of the Matrimandir appeared on our wall, Jean was reading from Ruud Lohman's book, *A House for the Third Millennium*, in which he says that when he asked Mother's permission to go to some international conference in Delhi she replied, "Are you not useful at Matrimandir?"

Our friend immediately associated this story with the kind of entrapment that goes on in cults. Perhaps she felt that Ruud's "usefulness" at the Matrimandir was being exploited in the same way that members of the Unification Church (Moonies) work long hours for next to nothing.

I was startled by her question at first, then quickly dismissed it as a lack of understanding of surrender and a general fear of cults in the USA. However, the question would not go away. On the one hand, it brought out my hesitation in speaking to normal Americans about my relationship with "Mirra Alfasa," a woman of transcendent consciousness who lived in India. On the other hand, the word cult pulled some chain of my being that also fears losing its individual autonomy.

The basic meaning of cult is to grow, to *cultivate*. It's also the root of *culture*, an environment that shapes and defines growth in an incredibly complex process and produces Americans, Indians, Eskimoes, Japanese, etc. Cultures also produce cults, mini-environments that attempt to modify some of the behavior learned by a "cultured" individual. Like punks. Like hippies. Like Nazis. Like a lot of large and small groups, none of which would want anything to do with the term *cult*.

Well, I knew that I was part of a group of people in various stages of commitment to the persons and visions of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (which we seem to refer to as The Yoga, in capital letters, in this journal). I also knew that some of us keep photos of our gurus in a room upstairs, not in the living room, and have some degree of difficulty explaining who they are. Many of us spend time trying to understand how and whether we fit into that melange of psycho-spiritual, transformational activities and groups called The New Age or the new religions. I remembered what Robert Minor had advised us once: to read what others outside The Yoga have to say about The Yoga. There is a Kirkegaardian term for this, "mastered irony," to be able to step back a moment from one's commitment in order to see other points of view and assess one's own point of view from the outside.

On an impulse, I wandered into my local bookstore and found a book entitled *Spiritual Choices*, a collection of articles and interviews edited by Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker, and Ken Wilber (Paragon House, New York, 1987). The book is subtitled, "The Problem of Recognizing Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation," and is meant to be a guide for American aspirants

through the labyrinth of psychospiritual systems, strategies and personalities prevalent in this country.

The authors, two of whom are involved in Zen Buddhism and one a disciple of Meher Baba, have developed a typology to help classify these new spiritual groups. They divide them on the basis of: (1) monism or dualism (interestingly, they define monism as believing that all individuals are inherently one with God-head, as in Hinduism, and dualism as maintaining that only some will be united with the Divine, as in Christianity); (2) technical or charismatic; and (3) unilevel (literal, definitive) or multilevel (realizing that there are different levels of meaning in spiritual teaching, and one's interpretations of these levels may be fallible).

".. you must listen to the small, still peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart .. to hear it you must be absolutely sincere .."

Using this classification system, the authors locate the People's Temple (of Jim Jones-Guyana infame), the group that jumps into most American's mind when they hear the word *cult*, as unilevel, dualistic (us against them) and charismatic (in which a personal relationship with the leader is the primary means of spiritual progress, not a technique such as chanting or mantras). One important characteristic of a unilevel group that leads to cultism is a desire for certainty that does not allow members to question their interpretation of the leader's teachings or the group's view of itself as purer than the rest of the world and, more damagingly, ultimately without corruption.

Literal (unilevel) interpretations of a leader's words are possible even in a multilevel, complex practice such as that taught by Sri Aurobindo and Mother. But, in general, we emphasize experience, not belief and yet "do not see authentic transcendence as readily attainable .. "from a few experiences (this quotation and those that follow are from the first article in the book, "The Anthony Typology: A Framework for Assessing Spiritual and Consciousness Groups," by Anthony and Ecker). Instead, we .. "value the authenticity of the approach rather than the expectation of rapid progress . . . The important thing is to turn towards the spiritual goal and to act in a way that seems to have most promise for bringing one closer to it." Aspiration, a key word in Sri Aurobindo and Mother's works, helps place their teaching in a multilevel context.

The one area of the classification system which The Yoga shares with The People's Temple is that both are

charismatic. As the authors state, "Western culture stresses individual autonomy and views charismatic master-disciple relationships suspiciously," wary of considering someone as God personified (idolatry) and concerned about authoritarianism.

To their credit, the authors accept the possibility of a guru being God-realized, "the symbol of ultimacy and ultimacy itself." Surrender to such a master becomes the task of the disciple; the role of the guru is not to exploit the disciple's "neurotic dependency needs," or protect them "... from their struggles with life ... the multilevel charismatic master repeatedly throws the disciple back onto her or his resources to 'find' the master internally and receive the master's guidance. The master orchestrates this ongoing, complex process in a way that reveals and resolves neurotic distortions and deepens the experience of contact with the master's transcendental being. This process also teaches the disciple to discriminate between internal guidance from the master and mundance, subjective promptings born of desire, imagination, and social conditioning."

Does this long quote sound familiar? I think of Sri Aurobindo writing five hours worth of letters every day to help his ashramites decide everything from whether they should drink tea to the quality of their experiences during meditation. And we come back again to Mother's reply to Ruud: "Are you not useful in Matrimandir?" Not a command or an injunction—just a question and a reminder. How many who wrote to Mother received those reminders? "It is not difficult to distinguish the voice of the Divine," she wrote, "you must listen to the small, still peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart ... to hear it you must be absolutely sincere ..."

That voice of the Divine is also the voice of the guru and, ultimately, that of our own real Self. But how can we, who are assaulted with advertisements for self-enhancement, not self-transcendence, who must judge claims of god-realization with our own ungodly consciousness—how can we be certain that the guru has realized an ultimate state of union with divinity?

The authors state that, "... the master's effect (on the disciple) ... includes an intuitive recognition or inner glimpse of the master's spiritual stature, a felt knowing ... that is not ultimate knowledge but goes beyond emotionalism and ideological belief." These experiences "do not *fascinate* (my italics—we Americans are often vulnerable to the exotic) ... "rather, they touch the heart and impart a deep feeling of coming home to oneself." Not coming home to a group or "family," as Charles Manson dubbed his dupes, but to oneself. If there is one feeling that most Americans I have talked to share, it is this secret belonging, this deep security that we have found where we belong. No matter where we roam or how much the ego resists, a part of us will always be home.

The inward connection, say Anthony and Ecker, no matter how powerful, should also be accompanied by an assessment of the guru's external personality over the course of time. If one is to unconditionally surrender, it

is crucial that there be no un-easiness about the master's character, particularly in the realm of morality. The authors devote much space to counter the argument that, since a master is beyond the limited framework of human consciousness, his or her actions should therefore not be judged. "The greatest danger is in allowing one's own wish-fulfillment to create the master's 'divinity' and override an instinctive sense that the master falls short of ultimate spiritual transcendence."

Since Sri Aurobindo and Mother are no longer with us in flesh, inner contact with them becomes, for many of us, more difficult and more necessary. The popularity of *Mother's Agenda* among disciples derives, in part, from her candid and open expression of the inner depths of her consciousness that draws us into her being. Reading her words is meant to do that, on a semi-meditative level, as well as provide guidance.

Those of us in need of more spiritual sustenance from another master, in or out of The Yoga, may want to read this book. It struck me as a sincere, well thought out, felt attempt in spiritual perspective. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo fit clearly into the multilevel, charismatic category set up by the authors who call it a rare and difficult path for westerners to accept, given our individualism and the current disillusionment with many spiritual figures.

Once again, finally, I return to Ruud. When Mother asked him that question, he didn't take it as an order or command, but as a mantra to be used over and over, asking and waiting for an answer to rise up from the guru within. In the passage that follows he writes, "And since Mother left Her body I can ask Matrimandir all my questions. Just sit there quietly for moment and Matrimandir infallible answers - not always what you would want to hear either."

