

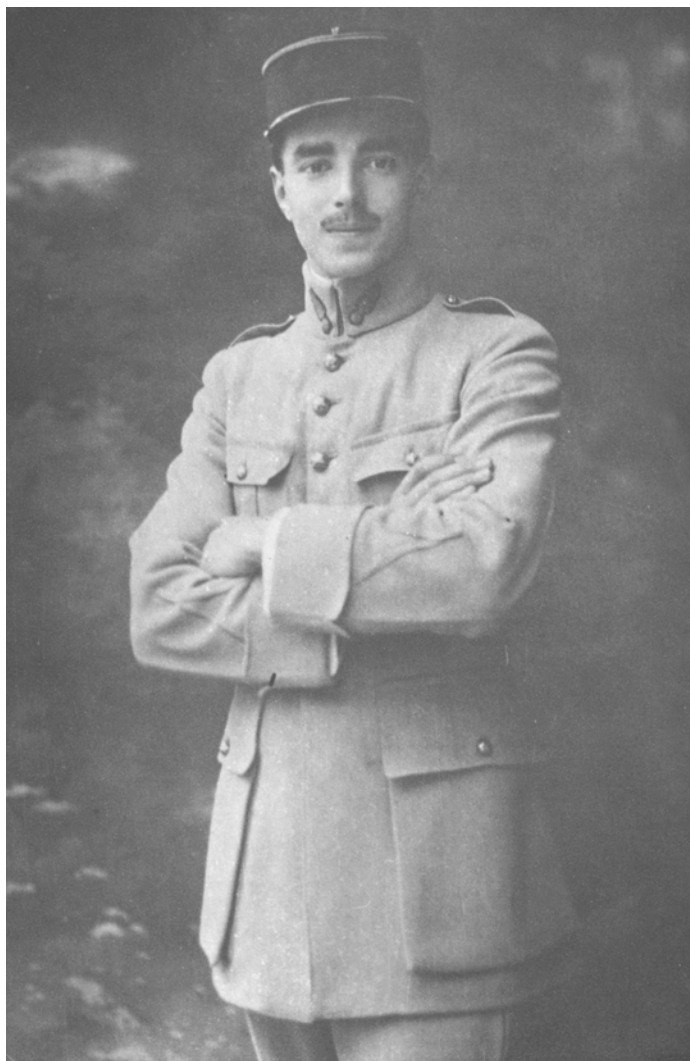
Recent Publications

Sabta

The First World War broke out just months after the Mother arrived in Pondicherry to meet Sri Aurobindo in March 1914. This issue's lead article, which marks the beginning of the centenary of the Great War (1914-1918), looks at what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother wrote and said in relation to the war. A few soldiers who served in World War I and later came to participate in the life of the Ashram are remembered in a brief tribute.

Another historical perspective of a different nature follows in the second article, which features some reminiscences of the beginnings of the Playground and the Tennis Ground in the 1940s, highlighting the Mother's presence at the centre of the early physical activities.

*A World War I photograph of Pavitra
(Philippe Barbier Saint Hilaire)*



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Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and the First World War

The centenary of the First World War (1914–1918) is being commemorated around the world. That war had erupted, after a long period of increased tensions in Europe, with the assassination of Austria-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914. This act launched a series of events and activated alliances that eventually resulted in more than one hundred nations becoming involved, directly or indirectly, in the conflict. Some were combatants over the four years of the war, others provided resources and manpower, especially the colonies, and some declared war late and either entered the fray or provided moral support to one side or the other. But, at the beginning, it was Austria-Hungary and its ally Germany that collided with Serbia and Russia, eventually dragging in Britain and France by the first days of August 1914.

The First World War was one of the deadliest, bloodiest conflicts in history. Western Europeans had a higher death toll than in any other war in their history. Twice as many Britons, three times as many Belgians, and four times as many Frenchmen died on the Meuse and the Somme as in all of World War II. It also wrought significant political changes for the future, the consequences of which still affect the world today. It brought an end to the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and from their dissolution new countries in Europe and the Middle East arose. Monarchies fell or became figureheads, and states were no longer ruled by a small circle of families that had held power for so long. The United States' entry into the war and the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 meant that Europe would lose the dominant position it held in the world for the past few hundred years.¹

But the war created a shared sense of history among the countries and people that lived through it and also among those who inherited its legacies. Although historians now argue that at its outset it seemed a senseless war, without apparent political, economic, or moral benefit, by the end of the conflict it had become known as “The Great War for Civilisation”. At the peace conference held at Versailles after the armistice that ended the war, a decision was taken to award a campaign medal to all participants on the victorious Allied side. Inscribed on one side of the medal were the words “The Great War for Civilisation”.

