

AUROVILLE TODAY

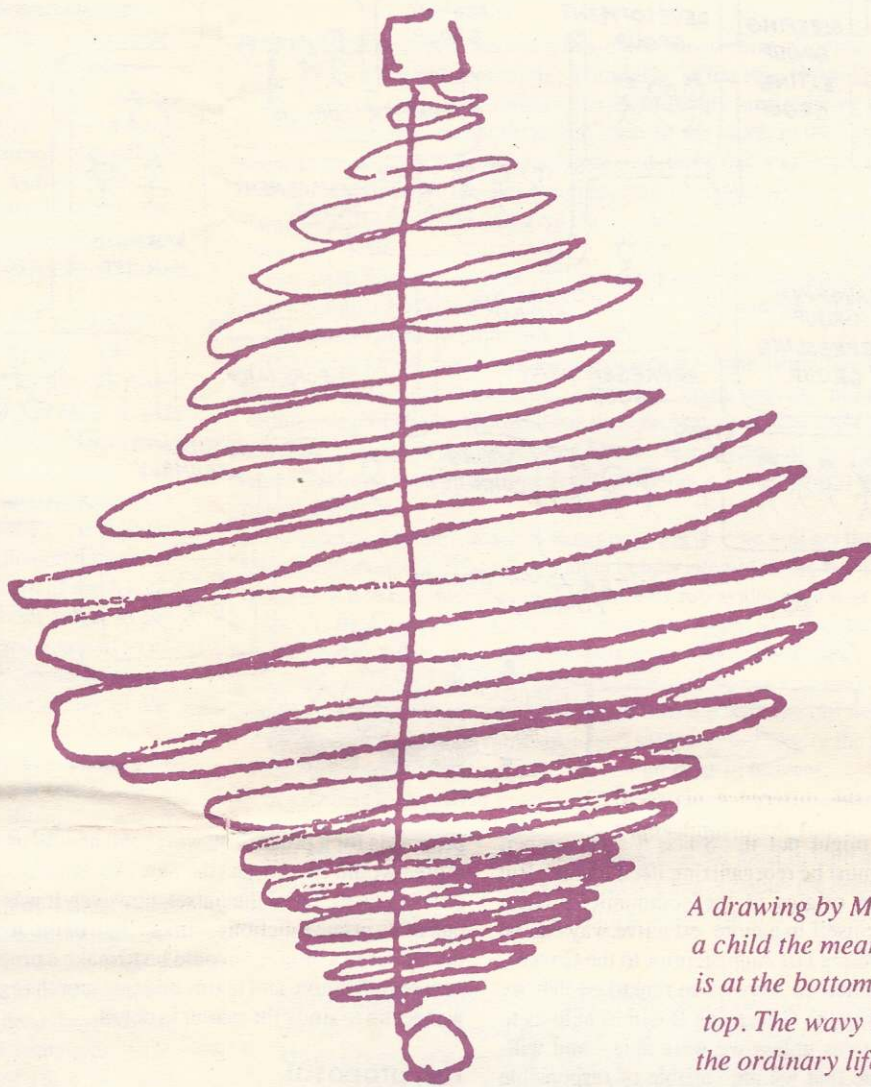
December 1993, Number Fifty-Nine

Except for tree-planters and those involved in land work, November tends to be a quieter month for the community; a time, as the monsoon rains pour down (and they've been good this year), to take breath before the main season for visitors bursts upon us in December, to continue until March.

The next season will be particularly busy as it includes, among other things, the visit of the Dalai Lama in late December and an international UNESCO-sponsored seminar in February on the theme of 'Humanity at the Crossroads: Evolution of Consciousness'.

The international seminar will be preceded by an internal Auroville seminar—provisionally entitled 'Auroville at the Crossroads'—which will challenge us, as a community, to consider the various directions the community is taking in the light of Auroville's ideals. In this issue of *Auroville Today* we begin that process with an article that reminds us of the need to step into another dimension, and Mother's sketch that graphically illustrates the difference between the straight path of yoga and the meandering path of the ordinary life—a crossroads that we face at every moment of our lives.

In addition, we include a review of Satprem's latest book, 'Evolution II'; we present various 'faces' of the community through a series of portraits—of an individual Aurovilian, of a new enterprise and of two established units; we describe yet another attempt at community reorganization, and we end with a perspective on Auroville from a guest.



A drawing by Mother to explain to a child the meaning of Yoga. Man is at the bottom, the Divine at the top. The wavy line is the path of the ordinary life, the straight line that of Yoga.

(Reproduced from The Mother, Paintings and Drawings. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust)

Auroville At The Crossroads

IS Auroville at a crossroads? In one sense, that is where Auroville belongs: at the intersection where the vertical line of involution and evolution meets the horizontal line of manifestation.

But the phrase 'at the crossroads' usually implies that some crucial decision needs to be taken, and that there is uncertainty about the direction to be chosen. In such cases it's helpful to have a map. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have provided us with a wide variety of maps, to various scales. The handiest version for most of us, readily accessible and specially designed for our daily needs, consists of the Mother's messages on and for Auroville. The key texts are, of course, the Charter, and 'To be a true Aurovilian'. These remind us of the goal we have chosen, and offer some essential pointers about how to get there.

Our goal is a unity that is totally transparent, like the crystal in the chamber, receiving the pure ray from above and spreading it everywhere, a oneness that embraces everything. The human unity she has asked us to realise is not something to be achieved, but something to be experienced. Only when it becomes a living experience for us will we be able to express it, spontaneously, in all our feelings and actions.

Instead, at present we experience a clash and confusion of conflicting opinions, tendencies and aspirations. We face so many practical problems, and find it difficult to square

the conditions of our daily life with the ideal we have chosen. How to get from here to there?

Perhaps by stepping into another dimension?

If we look at our map, the Mother tells us:

"The first necessity is the inner discovery, in order to know what one truly is behind the social, moral, racial and hereditary appearances.

At our centre there is a free, vast and conscious being who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the active centre of our being and our life in Auroville."¹

All the rest follows from this. Only when a sufficient proportion of us have this realisation will our society and our economy spontaneously become more expressive of the inner truth of Auroville.

The map says:

"What is needed to administer Auroville is a consciousness free from all conventions and conscious of the supramental Truth. I am still waiting for someone like that. Each one must do his best to achieve that."²

But meanwhile, whatever form of administration we may be functioning under, nothing but our own forgetfulness or unconsciousness can prevent any of us from putting all the resources we control into her hands at any moment, by offering them consciously to her for her use.

And:

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

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."³

This is not a thing that can be done for other people, or that other people can do for us.

So let's follow the map, where the Mother tells us:

"Be more concerned with your own faults than with those of others. If each one worked seriously at his own self-perfection, the perfection of the whole would follow automatically."⁴

