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## Ritam

This supramental vastness is also the fundamental truth of being, *satyam*, out of which its active truth wells out naturally and without strife of effort into a perfect and faultless movement because there is upon those heights no division, no gulf between consciousness and force, no divorce of knowledge and will, no disharmonising of our being and its action; everything there is the "straight" and there is no least possibility of crookedness. Therefore this supramental plane of vastness and true being is also Ritam, the true activity of things; it is a supreme truth of movement, action, manifestation, an infallible truth of will and heart and knowledge, a perfect truth of thought and word and emotion; it is the spontaneous Right, the free Law, the original divine order of things untouched by the falsehoods of the divided and separative consciousness. It is the vast divine and self-luminous synthesis born of a fundamental unity, of which our petty existence is only the poor, partial, broken and perverted cutting up and analysis. Such was the Sun of the Vedic worship, the paradise of light to which the Fathers aspired, the world, the body of Surya son of Aditi.

*Sri Aurobindo*

*Volume: 10 [SABCL] (The Secret of the Veda), Page: 423*

For in the idea of the Rishis a world is primarily a formation of consciousness and only secondarily a physical formation of things. A world is a *loka*, a way in which conscious being images itself. And it is the causal Truth, represented in the person of Surya Savitri, that is the creator of all its forms. For it is the causal Idea in the infinite being, – the idea, not abstract, but real and dynamic, – that originates the law, the energies, the formations of things and the working out of their potentialities in determined forms by determined processes. Because the causal Idea is a real force of existence, it is called Satyam, the True in being; because it is the determining truth of all activity and formation, it is called Ritam, the True in movement; because it is broad and infinite in its self-view, in its scope and in its operation, it is called Brihat, the Large or Vast.

*Sri Aurobindo*

*Volume: 10 [SABCL] (The Secret of the Veda), Page: 275*

We have concluded that the Angiras Rishis are bringers of the Dawn, rescuers of the Sun out of the darkness, but that this Dawn, Sun, Darkness are figures used with a spiritual significance. The central conception of the Veda is the conquest of the Truth out of the darkness of Ignorance and by the conquest of the Truth the conquest also of Immortality. For the Vedic Ritam is a spiritual as well as a psychological conception. It is the true being, the true consciousness, the true delight of existence beyond this earth of body, this mid-region of vital force, this ordinary sky or heaven of mind. We have to cross beyond all these planes in order to arrive at the higher plane of that superconscious Truth which is the own home of the gods and the foundation of Immortality. This is the world of Swar, to which the Angirasas have found the path for their posterity.

*Sri Aurobindo*

*Volume: 10 [SABCL] (The Secret of the Veda), Page: 233*

*Savitri*  
*Sri Aurobindo*

How sayst thou Truth can never light the human mind  
And Bliss can never invade the mortal's heart  
Or God descend into the world he made?  
If in the meaningless Void creation rose,  
If from a bodiless Force Matter was born,  
If Life could climb in the unconscious tree,  
If green delight break into emerald leaves  
And its laughter of beauty blossom in the flower,  
If sense could wake in tissue, nerve and cell,  
And Thought seize the grey matter of the brain,  
And soul peep from its secrecy through the flesh,  
How shall the nameless light not leap on men,  
And unknown powers emerge from Nature's sleep?  
Even now hints of a luminous Truth like stars  
Arise in the mind-mooned splendour of Ignorance;  
Even now the deathless Lover's touch we feel:  
If the chamber's door is even a little ajar,  
What then can hinder God from stealing in  
Or who forbid his kiss on the sleeping soul?  
Already God is near, the Truth is close:  
Because the dark atheist body knows him not,  
Must the sage deny the Light, the seer his soul?  
I am not bound by thought or sense or shape;  
I live in the glory of the Infinite,  
I am near to the Nameless and Unknowable,  
The Ineffable is now my household mate.  
But standing on Eternity's luminous brink  
I have discovered that the world was He;  
I have met Spirit with spirit, Self with self,  
But I have loved too the body of my God.  
I have pursued him in his earthly form.  
A lonely freedom cannot satisfy  
A heart that has grown one with every heart:  
I am a deputy of the aspiring world,  
My spirit's liberty I ask for all.

*Book X Canto IV*

# Yoga and Skill in Works

Sri Aurobindo

*Yoga is skill in works*  
*Gita*

Yoga, says the Gita, is skill in works, and by this phrase the ancient Scripture meant that the transformation of mind and being to which it gave the name of Yoga brought with it a perfect inner state and faculty out of which the right principle of action and the right spiritual and divine result of works emerged naturally like a tree out of its seed. Certainly, it did not mean that the clever general or politician or lawyer or shoemaker deserves the name of Yogin; it did not mean that any kind of skill in works was Yoga, but by Yoga it signified a spiritual condition of universal equality and God-union and by the skill of the Yogic worker it intended a perfect adaptation of the soul and its instruments to the rhythm of the divine and universal Prakriti liberated from the shackles of egoism and the limitations of the sense-mind.

Essentially, Yoga is a generic name for the processes and the result of processes by which we transcend or shed off our present modes of being and rise to a new, a higher, a wider mode of consciousness which is not that of the ordinary animal and intellectual man. Yoga is the exchange of an egoistic for a universal or cosmic consciousness lifted towards or informed by the supracosmic, transcendent Unnameable who is the source and support of all things. Yoga is the passage of the human thinking animal towards the God-consciousness from which he has descended. In that ascent we find many levels and stages, plateau after plateau of the hill whose summit touches the Truth of things; but at every stage the saying of the Gita applies in an ever higher degree. Even a little of this new law and inner order delivers the soul out of the great peril by which it had been overtaken in its worldward descent, the peril of the ignorance by which the unilluminated intellect even when it is keenest or sagest must ever be bound and limited, of the sorrow and sin from which the unpurified heart, even when it wears the richest purple of aspiration and feeling, must ever suffer soil and wound and poverty, and of the vanity of its works to which the undivided will of man, even when it is most vehement and powerful or Olympian and victorious, must eternally be subject. It is the utility

of Yoga that it opens to us a gate of escape out of the vicious circle of our ordinary human existence.

The idea of works, in the thought of the Gita, is the widest possible. All action of Nature in man is included, whether it be internal or external, operate in the mind or use the body, seem great or seem little. From the toil of the hero to the toil of the cobbler, from the labour of the sage to the simple physical act of eating, all is included. The seeking of the Self by thought, the adoration of the Highest by the emotions of the heart, the gathering of means and material and capacity and the use of them for the service of God and man stand here on an equal footing. Buddha sitting under the Bo-tree and conquering the illumination, the ascetic silent and motionless in his cave, Shankara storming through India debating with all men and preaching most actively the gospel of inaction are all from this point of view doing great and forceful work. But while the outward action may be the same, there is a great internal difference between the working of the ordinary man and the working of the Yogin, - a difference in the state of the being, a difference in the power and the faculty, a difference in the will and temperament.

What we do, arises out of what we are. The existent is conscious of what he is; that consciousness formulates itself as knowledge and power; works are the result of this twofold force of being in action. Mind, life and body can only operate out of that which is contained in the being of which they are forces. This is what we mean when we say that all things act according to their nature. The divine Existence is pure and unlimited being in possession of all itself, it is *sat*; whatever it puts forth in its limitless purity of self-awareness is truth of itself, *satya*; the divine knowledge is knowledge of the Truth, the divine Will is power of the Truth, the divine workings are words and ideas of the Truth realising themselves in manifold forms and through many stages and in infinite relations. But God is not limited or bound by any particular working or any moment of time or any field of space or any law of relation, because He is universal and infinite. Nor is He limited by the universe; for His infinity is not cosmic, but supracosmic.

But the individualised being is or acts as if he were so bound and limited, because he treats the particular working of existence that he is and the particular moment of time and field of space in which it is actually operating and the particular conditions which reign in the working and in the moment and in the field as if they were self-existent realities and the binding truth of things. Himself, his knowledge, his force and will, his relations with the world and his fellows, his need in it and his desire from them he treats as the sufficient truth and reality, the point of departure of all his works, the central fact and law of his universe. And from this egoistic error arises an all-vitiating falsehood. For the particular, the individual can have no self-existence, no truth, no valid force except in so far as it reflects rightly and relates and conforms itself justly to the universal, to the all-being, the all-knowledge, the all-will and follows its true drift towards self-realisation and vast delight in itself. Therefore the salvation of the individual lies in his universalising himself; and this is the lesson which life tries always to teach him, but the obstinate ego is always unwilling to learn; for the universal is not any group or extended ego, not the family, community, nation or even all mankind, but an infinite far surpassing all these littlenesses.

Nor is the universalising of himself sufficient for liberation, although certainly it will make him practically more free and in his being nearer to the true freedom. To put himself in tune with the universal is a step, but beyond the universal and directing and determining it is the supracosmic infinity; for the universe also has no self-existence, truth or validity except as it expresses the divine Being, Knowledge, Will, Power, Delight of Him who surpasses all universe, so much that it can be said figuratively that with a petty fragment of His being and a single ray of His consciousness He has created all these worlds. Therefore the universalised mind must look up from its cosmic consciousness to the Supernal and derive from that all its sense of being and movement of works. This is the fundamental truth from which the Yogic consciousness starts; it helps the individual to universalise himself and then to transcend the cosmic formula. And this transformation acts not only on his status of being but on his active consciousness in works.