Political Repercussions in Pondicherry

In our last issue, we wrote about the launching of the *Arya* on 15 August 1914, just days after France and Britain declared war against the Central Powers. Events moved swiftly and brought critical changes to the situation in Pondicherry. Relations between England and France were now much closer due to their wartime alliance, and the British felt they could press for Sri Aurobindo's expulsion from Pondicherry. The Government of India's proposal to expel him and the other freedom fighters meant they could be detained as soon as they entered British India. However, the Government of Bengal was not at all eager to have Sri Aurobindo back in his home province, as it feared his enthusiastic welcome there would prove too great a risk, and the idea was eventually vetoed by the Viceroy.²

Taking advantage of the panic produced by the presence of the German battleship *Emden* in the Bay of Bengal, the British Government now brought pressure on the French, claiming that the freedom fighters might possibly be German spies and posed a threat to the security of French India. Nolini Kanta Gupta described the situation:

The French Government accordingly proposed that they would find room for us in Algeria. There we could live in peace; they would see to our passage so that we need have no worry on that score. If on the other hand we were to refuse this offer, there might be danger: the British authorities might be allowed to seize us forcibly.

I can recall very well that scene. Sri Aurobindo was seated in his room in what was later called “Guest House”, Rue Francois Martin. We too had come. Two or three of the Tamil nationalist leaders who had sought refuge in Pondicherry came in and told Sri Aurobindo about the Algeria offer and also gave a hint that they were agreeable. Sri Aurobindo paused a little and then he said, in a quiet clear tone, “I do not budge from here.”³

Apparently, the British Government in London addressed the French Government in Paris on this matter. At this time the Mother’s brother, Matteo, held a senior post in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The file pertaining to the freedom fighters in Pondicherry came to Matteo’s attention, and he put it in his bottom drawer, where it only gathered dust.⁴ In 1939, Sri Aurobindo was to say to a group of his disciples that “it is men like him [Matteo] who built up France and also made it possible for the Ashram to continue here. Otherwise I might have had to go to France, or else to America.”⁵

Paul Richard was called up in the general mobilisation of 3 August 1914 to join the French Army Reserve. He remained in Pondicherry for another six months and tried to mend fences with the British, who considered him an undesirable presence because of his association with Sri Aurobindo and his anti-British intrigues. Finally, in January 1915, the Government of Pondicherry yielded to British pressure and ordered his expulsion, ostensibly because of the mobilisation order. He and the Mother left on 22 February 1915, the day after the Mother’s thirty-seventh birthday.⁶

Prayers and Interventions

The Mother’s diary records the anguish of the first days of the war. On 8 August 1914 she wrote: “Monstrous forces have swooped down upon the earth like a hurricane, forces dark and violent and powerful and blind.” And on 21 August, “O Lord, Lord, the whole earth is in an upheaval; it groans and suffers, it is in agony...”⁷ Years later she explained that the “First World War was the result of a tremendous descent of the forces of the vital world (hostile forces of the vital world) into the material world. Even those who were conscious of this descent and consequently armed to defend themselves against it, suffered from its consequences.”⁸

Meanwhile, the German armies were marching unresisted through northern Belgium and into France, with a plan to surround the French army and capture the prize of Paris, a symbol of Western culture and civilisation. But at this time, many miles away in Pondicherry, an intervention occurred. The Mother later narrated what had happened:

I used to sit on the terrace to meditate every morning, facing Sri Aurobindo’s room. That day I was in my room [at 7 Rue Duplex], but looking at Sri Aurobindo’s room through a small window. I was in meditation but my eyes were open. I saw this Kali entering through my door; I asked her, “What do you want?” And she was dancing, a truly savage dance. She told me, “Paris is taken, Paris will be destroyed.” We used to have no news, it was just at the beginning of the war. I was in meditation. I turned towards her and told her, “No, Paris will not be taken, Paris will be saved”, quietly, just like this, but with a certain force. She made a face and went away. And the next day, we received the “dispatch”. In those days there were no radios yet, we had telegraph messages, “dispatches”, which were proclaimed, posted on the gate of the Government House. We got the news that the Germans had been marching upon Paris, that Paris was not defended; the way was quite open, they had to advance only a few kilometres more and they would have entered the city. But when they saw that the road was clear, that there was nobody to oppose them, they felt convinced that it was an ambush, that a trap had been set for them. So they turned round and went back! (*Laughter*) And when the French armies saw that, naturally they gave chase and caught them, and there was a battle. It was the decisive battle: they were stopped.⁹

And in August 1926, Sri Aurobindo commented that “when the Germans were marching upon Paris I felt something saying, ‘They must not take Paris.’ And as I was consulting a map I almost felt the place where they would be stopped.”¹⁰

That decisive battle was, of course, the Battle of the Marne, which began on 6 September 1914 along a front extending for more than 100 kilometres. It ended a week later when the German armies retreated and fortified new positions on the banks of the Aisne River, a decision that marked the beginning of the relentless trench warfare that characterised the entire war. The Mother, while speaking to the Ashram School students in July 1955, said that the First World War was “much harder for the individual than the Second. It was a terrible war because men had dug trenches and were obliged to lie sunk in the earth like worms, under the perpetual danger of a bombardment...and with nothing to do about it. Of all things it was the most horrible. It was a horrible war.”¹¹

While much has been written about the overt support and occult action of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother during the Second World War, which Sri Aurobindo unequivocally called the Mother’s war, there is less material available regarding what they said or how they acted during the First World War. When asked in August 1926 if he worked upon the course of events in the Great War, Sri Aurobindo replied: “It was so difficult to have sympathy with either side. But it would have been a great disaster if Germany had won.”¹² In December 1925 he commented that he had “worked for the success of the Russian Revolution” and that he was “one of the influences that worked to make it a success.” Later in the same conversation, a disciple remarked that “Russia seems to have gone the wrong way.” Sri Aurobindo replied, “How do you mean? It has gone the way that was intended....The experience of humanity would have remained incomplete without the experiment in Russia.”¹³

Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother saw the occult truth behind the carnage and destruction of the war, and occupied themselves with what would come after, in the future, for the divine work. As early as 31 August 1914, the Mother traced the divine plan she could see behind the apparent chaos:

In this formidable disorder and terrible destruction can be seen a great working, a necessary toil preparing the earth for a new sowing which will rise in marvellous spikes of grain and give to the world the shining harvest of a new race....The vision is clear and precise, the plan of Thy divine law so plainly traced that peace has come back and installed itself in the hearts of the workers. There are no more doubts and hesitations, no longer any anguish or impatience. There is only the grand straight line of the work eternally accomplishing itself in spite of all, against all, despite all contrary appearances and illusory detours....

Peace, peace in all the world. . . .

War is an appearance,

Turmoil is an illusion,

Peace is there, immutable peace.

Mother, sweet Mother who I am, Thou art at once the destroyer and the builder.¹⁴

In a February 1937 letter to a disciple in reference to the Nationalist and Republican forces during the Spanish Civil War, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

You write as if what is going on in Europe were a war between the powers of Light and the powers of Darkness—but this is no more so than during the Great War. It is a fight between two kinds of Ignorance. Our aim is to bring down a higher Truth, but that Truth must be able to live by its own strength and not depend upon the victory of one or other of the forces of the Ignorance. That is the reason why we are not to mix in political or social controversies and struggles; it would simply keep down our endeavour to a lower level and prevent the Truth from descending which is none of these things but has a quite different law and basis.¹⁵

Throughout the war years, Sri Aurobindo was writing for the *Arya* each month and was deeply engrossed in his own spiritual endeavour. In five essays published between 1916 and 1920 in the *Arya*, he looked at the problems arising out of the First World War, the obstacles to the elimination of war and violent revolution, and the principle of self-determination for individuals and nations. Commenting in 1919, he said “its [the war’s] more important and positive result is not the destruction of the past, but a shaking even of the present bases and a clearing of the field for the forces of the future”, and “[M]uch is gone that had to go, though relics and dregs of it remain for destruction, and the agony of a sanguinary struggle is ended, and for that there may well be rejoicing. But if something is ended, all has yet to be begun. The human spirit has still to find itself, its idea and its greater orientation.”¹⁶

Soon after the war ended, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, which had appeared serially in the *Arya* between September 1915 and July 1918, was published as a book. It deals with the question of how to ensure political and economic unity while maintaining cultural and social diversity, and asserts that the unity of the human race can only be made real if the highest shared ideal of humanity spiritualises itself and becomes the inner law of life.