Shraddhavan

(References are to *Words of the Mother*, Centenary Library Vol. 13

1: 13:213

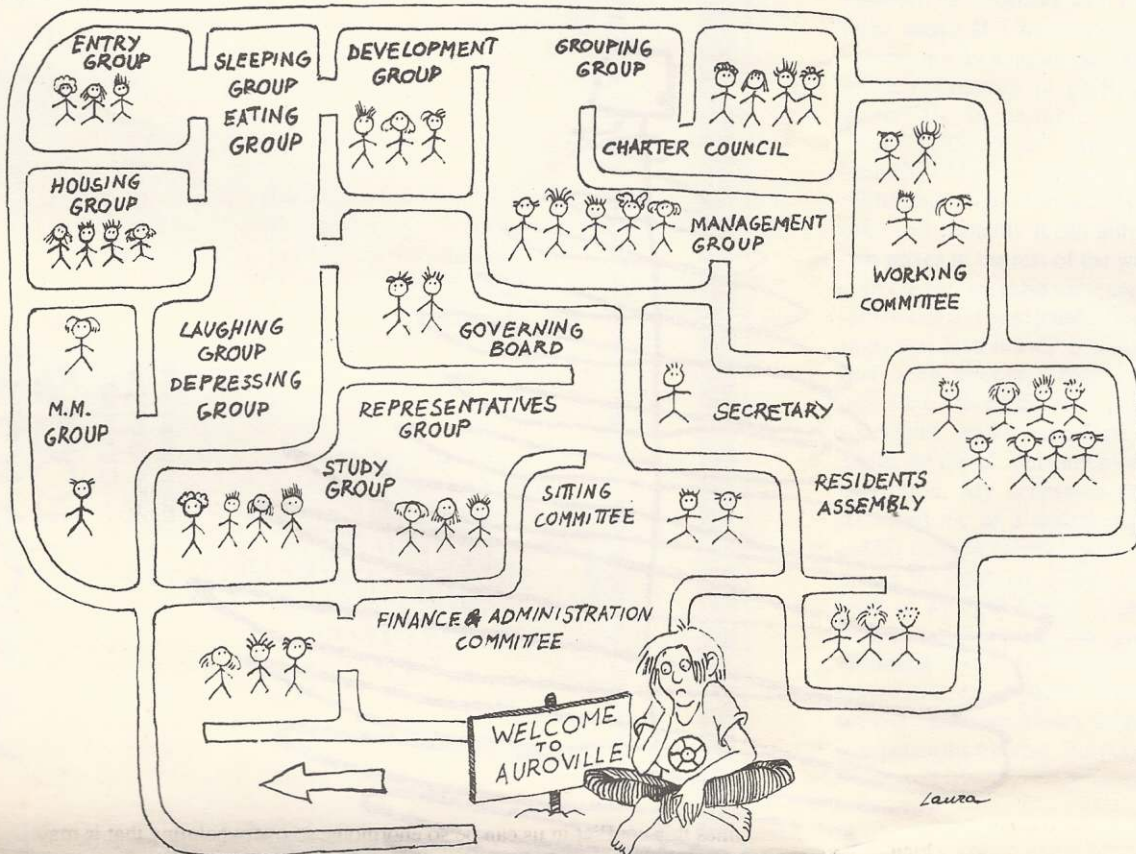
2: 13:215

3: 13:218

4: 13:206)

Organizing ourselves... Again!

Recently, a new proposal for overhauling our internal organization was presented to the community. It hasn't been received enthusiastically, and is very unlikely to be implemented in its present form. But it does reflect a widely held concern about strengthening our internal organization, and it represents one perspective on the process.



As a cynic might put it, "Since it's November, Auroville must be reorganizing itself again". But actually the origins of the community's latest attempt to organize itself in a more effective way can be traced back to a meeting last August, prior to the Governing Board's visit, when an Aurovilian remarked that we couldn't go on asking the Governing Board to help us to acquire a special status unless we were able—and willing—to demonstrate that we are capable of responsible self-government. And this perception gained currency when we realized that if we didn't get down to better organizing certain aspects of our community life, we would continue to give the Secretary generous scope to intervene in our internal processes. At a subsequent meeting with the Governing Board, therefore, the community stated its intention to come up with a new model for its internal organization within six months.

The problem

Actually, Auroville has had an effective grassroots organization—in the form of semi-autonomous work groups—for many years. The problem, for proponents of a new organization, is fourfold. Firstly, there is inadequate coordination and sharing of information between these groups, leading to overlapping projects and wasted energy. Secondly—and relating to this—there is no body at present which takes special responsibility for focussing upon the overall direction of Auroville, and for relating the present varied activities to our ideal. Thirdly, there is lacking a body which, being representative of different work areas and trends in Auroville, meets regularly to discuss and process issues in preparation for presentation to the Residents Assembly. And finally, perhaps crucially, the community has often not been able to effectively implement decisions taken at community meetings due to the refusal of certain of its members to recognize the existing decision-making process as valid.

In fact, the third point has already generated action as, on the initiative of the previous Working Committee, a so-called 'Representatives Group' composed of representatives of work groups and different orientations within the community, was set up some three months ago and has been meeting weekly ever since. Its work so far has included assisting the Working Committee in its dealings with the Secretary and Governing Board, and

proposals for a process by which the new Working Committee would be chosen (the new Working Committee is now in place). From the outset, however, it was clear that one of its prime functions—in the light of the statement to the Governing Board—would be to make a proposal for a new organization, and to this end two months ago a group was set up to study the matter in detail.

The proposal

Recently, it presented an interim proposal. Its main recommendation is that a new internal organization be set up parallel to the organization of the Auroville Foundation. While two interface bodies—the Working Committee and the Finance and Administration Committee—would serve to link the two organizations, the essential thrust of the proposal is towards making our internal organization as autonomous as possible. In addition to familiar elements like the working groups and the General Assembly—which would continue to give its final approval to all community guidelines and policies—the study group proposed three new groups. One of them, the *Representatives Group*, is already in existence, but the study group's proposal would refine its composition by suggesting that it be constituted of 40 Aurovilians, 30 of whom would be selected by working groups and 10 by the General Assembly on an annual basis. Its functions would be to develop all policies and guidelines to the point where they could be presented to the General Assembly, to review major issues in Auroville and try to find solutions to problems generated by these issues. The *Management Group* would consist of seven people, six of whom would be selected by the General Assembly and would relate to and represent each of six resource groups (a novel way of dividing up the existing numerous working groups), and a seventh who would be a delegate from the Working Committee. Acting as the secretariat of the Representatives Group, they would implement the approved policies and guidelines of Auroville. The third new body, the *Charter Council*, would be an advisory body constituted of six Aurovilians, three men and three women, selected by the General Assembly. The Council would have two major roles. To try to identify a general direction for Auroville, and to comment upon particular issues in the light of the Charter.

How was this proposal received? The Representatives Group was very appreciative of the energy that the study

group had put into the proposal, and for underlining the need for strengthening our internal organization. However, the group was divided concerning whether or not it was worth pursuing this particular proposal any further. Certain reservations were expressed, for example, about the need for a Charter Council ("Who has the insight to interpret the Charter for us?"), about the wisdom of creating three new groups when it was already difficult to find people willing to serve on the Working Committee, and perhaps most important, about the ability of this new organization to implement decisions any more successfully than former organizations in the absence of any suggested procedure for decision-making. It was pointed out that the crucial ingredient is the spirit in which we work together rather than the outer form, and it was further suggested that we first define what we want to organize ourselves for—in other words, to define a direction for Auroville—before we come up with the organization itself. To which the study group replied that an effective organization was a prerequisite for considering such matters; a classic example of the chicken and egg bind.

Underlying factors

And, perhaps, of deeper differences. Because when we consider why Auroville has so often come up with new forms of organization, and why each shining new model is so quickly dispatched to the junkyard, we become aware of certain underlying factors that are not generally addressed directly in our debates. Undoubtedly, one of these factors is that the collective consciousness of Auroville is generally not well developed. Many of us continue to be far more conscious of the needs of our individual cell than of the organism as a whole, and this prevents us from realizing the need for an improved collective organization. There are others, of course, who would prefer not to submit themselves to any form of collective process which would interfere with their perceived freedom of action.

Another factor which militates against a strong collective organization in Auroville is the deep suspicion many Aurovilians have of authority, fostered both by their upbringing—many of us are 'children of 1968'—and by experiences of manipulation and power trips within Auroville itself. The very nature of the ideal that Mother places before us is another important factor. For the gap between the ideal Mother put before us ("*Organization is a discipline of action, but for Auroville we aspire to go beyond arbitrary and artificial organizations. We want an organization which is the expression of a higher consciousness working to manifest the truth of the future*") and our efforts is so huge that a feeling of inadequacy often forces us to break down what we have set up in the effort to come up with something closer to our goal. In fact, energetically Auroville can be seen to be a balancing act between the need to create interim forms to concentrate our energies and the need to transcend them before they imprison us.

At root, however, different attitudes to organization may reflect radical differences—part temperamental, part doctrinal—regarding how we should move towards our goal. To simplify, there are those—the 'structuralists'—who believe that only through a strong outer organization and outer directedness can Auroville create the conditions necessary for reaching our goal. Others—the 'intuitives'—believe that any organization can only be a by-product, a consequence, of an individual and collective development which cannot be planned or imposed. A third group—the 'anarchists'—distrust any form of 'mental' or interim organization as an interference with the free play and manifestation of Mother's force.

Each group, of course, is adept at quoting Sri Aurobindo and Mother to support their position. And that, of course, is the point. Because, from their perspective, there is no contradiction between 'structure' and 'spirit', between 'order' and 'anarchy'. The problem for us, the reason why we continue to argue one position against another, is that we simply have not reached that point where seeming opposites find their harmony.

The challenge

The real challenge, therefore, is to clearly understand—at all levels—what Mother wanted of us in terms of organization and then, individually and collectively, to ask Her for guidance in manifesting it. This may involve transforming many of our cherished notions of freedom and democracy. It may require of us a whole new level of trust and openness both to the Force and to each other. It will take time; it will take a supreme effort. But, in the long run, what's the alternative?

Alan

Bearing Witness

BOOK REVIEW: EVOLUTION II, by Satprem.

Available from the Institute for Evolutionary Research, USA (address below)
Translated from the French (édition Rober Laffont), 1992

"Man's essential quality is perhaps to call everything in question", Satprem writes in his latest book *Evolution II*, and today as the Earth strains in upheaval, is it not the burden of our very species that is being called into question? "Will man using the tool of his mind understand the situation and seize the lever of change? The lever that will bring the victory over death, the end of this endless ballad of hanged men? . . . We seek nothing less than a hidden yet inherent lever or spring in this body which would open for us the doors of a new evolution . . . For the great floodgate of the new evolution is open, it is no longer a promise for future times, it is being done."