The Gita tells us that equality of soul and mind is Yoga and that this equality is the foundation of the Brahman-state, the high infinite consciousness to which the Yogin aspires. Now equality of mind means universality; for without universality of soul there may be a state of indifference or an impartial self-control or a well-governed equality of temperament, but these are not

the thing that is meant. The equality spoken of is not indifference or impartiality or equability, but a fundamental oneness of attitude to all persons and all things and happenings because of the perception of all as the One. Such equality, it is erroneously thought, is incompatible with action. By no means; this is the error of the animal and the intellectual man who thinks that action is solely possible when dictated by his hopes, fears and passions or by the self-willed preferences of the emotion and the intellect justifying themselves by the illusions of the reason. That might be the fact if the individual were the real actor and not merely an instrument or secondary agent; but we know well enough, for science and philosophy assure us of the same truth, that the universal is the Force which acts through the simulacrum of our individuality. The individual mind, pretending to choose for itself with a sublime ignorance and disregard of the universal, is obviously working on the basis of a falsehood and by means of an error and not in the knowledge and the will of the Truth. It cannot have any real skill in works; for to start from a falsehood or half-truth and work by means of blunders and arrive at another falsehood or half-truth which we have immediately to change, and all the while to weep and struggle and suffer and have no sure resting-place, cannot surely be called skill in works. But the universal is equal in all and therefore its determinations are not self-willed preferences but are guided by the truth of the divine will and knowledge which is unlimited and not subject to incapacity or error.

Therefore the state of his being by which the Yogin differs from the ordinary man, is that by which he rises from the foundation of a perfect equality to the consciousness of the one existence in all and embracing all and lives in that existence and not in the walls of his body or personal temperament or limited mind. Mind and life and body he sees as small enough things which happen and change and develop in his being. Nay, the whole universe is seen by him as happening within himself, not in his small ego or mind, but within this vast and infinite self with which he is now constantly identified. All action in the universe he sees as arising in this being, out of the divine Existence and under the stress of the divine Truth, Knowledge, Will and Power. He begins to participate consciously in its working and to see all things in the light of that divine truth and governance; and even when his own actions move on certain lines rather than others, he is not bound by them or shut to the truth of all the rest by his own passions and preferences, gropings and seekings and revolts. It is evident that such an increasing wideness of vision must mean an increasing knowledge. And if it be true that knowledge is power, it must mean also an increasing force for works. Certainly, it would not

be so, if the Yogin continued to act by the light of his individual reason and imagination and will; for the intellect and all that depends on it can only work by virtue of rigid limitations and exclusive determinations. Accordingly, the continued activity of the unilluminated intellect and its servants conflicts with the new state of consciousness and knowledge which arises out of this larger existence, and so long as they remain active, it cannot be perfect or assured; for the consciousness is being continually pulled down to the lower field of ego-habit by the claim of their narrow workings. But the Yogin ceases, progressively, to act by the choice of his intellectual or emotional nature. Another light dawns, another power and presence intervenes, other faculties awake in the place of the old human-animal combination.

As the state of being changes, the will and temperament must necessarily be modified. Even from an early stage the Yogin begins to subordinate his personal will or it becomes naturally subordinate to the sense of the supreme Will which is attracting him upward. Ignorantly, imperfectly, blunderingly it moves at first, with many recoils and relapses into personal living and action, but in time it becomes more in tune with its Source and eventually the personal will merges upward and all ways into the universal and infinite and obeys implicitly the transcendent. Nor does this change and ascension and expanding mean any annihilation of the will-power working in the individual, as the intellectual man might imagine; but rather it increases it to an immense forcefulness while giving it an infinite calm and an eternal patience. The temperament also is delivered from all leash of straining and desire, from all urge of passion and pain of wilful self-delusion. Desire, even the best, turns always to limitation and obscuration, to some eager exclusive choice and pressure, to some insistent exclusion of what should not be excluded and impatient revolt against the divine denials and withholdings. It generates anger and grief and passion and obstinacy, and these bring about the soul's loss of its divine memory or steadfast consciousness of itself and its self-knowledge and its equal vision of the truth of things. Therefore desire and its brood are incompatible with skill in works and their persistence is the sign of an imperfect Yoga.

Not only must the will and fundamental knowledge-view of things change, but a new combination of faculties take the place of the old. For if the intellect is not to do all our mental work for us or to work at all in its unilluminated state and if the will in the form of desires, wishes, intellectual preferences is not to determine and enforce our action, then it is clear that other powers of knowledge and will must awaken and either replace the intellect and the mental preference or

illumine and guide the one and transform and dominate the other. Otherwise either the action may be nil or else its impulses mechanical and chaotic, even if the static being is blissfully enlarged; for they will well up indeed out of the universal and not the personal, but out of the universal in its lower formula which permits the erratic action of the heart and mind. Such faculties and new combinations of faculties can and do emerge and they are illuminations and powers that are in direct touch and harmony with the light and power of the Truth; therefore in proportion as they manifest and take hold of their functions, they must increase the force, subtlety and perfection of the Yogin's skill in works.

But the greatest skill in works of Yoga is that which to the animal man seems its greatest ineptitude. For all this difficult attainment, the latter will say, may lead to anything you please, but we have to lose our personal life, abandon our personal objects, annul our present will and pleasure and without these life cannot be worth living. Now the object of all skill in works must be evidently to secure the best welfare either of ourselves or of others or of all. The ordinary man calls it welfare to secure momentarily some transient object, to wade for it through a sea of grief and suffering and painful labour and to fall from it again still deeper into the same distressful element in search of a new transient object. The greatest cunning of Yoga is to have detected this cheat of the mind and its desires and dualities and to have found the way to an abiding peace, a universal delight and an all-embracing satisfaction, which can not only be enjoyed for oneself but communicated to others. That too arises out of the change of our being; for the pure truth of existence carries also in it the unalloyed delight of existence, they are inseparable in the status of the infinite. To use the figures of the Vedic seers, by Yoga Varuna is born in us, a vast sky of spiritual living, the Divine in his wide existence and infinite truth; into that wideness Mitra rises up, Lord of Light and Love who takes all our activities of thought and feeling and will, links them into a Divine harmony, charioteers our movement and dictates our works; called by this wideness and this harmony Aryaman appears in us, the Divine in its illumined power, uplifted force of being and all-judging effective will; and by the three comes the indwelling Bhaga, the Divine in its pure bliss and all-seizing joy who dispels the evil dream of our jarring and divided existence and possesses all things in the light and glory of Aryaman's power, Mitra's love and light, Varuna's unity. This divine Birth shall be the son of our works; and than creating this what greater skill can there be or what more practical and sovereign cunning?

*Essays in Philosophy and Yoga*

# *International Zone - A Living Image of A Human Unity*

*Sergei Tretiakov*

*“The ideal would be for every nation with a well-defined culture to have a pavilion representing that culture, built in a style that is most expressive of the customs of the country; it will exhibit the nation’s most representative products, natural as well as manufactured, and also the best expressions of its intellectual and artistic genius and its spiritual tendencies. Each nation would thus have a very practical and concrete interest in this cultural synthesis and could collaborate in the work by taking responsibility for the pavilion that represents it. Living accommodation, large or small according to the need, could be attached, where students of the same nationality could stay and thus enjoy the true culture of their native country and at the same time receive at the university centre the education which will introduce them to all the other cultures that exist on earth. In this way, international education will not be merely theoretical, in the classroom, but practical in all the details of life.”*

*CWM, vol. 12 [On Education], “An International University Centre”, pp. 40-41; first published in Bulletin, April 1952*

People, who in this or that way got under the influence of the International Zone in Auroville, find themselves in a peculiar situation. They are asked to build pavilions representing in a living way cultures of their respective countries. This is one of the rare cases where Mother’s indications of what is to be done in Auroville may seem to be outdated. Pavilions of cultures in Auroville – but the world has changed, hasn’t it? What about already existing pavilions, pavilions of countries and groups of countries, at many other places of the world? What about television, internet, easy access to international travel, what about the interpenetration of cultures? All this happened in a few recent decades after the departure of the Mother. Now what can be the use of constructing all these pavilion buildings, trying to represent different cultures of the world, in a city, which is already multicultural? There is enough

information on different nations and cultures, there are a lot of analogous attempts in the world. So what is the need for the pavilions and for the International Zone in Auroville?

One possible answer to this question is: “There is no need for it. The time of nations is gone – we are in another period, cosmopolitan and global. And if one wants to know about different cultures one can do it otherwise, without a need for wasting a quarter of Auroville territory for this redundant enterprise.” This solution, though clear cut and honest – if it is honest, and not used to get rid ourselves of the trouble – is somewhat unsatisfactory. Auroville attempts to be a living embodiment of human unity – as the charter says it – and probably we cannot dispense with the main representation of this aim in the plan of the city – the International Zone – without thinking twice. Also the fact that the Mother was insisting on the idea for more than 20 years (first in the articles in the Bulletin<sup>1</sup> and later all the way through the planning and the beginning of Auroville) can warn us against the easy solution. It seems that we have to research the question deeper and to find a deeper reason for the need for the International Zone.

Another possible – and positive! – answer is: “Mother said that we should do it. What is required from us is to execute her will thoroughly, without too much mental questioning and doubting. She will see to it that it would be a success.” If you have the faith, surrender and openness so that the Mother is able to “see to it” using you as an instrument, this is one of the best possible attitudes. But not all of us are so lucky; may be our mind is troubled by doubts or we cannot trust our receptivity. But even if you have a strong faith, a deep and clear mental understanding, if it is not too rigid, is always of help.

Here we are brought to the third possible attitude towards the problem of the International Zone, that of research. This attitude is complimentary to the previous one. And when we turn to search for a deeper

meaning, for “why” and “what for” of the International Zone, wonderful revelations await us.

### **Education and the Auroville University**

If we study the origin of the International Zone and the works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo connected with it, one of surprising discoveries is that the idea of the International Zone is inseparably connected with education. The very first time when the Mother mentions national pavilions it is in the context of the University Centre (the beginning of 1950s). The inspiration for this University has come from Sri Aurobindo. Human unity, the main topic for the International Zone and for the whole of Auroville, had to be the main topic for the University:

*A few broad ideas will serve as a basis for the organisation of this university centre and will govern its programme of studies. [...] The most important idea is that the unity of the human race can be achieved neither by uniformity nor by domination and subjection. Only a synthetic organisation of all nations, each one occupying its true place according to its own genius and the part it has to play in the whole, can bring about a comprehensive and progressive unification which has any chance of enduring. And if this synthesis is to be a living one, the grouping should be effectuated around a central idea that is as wide and as high as possible, in which all tendencies, even the most contradictory, may find their respective places. This higher idea is to give men the conditions of life they need in order to be able to prepare themselves to manifest the new force that will create the race of tomorrow.*<sup>2</sup>

After a few lines the first ever description of the pavilions of countries follows (it is presented at the beginning of this article). The Mother writes: *That is why the international university centre will be international; not because students from all countries will be admitted here, nor even because they will be taught in their own language, but above all because the cultures of the various parts of the world will be represented here so as to be accessible to all, not merely intellectually in ideas, theories, principles and language, but also vitally in habits and customs, and in all its forms – painting, sculpture, music, architecture, decoration – and physically through natural scenery, dress, games, sports, industries and food.*<sup>3</sup>

This was the idea of the pavilions as it was expressed in the beginning. These pavilions were to constitute a large part of the University. It means that to understand the meaning of the pavilions, it can be of help to look into the idea of the University more carefully.