The Mother’s Experiences

The Mother was in Paris during some of the worst bombing. She also visited the trains which brought the wounded from the front. Every day she experienced that all the horrors of the vital world had descended upon earth. On 28 October 1915 she wrote:

The entire nervous plane seems to have swept down upon earth; but in its form of power, of force, it is localised in the area of combat. Elsewhere, behind the lines or in the neutral countries, this plane has embodied itself mainly in its form of weakness, nervous tension, feverishness, impatience, unruly imagination, frittering away all energies for action. All those who are not fighting feel bereft of the tremendous power which is driving – sometimes to the point of literally maddening them – those who are fighting and killing each other.

All those who go into the war zone – a clearly defined zone from the point of view of the active influences and atmosphere – are seized, carried away, impersonalised in a formidable current, as impetuous as a raging ocean....

Will they not let themselves be carried away by their own movement? Will not Kali, the longer she dances, lose control over her dance?...

All depends on the clarity with which the divine Will can be manifested upon earth; if it has been able in time to prepare for itself instruments which are sufficiently receptive and pure, instruments which are consciously immersed in its Essence while maintaining an effective contact with the active nervous power, then this monstrous and sublime outpouring of unbridled energies will yield its utmost results for the transformation of earth and man.¹⁷

And in an August 1963 conversation, she vividly described how, at the start of the war, “I offered my body in sacrifice to the Lord so that the war would not be in vain, every part of my body, one after another (*Mother touches her legs, her arms, etc.*), or sometimes the same part several times over, represented a battlefield: I could see it, I could feel it, I lived it. Every time it was...it was very strange, I had only to sit quietly and watch: I would see here, there, there, the whole thing in my body, all that was going on. And while it went on, I would put the concentration of the divine Force there, so that all – all that pain, all that suffering, everything – would hasten the preparation of the Earth and the Descent of the Force. And that went on consciously throughout the war.”¹⁸

The intensity and power of her concentration may have created its own repercussions. The Mother is reported to have said, during a conversation with a disciple in November 1961, that when she returned to

France in 1915 during the war, she understood that her very presence there was dangerous as horrific things were happening. It was, referring to one of Sri Aurobindo's aphorisms, as if just by sitting at home all alone, she was engendering revolutions and armies were revolting. When she saw that that was happening, she decided it was better to go away, because she did not want Germany to win, which would have been even worse. It was then that Paul Richard, who had been excused from military service on health grounds, found the opportunity to go to Japan on business. In March 1916 they left for Japan and spent the remainder of the war years there.

The Plunge into Barbarism

The true horror of war, the Mother observed in September 1955, is that "it materialises the conflict so brutally and totally that some elements which could have been saved during peace are, because of war, necessarily destroyed—and not only men and things but forces, the conscience of beings."¹⁹ Referring to the First World War, she said:

The world, the whole earth suffered from its consequences. There was a general deterioration from the vital point of view, I could say, which was inevitable even for those who consciously knew whence the force came, whence the deterioration came, and who could therefore fight against it consciously—they could not prevent certain effects being produced in the earth atmosphere.

Naturally, men do not know what happened to them; all that they have said is that everything had become worse since the war. That was all that they could affirm. For example, the moral level went down very much. It was simply the result of a formidable descent of the vital world: forces of disorder, forces of corruption, forces of deterioration, forces of destruction, forces of violence, forces of cruelty.²⁰

In June 1926, Sri Aurobindo observed that, to him, "the condition of Europe, after the war especially, seems almost to be the same as that at the break-up and disintegration of the Roman Empire. There is the same tendency to plunge the world into barbarism again."²¹

Courage in the Most Physical Consciousness

In reply to a question about the purpose of the March Past performed at the Playground, the Mother replied, in July 1955, that it is "a way of opening oneself to the energy, the universal energy, to prepare for the action. It is a contact with the energy, the universal energy which is there, it is to help the body to participate in the work." She explained that it is based upon a "kind of admiration...how to put it?...a spontaneous and also charming admiration for heroism, which is in the most material physical consciousness." She remarked that all the fighting capacities of armies during war are founded upon this principle, which has the power to overcome physical inertia and *tamas*.