In his previous book *The Revolt Of The Earth* Satprem referred to the notebooks he had been keeping of his own odyssey of discovery—"The Notebooks of an Apocalypse" as he called them. In *Evolution II* he shares with the reader many of the amazing and overwhelming experiences he has been having for the last ten years.

As he describes it, beyond the last reaches of the overmind, spirit and matter seem to fuse as the body enters into a forbidden zone, a no-man's land, characterized by a "crushing density . . . a fourth state of matter, no longer solid or liquid or gaseous, but something else!"

"The farther we penetrate into that dense radiance", Satprem observes, "the deeper down we are simultaneously thrust into a no less increasing resistance. The denser the power grows, the deeper it bores into resistant corporeal layers..." He compares the experience to the relentless pounding of a drop hammer or to lightning hurtling through the body's conduit rebounding as it hits a refractory, basalt-like base, below the feet.

"The lightning falls there, rebounds against the obstacle, rises to fall again, and again and again with each breath." What starts as a few drops becomes a Niagara, an experience of the "mighty waters" that the

Vedic Rishis hymned. "At first the body remains long unable to bear that cataract", and yet the descending density seems dosed to just what the body can bear, and progressively it adjusts.

"None of the old laws of the body hold, and after years of breathing in this new force the body knows there is another law—a single law, the new law, that of the other side of the waters, the other side of death." A new physiology, a phenomenon of superimposed existences or ways of breathing takes over, the body becomes completely porous—"frighteningly vulnerable", he remarks—as the veil lifts between the worlds of so-called living and the dead, and the body has the physical experience of the omnipresence of matter.

"He has entered earth and heaven as if they were one."

Each chapter is headed by a quote from the Vedas that corresponds in a vivid and symbolic way to the experiences Satprem is describing. The body is the key, "the crucible in which the meeting of heaven and earth is being worked out . . . a cellular bridge of the old species that could rebuild its world as it did at the dawn of the Ages." But how does a human body adapt to the fluid density of this new and mighty force? Sri Aurobindo left luminous hints in his writings about the subtle process of the Great Work:

"The subtle process will be more powerful than the gross, so that a subtle action of Agni will be able to do the action which would now need a physical change such as increased temperature."

It is truly a journey from which, once embarked upon, there is no turning back. As Satprem remarks "I do not know what is going to happen: I am living the event from day to day." Forging ahead beyond our known frontiers Satprem bears witness in this book to the workings of a new force and the makings of a new world in our midst.

Roger

A New Way of Being

Luc Venet has been a close associate of Satprem for many years and heads the Institute for Evolutionary Research in the USA. Together with Satprem he wrote *Life Without Death* (1985). The following letter states his view of the importance of Satprem's work. The letter is reprinted from the cover of the October 1, 1993 issue of *NexUS*, a newsletter for the USA centres of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

THERE is a new world on this earth, a new way of being. Something has been achieved concretely, materially, a first step toward a new species, a new race that is to replace or supersede the human beings that we are.

This is not evolution in the normal sense of the word, in the Darwinian sense; it is a *breakthrough*, a sudden opening of something that was impossible before.

This breakthrough has been prepared and brought about by all the work Sri Aurobindo did while He was in his body, and all the work He is still doing behind the veil of death.

This breakthrough has been secured and won by all the work Mother did while She was in her body—of which the 'Agenda' bears witness—and all the work She is still doing behind the thin veil of death.

The result of this breakthrough is that a first human being like us has been able to pass through to the 'other side', beyond the conditions that imprison our species within a wall of death. That wall has been broken, or at least sufficiently cracked to allow the passage of a human being like us. The passage to the other side has been accompanied by much pain, much suffering, but it has been won by a human being named Satprem.

Now, for us, the only question is to know whether we will get the clue and follow him to the other side. The more human beings attempt it, the less painful, the more 'natural' it will become; the crack in the wall gets wider each time.

This is, truly, the only question confronting us today. It is *the* question being asked of each living and breathing human being, and there is no other.

Indeed, this work is entirely personal, not a group work, some of us may have to reach a certain point of 'saturation' or suffocation with the old world, the old way of being, and this is what causes pain and suffering, because of the conflict between what our soul wants and what the old mortal parts in us want.

Sometimes this conflict in us can be so enormous, so overwhelming that it may appear to lead to a catastrophe or even a destruction.

But through all catastrophes and destructions we must remain as one-pointed as possible, with the goal as clearly in front of us as possible: the destruction is *not* the goal. Another way of being and breathing on this earth is the goal.

Luc Venet. Baca, August 15, 1993.

The Institute for Evolutionary Research publishes and distributes the English translations of *l'Agenda de Mère* and Satprem's books in the USA.

The Institute's address in the USA is: 1621 Freeway Drive, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273 In India: Mira Aditi Centre, 52 Sriranga 1st Cross 4th Stage, Kuvempunagar, Mysore 570023,

A LETTER

Conscious of the whole world

Recently, June Maher and other members of Auroville International USA participated in the Chicago Parliament of the World's Religions, which was convened by several sponsoring organizations in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the original Parliament at which Vivekananda gave his famous speech. Many Aurovilians had doubts at Auroville being represented at the Parliament as Mother made it clear that Auroville is not a place for religion. June sent us a copy of a letter she wrote for the Auroville International USA Newsletter about the programme that was presented by her and the others on Auroville's behalf. We reprint the letter here which gives her perspective on the presentation.

I learned about the event when I returned from Auroville in March and an invitation was extended by the Sri Aurobindo Association to share a booth at

the Parliament. We were also asked if a programme on Auroville could be organized. I volunteered.

I had reservations about the 'religious' theme but none the less felt that it was important to have an Auroville presence there. On entering the golden lobby of the Palmer House Hilton Hotel on that first day I experienced the vibrant possibility, very concretely, of 'human unity in diversity', a human unity field that was alive, harmonious—not theoretical. Who would have imagined that in a hotel, in Chicago! That week became for me this: "When you are conscious of the whole world at the same time, then you can become conscious of the Divine."

The 152 pages of the programme guide began with these words: "100 years ago Chicago brought the people of the world together. There is no better time than now for this to happen again, because we all want a better world."

About the particulars—there were five hundred presentations of the week of 28 August-September 5. Six thousand par-

ticipants arrived in Chicago from all corners of the globe, many of us staying together under the same roof for the whole week. Besides the Auroville programme, there were 12 presentations which focussed on the life and work of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo including a reading from 'Savitri' by Seyril Schochen at the opening plenary and a lecture cum reading of 'Savitri' by Rod Hemsell.

The Auroville programme format of 90 minutes included an introduction by Dr. Karan Singh, Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, followed by slides on Auroville with music and commentary and a panel to answer questions. In the end it was an all-out team effort. Dr Singh gave a concentrated and inspiring introduction which set the tone for the rest of the programme.

Bryan Walton played a major role in putting the slides together in a comprehensive and flowing way, synchronized with the quotes, commentary, and original music from Auroville (composed by Nadaka and just released as a CD "Straight to Your Heart"). Paula Murphy and Bryan did the readings, that added so much. The panel

was chaired by Dr Paul Edmonston and included myself, Dr Robert Muller (former Assistant Secretary General of UN and friend of Auroville), Rod and Kirti Hemsell and Dr Karan Singh. It was gratifying to experience the enthusiasm and interest in Auroville.

This event, I feel, was not separate from others in recent years as Auroville has moved forward and been involved on the world stage befitting its role as 'seen' by the Mother—i.e. the International Youth Year; the Earth Summit in Brazil; and the upcoming UNESCO programme scheduled for February 1994 in Auroville, for example.

Since the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture will be dedicated in Auroville this December by H.H. the Dalai Lama, I should mention that for many of the participants the arrival of H.H. was a very special highlight. His keynote address the last day of the conference, calling for compassion and putting into practice the aims that had called us together there in Chicago, was a powerful signature to the Parliament.

As you can probably tell, this opportunity to work and be there at this unique convergence was a peak experience. I am very grateful that I was able to be part of it all.

Love, June

A Taste For Something New

A rumour wafted up from Kottakarai about a new organic food processing unit where you can get snacks and even lunch. AUROVILLE TODAY immediately despatched Annemarie and Bill out into the monsoon rain to get a taste of what was happening. Annemarie wrote the report while Bill nibbled on the snacks.