Which brings me to the little disclaimer we've put under the copyright section in the beginning of this issue. This journal wants to be an expression of each-individual-in-The-Yoga's true Self rising from mud to sun. We, as editors, look more for that spark of unique, inner expression in submissions rather than how well someone has imitated the style of Sri Aurobindo or Satprem. Probably this is our American bias. *Collaboration*, as an organ of the Sri Aurobindo Association, reflects our organization's attempt to include individuals from many different branches of The Yoga. The views expressed by those individuals in this magazine are not necessarily those of SAA or the editors. They demonstrate our faith, as participants in a multilevel, charismatic spiritual path, that each person's relationship with Sri Aurobindo, Mother and the Self is unique, individual, and, ultimately, of supreme value to The Yoga.

by Gordon Korstange

A.U.M. 88



Photo by Roderic

The amazing grace of AUM encompassed me as I checked into the dormitory at Colorado University in Boulder. Amidst the chaos of teenage cheerleaders, basketball and tennis campers, familiar faces appeared at the check-in counter of Hallet Hall. Seyril Schochen arrived from Savitiri House in Baca with those who had been attending her Fourth-of-July conference. Mario Santonataso, Ariel Browne, Vijayrangan and Malati's wave of energy rolled over me as they described the beauty of the mountain range they hiked before leaving Baca for Boulder. Their enthusiasm continued as they spoke of Seyril's new play *Nishita*, which had its first public reading at the conference and finally came to an end with the mysterious tale of seeing a Matrimandir slide/video, a work of art, that I would experience on Saturday, July 9.

Teenagers ran up and down the staircases as we hauled our bags into dorm rooms. The dorm and the teens appeared to be one entity as we worked ourselves into the basement floor. Laundry hung from their windows, team cheers were clapped out in the courtyard, someone sat watching TV and Domino's Pizza delivered to the back door for a group of tennis players.

Once established in our rooms, we moved out to embrace each other, eager to touch, to look into the soul of an old friend. Another AUM, another homecoming, right there in an old dormitory with three floors of kids. We didn't feel old or strange. We just felt the force of what binds us together under the open sky of the West: our Eastern intimacy and knowledge swaddling us after

many years of flight from Pondicherry or Auroville. Fragile as new-borns we stayed close to each other. Tomorrow our group would fill this basement floor and spill over to into the first and second floors of campers. In the upstairs hallway teenagers would ask Ko Chennabasappa if he was a yogi. And in her second floor room Cheryl Mourison would set up a massage table to give her energy to our bodies.

On Thursday, July 7, as I sat in the registration lounge, a collegiate couple walked through. After they had passed, I thought, that the young man looked familiar. I waited quietly, expecting their return. When they walked through again Alok and I recognized each other. He had grown taller and looked as though he had grown up in the USA. I had cut my hair short, looked older and had not a trace of Auroville sun or sand on me. We talked of Warren Wilson College in North Carolina where Alok and his friend went to school. Like others who were to come, Alok was in no hurry to check into a dorm. He went off to get his luggage at his friend's house and I walked across the campus with them.

Thus began the fourth AUM. People trickling into the dorm lounge to register and check into rooms. It wasn't until dinner at 5p.m. that we were gathered together in the dining hall. It surprised me to see all those who had come. Once again the meeting had sprung us from our houses in California, British Columbia, New York, Wisconsin, Washington, Florida, Israel, and Auroville. New faces mixed amongst those that I had seen two or three times at past AUMs. I felt the wonder

and power of that thread that binds us together as we moved through the cafeteria line and cloistered ourselves on one side of the dining room.

At the opening session we found out what brought each person to this year's AUM. Everyone introduced her/himself with one word that summed up what he/she was looking for at this gathering. Forty-six people christened the 1988 AUM with these words: direction, AUM, peace, reconnection, gratitude, action, a gift, consciousness, clarity, connectedness, togetherness, fulfillment, openness, love, renewal, inspiration, confidence, rejuvenation, energy, yoga, aspiration, completeness, to be clothed in consciousness, optimism, enlightened, unity, harmony, grace, community and collaboration.

As Larry Tepper said, we who do Sri Aurobindo and Mother's work need to talk to more than ourselves. We need to reach out and support each other in the work. Looking around the room I thought, 'Only the yoga could bring together such a creative and diverse group of people.'

Friday morning AUM'ers faced an intense schedule. The day began at 7 a.m. with breakfast. That was followed by an 8:30 a.m. meditation. We gathered across from the TV room in the basement lounge, the one where the photos of Mother and Sri Aurobindo had been placed. Rod Hemshall had also set up 18 photos from Auroville. Sitting in a semi-circle on chairs and on the floor we quieted ourselves and joined together in the spirit and love of Sri Aurobindo and Mother's consciousness.

Here fully gathered, we expressed our need for consciousness, force and oneness in an environment that split us up and structured our time at a pace that was all too familiar: the everyday race we run between work, ourselves and our yoga. There was no retreat at this AUM. We were meditating in the Western world, on a campus that allowed us to use classrooms in the Engineering Center, the University Club and Business Building. Our Meditation was the first business of the day. It united us and supported us as we pushed on through meetings.

It seemed most appropriate that we get to know each other through our

work in centers around the USA. Each organization presented who they were, what they offered, and were given three wishes.

June Maher of AVI-USA wished for less of labor, more effortlessness, to have Auroville come to a harmonious completion of its status and for the completion of the Matrimandir.

Tom O'Brien of the Sri Aurobindo Association wished for maximum participation, mutual vision and collaboration.

Bob Dane of the East/West Cultural Center wished for only one thing; to do a better job of spreading the table of spiritual blessings.

Bina Chaudhuri from the Integral Cultural Fellowship and Institute of Integrative Studies wished that we could all be illuminated.

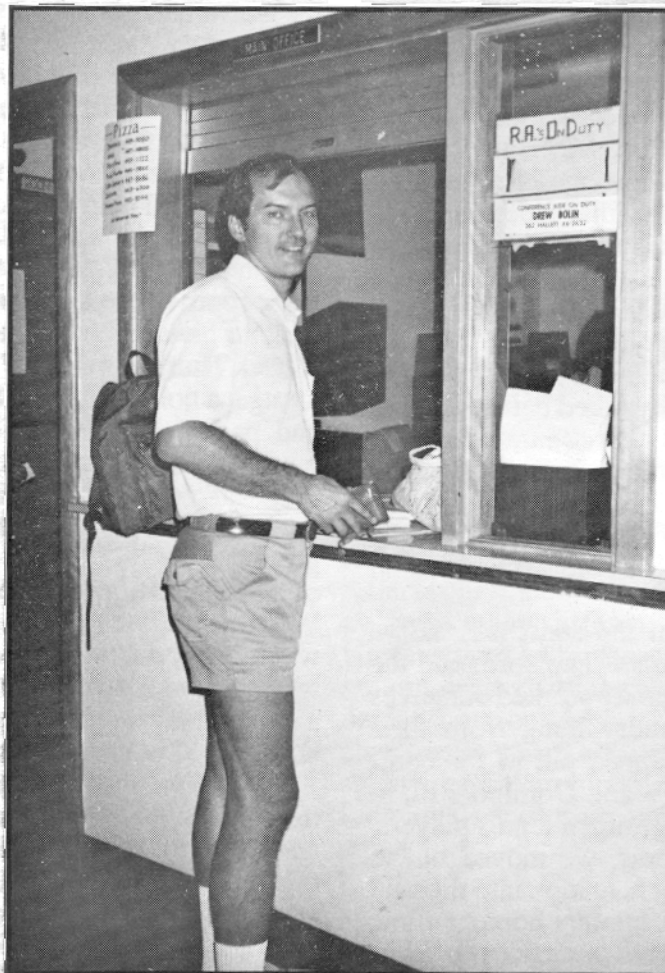
Joe Spanier told the story of Muriel's correspondence with prisoners. We listened as he spoke of the prisoner who had been convicted on three counts of bank robbery and lived in a cell lined with Sri Aurobindo's books. This obviously intelligent man studied criminology while in prison and was pardoned in order to become a professor in criminology at a university. Joe had only one wish: for Muriel to continue corresponding with prisoners about Sri Aurobindo's yoga.