She gave an example of this from the First World War. After describing the frightful conditions of trench warfare and how the soldiers had held their positions under the worst conditions, she spoke about their courage:

That was one of the most beautiful things in the war from the point of view of courage: because they had held on, the enemy could not take the trenches and was not able to advance. Naturally the news spread and then they came to a village and all the people of the village came out to receive them and lined the road with flowers and shouts of enthusiasm. All those men who could no longer even drag themselves along, you see, who were like this (gesture of collapse), suddenly all of them were seen drawing themselves up erect, holding up their heads, filled with energy, and all together they began to sing and went through the whole village singing. It seemed like a resurrection.

Well, it is about this kind of thing I am speaking. It is something so beautiful, which is in the most material physical consciousness! You see, all of a sudden, they had the feeling that they were heroes, that they had done something heroic, and so they didn't want to look like people completely flattened out, no longer good for anything. "We are ready to go back to the fight if necessary!" Like that. And they went by in this way. It seems it was marvellous; I am sure of it, that it was marvellous.

Well, that's what you are developing with the March Past now.

There we are.

In continuation of this talk, while leaving the Playground Mother remarked to Pavitra: "It is the cellular response to the enthusiasm of the vital."²²

From the devastation of the First World War we move to a message of courage for our most material physical consciousness. The phrase "to help the body participate in the work" echoes like a watchword for much of the collective life and discipline in the Ashram. The last prose work of Sri Aurobindo, written for publication in the quarterly *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, reveals his vision of the perfection of the body as an instrument of the action of the spirit and the creation of a new humanity possessed of a mind of light. And the Mother's indefatigable work on the transformation of her own body to realise Sri Aurobindo's vision is an example of the highest form of courage. Our human spirit has indeed to find itself.

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Those Who Served

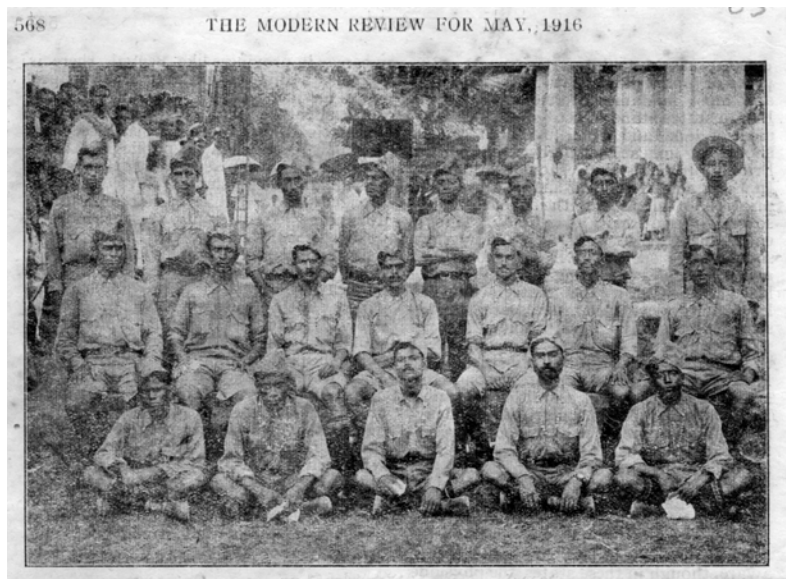
PHILIPPE BARBIER SAINT HILAIRE was twenty years old when the war broke out in 1914. He served for two years on the front as a junior artillery officer in the French army. For the following two years, he was an intelligence officer and was also assigned the work of keeping contact with the units at the front, as well as interacting with visitors and foreigners, mostly the Americans and the British. It was during the war that he began to read books on psychic phenomena, occultism, and Theosophy, which opened the doors to India for him. In 1920 he left France for Japan, and four years later went to Mongolia. At the end of 1925, he went to meet Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo accepted him as a disciple and gave him the name Pavitra. (Source: a 1964 talk by Pavitra at the Ashram School)