There's a lively scene around the health food centre at Kottakarai, even though it's pouring with rain when we arrive. Close together in a fairly small compound we find a house, an education centre, a kitchen-cum-foodstore and a lunch area, with the Ganesh Bakery just in front. Plenty of people are there, working, sitting or just passing by. This spot seems to be a hub where village life and Auroville life converge and merge.

We sit down in the kitchen section to interview Vinodh and Sharanam who spend their days working at and taking care of the health food centre. Martha drops in briefly; she tells us a little about the latest developments in the Life Education Centre (LEC), which is housed in one of the buildings on the compound. Actually the new health food centre is very much linked to the LEC which teaches basic life skills to village youth who somehow missed out on school (see AVT no. 46) and prepares them to start their own businesses.

Sharanam, who has lived in Auroville for 12 years, recently began to take part in the LEC programme. In July '92 she started to work with a group of LEC students in the field of nutrition. During the first year, the classes concentrated on simple basic hygiene and food preparation skills, such as cutting vegetables. They prepared healthy snacks to be distributed at the LEC and various other schools in the area. They also produced sprouts and malted *ragi* (a local millet). They experimented with making 'Essene' bread: flat cakes, made of sprouted wheat ground into a dough, and sun-dried or baked in a solar oven. Then slowly the range of products grew with the addition of 'solar' syrups prepared from local fruits and even flowers, jams and dried fruit bars. A lot of research is going into food drying with solar driers; packaged solar-dried soup is one of the resulting products now available at the Pour Tous store.

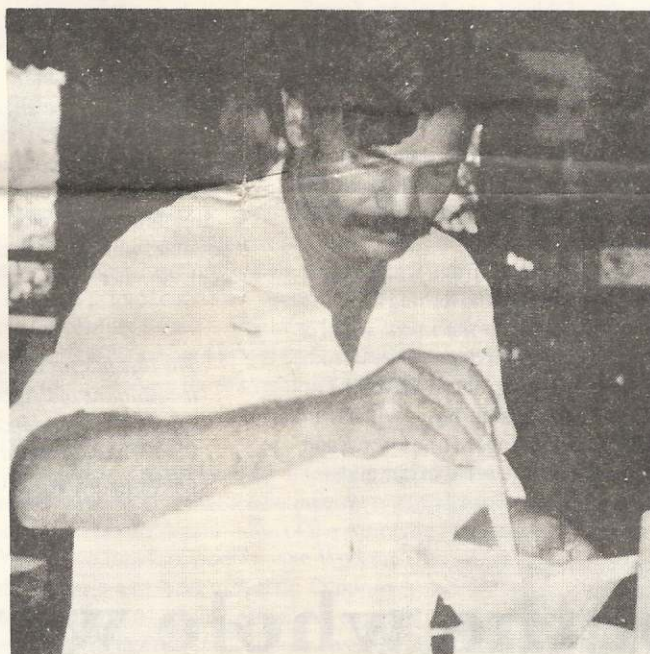
A few months ago, Vinodh, who had worked at Pour Tous before, joined Sharanam, adding his abundant energy and enthusiasm to help build up a 'healthy' centre, where one can now also buy organic fruits and vegetables and where lunches are prepared for about 30 to 60 people every day. They have the help of ten ladies who have come under a Government programme called TRYSEM (Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment) to learn about foodprocessing, health and other skills. Vinodh was educated as a botanist and worked in a food store himself following his family's traditional trade. He told us that a new stall will open shortly in Kottakarai, where fruits and vegetables will be sold. "Although India is not yet a market for organically grown food, in Auroville there is more of a market. Of the food growing communities in Auroville, only two or three provide organic vegetables regularly, because even in Auroville it is difficult to survive competition with Pondy market food, and there are storage problems. We want to help provide an extra outlet for their produce, and also stimulate the local farmers to grow organic food. There are more people than we think who grow spinach in their backyard and can grow a little more."

How did the centre get started? Sharanam: "There was some money available from the five-year food growing programme sponsored by Auroville International UK. This scheme was set up four years ago to help local farmers to switch from chemical to organic agriculture. And as it is an educational programme, SAIER also gives some maintenance."

Is the health food centre purely 'organic'? Sharanam: "We would like very much to provide purely organic food, but we had to compromise when making the syrups. We tried making them with organic *jaggery* (unrefined cane sugar) but we could not solve the problem of fermentation. So now we use sugar instead. We make lemon cordial, which is made with equal parts of sugar and lemon juice,



Above: Experimenting... Sharanam arranging strips of cucumber to be solar dried.
Below: Vinodh (photos Alan)



and then kept in the sun for two weeks. We do not use additives to preserve it. And she adds, "Speaking about health food, for me, the inner attitude while preparing food is a very important ingredient, which is not to be forgotten when we speak about healthy food."

Before coming to Auroville, Sharanam was a food technician for the Ministry of Education in Spain, and research into food and all that helps to bring about and maintain a balance in the body seems to have been a major thread weaving through Sharanam's life. She is full of plans for further research, encompassing wild spinach ("there are four kinds growing in the area"), the cultivation and drying of herbs, and natural cosmetics. Experienced in the use of Bach flower remedies which by a process of distillation can transfer the subtlest qualities of flowers to the body, she emphasizes: "I want to work with all parts of plants and flowers, from the roughest to the subtlest—food, oil, powder, pills (preventive), essences. I went to Dharamsala to learn how to make herbal pills! There is a use for everything." She is very interested to learn about traditional village recipes, because "there is a lot of knowledge there that could be tapped."

The health food centre (now officially named the Health Food Promotion Centre) is becoming a link in a larger network. During a course conducted by Ardhendu of Village Action, they met people who have a health food store in Bangalore, and will exchange rice, wheat, soya and moong dal with them. That centre will soon send ten ladies to Auroville to be trained by Sharanam.

"But in the town itself there will be food for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians, and there will also be some attempt to find the food of tomorrow."

The whole process of assimilation which weighs you down—this occupies so much of a person's time and energy—that should be done beforehand and then one should be given something which is immediately assimilable, like what they are doing now with vitamin pills and proteins which can be assimilated directly, nutritious basics which are found in one thing or another and which are not bulky. Chemistry is clever enough nowadays to simplify this.

... I would like to have a trial kitchen here, a kind of culinary laboratory for experimenting.
(Mother speaking about the future of Auroville. From: *Mother's Agenda*, VIII. p. 455)

Information for gourmets...

Many years of experience and experimenting have gradually established a gourmet's range of various processed foods in Auroville. As a rule these are free from chemical additives and often made from local produce. The Auroville Bakery has, besides biscuits, cakes and buns, developed a considerable range of breads, from yeast and sourdough to raisin bread, brioche, pumpernickel and baguettes. In Anusuya, a special bread made of sprouted wheat is produced, besides wholemeal biscuits of local millets, and peanut butter. In Hope and in Kottakarai are two more bakeries. "Le Gourmet" products include a variety of very popular jams (some made with organically grown *jaggery*), syrups, sesame and peanut butter, pickles, mustard and muesli. Aranyani produces roasted cashew-nuts and cashew-nut butter. Cheese is made at Aurogreen and La Ferme (see article next page) and butter is made at Gratitude. The Health Food Centre prepares solar dried soup, jams, syrups and snacks.

(*processed in the sense that raw ingredients have been combined into a ready-to-eat product.)

"Cheese Is Milk's Leap To Immortality"

In June 1989 (issue #7) AUROVILLE TODAY reported on the cheese making activities that had just started in La Ferme, a small community near Aspiration. At that time, little cheese was available in Auroville. Now, four years later, Aurovilians have a choice between 10 varieties of Auroville cheese, eight of which come from La Ferme. It's time for an update. AUROVILLE TODAY spoke with Michael and Olivier, the executives of 'La Ferme Cheese'.

AVT: There is reason to assume that you are managing one of Auroville's more 'popular' units. Your cheeses have an excellent reputation. What is the story behind your success?

Olivier: A difficult one, just as you might expect from any other unit in Auroville. Neither of us had the faintest idea about buffaloes, cows, cheese making or business management. We only came into the picture because two Aurovilians had decided that they wanted to set up a cheese unit and they needed people to run it.

The beginnings were terrible, with power cuts, water shortage, poor facilities and so many complications characteristic of pioneer life in Auroville. On top of that, we heavily resented being seen as profiteers, implying that we were putting money in our pockets as we pleased, when we were actually not even taking money for our own maintenance at that time. We were very near to collapse on many occasions, and tried to find someone to help us financially—

Michael: — and at least once a week we used to say to each other "this is ridiculous!!" and we looked with envy at all those other units that seemed to manage so well. But we did not have any other option, and we were stuck with it. Money was invested, we believed that something would come through and accepted the challenge Mother was giving to us.