Attempting to establish the University Centre in Pondicherry the Mother said that this University is the one *which for years he [Sri Aurobindo] considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.*<sup>4</sup> About the ideas which were to serve as a basis for the organisation and the programme of this university Mother says that *most of them have already been presented in the various writings of Sri Aurobindo and in the series of articles in this Bulletin.*<sup>5</sup> This was written in 1952. By the time the series of articles on the mind of light by Sri Aurobindo (collected later under the name “The Supramental Manifestation”) and the series “On Education” by the Mother (started in November 1950) had been published. Some other articles (probably the most important is the series “The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations”) will follow. One of the latest was “A Dream”, expressing the dream of the Divine which in 10 years formed itself into the idea of Auroville.

The idea of the University was not reserved for Pondicherry exclusively and was not limited in time by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding time Mother said that the creation of the University *may take fifty years, it may take hundred years, and you may doubt about my being here; I may be there or not, but these children of mine will be there to carry out my work.*<sup>6</sup> Later, after a span of 15-20 years, the idea of the University became the central one for Auroville: *The permanent university will be the key to Auroville’s raison d’être. It must be a leap forward; so that it can hasten the advent of the future, of a world of harmony, beauty and union.*<sup>7</sup>

The whole world of meaning is opening for the International Zone if we look at it in this aspect. Mother has given us only a brief outline and some inspirational hints and the depths we should explore and discover ourselves.

From the beginning, we have to be on guard against a mistake of identifying “the university” as it is understood and as it exists in the world today with



the university (and, therefore, with national pavilions and the activities of these pavilions) conceived by Sri Aurobindo and being manifested by the Mother. The aim of education is a progressive evolution of the being, guided by the soul; in the end it is the movement which is psychic and spiritual. The activities, the nature of education, the structure of the future Auroville University for Human Unity and its national pavilions we have to discover, not to copy. It is not an easy task because:

*We are not here to do (only a little better) what others can do.*

*We are here to do what others cannot do because they do not have the idea that it can be done.*

*We are here to open the way of the Future to children who belong to the Future.*

*Anything else is not worth the trouble and not worthy of Sri Aurobindo's help.<sup>8</sup>*

It looks like the Auroville adventure has just begun.

### **The Future of the Nations**

The nation, of which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother speak, is a being with a soul – this is the next discovery. That is why we can compare a nation to an individual. Like a human being it takes birth, develops, searches for its true self - a psychic being guiding its evolution from behind the veil. The state is a mechanism, but the nation is a living being. That is why there is no danger of its being dissolved in a unified humanity: the nations are real living entities. As a nation discovers itself and begins to manifest its true self in life, the more is its real development and its input in the evolutionary pool of humanity. Real achievements of a nation have an effect on all peoples of the world.

The natural task of a pavilion in the International Zone is to look for the soul of the nation, research into it, present it – or invite it. The International Zone will fulfil its role if it will be the place where the souls of the nations will be present and help the nations to participate in the experiment of Auroville. Human beings can realise oneness only when they have found their souls and when their consciousness is spiritually transformed – all beings are one in the spirit. The nations have to do the same work – we may say even that they have to do *yoga* – to achieve the real unity of humanity.

*The unification is therefore in the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand forever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.<sup>9</sup>*

### **Human Unity and Evolution**

The idea of human unity meets us on every path we are taking in our search for the meaning of the International Zone. The University is necessary for Auroville because it is just another instrument (considered by Sri Aurobindo being *one of the best means*) for the work aiming at human unity.

But what does human unity mean? Why was it so strongly insisted upon by the Mother and by Sri Aurobindo? It seems that it is one of the main imminent practical aims in the evolutionary movement of the earth. It is a great signpost in the advance of humanity – *real* human unity cannot be achieved without spiritual transformation – and is the sign of the victory. The outward human unity – social, political, economical, cultural – is the condition allowing humanity to focus its forces on the preparation for the real transformation. Here we are approach the next broad idea of the International Zone, that of evolution.

We look at the world as it was when it came into being and as it is now and see the evolutionary movement everywhere. The evolution of matter so that life can appear, the evolution of life towards more and more complexity and towards the possibility of housing the mind, and the evolution of mind – and of the man as an edge of this movement at present – what is it pointing towards? We look at the history of humanity as a record of the gradual, even cycles of search and development, of search for something real and something greater and greater all the time. And what is the direction of our movement, if any? We are speaking about the world – what is the history of the world?

One possible outlook is that of evolution of consciousness. On a collective level, the level of humanity, every nation is trying to express itself and to make an input to the same work through its unique aspect, from its unique personality, at its particular place and time in history. All the nations are necessary for the process, all findings and all mistakes are inputs to the common pool of experience of the one soul of humanity. Nations as well as human beings can consciously participate in this evolutionary movement. We have to look into ourselves, using all the instruments we have to find the real mover and doer of the work, our real self, the spark of the Divine in us.

India gave humanity *yoga* as an essential tool for this conscious self-search and self-development. All modern findings of humanity should also be utilised here.

*All countries are equal and essentially “one”.*

*Each of them represents an aspect of the One Supreme.*

*In the terrestrial manifestation they all have the same right to a free expression of themselves.*

*From the spiritual point of view, the importance of a country does not depend on its size or its power or its authority over other countries, but on its response to Truth and on the degree of Truth it is capable of manifesting.<sup>10</sup>*

If essentially humanity and the peoples are one, we do not have to create this oneness anew, we only have

to find this deep inner oneness and realise it in life. Here in Auroville we feel that only this can bring human beings and nations a real hope for peace in the world and harmony between people and between peoples. Auroville is not an ordinary city – it is a city with a soul. This soul aspires to work for the manifestation of Human Unity.

In the International Zone of Auroville we plan to create Pavilions of different nations of the world. Each Pavilion will be expressing the contribution of the country to the evolution of the human consciousness. Another side of the work of the Pavilion is searching for and expressing the soul of the nation – the prime mover of evolution. The activities of the Pavilions are research-oriented, educational (in collaboration with the future Auroville University) and cultural. The Unity Pavilion is expected to coordinate and help the manifestation of the International Zone and to search for and represent the soul of the unified humanity.

We came to Auroville to explore this possibility of this future Human Unity. Auroville and its International Zone are inviting all nations to take part in this experiment, to help us in the movement on this particular path to the future. Here is the atmosphere and intent and capacity to facilitate the search in this direction. It is the practical research, the research in life. The International Zone in collaboration with the CIRHU (Centre for International Research in Human Unity) – the developing university of Auroville – aspires to work along these lines. We invite all countries to participate in this adventure!

## References:

<sup>1</sup> CWM, vol. 12 [On Education], “An International University Centre”, pp. 37-42.

<sup>2</sup> CWM, vol. 12 [On Education], “An International University Centre”, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> CWM, vol. 12 [On Education], “An International University Centre”, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Message 24 April 1951; first published at the time; Source: CWM, XV, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> CWM, vol. 12 [On Education], “An International University Centre”, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> CWM, vol. 12, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> One of several quotes typed on a paper. Original language: French. Sources: AV Archives

<sup>8</sup> CWM, vol. 12, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> Sri Aurobindo, On Himself, p.405.

<sup>10</sup> CWM, vol. 13 [Words of the Mother, I], p 383.

# *A Sound Evolution*

*Aurelio*

Even before the first signs of light appear on the horizon to assure us of the coming of a new day, a concerto of sounds greets us at dawn, announcing and celebrating the constant movement and progression of nature, the incessant wheeling of the cycles, the rhythmic song of time. The Auroville soundscape reveals itself out of the hush of the night with the first call of a bird - in a discernable descending minor third - the hum and chirps of the waking insects busy life, a rooster in the neighbourhood, filtered through the thick canopy of lush green some traffic noise from the nearby village road embedding a muezzin's call, and from afar, 5 miles down the eastern slope of the plateau, carried by the coastal winds from the Bay of Bengal, the murmuring drone of the rolling waves ..... and sure enough out there in the east : the rising sun, a new dawn !

While many of the inhabitants here use the atmosphere of the breaking of a new day for a contemplative, rejuvenating activity, the legends tell us of that awe inspiring moment of the rising sun and its experience by the early humans, the occurrence of a first 'wonderful' response, a 'sound' expression of oneness, unison with the play and movement of the worlds. It is a long journey from these primal beginnings right into the midday of the age of communication, and one can trace and follow the path of this sound evolution, hearing it reflected in the various means and ways of 'sound-making' and discover its parallel relation to the development of human consciousness and culture.

Fortunate enough for our sound-research – the basic outline of which we are trying to present and describe in the limited space of this brief article – we still can find, observe, record and analyse all the different stages of this evolution of human expression through the simultaneously present diversity of developmental layers of the unfolding of human culture. Moreover, we find in the growth and course of a single human life a clear delineation of these stages of sound perception and vocal expression. An array of recent international research of the last

decades in the field of prenatal perception and linguistic and musical beginnings of the child is deepening the understanding of the growth of this existential human faculty.

Now it is clear that we are entering herewith an unlimited field of investigation of original knowledge of creation and its processes. For the sake of a comprehensive research a focus has to be chosen through differentiation, the question defined and a strategy of a step-by-step process elaborated if we would like to gain a deeper insight into the postulated query.