Santosh Krinsky from the Wilmont Center in Wisconsin hoped to find more ways to work with others in the U.S.A. for the yoga.

Seyril Schochen of Savitri House in Baca Grande wished that a living community for Sri Aurobindo and Mother would become established on the land of Baca.

Peter Callaway of Merriam Hill Center, an organization that has given Auroville support and encouragement over the last seven years, wished that Auroville's organization would become clearer in order for MHC to create and run educational programs between the U.S.A. and Auroville.

Other organizations like the Foundation for World Education, the study group in Pensacola, Florida and the Willow Gold/Global View community and business were represented through brief reports. It took one hour to hear from all the organizations. At the end of all the center presentations, it was evi-



Larry Tepper checking in to Hallett Hall

Photo by Roderic

dent that many of us have been creating a flow of people, books and activities that focus on Sri Aurobindo's yoga for years. Each center reflects the particular interests of people in such places as Los Angeles where the East-West Cultural Center has provided a forum for developing an understanding of Eastern philosophy as well as a meeting place for those who do Integral Yoga.

While Matagiri was once the only community/business based on the principle that all life is yoga there are now centers like Santosh Krinsky's that experiment in collective action while maintaining individual self-sufficiency through business projects such as selling incense, distributing and publishing books and the wholesaling of alternative health and body care products. These business ventures help sustain the group's collective interest in the study of Aurovedic medicine and a program of integral education for young children.

Since the late 1960's individuals called to the yoga have established study groups and places where Mother and Sri Aurobindo's vision could take root in the USA. The stability and growth of these centers reflects the ways in which individuals have been able to integrate the yoga into their everyday life. For the most part, all that exists has been done in the spirit of an offering. Everyone faced the economic necessity of work and the inner aspiration for spiritual growth that ideally should not require a retreat from the world, but in reality demands a quiet mind and free time to pursue the new consciousness that Sri Aurobindo and Mother embodied.

All the centers need more money, more people to do the work and seek to increase participation in their activities. How to develop a larger audience in the USA for Sri Aurobindo's yoga and the support of Auroville continues to perplex people. Selling the books, setting up study groups, presenting speakers and organizing educational programs are activities that have been going on for years and people at this meeting continue to do them. I looked to some of our oldest organizers. Their experience now lies in the inner realms. Outer action is our habit. Inner action is the unknown territory that yearns to be manifested on the outer level. But our conversations about the consciousness of the cells or the collective supramental consciousness are silent ones. The inner experience of Mother, the voice that whispered in our ear, the golden light of Sri Aurobindo that filled us are shared in dreams, in our collective unconscious, in our wish for enlightenment or our meditations. Our consciousness doesn't always seem to manifest through our organizations.



Bina Chaudhuri and Chitta Goswami

Photo by Roderic

Inside and outside of our organizations people discover the integral yoga. At this AUM I met Mary Francis Weathersby. Motherbridge yoga is Mary Francis's vehicle for bringing the idea of the consciousness of the cells to people in the USA. Living in San Antonio, Texas she teaches classes, gives seminars and makes public appearances to teach her students to put their consciousness into the cells of their body. Mary Francis guided a group of AUMer's through traditional Hatha yoga stretches with the admonition to: "Be still and experience the effects of the stretch in your cells." While poised in a leg stretch she told us to, "Put your consciousness into the tissues of your leg." She continually encouraged us to turn up the corners of our mouth in order to express the smiling joy and peace that is our nature.

The goal of Motherbridge yoga is to remain conscious of the "Force of Being" vibrating in our cells. As we moved gently from one stretch to another, we chanted: "Om Namo Bhagavate." Under her guidance my physical energy came to life and flowed through my body.

Soleil Righter guided a group that asked us the question: "What was happening in your life when Mother left her body?" Through small group discussion individuals found threads that lead them to understand how Mother's passing had been significant in their life. This idea of sharing our experiences of Mother was carried out in small groups as the meeting began its final session on Sunday, July 10.

There were others who presented their understanding of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy in talks on Bhakti Yoga and the political and social implications of Sri Aurobindo by our scholars Jaya Srivastava and Chitta Goswami.

Personal sharing, long talks over meals and meditations nurture AUMers every year. I noticed clusters of

two or three people at dining tables, in front of buildings or in hallways, speaking from the heart about what was happening in their lives and what they were still seeking in the yoga.

Saturday afternoon Barbara Vail, a friend of Seyril Schochen, brought us the Matrimandir slide/video production. This work in progress began with the night sky. The star nebula spun us into the future, into Auroville. The spiral model of the future city became one golden point: Matrimandir.

The work began on the burnt red earth. Workers dug down into that crust of baked clay. From there the Matrimandir rose, concrete, steel, scaffolding, people working together on a structure that is always changing. The tools, the people, the progress faded in and out of each other. Then Piero, architect/engineer of Matrimandir, walked up the ramp and led us into the inner

a center in Boulder, published The Auroville Voice, sold Auroville products, gave talks on Auroville, published articles and collected all the information they could on the community. With Muriel's post-polio syndrome making it difficult for her to walk and Joe's recent illnesses they have disbanded their organization and moved into an apartment that offers them a quiet supportive environment. During these four days many AUMers visited Joe and Muriel in their new home and gave them the care and attention they so generously gave during their years of service to Auroville. The hearts they have touched for years glowed in that room as Savitra presented a gold-embroidered Mother's symbol to Muriel.

More importantly it represented how the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and Mother brings people into a new and wider family. The fifty people who sat together this particular Saturday night have given their soul to a path



Savitra presenting the gift to Muriel and Joe Spanier

Photo by Roderic

chamber. He opened the door for us and took our hearts there. Light came into the crystal. We were one with it. More than a work of art, we experienced a work of consciousness through this video of Matrimandir. Our gratitude lifted us from our seats as we came back to the little theater in the Business Building at the University of Colorado.

That could have ended our meeting. But it didn't. One of the reasons for having AUM in Boulder was to embrace two dear and precious people, Joe and Muriel Spanier, as they make a transition into an inner work. Saturday evening brought them a gift from Auroville in appreciation of their efforts to nurture this 20 year old community. During these years Joe and Muriel started

and accepted each other on the way to supermind, to the consciousness of the cells or to the heart of what integrates these personalities that must be transformed through an adventure of consciousness. Our particular adventure here in the USA includes a diverse and gifted number of people. While Auroville sends a gracious gift to two it would not be but for all who have walked the same path. And thus as one body we were led into the heart by Aurora. This group of singers awakened the joy and spirit of our souls and celebrated the people and the yoga here in the USA.

By Jean Korstange



Hadassah Haskale

Photo by Roderic

Savitiri on the Mountain

by Hadassah Haskale

After the Saturday morning meditation, Wayne Bloomquist, Bina Chaudhuri, Clark Bell and I took to the hills. We found a rock enclosure among boulders and trees, seated ourselves and opened *Savitri*. Passing the book along, each person took a turn reading a found passage.

Having read, having listened, the circle formed in silence; then dispersed, each to glean a message by his/her own light. Here is the poem that came to me as I meditated in the Boulder hills.

Cave Meditation

From the cave of the rock
the chatter of the world,
the rush of time,
repeated steps pat-pattering
like a bird knocking on a tree for food.
Time devours us in heat and hurry.

Breathless, we stop
to catch our breath,
to stop the clock
and find the way
clearing us
in a clearing;
still the clashing rhythms:

raucous laugh,
groaning airplane
straining cars

the pace undoing peace.

How to come back to it?
Listening, wafted
on waves of being
supported, rocked...



Aura Reading in the Context of Mother and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

by Ariel Browne

Note: for all those who had aura reading appointments with me, the material covered in those sessions is strictly confidential from my side. It remains private between us. Know, of course, that you may choose to share this material in any way you like.