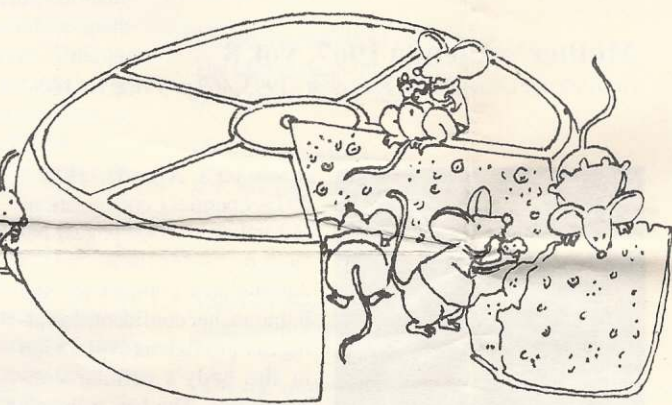
Olivier: We started off with a couple of loans, some of which we have not yet paid back. But they were insufficient and the problems went over our heads. The change came only two years ago, when we received a donation of approximately 2 lakhs rupees (approx. US \$ 7,000). This, together with another loan of Rs 2 lakh helped us to realize our present set up: we built a new cow shed, bought more cows, installed a cool storage room, improved the water system, purchased a generator and upgraded the packing system and processing facilities. Even with these financial injections we still had a hard time to repay most of the loans. But the cash flow is now much better. Our problem now is not to set a standard—we have achieved that—but to increase our production. We still have to repay loans of about Rs 1.5 lakh, and that is a lot of money when your yearly turnover is only about 4 lakhs.

Michael: It is only recently that it started to be a much more joyful process, partly because we started to become profitable,

but also because we get truly marvellous feedback from the Aurovilians and from Pondicherry customers.

You mentioned that none of you had any experience making cheese before. You started a unit just like that, without any proper preparation?

Michael: Well, we did not start alone. Giovanni, the Aurovilian who initiated this project, together with Prem Malik, had the idea to produce a cheese like the Italian mozzarella, which is made from buffalo milk. So we bought buffaloes and started making it. But we quickly found out that it was not going to work. Since mozzarella has a very limited life—it is a fresh cheese—we thought of hanging and aging it to produce a ripened cheese. We brought the result to Pour Tous, not sure whether we really liked it or not, but half of the people welcomed the change from the only two cheeses then available. The other half were of the opinion that it was absolutely inedible and wondered how we had the nerve to sell it. We have to admit now that it was



not good cheese.

Olivier: And after a year we realized the advantages and disadvantages of keeping buffaloes. They give a much richer milk than cows, so you can produce more cheese. But many people did not like the strong taste and the high fat content of the cheese. And it is very difficult to breed buffaloes domestically. We tried all possible methods, but without much result, and it cost us a lot. So we switched over to cows, and since three and a half years all our cheeses are made exclusively from cow's milk.

It is a well-known fact that cheese making in the tropics is rather difficult. How is your experience?

Michael: It took years of experimenting before we finally understood what we were doing wrong, and started making good cheese.

Olivier: You see, all these different cheeses came mostly by accident. We did not decide to make this or that type of cheese, but under the peculiar conditions we have here those cheeses were spontaneously coming. What we have been trying to do is to standardize those results in order to reproduce them consistently.

A special difficulty is that we make many different types of cheese in the same storing facility. I do not think that any professional cheese maker in the world would do that. We have only one cool room, which is kept at 10-11° C. Certain types of fungi grow there, others don't. The problem is that when you grow one kind of cheese, the fungus affects what is lying around.

One hears often in Auroville that your prices are rather high...

Olivier: Yeah, I was expecting this question. At the beginning we ourselves were quite bothered by the fact that we had to put such high prices on our cheese, as we started with the intention to offer a concentrated protein product to Auroville and we wanted to make it as cheap as possible for everybody. Meanwhile we have come to know that our prices are lower than those charged elsewhere in India for a really good piece of cheese. We manufacture a gourmet product, with a small-scale facility. Some people compare our prices to those of Kodaikanal cheese, but that is not quite fair as the size of their production far exceeds ours, and their milk costs much less than what we pay over here. The standard of

How much cheese do we eat?

Average cheese consumption in 1992: 360 kilos per month, or 5.4 kilogram per year per Aurovilian. (In comparison: Cheese consumption in Holland in 1971: 8.7 kg/person/year)

Which kinds of cheese?

Produced by 'La Ferme Cheese':

Fresh cheeses: Mozzarella, Feta, Ricotta and Herbal Cream Cheese.

Seasoned cheeses: Lofabu, Romano, Buttermilk and Swiss Cheese

Under experiment: Camembert: a cheese that is camembert-like in the centre with a blue fungus on the outside.

From Auroville farmers:

Fresh cheeses: Pepper cheese

Seasoned cheese: Charlie Cheese

From elsewhere in India:

Amul processed soft cheese

Kodaikanal seasoned cheese

'La Ferme Cheese' in figures (1993)

Number of cows: 20

Method of cow serving: artificial insemination

Litres of milk in own production: 100-120/day

Litres of milk purchased: all excess Auroville milk

Presently processed: 180 liters/milk/day

Presently produced: 25 Kilograms/cheese/day

Maximum processing capacity: 300 liters/milk/day

Main consumers: Auroville (80%), Pondicherry (20%)

Potentiality: double or triple the daily amount manufactured can be sold in the winter season.

living is rising in Auroville, so we hope that more people will be able to afford our cheese.

How do you relate this business of selling with Mother's Dream, in which She said that the farms would give their produce to the town?

Michael: We are holding that vision in front of us. We started out with that idea, with the vision that we would be a unit able to supply the community with this protein product cost free, or at cost price. That is still our ideal and we welcome any change in Auroville's economy that would make that step feasible. We are happy to have begun donating cheese regularly to the schools.

You both came to Auroville because of your attraction to its ideals and your desire to do 'sadhana' here, not because of your interest in cheese. Would you mind sharing some of your experiences, how you interweave the two?

Michael: Actually a lot of time and energy is devoted to the practice of meditation. We do a lot of research through dance, working with the body as a medium for deeper awareness of our oneness. That has its influence on the daily work, and it is at times possible to relate to each other and to our workers through that awareness. It is as if the body itself is conscious of what goes on in the beings and circumstances around it, developing the ability to balance harmoniously the play of energies.

Olivier: Work and inner aspiration have become more integrated. It has become possible to go through the whole day as a

unified expression of sadhana, which brings a deep satisfaction. The inner work of research has become more intense and steadier now that the unit runs smoothly... less energy is leaking away.

Michael: We are keeping aware of maintaining a special relationship between the people working here. We have realized that we have a lot to learn from our Tamil workers: not so much on the mental level, but more on the psychic and intuitive level. They are basically joyful and we learn to respond to it. That happiness, love and creative playfulness is something that we want here, and we value it as something precious to be manifested daily. Through this our workers have developed a shared sense of responsibility towards the unit. This does not mean to say that we do not have our frustrations and bad days and emotional outbursts.

The general impression many visitors have of Aurovilians is a grim one: Aurovilians don't smile. Some hold the opinion that this is the result of the gap between Auroville's unrealized ideals and the levels of the individual consciousness—

Michael: —Yes, I have observed that too. But it seems that we have found a beautiful way of bridging that gap. The cheese making, the business, and dealing with the workers have become our way of doing sadhana, and very often a quite delightful one. And that is also why for us Auroville is turning out to be a really wonderful place.

Interview by Carel on 15-10-1993
(title quote attributed to Clifton Faddism)

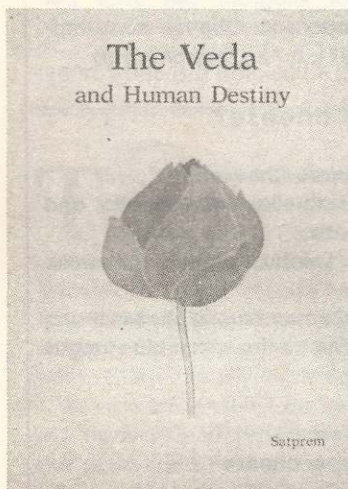
Recent Publications

Here is a selection of books, published within the past two years, which focus upon the next great step in evolution for the individual, for the nation and for humanity as a whole.

The Veda and Human Destiny

by Satprem

(Mira Aditi - 1992, 30 p. - Price : Rs. 25/-)



This text dating from 1961, but never published, was part of Satprem's first essay, *Sri Aurobindo or the Transformation of the World*, written before the *Adventure of Consciousness*.

The book focusses upon what was already Satprem's central interest: the Veda as the key to human destiny.