It is obvious that by getting involved in a research activity within the Auroville context, the basic premise is already laid out through the *raison d'etre* of the AV project which, if we agree, is a laboratory of a conscious, co-creative r-evolutionary process in which we are invited to willingly serve, constantly progress, bridging the past and the future, taking advantage of all the discoveries and to participate in "a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity." We can assume that researches here are not undertaken primarily to produce study material adding to the mass of 'academic storage' - gracefully enough the invention of the microchip allows us a compact and much more easily available and recyclable version of the amazing collection of data, documentation, thesis and antithesis and profound studies and synthesis. Nor is research in Auroville motivated as in a high percentage in the materialistic world by commercial and military interests and projection.

Let us see then how our subject of "sound evolution" relates to the given points of the Auroville Charter:

- "material and spiritual researches": the means and methods must be both outward and inward, statistical and experiential, rational and intuitive, productive and inner growth oriented , practical and inspiring – in one word: holistic.

- "for a living embodiment": the outcomes and results are there for something alive, active, and dynamic (in contrast to the above mentioned paper and letter product), evolving, unfolding, in one word: progressive.
- "of an actual Human Unity": the research is asked to actualize itself ("from fact to act"), to manifest an activity or state of being which expresses and embodies the next stage of human evolution, an expanded, globalized consciousness of oneness and unity of human beings.

Having introduced the subject and staked out the background we can now proceed in defining the actual focus and aim of the investigation. This is done by a narrowing down of the vast field – using a specific micro or macro lens to intensify the view – into a clear path and hopefully untrodden track, if we are ready to undergo the adventures of a novel field research, which steps out of a mere descriptive compilation of the known into the exploration of the unknown.

Out of the total realm of sound – which is according to many wisdom traditions the whole creation – we choose only musical expression (and leave amongst others the whole field of language and linguistics behind to which another of our AV research colleagues is deeply dedicated – see article in the last issue); continuing the selective process we are interested within the amazing variety of musical culture with the origin and genesis of sound relating to matter, the materials the sound-makers, the instruments. Even if the discoveries of the electronic field offer us a sheer infinite possibility of re-producing sound, we choose to stay with primal, immediate 'un-plugged' sound production, so that we could understand and experience more directly the nature and dynamics of sound.

To stay aligned with one of the stated purposes of Auroville we again choose to inquire about this sound-sources and music-making in relation to the evolutionary process, in this case to the field of education and personal growth.

The formulation of a clear question helped us further to define the direction and course of the investigation: *"How can the auditory awareness and musical understanding of the growing child – irrespective of its culture of origin – be enhanced*

*through the use of new musical instruments?"*

Of course with the raising of a question many counter-questions can be stimulated and the first one we had been challenged to answer was: "Why is it important to investigate this question?" Let's see! - or rather listen carefully!

- The sense of hearing has according to many different wisdom traditions always been considered as the subtlest and deepest reaching sense and its training and development was of prime importance in all models of a holistic education.
- The development of the auditory sense (its reintegration after 2000 years of mental and therefore predominately visual evolution) is a key point in the change of consciousness. ("The sense of sound is a sense of depth, sense of sight a sense of surface")
- The initiatory training in auditory awareness has been found to be helpful in the deepening of the attention and perception of the child and increases the concentration span; 'listening-quality' and receptivity for 'the unknown' (the 'vibrational' in contrast to the apparent material reality), a contemplative faculty are furthered and imagination and spontaneous creativity are richly stimulated.

Opening through this to the importance of a specially trained sense of hearing in child development one still can argue about the necessity of a musical understanding and the question of what the diverse musical cultures have to offer for education and which instruments and practises would be favourable to introduce in a new approach. Here we have this to offer:

- The primal components of sound-perception are universal and archetypal and independent of cultural conditionings (like for instance mathematical parameters) and their comprehension can contribute towards the development of a unified global understanding and common vocabulary of human expression.
- Traditional instruments in conventional music education need a high degree of specialisation and long years of practise, whereas the creation of a new instrumentarium – covering the full range of the musical evolution of humanity – offers an immediate contact and experiential and creative learning to everyone independent of age, talent or disposition.

So how would we go about exploring an answer to the postulate question, what would be the methodology? For the first year the focus is on research, experimentation and development of new musical instruments in the facility and with the trainees of SVARAM Vocational Training and Research Station through:

- exploration of sound sources and material
- understanding acoustic principles
- introduction to the science of harmonics
- auditory awareness, intonation and vocal training
- comparative study of the classification of instruments in classical texts and modern musicology
- the craft of instrument building and the art of tuning

Having explored and constructed a basic set of instruments and being trained in their use and application, two selected pilot groups (possibly in Transition, Isai Ambalam and the Kindergarten) would be introduced to the work and experience and data would be collected through weekly classes and monthly feedback and training sessions with the teachers. At the same time a group of volunteer adults, teachers, can meet in the creative arts studio of the Integral Learning Centre, Verite to work on an experimental and improvisational basis with the instruments and gather ideas, suggestions for improvements which would feed into the ongoing process of SVARAM Research Station.

With all the collected data a revision and improved edition of an 'ensemble' would be worked out and tested in the formal settings of the schools and monitored in a comparative study. The findings will be prepared and put in a communicable format.

How will the project be monitored and evaluated and what will be the outputs?

- Through documentation on the work process of developing the instruments, progress will be self monitored through the experience and understanding gathered by the trainees and guided by the researcher and the craft resource person.
- Investigation on pre-musical education in the selected school before the introduction of the new material and classes.
- Feedback and input from the children and the

adult group.

- Comparative studies on the class working with the material and another (same age group) which is not exposed or follows a conventional method
- The full impact can only be evaluated in years to come after successful adoption of the new learning material and method.

The research is focusing on the specific requirements of Integral Education in relation to this new music pedagogy. With its findings unique learning and teaching material (musical instruments and sound makers) for primal music education can be developed and tested in AV schools and the new methods integrated in the curriculum, be a model for other similar institutions in India and abroad. This will contribute towards the reintegration of a deeper sense of listening and the place of sound and music into the predominantly visual settings of the schools of our modern culture.

One last question remains, covering the motivation – why to undergo and take up a specified research within the context of Sadhana, the deepening progress in life, the Yoga, and why to stress so much on sound and music? In the Integral Yoga artistic activity and expression is recognised as a valuable means to further the individual progress of a psychic enfoldment and spiritual realisation and we would like to add here two quotes from a prepared compilation on the subject to share the inner move and motivation which started us off in this direction:

"Well, a means of expression that is superior to language and writing – that's what has to be found.

*Question: A superior material means?*

Yes, it should be something material...

*Question: I have the impression there's always music behind things. Music or rhythm.*

Rhythm, yes.

*Question: Perhaps that would be it?*

(Mother nods her head vigorously): Yes, yes."

- *Mother's Agenda 11, 26.9.70, p.130*

"It was about .....the primal sound...

*Question: A sound that can bring in the supramental Force?*

Yes.

When this essential sound becomes a material sound, it will give birth to a new expression which will express the supramental world....."

- *Mother's Agenda 2. 27.1.61, p.49*

Having worked on this article over a quiet and rainy Sunday, experiencing Auroville's ideal 'research set-up', the beauty and peace of the environment, reflecting on our being here in a "living laboratory", feeling the gratitude of having been granted admission into this evolutionary research 'project' where we are simultaneously experimenters experiencing the experiment, – listening weaves a golden thread through the writing: the rhythmic pattern of the rain drops unnoticed changing into the

soft breathing of the breeze, the insects untiringly adding a drone and punctuated ostinatos, adorned with minimalistic tunes of some birds, a pleroma of sounds from the distance, the background traffic with the occasional crescendo of an accelerating motorbike, a diesel engine, a barking dog in contrapoint to the duet of a pigeon couple – the late afternoon atmosphere sets in and reminds of the intricate improvisations of an early evening *rāga*. Night will come. Night there is, rhythmically, sounding silence, carrying forward the listening sails of the town-ship, through the incertitude's of the trials and transitions. Yet, another new dawn is promised, revealing itself in our selves, in a deep dedication:

*"Listening for a foreseen tremendous step..."*

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*Music is a means of expressing certain thoughts, feelings, emotions, certain aspirations. There is even a region where all these movements exist and from there, as and when they are brought down, they take a musical form. One who is a very good composer, with some inspiration, will produce a very beautiful music, for he is a good musician. A bad musician can have also very good inspiration; he can receive something which is good, but as he possesses no musical capacity, what he produces will be terribly commonplace, ordinary, uninteresting. But if you go beyond, if you reach just the place where there is this origin of music — or the idea and emotion and inspiration — if you reach there, you can taste these things without being obstructed by the forms ; the commonplace musical form can be linked with that, because that was the inspiration of the writer of the music. Naturally, there are cases where there is no inspiration, or where the origin is merely a kind of mechanical music. In any case, it is not always interesting. But what I mean is that there is an inner condition in which the external form is not the most important thing; it is the origin of the music, the inspiration that is behind which is important; it is not purely the sound but that which the sound expresses.*

\* \* \*

From what plane does the music come generally?

*It goes by steps. There is a category of music that comes from the higher vital, which is very catching, somewhat (not to say exactly) vulgar, it is something that twists your nerves. This music is not necessarily unpleasant, but generally it seizes you there, by the nervous centres. So there is a music that has a vital origin. There is a music that has a psychic origin — it is an altogether different thing. And then there is a music that has a spiritual origin: it is so bright, it carries you away, wholly captures you. But if you want to execute exactly this music you must be able to take it through the vital passage. Your music coming from above can be externally quite flat if you do not possess the intensity of vital vibration that gives it its splendour, its strength. I knew people who had truly a very high inspiration and it became quite flat, because the vital did not stir. I must admit that by their spiritual practices they put completely to sleep their vital — it slept literally, it was not active at all — and the music came straight into the physical, and if one had made the connection with the origin of music, one would have seen that it was something wonderful, but externally it had no force, it was a little melody, very poor, very thin; there was none of the strength of harmony. When you can bring the vital to play then all the strength of vibration is there. If you bring it in there, this higher origin, it becomes the music of a genius.*

The Mother  
Bulletin, April 1968

# *Health, Homeopathy and Spirituality*

Nandita Shah

Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, said that a healthy body is an asset to any spiritual quest.