This article is a must-write. And, that doesn't make it easy. The experiences with aura reading at the AUM conference represented a significant risk-taking for me. It was a new thing to do, to offer such a thing. I felt potentially foolish and certainly exposed. And I am not alone. Everyone who is devoted to Mother and Sri Aurobindo must be brash. They didn't create an aegis of guruhood for us to walk under. They didn't rework old philosophical saws to which, with only tiny adjustments, we could conform. It requires a certain brashness to place our lot with Mother and Sri Aurobindo. In fact I would venture that all of us in this Yoga probably find that realization of the Divine in us, in our cells, makes it incumbent upon us to express, however subtly or overtly, the unique and irreplaceable soul-being that we are. We must be the Self; it compels us. In fact, it is unique to this Yoga, among all spiritual philosophies and disciplines, that the responsibility to experience the Divine Consciousness *in* the body, in the cells, in the self, is of primary focus. This is the some-actual, some-anticipated delight of the Supramental Manifestation. We are already, subtly, and will be more and more experiencing the Supramental in our very being AND it will be shared. This anticipation, this integral promise, is what I would like to focus on in the article because it manifests in a rich myriad of ways. One of these ways is through auric perception.

Let me begin with a definition of auras, and aura reading, from my perspective and from within the context of Mother and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

To reiterate, I've perceived auras all my life. That doesn't imply any special wisdom or insight. It is just what was, like breath or sky. In retrospect, I understand that it was probably nurtured by the home education developed by my parents coupled with certain traumas significant among which was the death, at birth, of my identical twin sister.

The ability to perceive auras seems to be inherent to infants and children. My research and others', namely Piaget and Gesell, corroborates this. Generally, though, social conformity and public education conspire to deny this natural ability in the child and it is repressed but not lost. Events in my life conspired to retain this ability in consciousness.

Auras are the "real" energy of all material life. Material life is atomic, cellular. Most current definitions describe aura as generated by atomic activity, shadow "fields" which represent the vibrational atomic activity which our normal range of vision cannot quite encompass. Some writers call the aura, to follow this defini-

tion, the subtle emanation of the physical body. But aura means "body of energy." If auras are generated by atomic activity, could we posit that these active atoms would also generate organization?

Energy manifested in the physical represents a vastly complex and miraculously interdependent tapestry of life-being. According to the newest mystical-scientific thought (ref. particularly to the writings of Rupert Sheldrake, Lyall Watson and Lewis Thomas), the Cartesian theory of particle physics is giving way to a new perception. It now appears, thanks to electron spectroscopy technology, that the very essence of our material universe is photonic: LIGHT! Think, the chair you are sitting on, the earth on which it and you are poised - our so-called solid ground - is actually energy.

. . I've perceived auras all my life. That doesn't imply any special wisdom or insight. It is just what was, like breath or sky.

You might ask now, if you are of an investigative and scientific bent, what is energy? And I might reply - God! But I'm the wrong person to ask, you might realize. If you ask Sri Aurobindo, you might get the same answer. In fact the best response I know, bar none, to this question is: **The Life Divine**, and particularly Book One. **The Life Divine** is direct corroboration, for me, of the non-separative vision which is the basis of my sensing world. The Gita says, "Indivisible, but as if divided in beings." (XIII. 17.) The Taittiriya Upanishad says it this way, "[We] arrived at the knowledge that Matter is Bra (III. 2). Sri Aurobindo, in **The Life Divine**, chapter XVI, says this:

We have started with the assertion of all existence as one Being whose essential nature is Consciousness, one Consciousness whose active nature is Force or Will; and this Being is Delight, this Consciousness is Delight, this Force or Will is Delight. Eternal and inalienable Bliss of Existence, Bliss of Consciousness, Bliss of Force or Will whether concentrated in itself and at rest or active and creative, this is God and this is ourselves in our essential, our non-phenomenal being. (p. 42)

It is interesting to note that the better known transpersonal psychologists such as Frances Vaughan, Larry Dossey, Robert Ornstein, Ken Wilber, and June Singer all cite Sri Aurobindo as a source. And they are putting

forth a proposal that we human beings are, collectively, participants in generating our own universe. That we create our own reality. Obviously, in the personal egoic sense we cannot; we are too limited. but in Being, through what Sri Aurobindo called "active surrender," we can all sense our profound energetic interdependence and enter into the play of consciousness.

Aura reading is, as I experience it, a phenomenon of perception related to the Divine play of consciousness. It is a surrender of the separative perception in favor of the non-separative and becomes, through joining in a session together, a certain path into the fourth dimension of coalescent partnership. It is collaborative inquiry of Bliss-Self.

Perceiving auras has meant living in the paradoxical world of split reality: seeing *everything* as coalescent energy-being (fourth dimension) as well as maintaining the so-called normal reality of separative existence perception. Somehow, although I lived according to the separative world perception I felt, inwardly, the clear truth that world is an insolubly interactive dynamic in which everything moves, beautifully, in and through everything else. The paradox is represented, without agonies, by both Mother and Sri Aurobindo. They imply that paradox is a fundamental tension which is natural to the physical world. It is Nature, to have distinctness within the One - Purusha and Prakriti, He and She, me and we.

I think a story might help to share something of my personal development with aura reading. In 1976 I went, with a poet friend, to stay at the author Henry Miller's home in California. That evening Anais Nin's Japanese translator, Rupert Poole (Anais Nin's lover), my friend and I went to dinner. During dinner, the Japanese woman poured out an agonized tale. She felt trapped in Anais Nin's identity: translating Nin's writings, living with Nin's lover in Nin's house. She felt possessed, taken over.

Something strange happened to me during this sharing: I suddenly felt pushed in the back, pushed to reach across the table without a clear sense of what I was doing, take her hand and tell her I wanted to do an "aura reading" for her. Silence. I didn't know *what* I had done! My friend was staring at me. And, yet, the Japanese woman accepted the offer. Suffice it to say that the next day I found myself, at the appointed time, doing an "aura reading" in Henry Miller's house surrounded by his vivid paintings.

I didn't know the term *aura reading*, but I felt a strange trust in the phenomenological possibility. My friend was present and supportive. The Japanese woman, although she was informed that this was an experiment, also seemed to be open and trusting. Essentially, for all



Ariel Browne, Georges Dandrimont, Alok, Clark Bell

Photo by Roderic

of us this was an experiment. It was an experiment that yielded, for me, an experience of more overt surrender to the higher Self, a more realized dance in knowing-integration. The information which came through for the Japanese woman focused on Soul, on energetic interaction, on the essential indivisible nature of all life-being. Thus it was, for the first time in my life, an overt, communicative corroboration of what I had always taken to be the essential nature of the Universe. The only new thing happening was that I was speaking and sharing, guided in it by an ever present Beingness that I had always known, but privately.

It is interesting to note, also, that the Japanese woman found the information which came through in the aura reading helpful. It had to do with affirming a unique bond, in energy, which she had with Anais Nin and which was being played out in the life circumstances. Much information also came through, in this context of higher perception and clairvoyance (clear seeing) which brought a cyclical and wholistic perspective to the particular agony of limitation which she was experiencing. I've found often, in aura readings, that sharing a Soul vision of the life brings a contextual ease to the particular circumstances which are giving such pain. And, like a hologram, the aura is an energetic "picture show" or thought-form representation of Soul embodiment for each person. For every person this is utterly unique. For the Japanese woman it entailed a profound involvement with Anais Nin and a playing out of complex soul precedents, even though Nin was no longer in body.

I felt, during this first aura reading and still, that during the aura reading my personal self is a bystander. And yet this is not mediumship. This is no spirit entity seizing my body and using it. Rather I would venture, after doing hundreds of aura readings, that aura reading

is a phenomenological accessing of the superconscious, or Soul, and it arises out of a partnered/shared inquiry of the Divine. In addition, it is clearly a gift which I have been learning to use through a surrender to inner direction. Each aura reading I do informs me more fully as to what this gift is about, why I am expressing it, and how it serves those who request aura readings. Like the discovery of an ability to paint, or finding that one is mechanically adept at it, is by expressing the gift and using it that the gift describes itself and fleshes itself out.