ANDRÉ MORISSET, the Mother's son, joined the French Armed Forces in October 1916, when he was just eighteen. He received the *Croix de Guerre 1914-18* (War Cross) for an act of bravery during World War I: he saved the life of a wounded officer by rescuing him from the battlefield. He was also awarded the *Croix du Combattant Volontaire 1914-1918* (Volunteer Combatant's Cross), designated for those who volunteered to serve on the front in a combat unit during the Great War.

After the war, he attended the École Polytechnique, France's prestigious higher education and research institute known for its polytechnic engineering program. He visited Sri Aurobindo Ashram for the first time in 1949, after which he came frequently and collaborated in the Mother's work in a variety of ways. In 1956 André established the Centre d'Études Sri Aurobindo in Paris, which provided teaching materials, textbooks, and other forms of assistance to the Ashram School. (Sources: Janine Panier [André's elder daughter] and Centre d'Études Sri Aurobindo)

HARADHAN BAKSHI was a young Bengali from Chandernagore when he joined the French army. He can be seen in this photo in the top row, far right, and is noted as the "Chef." of this group, all of whom were from Chandernagore, which was at that time part of French India. While fighting in France, Haradhan was injured, and later was taken prisoner and sent by ship to a POW camp. He escaped en route by jumping overboard and swimming to shore on the coast of Algeria. Haradhan first visited Pondicherry in 1916, when he was nineteen years old. After the war, he returned in 1919 and then settled permanently here in 1930. (Sources: Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research Library and Among the Not So Great by Prabhakar)



At the Playground and the Tennis Ground with the Mother

Physical education has been an integral part of Ashram life for many years. Chitra Sen, one of the early participants in these activities and a group captain in the Physical Education Department, has been gathering information and collecting anecdotes about the early years. We publish here a few excerpts from her reminiscences that pertain to the history of the Playground and the Tennis Ground.

In April 1944, the house known as Maison Dubreuil at 3 Law de Lauriston Street was purchased and converted into a *dortoir*, a boarding house where the first batch of young children started living. At the same time, the plot just south of the building was also purchased. This newly acquired area, known as the Playground, was used freely by the young students during after-school hours. The boys played football or volleyball and the girls croquet, free running games, or netball. There was no organised activity as yet. It was not until June 1945 that the Physical Education Department had its beginnings, when some boys requested Pranab-da to look after their physical training.

When we look back to the years of activity from 1945–47 it is as if the Mother's Force was active in the background. All sorts of preparatory activities were getting started and the group of young participants was happily being carried in its current: a few games were played, some running was done on the beach road, and informal jumping contests were performed by the boys' group. Prior to the opening of the Tennis Ground, a few young men started playing tennis on a make-shift court in the Playground, using a rope as a net. The Mother also played a few times with them. As my friend Pushpa remembers, "The first three or four days she played wearing a sari. After some days she came to the Playground in Punjabi dress with a *chunni* draped over her shoulders. For a few days she tried wearing the *chunni* in different ways so that she could feel free to move and play. But none of them suited her purpose. So she finally stopped using the *chunni*. Decades before the present mode of wearing Punjabi dress without a *chunni* came into vogue, the Mother had started wearing the dress in this manner."

Then in 1948 the Tennis Ground was added, and it included one basketball court, a place for discus and hammer throws, and later, a handball court, a boxing ring and a wrestling pit. Sandpits for the pole vault, high jump, and long jump were also located there. A long, narrow strip of land ran along the length of the ground on the eastern side, beside the sea beach. After playing tennis, the Mother and Pranab-da often took a brisk walk on this strip of land, but it was also used for hurdles, javelin, and cricket ball throws. Athletics, combatives, and all games other than volleyball were played at the Tennis Ground. Gymnastic items and yoga exercises were practised in the Playground. Table tennis games began in 1946, played mostly at Nanteuil, but later tables were added at "Michel", a house on François Martin Street, and at "Fenêtres", Udar's house.