*“In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purpose of our existence.”*

**Samuel Hahnemann**  
**‘Organon of Healing’**

Homeopathy helps us to reach the “higher purpose of our existence” by freeing us from our physical and mental problems. Most of us get stuck in our stories, which become more complex as the pace of life increases. The stress from this causes disease. If we could step back and observe these stories, as just stories, we could be free.

Nature intended us to be healthy. The closer we adhere to nature’s laws, the healthier we are. Despite the progress man has made nature often proves herself wiser. Our distancing from nature is one of the important reasons for the sickness of our race. Our delusion as humans is that more is better: “If I go to all these healers I will be better;” or, “If I take all these medicines, I will be better;” or “If I get a bigger house and a better car I will be happier,” etc. This race for more has left the planet polluted yet we are unable to live without the plastics, batteries and fuels that endanger us and every other species on the planet. Human population too has grown out of balance with other plant and animal species.

Despite all the successful efforts to reduce mortality through science and medicine, morbidity has increased. Incurable diseases, like AIDS and cancer, are affecting growing populations. Our sickness is a direct result of not following nature’s laws. Because

of overmedication, in the United States there is almost no tap water free from medication! In India the situation is not much better; recent newspaper reports on the soft drink and bottled water industry reveal that there is hardly any ground water free from pesticides. Both these situations are bound to get worse. The examples are limitless, and this is the price we pay for development.

Homeopathy is based on nature’s laws, and so it is not just a system of medicine, rather a philosophy of life. A homeopath uses minimum dosages and only when necessary. It is not polluting and nor does its production and testing cause harm to another species. Essentially it is based on the opposite of the ‘more is better’ idea. Unfortunately homeopathic remedies are often misused because they are believed to be harmless.

‘Homeopathy’ means a therapy based on the law of similars (‘Homeo’ is Latin for similar and ‘pathy’ means therapy). Allopathy is for the most part based on the law of opposites. For example, a man suffers from asthma, which results in the constriction of the bronchi or respiratory tubes. An allopath may prescribe a bronchodilator, which dilates them, allowing the patient to breath better. According to nature’s laws, every external influence is opposed in an equal and opposite way by the organism, in this case resulting again in broncho-constriction. This is why the effect of the bronchodilator is only temporary. Therefore in chronic asthma the bronchodilator would have to be used repeatedly, and gradually the dosage would increase. Most chronic diseases are treated with lifelong prescriptions.

Correct homeopathic treatment works in the opposite way by stimulating the body’s defense system. A remedy is chosen which in a healthy person would produce a similar set of symptoms to what the patient is experiencing. A minute dose of this remedy is given to the patient, which causes a slight aggravation of his symptoms. This stimulates an equal and opposite

reaction from the patient's vital force against this artificial (medicinal) disease. Since this medicinal disease is very short lasting but similar to the original disease, this reaction serves to oppose the original disease, being therefore curative by nature. As long as this curative reaction persists, it must not be disturbed — so no further doses or other treatments are required. Repetition is indicated only when this process stops.

Homeopathy can be practiced at different levels:

- *Pathological* – The remedy is prescribed based on the pathology. This is effective in alleviating symptoms but requires frequent repetition and after some time the remedy may stop working.
- *Symptomatic* – The symptoms are understood in greater details, including the qualities and modalities of the complaint, and a prescription is made for this particular condition. This is more effective than pathological treatment, so less repetition is required, but here too the remedy will work for sometime and then may stop.
- *Emotional* – A remedy is chosen which connects the emotional and physical states. At this level, the efficacy improves.
- *Delusional* – The physician tries to understand the block or the delusion, which prevents the patient from being completely in the present. This is often based on past experiences but could also be based on past lives or one of the parent's histories. For example a patient is always afraid that thieves will rob him and has to keep checking the locks. The problem makes him distrustful and sleepless. A theft in his past has been blown out of proportion in his mind and now affects everything he does. Even if he is in a very safe situation, his perception is still one of fear. The treatment of this stress will cure the physical disease because a deeper root has been reached.
- *Sensational* – The prescription is based on the physical, emotional and delusional levels connected through a vital sensation which is

the point where all three meet. The cure is at a still deeper level.

- *Energy based* – It is the relationship of the patient and all their states to the universal energies and the substance that they require. This deeper understanding of the patient is just emerging and is not yet fully understood.

Often patients who are in homeopathic treatment do not understand what is being done for them. This can cause difficulties in their treatment and sometimes problems for the practitioner. Some patients prefer to have several different kinds of alternative treatments at a time, and often say that their other practitioner has told them that it is alright to take homeopathy with the other modality of treatment. This is true when both the other modality and the homeopathic treatment are being done at the pathological, symptomatic or sometimes at the emotional level. But if the level of homeopathy being practiced is a more holistic deeper level then everything else can be an interference including other homeopathic remedies. Although in certain rare emergencies other modalities may be necessary, in most situations their use would make it very difficult for the homeopath to treat at the deepest levels since assessment of the remedy would be impossible.

When treated homeopathically at a deeper level, patients usually do not require vaccinations, vitamins and minerals or other supplements (although sometimes minimal supplements may be required in the initial stages). In fact these can be considered harmful. Supplements are often sold in doses as large as 100 times RDA (Recommended daily allowance), which is good for sales since more is considered better, but such a large dose of daily nutrient(s) puts the ratio to other nutrients out of balance and the liver, kidneys or excretory system are overloaded and have to expel the excesses.

We are seldom aware of the many ways the body is always healing itself. Every breath we take contains hundreds of bacteria and viruses, which generally go unnoticed because the defense system is working efficiently. We succumb to sickness either when the invading organisms are too many or too strong, or when we are too weak due one of the following reasons:



1. Personal care problems like bad nutrition, lack of sleep, etc.
2. Environmental conditions like extreme heat or cold, pollution, etc.
3. Psychological issues like being stuck in emotional problems or stressful situations.

Rather than use other modalities during the homeopathic treatment, the patient can best assist their cure by ruling out any of the above and by following nature's laws. The science of natural hygiene often called 'the do nothing cure' explains these laws in terms of diet. Natural hygienists take into consideration our physiology to understand what nature intended and therefore what is most healthy. We have lost our natural intuition. Healthy animals will always chose by instinct. A cat would prefer fish or chicken to beef or cow's milk as these are more likely to be natural to them. I list a few principles of natural hygiene here as guidelines. The reader is referred to 'The History of Natural Hygiene and the principles of Natural Hygiene', or 'Natural Hygiene – the Pristine Way of Life' by Herbert Shelton, or any other book on natural hygiene for a deeper understanding.

1. Nature meant humans to be predominantly herbivorous. Our dentition with more molars and premolars than canines, our long intestines, absence of claws, etc, all point to this. It is scientifically proven that a carnivorous diet predisposes humans to colon cancer because the meat putrefies during the long journey in the intestines. Carnivores have short intestines, so do not have this problem. High protein diets predispose us to allergies, skin diseases, diabetes, gout, breast and prostate cancer, high blood pressure and other heart diseases, and so forth.
2. Nature intended milk for the young of mammals, not for adults and definitely not across species. Human infants require milk with less protein and fats, but more vitamins and minerals because humans grow slowly physically as compared to animals and brain growth is important. Traditional South East Asian diets do not contain milk, nor is there any tradition of dairy farming in Japan, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia or Sri Lanka. These cultures have

lower incidences of breast and prostate cancers, heart diseases and even osteoporosis.

3. Every fruit or vegetable in nature contains a balance of nutrients so eating fruit, vegetable or grain whole is better than eating a part. Eating coconut does not raise cholesterol but coconut oil does. Similarly whole rice is better than white rice because it contains proteins, vitamins and carbohydrates, and white rice only contains carbohydrates. Today people are eating more whole grains but some still peel their vegetables in the hope of avoiding pesticides not realizing that the pesticides reach every part of the plant. Pesticides used around a coconut tree can be traced even in the coconut water. The answer is not peeling, which removes important fiber and nutrients, but producing and eating organically grown food. Fruit too should be eaten whole rather than as fruit juice.
4. Nature's first law is a raw food diet of fruits, seeds, nuts and vegetables. If cooking is necessary it is better to eat the food immediately after cooking so as to not lose vitamins. It is almost impossible to overeat on a fruitarian diet, and there is no risk of protein shortage. In fact raw food diets are being recognized as a cure for diseases ranging from high blood pressure to cancer.
5. Food combining is important. Different foods require different digestive processes so mixing various categories of food makes digestion more difficult.

Like homeopathy, natural hygiene is holistic. Natural eating can be related to natural farming, the opposite of industrial farming. Masanobu Fukuoka, the founder of Natural Farming, explained that man feels the more he does the better, but in reality he needs to do very little. He says in agriculture doing more can actually be counter-productive. Plowing to aerate the soil kills helpful organisms like earthworms that naturally aerate and fertilize the soil. Farmers must use chemical fertilizers after plowing which further imbalance the soil rendering it more infertile. The nutrient imbalance results in crops that are less healthy so that pesticides and herbicides are required. The

result is big beautiful vegetables and fruits with less taste and less nutrient value.

Fukuoka described natural farming as ‘do nothing farming.’ It involves no plowing, but mulching and intercropping to keep the soil fertile, conserve water, and to not allow any one pest to multiply unrestricted. It is environmentally sound and helps keep the natural balance. It is not hard to imagine that plants can grow with minimal interference when one observes nature in the wilderness.

Man has grown away from natural farming and eating for predominantly economic reasons. For example a fruit orchard would provide more kilos of food per acre and is less labor intensive than a field of wheat. Fruit is healthier but not so easy to store or transport.