Perceiving auras involves what I call omni-vision: there is an area in my body, approximately diamond shaped, which encompasses eyes, forehead, nose, brain and an area above the head. This is the specific focus place for the perceptibility used in aura reading. I see clairvoyantly with this sensing area. But it is fourth dimensional, a coalescent seeing, beyond the vital control centers related to the three geometric dimensions. This is more a participatory perception, relational and surrendering, rather than cognitive. One perceives Soul, timeless and specific, expressing the Divine play.

Seeing in this fashion reminds me of something Mother said, I can't quite remember where now, about the subtle organs of the subtle body which function and serve the Being but are not yet perceivable in consciousness. I suspect that this sensing faculty used in perceiving auras may have to do with the subtle seeing ability, bridging into Supermind . . . but I digress.

Around each person is, aurically, an energy identity which manifests as thought forms distinct to that person. I also describe it as a vibrational concert which is, again, distinct to that person. To describe it as a field is accurate because it has magnetic boundary. This boundary is a product of the creative tension which is endemic to all of material life. Most people describe tension pejoratively. I see tension as basic to matter. Material life has an essential vibrational, or rhythmical, nature. This multiplicity of vibrational and rhythmical tensions, in richly varying expressions, makes more than matter. It makes sound. It makes odour. It makes colour.

After doing so many aura readings and studying this phenomenon of the aura I have come to see that there is not only the interplay of biomagnetic tensions there is also a progression taking place, aurically. It is a subtle rising and lifting which seems to be inherent to matter. Everything, in its physical nature is rising, evolving, growing more subtle. This phenomenon is made particular by working with the group of people who are distinguished as devotees of Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

When a person commits to consciousness and enters into active engagement with Soul, however that may be for her, something that I would describe as attentiveness begins to enter into the auric field. The very best description of this attentiveness is, of course, **Mind of the Cells**. Mother models this rapt engagement with the inner Being inherent to us all. This attentiveness is, I believe, a prerequisite for conscious evolutionary work because now that the Supramental Manifestation is working in the cells of our Earth matter, it is also pushing out and replacing the garbage (I have chosen that word care-

fully) of our primitive precedents. The violence, domination, misplaced power, fear, pain imbalance, instability, disconnectedness which we all find inside ourselves cannot coexist with the Supramental. But all this garbage cannot, also, simply be ignored, repressed, denied. The Supramental pushes it up to the surface.

You might ask . . . what is energy? And I might reply - God!

In 1985, a year after I returned from Auroville, I encountered the Rainbow Bridge material. The two source books, **Rainbow Bridge I** and **Rainbow Bridge II**, authored by Norman and Josephine Stevens, puts forth a beautiful system for cleansing the aura/self, responsibly, and acknowledges that we all have a radiant auric body which is retrievable through cleansing. I have found the Rainbow Bridge books to be very useful source books. The material conjuncts beautifully with the Yoga (and are another clear example of how Mother works through people and material to bring about the Superbeing).

The second book, **Rainbow Bridge II**, should be seen for the marvelous paintings of the process of energetic cleansing and of the final radiant Superbeing which is potential in us all. (Norman Stevens lighted up when I asked him about Sri Aurobindo. He said that he and Josephine had met Sri Aurobindo, after his death, in the upper realms during clairvoyant meditation. He said that they met him in a "room of crystal. He was working with crystal, manipulating it . . ." {private conversation - Dec. 1985}). I've added this note regarding Sri Aurobindo because at the time we were having the conversation, there was, literally, a global conversation going on about the crystal for the Matrimandir. I was struck by the timing.)

During a return trip from Matagiri, in 1986, a friend and I were discussing the Supramental Manifestation, how it is showing up in material life. I said that it is showing up already; I see it in everything. He said that it won't show up for hundreds of years. I think we're probably both right. I tend to over-anticipate realization because I perceive subtle energy. In auric terms, the Supramental is already present and already working. It is manifesting as unusual depths of cleansing and healing, transformation of energy, relational potentials, partnership abilities, unusual abilities in knowing-sensing-feeling-telling-making. Even the term *aura*, which was virtually an unknown term in the English language ten years ago is now in very common usage. I kept a file for three years of all the different instances of the term *aura*'s usage. When I heard William F. Buckley use it on the television program *Firing Line*, I closed the file.

When I see the term *aura* used, I read: "DIVINE ENERGY MANIFESTING." It helps keep things in

perspective. But my friend was describing humanity's conscious realization of the Supramental Manifestation, together, and that may take hundreds of years. We are all in that common inability to realize the scope of our evolution because we're involved in it.

This is an exciting and challenging time for humanity. It is a cross millennial time and we're all on a great bridge of evolution moving from the two-thousand year Piscean period to the Aquarian period with its unknown and uncharted characteristics. I've been seeing much more unusual people in aura readings, and the most unusual have been, predominantly, those with a personal relationship to Mother and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. I would describe these people, lovingly, as "space cadets." I use the term positively to describe souls who appear to have an extra-Terran orientation. (I wish I could share with all of you some of the incredible beautiful thought formations which appear in these special auras. I'm seriously considering getting into fourth dimensional painting, but there's the problem of exhibit space . . .)

If the thought seems strange, think of it this way: does it not seem equally strange to imagine that the Divine would manifest its vast play only in Terra? And might it not make sense to you, as it does to me, that as the subtle and omniscient force of The Supramental Manifestation works its transformative pervasion on every aspect of Matter perhaps unusual perspectives, and unusual talents, might be needed to support the creative upheaval of transformation? One often finds these unusual people in positions of influence. It's as if, for the big transition from our primitive beginnings through this cross millennial time into our radiant Superbeing, humanity is calling forth, from the resplendant Self, its latent and gifted potentials.

I've met You in your Superbeing, and you've met me. We may not all fully realize our election, as souls in Matter, and yet it is given to us in this body and in this lifetime to know it.

In doing aura readings for devotees of Mother and Sri Aurobindo, it has been my privilege and gift to have met many unusually gifted individuals. It should also be noted that in my experience all those especially gifted and unusual people, and this includes a much broader spectrum of people than just those in the Yoga, have also experienced an unusual level of suffering. But no matter how terrible their past or present circumstances they are finding, each in his/her unique and irreplaceable fashion, what Mother called "the flame of truth within the cells."

Part of that light is reflective of aura reading which bears to each person who requests it the clear mirror of the Supramental. It calls forth the radiant inner Being through reflection and reassurance; this, I feel, is Mother's hand in the work. Part of that hope, however, is also inherent to his uniquely active time for the human species. I am not so much surprised as corroborated that Mother and Sri Aurobindo described, and anticipated in their beings, the Truth-Consciousness that we are beginning to see come forward. It is really not surprising that this *throw-ahead* Being, at once latent and emerging, is coming forth in response to the Yoga.

I've met You in your Superbeing, and you've met me. We may not all fully realize our election, as souls in Matter, and yet it is given to us in this body and in this lifetime to know it. Deep inside us, and lived out in auras, is an ecstatic communion of recognition.

From what I have been perceiving, we are all starting to join now in the fourth dimension. We don't have to give up distinctions; we just add unity. We're in the circle again and the embrace of recognition and Divine Body is being passed from one radiant being to another, from you to me and to you. We're still *each* and yet we *are* the WE.

. . . the play of consciousness, the play of force and will, that play is the universe and that delight is the sole cause, motive and object of cosmic existence. . . it is one in being with the Divine Consciousness. If we aspire therefore to a divine life, we cannot attain to it by any other way than by unveiling this veiled self in us, by mounting from our present status in the false self or mental ego to a higher status in the true self, the Atman, by entering into that unity with the Divine Consciousness which something superconscious in us always enjoys, - otherwise we could not exist, - but our conscious mentality has forfeited.

(Life Divine. Chap. XLI, p. 143.)



*The effective manifestation
of Ishwara and Ishwari
in union.*

The Matrimandir Crystal

by Joke Thieme

It is June 14, 1988, 9 a.m. Piero, Carel and I are walking under a pale blue, cloudless sky through the peaceful, orderly streets of Oberkochen, the little village amid the wooded hills of Schwabenland where Zeiss has its headquarters. For Carel it's his sixth visit. For Piero and me it is our third visit. This time will probably be the last, for we have come here to inspect the crystal globe; if the result is satisfactory, the globe will become the property of Auroville International on June 15, 1988. AVI will then donate it to Auroville.