Sri Aurobindo discovered the key that can help us to effect the necessary change — a change of consciousness

— and at the same time, he rediscovered the key to a great many traditions, in particular, as we shall see, the Secret of the Veda, because ultimately there is only one secret. The light he throws on our past will help us to better understand our present position in the human development and the possibilities of our future evolution, but we would be grossly mistaken if we thought that Sri Aurobindo came to resurrect old traditions — "We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future" — or even that his work is tied to the Veda, for had he never known Sanskrit, neither his life nor his work would have been changed in the least. His ancient discoveries are the corollary of a central discovery that plunges into the past as into the future and shows all our History as a blossoming of the future or, rather, as the immense frondescence of a giant tree whose roots are neither below nor behind, but above, as the Vedic Rishis had seen, in an eternal Present.

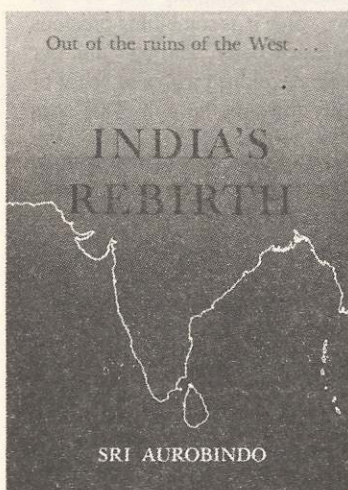
(Satprem)

Weave an inviolate work,
become the human being, create the divine race...
Seers of truth you are,
sharpen the shining spears with which
you cut the way to that which is Immortal;
knowers of the secret planes,
form them, the steps by which
the gods attained to immortality.

(Rig-Veda - X.53)

India's Rebirth

(Institut de Recherches Evolutives, Paris - 1993, 263 p.- Price: Rs. 90/-)



A chronological selection from Sri Aurobindo's writings, talks and speeches, in which Sri Aurobindo strikes at the heart of what ails India and shows the key to her rebirth.

What makes India a country unlike any other?

What power can bring about her rebirth?

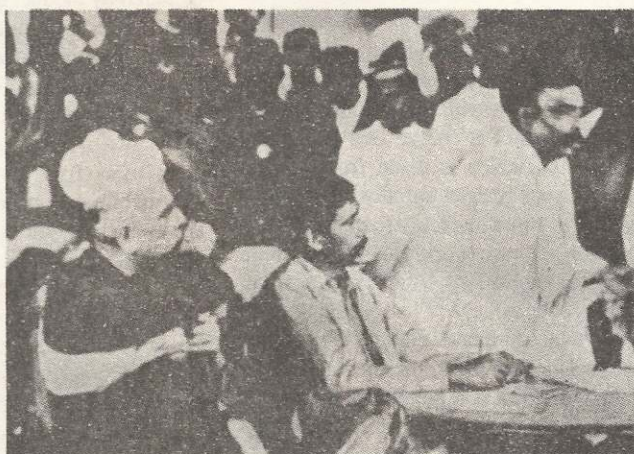
Today, with the worldwide churning of blood and mud about to smother us, our answer to these questions will decide India's destiny.

The present selection from Sri Aurobindo's writings is intended for those who seek such an answer.

India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and

doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma.

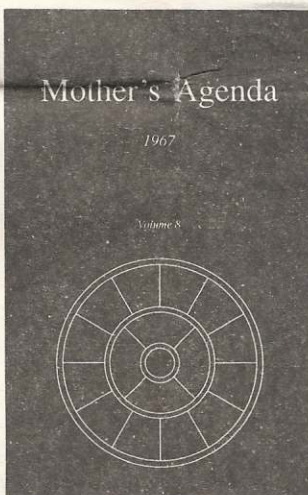
(Sri Aurobindo)



Sri Aurobindo presiding over the Nationalists' conference at Surat. On his right is G.S. Khaparde; on his left, standing, is B.G. Tilak

Mother's Agenda 1967, Vol. 8

(Institute for Evolutionary Research - 1993, 469 p.- Price: Rs.180/-)



Mother's Agenda, 1951 - 1973: countless conversations (13 volumes, 6000 pages) between Mother, Sri Aurobindo's companion, and Satprem, her confident, narrating her prodigious exploration in the body's cellular consciousness. The key to man's passage towards the next species.

This is the tenth volume out of 13 now available in English.

During this year, 1967, all the features of the yoga of the cells become clear: "A growing conviction that a perfection achieved in matter is a far

more perfect perfection than any other. The consciousness expressed in transformed cells is a marvel: it legitimizes all these ages of misery. Oh, what a fuss all those gods make."

This year marks the discovery of "true matter"... without fuss: "In that cellular limpidity, there are no more problems: the solution precedes the problem. That is, things arrange themselves automatically." It's another mode of life on earth "such a natural way of being" in a body freed from its mental shackles and the laws of false matter: "The extraordinary impression of the unreality of suffering, the unreality of illness... It does not cure illness: it annuls it it makes it unreal... And then you see: as the functioning gradually grows perfect, it necessarily, inevitably means victory over death."

And meanwhile, *Surveyor* is digging the ground of the moon with its mechanical arm, while our own secrets remain buried in a little cell: "We can travel anywhere, we know what's going on anywhere... and we don't know what's going on inside ourselves."

War is raging in Biafra, the Israeli troops are marching towards Suez, American planes are bombing Haiphong, China explodes its first thermonuclear bomb... and so on. "A tremendous conflict over the earth." At stake is a new earth, or the return to the old fiasco: "A local and momentary manifestation is not ruled out, but what is needed is a collective transformation sufficient to create a new species on earth... This fact is certain."

Will we understand where the real way out is, and the marvel concealed in a human body?

Short News

New kindergarten opens

Friday, November 12th: Auroville's new Kindergarten organizes an open house for those who want to see its new premises. Located next to the old Kindergarten, on the road between Certitude and Bharat Nivas, the new building represents the untiring and united efforts of many Aurovilians to find the money for this essential project, and to design and build it at low cost while making it as attractive as possible. The result is appreciated by all, not least by the children themselves. In a future issue of AUROVILLE TODAY we will focus more intensively on the project.

New Auroville Calendar

The Auroville calendar for 1994, which features photographs taken by Auroville photographers in and around the community, is now available at the Boutique d'Auroville. For information about the cost of receiving it overseas and in the rest of India, contact the Auroville Greenwork Resource Centre, Auroville 605101.

Monsoon rains

The winter monsoon rains have been good after a dry start to the year (only one centimetre of rain in the first four months!). In September we received 30 centimetres (the average over 18 years is 17 cms.), in October 33 centimetres (average 25 cms.) and in November we have received about 50 centimetres (average 30 cms.) Most remarkable of all, upto the 16th of November it had rained on 41 out of the previous 45 days!

Snake exhibition

For two weeks recently, a room in the Visitors Centre was filled up with snakes and pictures of the reptiles' various anatomical parts. The exhibition was organized by Rajeev of the Auroville Greenwork Resource Centre and attracted many visitors. Among the snakes on display were a saw-scaled viper and a Russell's viper, and various harmless species like the rat snake and the trinket snake. Panels with illustrations gave information on how to prevent and cure snake bites. The objective of the exhibition was to dispel myths and alleviate fear. Funds are being raised to take the exhibition to the surrounding villages.

Poetry reading

On the evening of the 25th November at Pitanga, there was a reading by Shradhdhavan of a selection of poems by K.D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) to mark his 89th birthday. Amal Kiran joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1927 and had a voluminous correspondence with Sri Aurobindo about poetry—Sri Aurobindo thought very highly of some of Amal Kiran's poems.

The collected poems of Amal Kiran have just been published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram under the title *Secret Splendour: Collected Poems*.

Mr. J. R. D. Tata

Mr. J. R. D. Tata, eminent Indian industrialist and member of the International Advisory Council of the Auroville Foundation, died on 29th November. In our next issue we will include an appreciation of Mr. Tata who was a great friend and supporter of Auroville, particularly during a critical phase of Auroville's struggle for self-determination in the late 1970's. He was a true pioneering spirit.

"The real work is the inner work"

VITTHAL came to Auroville to look up an old friend of his—Bill Sullivan, who had left California in 1973 to make a film in Auroville and never returned. Vitthal finally settled here in 1984. Born in 1929 in Germany, he has lived in many different countries and experienced many different lifestyles. For two years he studied medicine, and then he entered the Jesuit Order and was ordained as a priest. During the 20 years he was a Jesuit, he worked for eight years in the Vatican as Director of African Broadcasts at Vatican Radio.