In the recent past not so much meat and milk was consumed; 30 - 40 years ago the average European ate meat mainly on Sundays. In India milk consumption has recently increased due to refrigeration and powder milk production. The need for more protein has been over emphasized by the meat and dairy industry. Scientifically humans need no higher percentage of protein in their diet than that of human milk. This is similar to the percentage of protein in fruit juice (another reason physiologically

humans are fruitarians). Animal milk contains far more protein, as young animals must grow rapidly. We are only now seeing the effects of this change, which has resulted in an increase of various diseases like heart disease, diabetes, cancers and obesity.

This change affects us at a very deep level, because it is connected to the psyche with the associated greed. The idea that more is better draws us away from our spiritual goals and the higher purpose of our existence, and is the cause of stress and disease. Many spiritual communities in the world are vegetarian and frugal because they recognize the importance of ecological and sustainable lifestyles.

In order to achieve good health, we need to consciously do almost nothing. Lead a simple life, eat the simplest food, grown in the ‘do nothing way’. If help is required, homeopathy ‘the do nothing medicine’ can fill in. Mother, recognized the value of homeopathy when she said,

*“Doctors very usually make things worse instead of better by spoiling nature’s resistance to illness by excessive and ill-directed use of their medicines. We have been able to work through homoeopathy far better than anything else.”*

**The Mother**

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*Now, as you know, from the physical point of view human beings live in frightful ignorance. They cannot even say exactly... For instance, would you be able to tell exactly, at every meal, the amount of food and the kind of food your body needs? — simply that, nothing more than that: how much should be taken and when it should be taken . . . You know nothing about it, there’s just a vague idea of it, a sort of imagination or guesswork or deduction or ... all sorts of things which have nothing to do with knowledge. But that exact knowledge: “This is what I must eat, I must eat this much” — and then it is finished. “This my body needs.” Well, that can be done. There’s a time when one knows it very well. But it asks for years of labour, and above all years of work almost without any mental control, just with a consciousness that’s subtle enough to establish a connection with the elements of transformation and progress. And to know also how to determine for one’s body, exactly, the amount of physical effort, of material activity, of expenditure and recuperation of energy, the proportion between what is received and what is given, the utilisation of energies to re-establish a state of equilibrium, which has been broken, to make the cells which are lagging behind progress, to build conditions for the possibility of higher progress, etc... it is a formidable task. And yet, it is that which must be done if one hopes to transform one’s body. First it must be put completely in harmony with the inner consciousness. And to do that, it is a work in each cell, so to say, in each little activity, in every movement of the organs. With this alone one could be busy day and night without having to do anything else . . . One does not keep up the effort and, above all, the concentration, nor the inner vision.*

The Mother  
CWM, Vol.4, p. 250-251

# *The House: Our Body*

*Hans van Baaren*

To work on one's health is to walk The Path. It is essential for all, but for those aspiring to the Inner Life, health takes on a deeper meaning. In the context of the Integral Yoga, we know what is concerned is the manifestation of the Divine in matter and therefore in the body. For the body to manifest the Divine, health involves all the levels of the being and it becomes a foundation for a future humanity. Attaining this health implies a work on the body: a practice or discipline.

But it is also very much a work of allowing the body to be: liberating the body of all that has been put into it unnecessarily. Health means a physical functioning of the body, but to us it implies bringing a refinement, beauty, graceful movement, coordination, balance, a liberated breathing and a greater harmony into our lives, ... a fine-tuning of the instrument for the Divine to play.... to improve the quality of living and well being... to be joyous and shining with this 'higher' health.

I would like to write something about this, but wish to stay with the more practical aspects of the subject. Health includes the physical and the subtle physical development, the functioning of the brain and nervous system, and the 'awareness' faculty. The 'higher health', our cultural refinement and quality of living, has very much to do with the pranic reality and the awareness function. We can say there is a work to be done, a conscious effort to be made to liberate the body of complications and unnecessary tensions in order to free it and to let it discover itself, learn by itself, instead of it being (mal)treated as an object.

The body is the House, the temple of the Divine, but the forces wanting to inhabit it are many, and they are knocking on its doors constantly. They are all too keen to enter through the windows or cracks left open too carelessly for too long, and they do enter regularly. When the house is clean, then there is health. One needs to perceive the dust before being able to clean it, know where the tensions are, or where the bolts

are too tight or too loose, where there is a forgotten corner to be polished.

It implies a daily cleaning routine, a discipline and a conscious approach to the body. One realizes that the house does not belong to 'me', but to the Soul, and should be treated as such, kept clean for the Divine to enter. The very stuff the house is made of, its cement, the space in between as it were (as well as everything), its 'well being', is the 'Chi' (a Chinese term indicating the life-force, meaning for them the source as well as the manifestation of all life forms), the Prana, the Universal Life-Force. It has a role in whatever we do. Often its flow is blocked, its harmonizing influence reduced because of the 'shrinking' influences on the Being. Our health is not optimal as we do not consciously explore this field much; its working and its influence on the daily life and health.

When one learns to relax truly (and this is an art) one learns to widen and there is a release of tension, bringing about a flow of well being in abundance and one learns to connect to the 'higher Prana' to revitalize oneself and heal ailments. The quality of this flow can also be much improved, refined, cleaned, purified, allowing it to be a support to ones inner life, creativity and aspirations. One can work towards this 'higher health' through the pranic reality; learning to perceive and then circulate it. Yet one should take care to feel strongly that the Divine Issue is there and not let one's ego take over.

I feel a lot can be learnt about this great influence in our lives, because it is there...one can become aware of this influence, this Universal Harmony and then allow it to enter fully. It is then a help in opening up to the Divine life. One can often feel 'something', but what is it? How often do we hear someone say: "I am so sensitive to this, to that"...Is it a truer perception of the reality or is it because of a lack of balance somewhere, a 'crack' in one's subtle physical? Or is it something else? Perhaps it helps to discern

deeper, mystical, spiritual experiences one has from the very 'normal' phenomenon of Chi. One can say, it is this, it is that, but until one has explored this field a little in practice, it is very difficult to speak about it. A lack of good health influences one's perception. By allowing this flow and freeing the breathing, one liberates the body and learns more about what one truly feels: one opens and sharpens one's perception by becoming more healthy.

Movements made by animals can be considered as more beautiful, graceful, elegant and certainly having less distortions than that of the human being. The tiger moves very efficiently, using its muscles when needed, relaxing them when not needed. Not one is used superfluously, and there is a force flowing in abundance, there is a greater harmony at work..... The human body seems all too often awkward (and there are really few exceptions...), lacking in freedom, its gestures distorted, lacking this grace. Why? This means there is a lot of tension and complication entering the body which it has no need of whatsoever. This takes energy. It is used as an object..... Reflexes will not work properly. It influences for example the way we react, or rather, are reactive. Or our aging-patterns...are those pains, back-aches, 'sore bones', hunched backs truly unavoidable?

*"In the matter of positions, postures and movements, bad habits are formed too quickly that may have disastrous consequences for the whole life."*

**The Mother**

The habits, the habitual patterns formed during our lives and stored in the body can cause trouble for our health, the shaping of our character, the psychological development. A small, seemingly insignificant example: One falls off the cycle at the age of ten and there is a sprain in the ankle and the lower back hurts. The brain, avoiding any unpleasant feelings, or fears of feeling pain, organizes the muscles/posture in such a way so as not to feel this. These contractions are kept, let's say, for a few days. Then, a situation occurs where the brain forgets to release these muscles. The pain has gone away, and one enthusiastically jumps on the cycle again. A memory of this accident, or trauma, remains. You feel normal, 'just as before', but the posture is not the same as before. The perception one has of oneself is that the body feels normal, but it is not. The brain has forgotten to relax those muscles involved in avoiding pain during the

recovery period: it sees the chronic contractions as being the normal situation.

And so begins a pattern of tension in the body and one is not aware of it at all. This causes a strain on the spine in particular and after twenty years can become something like migraine, back-ache, neck pain, trouble with knees, allergy, organs not working optimally etc, or...can cause those 'edgy' parts of the character (which for example chronic contractions in the lower back certainly have their influence on). The spine contains nerves, glands, the 'energetic' centers, and if there is a constant pull of the muscles on it, however little, it has a profound influence on our health and well-being. Instead of a small accident, it could be anything else, and these 'elses' are knocking on the doors of our house constantly, and they do enter and cause cracks.

Reflexes in the body, i.e. the brain sending contract-commands to the body, occur very often. They have ensured survival for all living organisms. In this modern age these reflexes are triggered very often, mostly unnecessarily. You are driving in the dark and there is a head-light coming towards you and naturally you think it to be a motor bike but then suddenly it turns out to be a truck, with one head-light not working which is on your side of the road. Just before the headlight blinds you, of course, you react. Reflexes are there, at incredible speed the whole body is on red alert, without your conscious intervention, and it is better that way otherwise reactions will be too slow. (Reflexes are also often triggered out of fear only and are not really needed at all). There is no room for hesitation. But sometimes we have become slow, our reflexes are not finely tuned, they are distorted.

A strong smell, a loud noise, fear, a thought, a memory, a dream, a loud bomb exploding in a movie (the body makes no distinction between metaphor and reality), an emotion, an intense aspiration... Often whilst having an intense concentration of will there is a mixture of tension in the body. All trigger off these reflexes (a 'shrinking' occurs). One can see that especially today this happens so often that the brain finds it hard to keep up! Not necessarily only with the 'contract' commands but especially the 'release' commands. To relax becomes more and more difficult. The brain forgets what it was like to have normal functioning muscles. It loses control and

tensions accumulate, and these influence our lives daily: the way we walk, sleep, perceive, grow 'old', experience, react.

A simple experiment: stand in front of a mirror, close your eyes and stand straight, then open the eyes again and notice that you are not straight at all. This means, the perception you have of yourself is incorrect. Reality is different. Now, what to do about it? Do not shape yourself according to the mirror image, this will not be enough. Football? Cycling? Dance, stretching, yoga, badminton, walks? Enfin, no guarantee, it is not enough...more is often needed to solve this problem. If you attempt to voluntarily force a muscle that is chronically contracted, you will cause an equal and opposite resistance of that muscle. And this again pulls at the spine.