As we walk towards the Zeiss complex, I think of the days spent searching for a company able to produce a crystal globe 70 cm. in diameter. Of the people in different countries who helped in the search. Of the technical questions that had to be studied and solved. The years of gathering donations, both small and large, from people all over the world. These efforts, these aspirations have brought the three of us here today. The culmination of all these efforts will be the day when the globe is placed in the completed chamber of Matrimandir on Sri Aurobindo's four symbols.

We enter the spacious reception hall of the Zeiss building. The receptionist hands us identity cards. We are asked to wait. The last time I sat here Julian Lines and Ruud Lohman were with us. As usual, Ruud was joking; "We could," he said "accept the condition that we would have to turn the globe once every thousand years, in order to prevent any eventual deformities due to the semi-liquid nature of glass."

After a few minutes we are taken to a room where people whom we met on earlier visits greeted us. This time they give us a set of slides showing the mould with the liquid glass, the process of cutting the rough block, the different tests and the diverse stages of the polishing. We are told that while testing the globe with fine optical instruments 3 inclusions had been found. One is visible to the naked eye if you peer into the globe from close up. This means that the casting has been more successful than Schott and Zeiss had anticipated. Speaking in technical terms, the globe is really "optical." That is, it's incredibly pure and perfect.

Schott, the company who made the glass, delivered the globe to Zeiss already cut to size and form. The cutting at Schott's was done with a diamond tool which

leaves innumerable little scratches on the surface. Zeiss did the polishing, the fine work of removing the thin layer of little scratches μ after μ (a μ is less than a millimetre), giving the globe its perfect round form. This is a work of great precision and expertise, which took several weeks to complete.

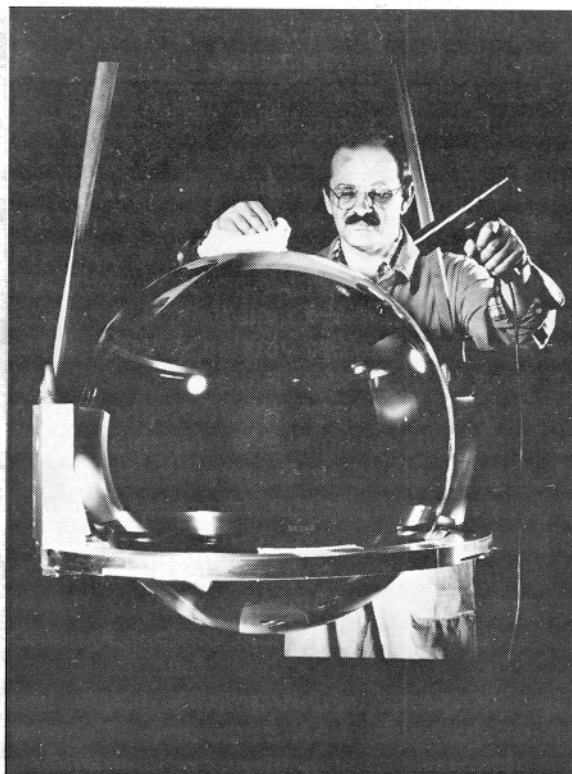
After seeing the slides, we are taken down long corridors into the basement where we enter a room full of polishing machines of various sizes. Among the many objects in the room stands a wooden crate. It contains something round, covered with pieces of white cloth. The cloth is removed as we stand talking. We grow silent as the crystal globe becomes visible to our eyes. Eagerly we approach the globe to have a closer

look. We catch our breath as we look into the crate where the crystal of incredible beauty is resting.

As we stare and look, it starts to move slowly upwards, being lifted out of its crate by an electric pulley. When it is free from the crate, it moves towards us, till it hangs in space and we can stare at it. We drink it in with our eyes. Marvelous. Marvelous. For us it is marvelous.

How can I describe it? It is a perfect globe of pure, crystal clear glass. Colours of surrounding objects are vividly reflected in it, yet at the same time it is so clear, so incredibly clear.

For me it is an object of perfect beauty. It has a quality of silence. Even now, after some days, it comes to my mind's eye. Along with it comes a sense of quietude, of



The crystal at Zeiss

perfect harmony.

We carefully walk around it. We look at it from a distance. We peer into and through it from close range. We kneel on the floor under it and look up at it from beneath. Impressive!

While Piero and Carel talk with the experts about technical details, I approach two friendly looking men with pieces of cloth in their hands who from time to time walk towards the globe to sweep away a few particles of dust here and there. I ask them what kind of cloth they use and they present me with a piece of the soft flannel material. Later on, we discuss the question of how to keep the globe clean. Some guidelines are given. Zeiss will send us full instructions on how to do it when we receive the globe.

As usual, Ruud was joking:
“We could,” he said, “accept
the condition that we would
have to turn the globe once
every thousand years, in
order to prevent any eventual
deformities due to the semi-
liquid nature of glass.”

We have to tear ourselves away from this superb object for a detailed discussion of the test-certificate, the question of storage, insurance, transport and guarantee. This globe, the biggest crystal globe ever made in the world, now waits in the basement of the Zeiss complex for the moment when the chamber is ready.

Schott made it known to the press that Zeiss and they had created the largest man-made crystal. That afternoon two teams of German television networks, a radio reporter and a journalist from a local newspaper arrived. We descended once more into the Zeiss basement. This time the crystal was hanging perfectly still in its transparent beauty. It was surrounded by a battery of cameras and lamps. Reporters dashed at us with microphones ready and started to shoot off their questions. Halfway through the interview, Carel and I had to leave to catch the last train to Holland. We left without a second look at the crystal. A happy Piero, because at least one aspect of Matrimandir was completed, was left to answer further questions.

I thought how symbolic it is that the innermost aspect of Matrimandir is completed first. After all, Matrimandir builds itself from within.

All as the evening shadows were blending soft in the darkness,
Under the brilliant stars in their vessels crossing the black seas,
Low in the west was an ultimate vision and rapture of beauty,
Streaming as never before with its love all depths of the holy,
Taking him up in assurance and clarity splitting his hard cast:
West and east were one and one the zenith and nadir,
North and south were meaningless, evening passed into morning,
All was the blessed dawn and the fragrant waft of the aether,
Flakes and fingers of flame and a sudden stir of the waters:
There in the burst of the sun as the cloud-cleaving horses came onward
Rose a woman with cry of all meaning and eyes of the future,
All the rich mane of her hair a cascading torrent of waters,
Smoothing away in their foam as her breasts the cream of the full tide
Rose, and her exquisite form was revealed, as gambolling about her
Came the seals and the dolphins with glad assent to her leaving,
Offering life to the world: and her soft feet trod on the smoothness,
Naked all truth she came, and her lips were the summit of laughter,
Eyes the expression of all the most noble thoughts and endeavors,
Hopes and sustaining dreams and bright revelations of morning
There as she moved in her floods of light all rose of the aether,
Golden deepening glow as her flanks came broad to his presence,
Where she wheeled in her dance, the ascendant queen of the waters:
Swiftly she was afar, and she whirled in a current of flame that
Grew, and steadily walked with a marvellous swift-ness upon him,
All aflame, and ecstatic, a golden host of the pure flame,
Golden and red, with a brilliance of whiteness clear at the center,
Harder than diamond and softer than petals caressing the lover,
As on she came in a silent rush to deafen forever
Ears of a failing world that would heed the call of the darkness,
Into him wholly, who stood where the star dipped under the long verge.

People

Ko Chenabasappa, founder of the Vivekananda Center in Bangalore, and a visitor to the Ashram since the Supramental Day in 1956, spoke to numerous audiences in Washington, D.C. and the Chicago area, after participating in the AUM meeting in Denver and visiting the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles. **Helen Lee** of Connecticut, who arranged his tour, held a reception in her home. It was attended by numerous area residents including **Roger Cowen** and **John White**, author and editor of a number of books on spiritual disciplines.