"Although I've written and published poetry before, I don't call myself a professional poet because I don't really devote enough time to it. However, for many years I've practised T'ai Chi and this has taught me to open to the energy of the cosmos and to go with the flow. One night some weeks ago, when I decided to get up and sit at my desk because I was in pain and couldn't sleep, suddenly this whole creative process got going, and since then I've spent a lot of time writing poems, fables, composing music and drawing.

"The trigger for this creativity was undoubtedly my recent illness, and the learning process that went with it, when it was diagnosed that I had a malignant tumour in my colon. Within the last 6 months, I've had two major operations and had additional problems with my spine. This, and a good deal of physical pain that came with it, made me try to discover the significance of what was happening, and try to resolve the recent and ancient conflicts within me which produced the cancerous growth in me. In other words, it's made me do a lot of inner work.

This, for me, is the most important aspect of Auroville; that while the outer activities are necessary, the real work we are called to do, the creation of unity with each other and with the world, is an inner work which is largely invisible. I feel that everything in the environment here encourages this work, so that however your sails are trimmed you move much faster in that direction; Auroville is Accelerated Transformation Incorporated!

At the same time, for many years I wasn't clear what my role in Auroville should be. This difficulty was resolved after my first operation when I had a very powerful and visionary image as I came out of the anaesthetic. I saw a mirror-plated Matrimandir with a great waterfall rushing over the middle of it, flowing down to the ground and all through Auroville. I was there as a tiny figure, overawed by the power of it all. And as I stood there, somewhat confused, I heard a voice saying, 'You can breathe. If nothing else, you can breathe.' And I realized that I was being told I need only be creative in my own way, and since then I have, in

fact, 'breathed' with and for Auroville, and it has been a source of great strength for me.

It has led to another realisation. For when I came back from hospital, I had the grace to perceive everything in Auroville in an extremely positive light. I saw that things that had previously annoyed me had their place, and I also felt that, as a community, we were really going somewhere. The tremendous support I received from the Aurovilians made me realize that there is already a very strong unity between us, which doesn't, however, always manifest. It was out of this feeling, that the essential Auroville is already there and that we have only to awaken to it, that 'Auroville Sundance' was written. For the sun is for me the symbol of that divinely powerful energy one finds around here, and dancing is for me the most appropriate response:

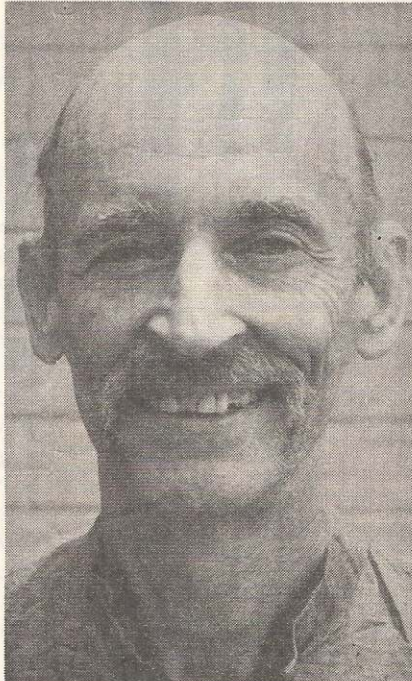
We are the people of the sun:
The dancers and the dance,
Deep music in our bone.

Now we have begun:
Our tools are gleaming in array.
Today the war is won.

Unseen our work is done:
Together Sound and Silence
Dancing in the sun...

On the other side, however, remains what I call the 'shadow'. In any deep personal work there is always shadow as well as light, and the more intense the light, the more intense the darkness, until all is transformed into the greater light. What I mean by the 'shadow' is not so much the petty manifestations of ego, but something deeper—our shared darkness, our collective *evil*, if I can use that word. When I wrote 'Auroville Shadow', floods were ravaging parts of India, and I felt in some way personally responsible, and that Auroville was also responsible for this and for other suffering on this planet. 'Responsible' because we are not straight, not 100% ourselves but zig-zag lines of lightning, dark Asuras of the night, black crocodiles, and—the strongest word I could think of—'traitors' to our greater

PHOTO: ALAN



VITTHAL

selves. I feel that our shadow is a burden we could all carry together in Auroville by first helping each other to look at it and acknowledge it. Because once we acknowledge it, we can transform that dark energy, and nothing can stop us 'riding our shadow' into the light.

We are the thunderstorms, the rains,
The scattered zig-zag lines, the burst,
The floods and damages and deaths.
We are the dark Asuras of the night,
The traitors.

We say: it doesn't have to be today.
In ancient swamps black crocodiles
Feed on bright dragonflies.
Before starlight we were poured out
Like water.

We ride our shadow on charred land.
We shape our images in pride and reddish clay,
A sad king or a sobbing clown...
Does not the nectar of chanting flow in our veins?
Chanting.

'Plea and Promise' is one of my most recent poems and comes out of the feeling that many of us in Auroville are right now particularly fed up with so many manifestations of ego and pettiness, and are aspiring for them to be swept away and replaced by something else. This aspiration, this prayer, is the first part of the poem. The second part is a glimpse of future realizations, without a sense of which it is very difficult indeed to keep going. I believe we are getting there, getting there together. And I am convinced that the new being is already here, 'the war is won', and if we could only believe this, and believe that we are free and one, then we really would be free and one, acting and living in the inner presence of Supramental Becoming.

Plea and Promise
So many upturned pleading faces:
Inter-galactic winds,
Sweep clean our house
Of self-inflated trivia
Cluttering us!
Install in empty space
One grace: beyond our mind
Awareness, Inner Presence.

On a near beach today,
The bay benign a promise,
Colours of stray objects
Melt into mirrors of Light:
The peripheral flashes
Of jewelled Mandirs,
Beyond Mind Awareness,
Inner Presence.

From an interview with Alan on 3.9.1993

Dancing Is My Life

After many Bharat Natyam performances it was nice to see a different kind of Indian dance in Auroville, given by Bireshwar Gautam in October this year. *Kathak* was originally danced by male dancers and courtesans in the Royal courts of Northern India. This dance combines improvisation and gestures within a comparatively free structure of movements, and does not use *mudras* (meticulous set hand movements) like in *Bharat Natyam*, a well known South Indian dance form. *Kathak* is a spontaneous interplay of rhythmical patterns between the dancer and the *tabla* player, each inspiring and encouraging each other. The strict rhythm is kept by the *sarangi*, a 100 stringed instrument, which is rarely seen in performance these days. This is in sharp contrast to the role of string instruments which usually play the melody as we know in Western classical music.

Bireshwar Gautam, a 31 year old dancer from Bombay, has spent almost his entire life dancing. At the age of four and a half he started improvising *Kathak* by himself, stimulated and encouraged by his father, who was principal of a music college in Calcutta. From the age of seven onwards he has been studying dance seriously under several famous *Kathak* teachers. He also sings in the *Khayal* style, which he presented the next evening in a vocal recital.

Bireshwar came into contact with Auroville through Joy, an Auroville dancer, while working on "A Greater Dawn", the theatre/dance piece, based on Sri Aurobindo's epic "Savitri", which was performed last summer in Auroville. His first contact with Auroville was positive, and Joy invited him to return. Besides his dance and vocal performance, he also gave a four day intensive dance workshop for the Auroville dancers.



Bireshwar is looking forward to coming back to Auroville in December. He will do a programme for the Alliance Française, in which he wants to combine elements of *kathak* and flamenco. "But in Auroville I find a peaceful place to dance, a mental

peace, which I need to improve my slow dance movements".

What are his plans for the future?

"To teach, to travel, but most of all to perform and continue to study. Always studying. This is my life".

Jill and Tineke

By Airmail
Bookpost

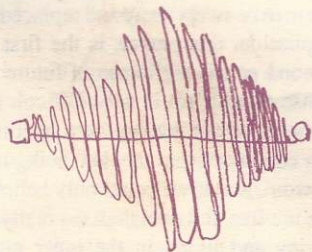
AUROVILLE TODAY

C.S.R. Office,
Auroville 605101
Tamil Nadu, India

Exp. # 63

AME AND MICHAEL
GRACE
AUROVILLE

December 1993
Number Fifty-Nine



In this issue (8 pages):
Auroville at the crossroads; Evolution II; research in food; portraits & profiles etc.