These then are tensions inside the body, which the brain (or your perception) is unaware of, that pull the body in a particular shape or form, and bring to it weaknesses. Often someone will say, with shoulders completely tight: "I feel great", until one day the pain is unbearable, or it comes out in the form of severe headache...or a slow reaction to an incoming truck....then it is off to the doctor for the quick fix, and up and away on the bike again.

One might undo certain patterns within oneself psychologically, but the body will not necessarily follow or change. A re-education of the brain, of one's awareness is needed and it has to involve the physical body. The window needs cleaning before one can look out. A gradual dissolution and a melting of all the body's distortions, all its habitual patterns, is needed through a more conscious approach to the body, the

brain and the use of the subtle physical. Then, a large part of the Path is cleared out, a lot is purified. A relaxing of one layer of tension will automatically lead to the next, leading to a continuous opening and a deeper awareness. A greater health is to be attained, and a simple gesture to be rediscovered. Perhaps it mainly concerns an attitude to be cultivated; a releasing, to learn to have a repose that is an ascent. To learn to relax and to 'feel' again, these things are beautiful, and will bring this higher health to our culture that is in Auroville. To re-discover a harmony in the gesture, to slowly grow toward a conscious movement. The daily renewal, the clean up of the house taken care of, the walls of the house to be strong and the foundations solid.

A problem is the art of working attentively, daily, meditatively, with the body. It is so used to doing, going '....go, go, go...', being pushed at, pulled, tugged, slumped in chairs (Oh God, it cries, let someone design a good chair), forced, stuffed etc, that it is difficult to stop, and relax, and do the work on the body with attentiveness, consciously. It is generally easier to run up a hill or cycle miles or do 50 push ups. To learn to breathe freely, to stand straight without effort, all this implies a de-mechanising of oneself, an unlearning of what has been wrongly learnt, a reprogramming of the software, a demystifying, or rather a more conscious experience of the phenomena of the Pranic reality.

To work on one's health is to also work on Auroville. The body of Auroville too needs to undo habitual patterns...renewing it daily... to find its flow, to attain health for it to make simple gestures: letting the Divine Influence create the true, harmonious movement.

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*The vital body surrounds the physical body with a kind of envelope which has almost the same density as the vibrations of heat observable when the day is very hot. And it is this which is the intermediary between the subtle body and the most material vital body. It is this which protects the body from all contagion, fatigue, exhaustion and even from accidents. Therefore if this envelope is wholly intact, it protects you from everything, but a little too strong an emotion, a little fatigue, some dissatisfaction or any shock whatsoever is sufficient to scratch it as it were and the slightest scratch allows any kind of intrusion. Medical science also now recognises that if you are in perfect vital equilibrium, you do not catch illness or in any case you have a kind of immunity from contagion. If you have this equilibrium, this inner harmony which keeps the envelope intact, it protects you from everything. There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish.*

The Mother  
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# ***Challenges for an Integrated Planning in Auroville***

## ***A probe into interlinked issues, researches and potential future directions***

*Lalit Kishor Bhati*

### **To plan is to envision the future**

As per the Mother's vision and directions, Auroville has a unique privilege as well as a responsibility to evolve as a 'City of the Future' – creation of a new civilization - and 'Living Laboratory of Man'. This vast scope essentially calls for a wider understanding of the ideals, values, principles, activities and the process itself. It is evident that there is a great inbuilt thrust in this vision on the aspects of deeper researches and experiments in all walks of life.

Mother envisioned Auroville at the highest scale. Following that vision, interested and dedicated people (Aurovilians and others) have been engaged in 'further envisioning and realising' exercises over the years. This process has brought about many types of realizations and differing approaches of this 'further envisioning'. We all might have our own preferred way of perceiving Auroville's growth. How should then the progress and growth be guided? Needless to say that all of these have to be guided by some basic fundamental guidelines given by the Mother both in terms of quantitative aspects such as target population of 50,000, various zones etc. and qualitative aspects such as being experimental, innovation, issues of sustainability, harmonious co-existence of all in the region etc.

The growth is taking place in one way or other. Envisioning it beforehand and making appropriate plans and actions is important and required. Some might even not believe in the need of this envisioning (planning for the future); at the same time not every one has the ability to envision!

One of the most important elements of Auroville's way of life is to conduct experiments and discover appropriate solutions for diverse and ever increasing needs of its growing society in entirety. Due consideration of progressively different scales and times makes it more challenging.

### **Evolution and Challenge of Planning**

A careful look into the evolution of Auroville so far provides a very clear picture of Auroville's approach towards innovative and ecological planning and its phased implementation. Due to the uninhabitable nature of the land in Auroville area, the very first task of planning and development became to make it habitable.

Thus a massive but well planned collaborative action was launched to regenerate the land via soil and water conservation. The results are visible. Auroville, today, has recreated a local climate and environment which is being seen as a role model for others to learn and follow.

While there has been the 'Galaxy Plan' approved by the Mother since the very beginning – an inspiring and directional plan for the 'city of the future' aiming for the ultimate population of 50,000, a true interpretation and further detailing is required. The lack of adequate resources to carry out appropriate research at every stage of planning and development has been one of the crucial factors which have resulted in the present state of stalemate in this regard. Also, lack of effective coordination among various services and activities is another crucial element. A great amount of challenging work is envisioned in this direction which if attempted well, would essentially bring forward a range of issues and solutions which the modern world is struggling to achieve.

### **Need and Will for Planning – Materialisation of the Master Plan**

It is a known fact that the first ever Master Plan came into existence, not by the willingness of the people to have a planned development, but primarily to protect the threatened lands in the proposed Auroville Township Area.

This Master Plan titled as "Auroville Universal Township Master Plan: Perspective 2000-2025" was prepared in collaboration with the planners of Town and Country Planning Organisation, Delhi. Subsequently, it got the approval of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, our nodal ministry in 2001. It essentially comprises of 3 parts:

- 1) Description of the existing scenario
- 2) Development proposals for a population of 50,000 residents.
- 3) Broad development regulations to guide its development.

The development proposals have included goals and objectives of the plan, land-use pattern for distribution of assigned population, standards for social and physical infrastructure, phasing and resource mobilisation, and the mechanism for planning and development of Auroville in a broad framework.

As a common topic of interest and need, planning at the community level had not been receiving its due recognition for various reasons and differing perceptions. However, over the past couple of years, there has been a visible change in the thinking and approach towards 'need for planning' due to many crucial and urgent developments directly linked to it on both short and long term basis.

Planning in Auroville, apart from dealing with the very fundamental aspect of facilitating the growth of the township and bringing of all the development sectors to a common platform, has been tremendously resourceful and engaged in exploring and establishing relationships with various local, regional, state, national and international level bodies of a diverse nature and scale.

Planning and Development are not end products in themselves but rather a dynamic evolving process.

Following that, there have been numerous collaborative efforts to comprehend the overall picture and chart out a future path. One such major integrated effort in very recent times has been in the form of a European Union sponsored project titled 'Auroville Innovative Urban Management'. This recently completed project lasted 2 years and was a pioneering attempt of such a scale encompassing a range of related activities which brought out many useful baseline studies and reports. These are indepth inputs for further ongoing works.

One of the most important and revealing aspect of these studies has been to understand and recognize our present development trend, its causes and effects. While Auroville has been on the path of innovations, there have been many collective areas/practices which could really not be termed very sustainable or eco-conscious. For example, our energy and water consumption which is far above the Indian national average. The cost of infrastructure is being ranged from 25% to 35% of the total housing cost in Auroville. It is an amazingly high share of cost towards basic infrastructure connections – water and electricity. This element causes a great hindrance in providing affordable and healthy housing options to the Aurovilians as well as the New Comers. The temporary closure of the Entry Group in 2000-2001 was primarily linked to this aspect. One can easily see the interconnectedness of the issues here and an urgent need to find an appropriate planned solution.

Out of a range of topics requiring a deeper probe, there are a few listed here which need immediate and in-depth attention to break this development deadlock and would also help in bringing out a set of effective policies to guide long and short term goals.

*Infrastructure Options* - This is one of the most crucial pieces of planning and development puzzle in Auroville.

This is a fact that due to the set pattern of decentralised development in Auroville, various communities and areas have been trying to be self-sufficient in their own way. This approach is specifically true in terms of water and energy supply and waste-water treatment. While on the one hand, it appears to be a good case study for decentralized development, on the other hand, it did not take into account the harmonious fitting of these 'islands of decentralised development' within a larger frame work and entity called an Integrated City Character.

*Resources* – The main resource required is manpower. It is in a way available here. This is quite a paradoxical situation. Although Auroville has perhaps a very high density of architects and related development professionals we have still not been able to manage to pool our talent collectively and develop a common vision and action plan. What does it reflect – either we, as a community, have not matured enough to be able to agree to a common agenda (based on laid down principles) or there is a serious lack of capacity for such a task to be carried out or there is an element of concentration going towards individual economical survival! The latter hints towards our collective economy and thus, in this context, supporting activities like planning and others.

Auroville is poised to look forward to explore new means in line with its objectives. The thrust here is on its techno-economical and social aspects as well as modular increment.

*Urban Planning and Urban Design* - The future urban form for the city would, of course, draw inspiration and guidance from the Galaxy Plan. One of the most important aspects of this detailing process is to prepare urban design guidelines with special emphasis on the features which carry the essence and spirit of the galaxy plan, namely the Lines of Force, the Crown area, and the development along major roads to achieve a harmoniously built environment. This urban form along with zoning should provide adequate flexibility and opportunities for innovative and appropriate mixed-use development. A lot of research is required to be done to come up with suggestions towards its climatic behaviour once everything would be in place and also on the way.

### **Participation**

This is one of the most important and interesting elements in the whole aspect of emergence of the city. But before starting to understand the popular and surface meaning of this word and concept as a 'fundamental right to express oneself', we need to make an effort to understand the larger context of Auroville: its basic framework, fundamental aspects, what it offers, what it demands, to name a few. In a nutshell, it suggests 'What does one understand of Auroville in totality?'