Dr. V.M. Reddy spent May and June visiting disciples in California, Texas and New York. He presented his Aurodarshan project, a learning center for the promotion of Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future. A number of Dr. Reddy's books are available from the Sri Aurobindo Association including **Meta-History, No-lini: Arjuna of Our Age, Yoga of the Rishis, and Celebration Future: The Next Millennium**. His most recent effort honors Champaklal with a collection of essays and recollections.



Mohan Mistry, Champakal, Sam Spanier

For the second time in three years, we have been privileged to have **Champaklal** spending some time with disciples here. **Kamalaben** again traveled with him, as did **Mohan Mistry**. Mohan, who teaches music at the Ashram, sang devotional songs while accompanying himself on the harmonium. The intensity of the lyrics, combined with Champaklal's presence made for an extraordinary experience.

They arrived from Montreal and visited the home of **Dushyant Desai** in New Jersey, which houses Sri Aurobindo's relics in a marble shrine. After visiting the homes of many friends, including a sweet return to Matagiri, they proceeded on a whirlwind tour of the rest of the U.S. including South Carolina, California, Colorado, Illinois and Ohio.

The Sri Aurobindo Association hosted the party for a tour of the United Nations, the Nicolas Roerich Museum, and sponsored a concert by Mohan at the Cath-

edral of St. John the Divine. They also attended a slide show and talk on Auroville at the New York Open Center where **Julian Lines** showed slides of the crystal for Matrimandir.

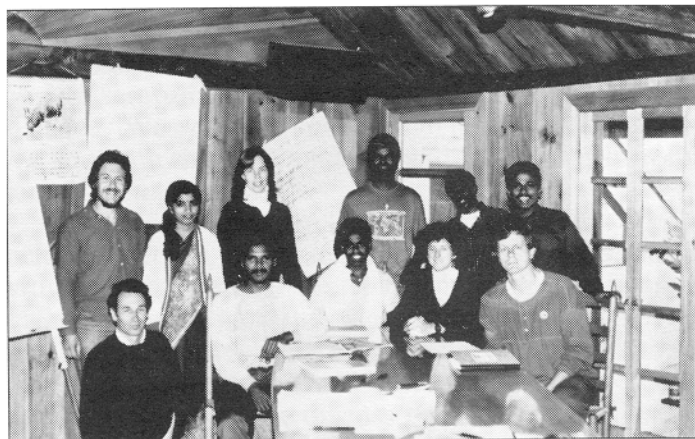
Edgar and Chitra Neogy-Tezak, Shashikant Desai, Advait and Shree Dwivedi, Ila Motiwala and numerous friends across America offered their kind hospitality to Champaklal and party.

For those of you who missed Champaklal, we can only report that his tour unfolded spontaneously and without much advance planning. By keeping in regular contact with The Sri Aurobindo Association you can be informed of last minute programs in your area.

Four Aurovilians, **Boominathan, Kanniappan, Kumar and Ponnusamy** spent the months of July and August in the Northeast as part of the Inquiry Apprentice Program sponsored by Merriam Hill Center. They lived and worked in Sirius, a community near Amherst, Massachusetts. While there, they were able to compare Sirius with Auroville and developed close relationships with many of Sirius' 20 members.

They also visited the Northeast Organic Farmer's Association annual meeting, Sterling College in northern Vermont where **Narayanaraj**, an Aurovillian, is studying forestry, Boston, the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont, New York City and Matagiri to give slide show presentations on Auroville.

Kanniappan wrote the following: One of our friends from Sirius introduced us to Walter, the man he works for. Walter is 85 years old, but he looked young and active. They both took us to the hay field and showed us how they cut hay and make bundles with a machine. It was very interesting to see the machine cut the hay and bundle it, but if I think about India or Auroville, we provide work for people to make their living. In the USA they only use machines to do the work. But I liked seeing that 85 year old person drive tractor, car, lift heavy bundles of hay and manage the 360 farm and woods. I wish that I can be like him when I am his age.



David Lovler, Jacques, Malati, Suzan MacDonald, Kanniappan, Boomi, Kumar, Jean, Narayanaraj, Ponnusamy, Gordon at Merriam Hill

Center News

Wilmot Center
P.O. Box 2
Wilmot, WI 53192

The center is focusing its current efforts in two directions, the Institute for Wholistic Education and Lotus Light Publications.

The Institute for Wholistic Education has now funded a position for a teacher to develop an integral education program for young children based on the free progress system of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Applications are being reviewed and we are hoping to finalize the choice of this teacher by 1989. We are looking for someone to develop and organise the program, and integrate it with the needs of children growing up in the USA, who have to live in a complex, technological world, while they develop the spiritual and psychological aspects of Sri Aurobindo's education.

The Institute is also running a course in the healing science of Ayurveda. It emphasises Ayurveda as the "science of life" in order to integrate it into our culture. The first segment of this course begins September 15 and ends in May.

Lotus Light Publications has recently published a work by Sri Aurobindo entitled, **Vedic Symbolism**, compiled by Sri M. P. Pandit. It is working on two more titles for the fall of 1988; **Wisdom of the Upanishads** and **The Upanishads: Gateways of Knowledge**, both compiled by Sri M. P. Pandit. A major new text on herbology titled; **Planetary Herbology** by Michael Tierra should be available in October 1988.

The center continues to welcome visitors from many parts of the world and holds meditations on auspicious occasions.

Le Centre Sri Aurobindo
4127 Rue Saint-Denis
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

On August 15, 1987 Madeliene Gosselin unveiled the marble shrine containing Sri Aurobindo's relics. Carlos Calado, a well-known Montreal artist, designed the shrine which consists of two large steps, the first a blue marble cube representing the ascent and holding the relics in its center, the second a white column expressing the descent of light. These steps are topped by a pink lotus, the symbol of the Avatar. The shrine measures four feet at its base, five feet in height and weighs around five hundred kilos. The blue marble came from Brazil and the white and pink marble were brought from Portugal by Mr. Calado.

The Centre was founded in 1965 and is the only one in Canada. It seems appropriate that this center was the first outside India to receive the relics. Mr. Christyn Feuillette had the privilege of bringing the fragments of Sri Aurobindo's hair and nails to the North American

continent. On the first floor of the building, which now houses residents, there is a shop that sells Sri Aurobindo books as well as incense and handicrafts. The meditation room, where the shrine is installed is located on the second floor. The Centre is open to the public for collective meditations on Sunday evenings from 8 to 8:30 p.m.



The shrine at Le Centre, Montreal

Willow Gold Farm/Global Views
Route 3
Spring Green, WI 53588

Global Views is the non-profit educational organization that sponsors the international festivals at the Willow Gold Farm each summer. It also believes that travel cultivates a sensitive appreciation of the ideas and experiences of other cultures. It seeks to serve travelers by offering them a personal experience of Asia through culturally conscious tourism. Their service puts travelers in touch with the lives and cultures of people living in Asian countries. The staff of Global Views arranges visits with artists and craftspeople and to historical sites and cultural performances. Activities and programs are designed as a process of exchange that often leads participants to experience personal change and growth.

If you are interested in an alternative for human interaction write Global Views and request a copy of their 1988-89 tour brochure or call them at 608 583-5311.

Matagiri
Mount Tremper, New York 12457

About 50 people attended the celebration of Sri Aurobindo's birthday on August 14, 1988. Eric Hughes read from **Mother's Agenda**, the group listened to a tape of Mother talking to disciples, and a collective meditation followed. A delicious pot luck lunch was served after the meditation. Then attendees gathered to listen to Bhajans sung by Mohan Mistry from the Ashram accompanying himself on harmonium with Gordon on flute.