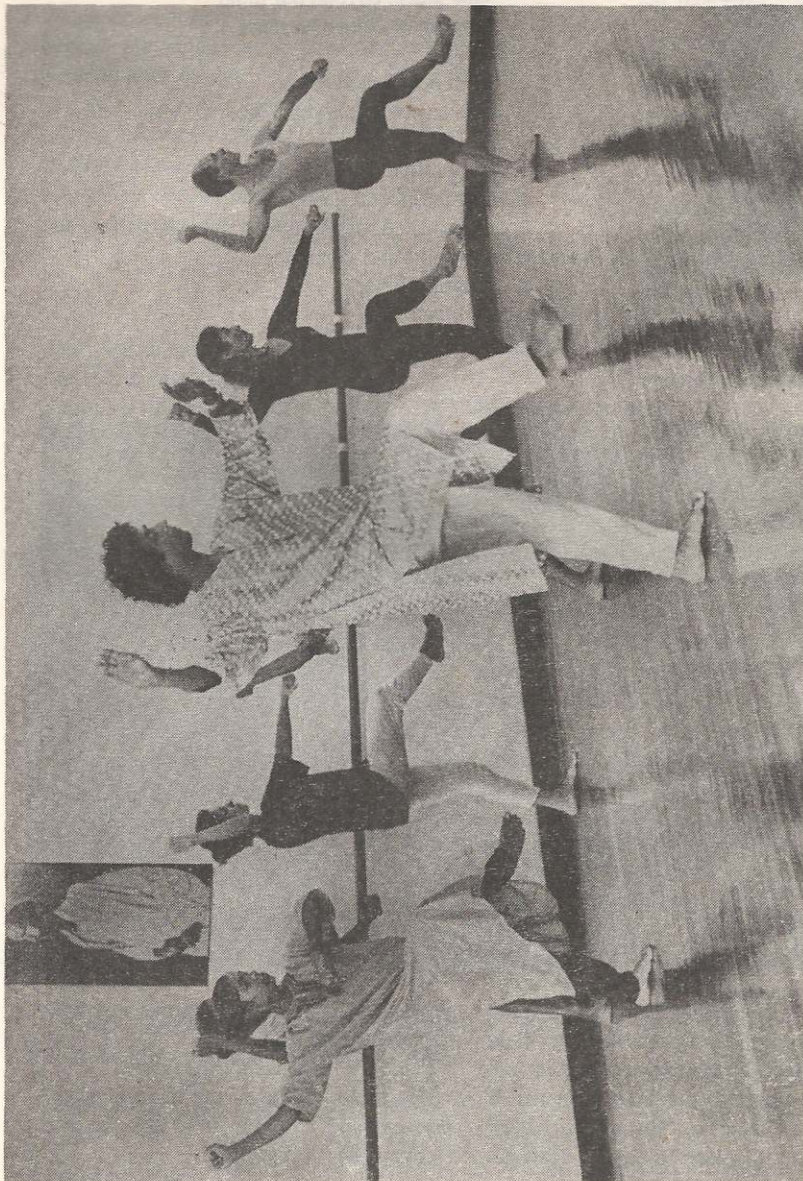


PHOTO SVEN

At Pūānga: Auroville dancers practicing Kathak dance with Bireswar (see also page 7)

PASSING THROUGH

A letter from a guest

Dear Aurovilians,

I have just spent three weeks as a guest in Auroville. I could share in the day-to-day life of the community in which I was living, New Creation. I visited many places in Auroville, I met many Aurovilians, newcomers and workers. I am myself involved in spiritual research and visited several communities in Europe. (I stayed for six months in Findhorn in Scotland and will go back there soon.) If I must use one word to express my feelings at the end of my stay in New Creation in particular and in Auroville in general, I would say GRATITUDE. Your experiment is really beautiful. The energy here is extremely subtle and strong. It made my heart wide open and certainly it can only send positive waves to the rest of the world.

Of course I met also some contradictions, difficulties and even painful things. I understand that Matrimandir is a place of peace and deep energy which needs to be protected. Among the rules, passes, guards, timetables, socks, etc., I am sure some things are useful. But only some. And with discretion. My access to the chamber reminded me of a school excursion to a NATO military camp. It was 30 years ago during the cold war. I don't know if I am right or wrong but what I feel about the Matrimandir is that it is the symbol of the Universal Mother and because of that, in the access to it, the emphasis should be put on welcome and love. Here I felt the emphasis was put on the filtering. But maybe there are

some realities I don't know and maybe all of this is right. I don't know enough of Auroville to trust my intuition a hundred per cent. I leave it to the Aurovilians to judge.

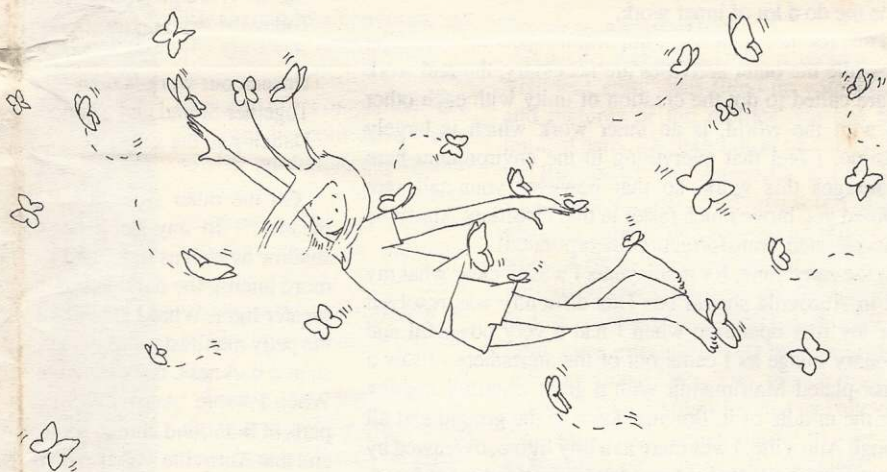
Anyway, the important thing for me is that the Matrimandir exists, lives and is the result of much goodwill. As for everything else, the way to organize and use it is bound to change in the future. I just hope my feedback can bring a positive note in that process.

I don't want to be one of those who say from outside, "In Auroville they are failing, it's a utopia, it's too slow, they fight against each other as anywhere else, they are not able to resolve the problem of money circulation etc." I feel better to say to myself: "If you don't intend to live in Auroville or to participate in any other way in the experiment then you can't interfere in the business of Auroville. If you feel close to such an experiment, or if some weaknesses touch you particularly, go then, they can still welcome 49,000 people. Go and give your contribution with your best energy, truth and humility. If you don't dare, that doesn't necessarily mean that Auroville is not ready to achieve its ideal, maybe it means you are not ready to join Auroville." The important thing for me is that Auroville exists and opens itself to anyone who wants to "be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness."

It's not impossible that one day I will come back for a long time.

Françoise Lhermitte (Belgium)

(This letter has been considerably shortened for space reasons—eds)



To our readers

Next month's issue will appear a week or so later than usual to enable us to include information about the Dalai Lama's visit on December 25th/26th.

❖ How To Subscribe ❖

The contribution for the next 12 issues of Auroville Today in India is Rs. 150, for other countries Rs. 750, Can.\$ 30, French F. 150, DM 47, It.Lira 35,500, D.Gl. 52, US \$ 25, U.K.£ 14. This includes the postage by airmail. Please send your contribution (or your supporting contribution of double the amount) either to the Auroville International centre in your country (add 10% for admin. and bank charges) or directly to Auroville Today, CSR Office, Auroville 605101. Cheques should be made payable to Auroville Fund, specifying: "Contribution for Auroville Today". You will receive the issues directly from Auroville. Personal cheques are preferred to bank cheques. Please do not send postal money orders. Subscribers will receive a reminder when their subscription is about to expire.

Addresses of Auroville International centres:

AVI Deutschland, c/o M. Soerensen, Bleicherstrasse 60, 28203 Bremen, Germany.
AVI España, c/o Arjun and Anand, Apartado de Correos 36, 31.610 Villava, Navarra, Spain
AVI France c/o Sotyakom Karim, 14, rue du Colonel Grancey, 94500 Champigny Sur Marne, France.
AVI Italia, c/o Emanuele Scanziani, Via Mazzini 19, 24100 Bergamo, Italy.
AVI Nederland, c/o M. Berden, Lobellalaan 51, 2555 PC Den Haag, The Netherlands.
AVI Quebec, c/o Denis Henley, 847 Chemin Perry, Aylmer (Quebec), J9H 5C9 Canada.
AVI Sverige, c/o Ulf Carlberg, Borgholm, Broddebø, S-59700 Avidaberg, Sweden.
AVI U.K., c/o M. Littlewood, Canigou, Cot Lane, Chidham, W.Sussex, PO18 8SP, U.K.
AVI USA, c/o Jack Alexander, P.O.Box 162489, Sacramento CA 95816, USA

AUROVILLE TODAY provides information about Auroville, an international township in South-India, on a monthly basis and is distributed to Aurovilians and friends of Auroville in India and abroad. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the community as a whole. Editorial team: Tineke, Roger, Jill, Carel, Bill, Annemarie, Alan. Proofreading: Barbara. Layout & DTP: Annemarie. Printed at Auroville Press.