This is most important and thus our collective responsibility towards each other, in the best way possible, to be constantly aware of the Mother's vision and accordingly refine our own visions. The overall picture needs to be fairly clear in one's mind. It is rather damaging to be in a constant state of indecisiveness. As a conscious community, a decent part of this overall picture can be clarified by highlighting some very basic aspects of development at least. This can also be reviewed and refined, based on well-studied and meritorious inputs. It is impossible to dream of a well-planned and conscious society without having clear and sound fundamentals and these should not be open for major changes on a day-to-day basis. Our community is constantly facing the crisis in development related areas precisely because of a lack of a clear establishment of fundamentals in the early stages as well as following a tradition of making ad-hoc and unintegrated policies. This happens due to lack of a clear, common and agreed vision. If other innovations and activities are indicators of our collective achievements, this is one of the areas which reflects our collective failure. There are many other areas in this category which we need to learn from.

For example, the preparation, participation and acquaintance of the Master Plan. The Master Plan was prepared after a long period of information collection, analysis and deliberation of 12 sub groups (almost 40 people altogether) of Land Use Coordination (LUC - created in March 1999). The various drafts of the Master Plan were on full display with maps and text for over 2 weeks. Very few people came to visit, to be more aware and to give their comments. Even the size of gatherings had been very small as compared to the importance of the crucial topic during various Master Plan related and the Resident's Assembly meetings. Many more recreational activities, that too on short notice, manage to accumulate a larger number of Auroville population! Perhaps it is not being realized well enough that as of today, Auroville has only one major and legal document, apart from Auroville Foundation Act, not only to interact and deal with the outside agencies but also to regulate our own internal development and that is the Master Plan. It is quite significant and not to be taken lightly. It would be an interesting exercise to find out as to what percentage of Auroville population has actually read the Master Plan and discover other meanings of participation!

It is against this background, we need to look into the aspect of 'Participation'. In my view, participation is an excellent tool for all of us to make our genuine, well-informed and well-thought out contribution towards Auroville's growth as well as our own. It should certainly not be taken as a loose element of just making our own points in a rather limited and generally less aware

context. Ultimately, all these differing views need a synthesis in a proper way and that can only be done with the help of Auroville's ideals.

I would like to share another important aspect – it might sound a rather restrictive way of proposing development but there is a great scope of flexibility and creativity within it, which in turn demands extensive research and collective working. A good amount of work on this could bring forward some results in diverse fields as the social impacts of a growing society, impact on environment, a co-process of building the city as well as building ourselves apart from finding appropriate solutions for our basic living needs.

It would be good for all of us to know and reflect on 'what are the basic parameters on which planning is based? How can the residents participate effectively in the Master Plan related work? How important and binding is the Master Plan for Auroville residents - existing as well as future ones? What is its flexibility? What efforts have been made to communicate the major features of the Master Plan to the community for their awareness and feedback? What could be the ingredients of a 'harmonious neighborhood' and how can we all try to achieve it?

The responsibility lies on all of us as aware and participative residents and as those who are engaged in various areas of the development sector.

### **Emergence of a Comprehensive Planning and Development Council**

The Auroville Planning and Development Council [APDC] emerged in a way which signifies a commitment from diverse sections of Auroville society, to prepare an implementation plan for the next five years. Perhaps, it is for the first time in Auroville's history, that a group as diverse as this has come to a common platform with a rather harmonious attitude and environment on issues of planning and development! This itself is a welcome change.

The APDC has already gone through its preliminary rounds of understanding the depth of work, share of responsibilities across zonal and other groups and needs to have an agreed development brief. This work is based on the principles of the Master Plan. The APDC targets a period of one year (all of 2004) to prepare the 5-year Detailed Development Plans. It is a challenge to the APDC as well as to the community to steer the available resources (and generate new resources, if required) in a way so that Auroville has its first ever detailed planning and development framework fully worked out and established and we can move forward. Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Integral Research [SAIIR] projects have already provided a kind of boost to



Auroville development and also in a way forced to find a way to accommodate these required activities and facilities. It is high time that Auroville prepares itself, of course in the best way possible but without taking too much time either, for more such possibilities like SAIER and others apart from meeting our basic housing and working needs adequately. Doesn't it sound odd that after 35 years of existence, Auroville has yet not been able to provide a simple and adequate base which could house all Aurovilians and New Comers as well as facilitate smooth entry of worldwide talent to be part of an entity called 'The Auroville Experiment'?

Some of the important issues highlighted for further work mentioned in the APDC Development Brief are mentioned here for reference. The full details of this brief can be read on the AVNET.

What are the consequences of population increase in terms of increase for housing, infrastructure health, education, food accessibility, employment and transportation? What is the capital investment required for housing, schooling and infrastructure development? A financial outlay would have to be made jointly with the FAMC and AV council and other relevant working groups. This joint body should come to a decision how the development envisaged can be materialised, through loans, grants or otherwise – to develop industry and commerce in order to employ the increase in population, to develop hotels and guest facilities to meet the increase in the number of tourist and guests, to develop guidelines to help citizens understand the need and to implement a more sustainable resource management (water, electricity, fuels), to create an appropriate Auroville governance structure with office space and budgets, to evolve communication tools for due community participation.

Auroville's ideals on the economy cannot manifest without a large increase of productive units that contribute to the development of the township. Infrastructure will have to be developed to promote productive units. At the same time, care has to be taken that such a development does not lead to an unsustainable inflow of employees.

### **Long range targets**

To enable Auroville to grow both in tangible and non-tangible ways a number of long-term issues will need to be addressed. One issue is land use and land acquisition in partnership with the villages concerned; another issue is how to create a dynamic economic framework that would facilitate the development of Auroville into a self-maintaining society. The APDC will also investigate if and to what extent Auroville can participate in the setting up of a Regional Planning Authority which would consist of representatives of

Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry governments and would deal with the planning of the area around Auroville. Such planning would involve regional environment, water protection areas, access to Auroville, joint venture projects and development of the villages.

### **List of development priorities**

The following priorities will be part of each zone or area development plan:

- 1) Population projection for the zone.
- 2) Envisaged mobility: polluting vs. non-polluting traffic; cycle and pedestrian facilities. Additional considerations: shade, safety, noise reduction, quality of air etc.
- 3) Roads (feeders, distributors and local network); road sections and levels (approximate) to avoid having plinths below road levels in the future.
- 4) Demarcations of sectors in terms of infrastructure network.
- 5) Allocation of areas for service (social and essential), public open spaces, parking and institutional areas.
- 6) Densities with land use projections, focal points of development.
- 7) Infrastructure solutions envisaged: sewage treatment, water consumption, electricity and communication network, waste management.
- 8) FAR (floor area ratio) and BUA (built-up area) at a sector level.
- 9) Building heights, building materials and elevation control.
- 10) Building by-laws (civil/structural, setbacks, climatic consideration).
- 11) Social infrastructure (recreation, community facilities, safety, noise levels).

### **Usage of this 5-Year Detailed Development Plan**

Architects, developers, town planners, urban designers, environmentalists, sociologists and engineers (civil, structural and infrastructure) would use this document to work on individual/collective projects. This document would also be available to residents and working groups for reference so that their promises and projects/actions are not out of sync with the direction of the development plan.

It is entirely up to us to make an effort to understand these dynamics and prepare for them as consciously and joyfully as possible and avoid inculcating doubtful feelings towards 'planned development'. If we are not ready, well in time, to express our collectivity in a right way, for sure, this time some other external element/pressure, in any other form, would make us do so! Which path do we wish to choose?

# *Helping Humanity*

## *The Mother*

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

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

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

One in the East, Prince Siddhartha, later known as the Buddha, and the other in the West, Monsieur Vincent, who came to be called Saint Vincent de Paul after his death, stood, so to say, at the two poles of human consciousness, and their methods of assistance were diametrically opposite. Yet both believed in salvation through the spirit, through the Absolute, unknowable to thought, which one called God and the other Nirvana.

Vincent de Paul had an ardent faith and preached to his flock that one must save one's soul. But on

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

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

Millions have believed in his doctrine, although the number of individuals capable of putting it into practice has been very small. But the condition of the earth has remained practically the same and there has been no appreciable diminution in the mass of human suffering.

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

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

Indeed, true happiness is the happiness one can feel in any circumstances whatsoever, because it comes from regions which cannot be affected by any external circumstances. But this happiness is accessible only to very few individuals, and most of the human race is still subject to

terrestrial conditions. So we can say on one hand that a change in the human consciousness is absolutely indispensable and, on the other, that without an integral transformation of the terrestrial atmosphere, the conditions of human life cannot be effectively changed. In either case, the remedy is the same: a new consciousness must manifest on earth and in man. Only the appearance of a new force and light and power accompanying the descent of the supramental consciousness into this world can raise man out of the anguish and pain and misery in which he is submerged. For only the supramental consciousness bringing down upon earth a higher poise and a purer and truer light can achieve the great miracle of transformation.

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

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

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

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

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

For there is a series of fundamental questions which those who are concerned by the fate of mankind and are not satisfied with current formulas inevitably ask themselves. They can be formulated approximately as follows:

Why is one born if only to die?

Why does one live if only to suffer?

Why does one love if only to be separated?

Why does one think if only to err?

Why does one act if only to make mistakes?

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

This new creation, the appearance of a superhuman race, has already been the object of much speculation and controversy. It pleases man's imagination to draw more or less flattering portraits of what the superman will be like. But only like can know like, and it is only by becoming conscious of the divine nature in its essence that one will be able to have a conception of what the divine nature will be in the manifestation.

Yet those who have realised this consciousness in themselves are usually more anxious to become the superman than to give a description of him.

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

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

Until the superman can come in person to show man what his true nature is, it might be wise for every human being of goodwill to become conscious of what he can conceive as the most beautiful, the most noble, the truest and purest, the most luminous and best, and to aspire that this conception may be realised in himself for the greatest good of the world and men.

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