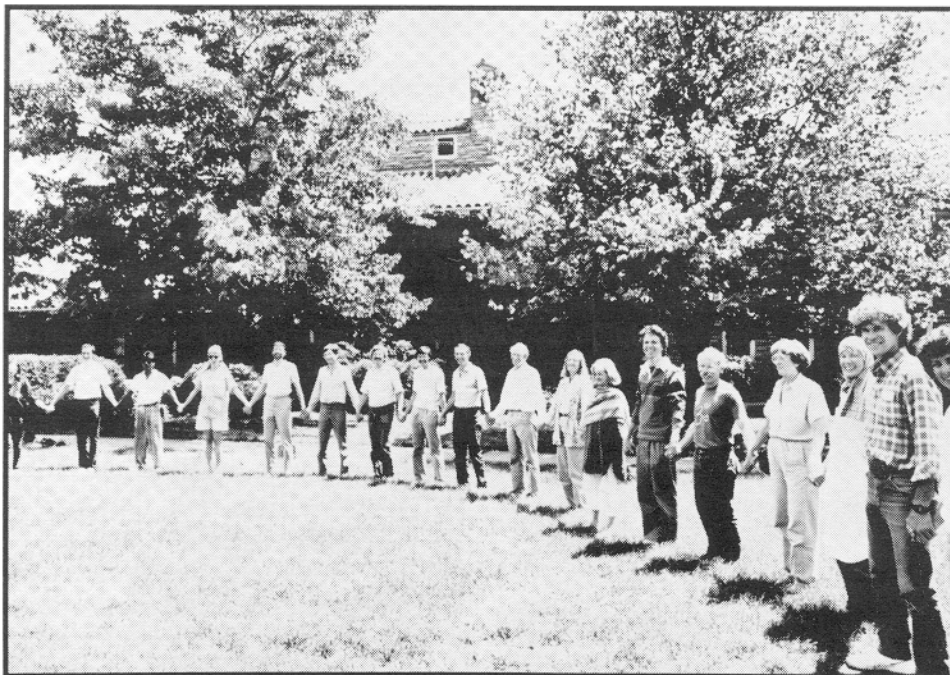
Sri Aurobindo Association
P.O.Box 372
High Falls, New York 12440

The Association is once again participating in the annual New York is Book Country festival on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The theme is travel. **The Adventure of Consciousness** and **The Problem of Rebirth** will be our featured titles. A travel brochure with information on visiting India and a list of study groups will be distributed.

A retreat is being planned for October 8 through 10, 1988 at the Merriam Hill Center's Coolidge House in Greenville, N.H. Please contact the office for an up-to-date activity schedule. If you have an event or activity you wish included in our schedule or **Collaboration** call Julian Lines at the office, (914) 687-9222.

AUM 89

The Sri Aurobindo Association in High Falls plans to host the 1989 AUM for five days: June 30th through July 4th. We want to invite scholars and disciples to discuss the theory and practice of Sri Aurobindo's yoga at next year's AUM. If you are interested in participating in the planning or can lead a group on some aspect of the yoga, please contact the High Falls office. In the meantime, set these dates aside so that you can participate in this special gathering.



Clothing Circle, AUM 88

photo by Roderic

The Invisible Road

Rod Hemshall reviews *Mysticism* by Sisirkumar Ghose

Professor Ghose, unraveller of the fine threads of hidden meaning, seeker of the non-existent middle term, finds himself on the track of the inexpressible in the mystical utterance. And we find him at home in this most recent tome of his life's work, at a crossroads in our own lives perhaps, asking along with this wayfarer, "Are we treading on the mystery of mutation, the invisible road running through history?"

He is speaking of the silence mirrored by the mystic's words, to which his hieratic path leads us, and which empowers us with being. "The renewal of insight or visionary power is the hidden link between mysticism and literature. The emergence of Being out of non-Being, a recurring enigma, is the climax of creativity."

Professor Ghose... finds himself on the track of the inexpressible in the mystical utterance.

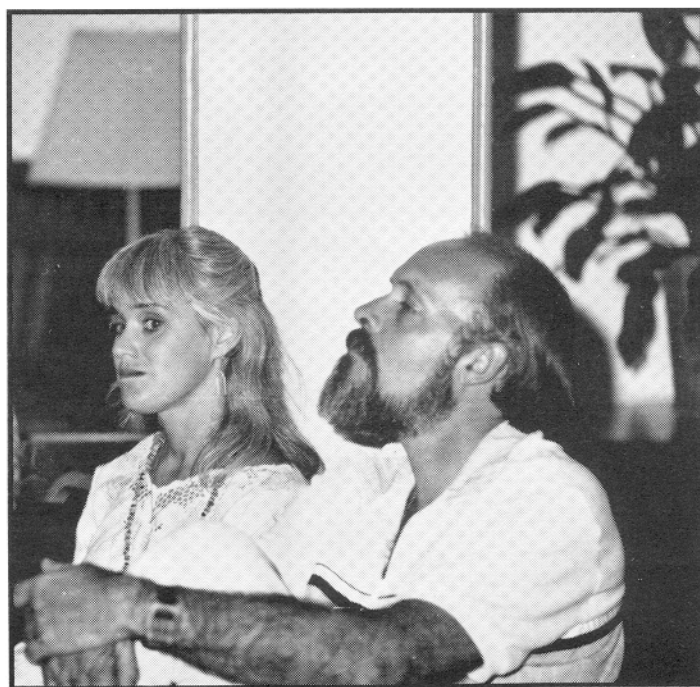
To illustrate his thesis, Ghose provides reviews of the works of such authors as Tagore, Thomas Merton, Gopi Krishna, and Sri Aurobindo along with numerous references to everyone from Aquinas and Eckhart to Teilhard and Toynbee. A professor of literature at Santiniketan for decades, National Fellow and National Lecturer during the 70's and 80's, twice contributor of articles on mysticism to Encyclopedia Britannica, Dr. Ghose is an encyclopedic author, aware of the dangers of mere verbosity, clearly more a disciple than devotee. Here his usual alliterative sense and wit are intact as he persistently cuts away at the superfluous and exposes the impertinences. "In fact decibels underscore our undoing. Could silence be an alternative?"

He practices the art of the literary review; his chapters are collections of critical essays and commentaries rather than systematic expositions. One has the sense in this volume that it is not for its own sake, but for the sake of truth alone that it is done. The entire book is rich in references to his real mentors and inspiration - Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath, and Aldous Huxley. In *Modern and Otherwise* (1974), which was the first of his books that I reviewed, he was criticizing the critics in Indian academia and the techniques of the modern in general, in juxtaposition to true literary values. In *Mystics as a Force for Change*, published in America by the Theosophical Publishing House in 1981, his focus was on the contradictions and paradoxes of the mystical and the social, sacred and profane, literature and life. Aldous Huxley wrote a Foreword to the first edition in 1963 in which he said, "Thanks to Dr. Ghose's

wide reading and his gift of discriminating selection this book is among other things, a valuable anthology of texts, ancient and modern, Western and Eastern."

Then in *Lost Dimensions* (New Delhi 1982), he became stridently critical of modern scientific-technological-industrial civilization, which he interpreted as the night before the dawn of a new age. But in both of these volumes, which I reviewed in '82, I felt disappointed that one so attuned to the vision of Sri Aurobindo, so intimately familiar with his and Tagore's poetry, should have so little to say about them. This is not the case in the present volume. Here he goes to the heart of high visionary literature and reveals the masters' art with characteristic eloquence. It is for this reason that he is rightly considered among the most competent of Sri Aurobindo's literary disciples.

Now that Sisirkumar Ghose has retired from professional academic life, perhaps he could be persuaded, as Huxley once tried to do without success, to spend some time in America speaking the word of those masters whose message has indeed fallen silent among the mass of standardized terms, the empty clichés and forced empty structures by which we live and think. Having spent a long while interpreting western literature to India, he might well do the reverse for us. An occasional Huxlean criticism from Ghose is certainly not a bad thing. "The quality of life cannot improve unless the quality of persons improve. The quest of the authentic self may be our only atonement for the errors and excesses of a schizoid, self-destroying system." His conclusion, dropped with a note of candor: "Meditate or perish."



Mirra Browne and Rod Hemshall at AUM 88

Do you know what
is true love?

There is only one true
love the love from
the Divine which, in
human beings, turns
into love for the Divine.

Shall we say that
the nature of the Divine
is love,