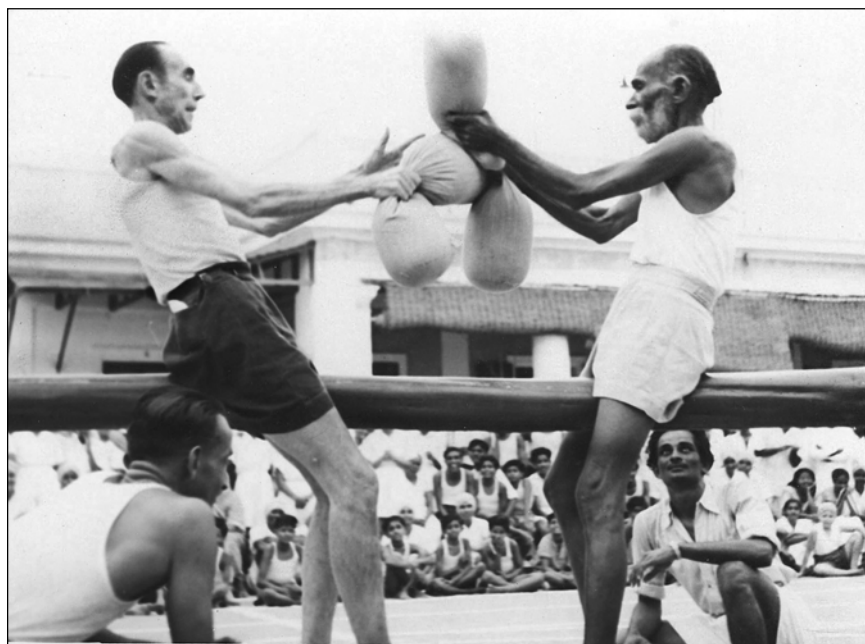
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Sports meets were held each year. During the annual sports meets of 1947 and 1948 the Mother played the harmonium for the game of musical chairs for the "A" Group children. Sumedha, at that time a member of this group, remembers:

The Mother played on the harmonium for musical chairs in our novelty race. There were a few groups. As each group completed their turn and the winner went to the Mother, she sang a little for the winner. When all the groups had completed and our item was over, she sang again for a little while. Hearing this, we all quickly gathered around her to hear her sing.

* * *

From 1949 onwards novelty races for all the groups would be held in the Playground after our athletics competitions were over at the Tennis Ground. The last day was kept for two extremely popular items: tug-of-war and pillow fights....In the pillow fight two contestants straddled a high horizontal bar. Each one



had a pillow in his or her hand and tried to hit the other player with the pillow so as to make his opponent lose his balance and fall from his seat. One rather funny incident comes to mind. Millie Pinto (Udar's sister) was then a "D" Group member. The fight was between Bhavaniprasad and Millie. Both straddled the bar. Bhavaniprasad sat immobile. He did not lift his pillow even once. How could he hit a lady? It was against his principle, whereas Millie went on happily pounding him with the pillow and in the process lost her balance and fell down!

Pillow Fight at the Novelty Races, Athletics Competition, Playground, 1949
(Contestants are Pavitra on the left and Gangapratap on the right)

* * *

In 1948 the Tennis Ground was acquired by the Mother from the Government of Pondicherry on rent, on a long-term basis. The now-beautiful ground was earlier a hillock of earth where the Pondicherry Municipality dumped the garbage. To Manoranjan Ganguli goes the credit for changing this stinking area and constructing in its place a beautiful playfield including two tennis courts out of clay and cow dung. Within a short time the court on the northeast side was converted to a cement surface, and the Mother started to play on this court. She played daily, from about 4 to 5.30 p.m.

Pavitra-da would drive her car and stop right in front of the entry door to the courts. She would walk down to the northern side of the court, accompanied by Vasudhaben and a few others, such as Priti Das Gupta, Sutapa, Amiyo Ganguli, Kalyan-da, and Udar. Kalyan-da was already an accomplished tennis player, known for his impeccable style. The Mother chose him quite often to play against her. One day the Mother remarked, "Do you know why I choose him so frequently? Whenever he sends me the ball, it is as if he is doing *pranam* to me."

Quite a few young men, enthusiasts of the game, played tennis whenever they could, often from 8.30 a.m. till about noon and again from 2.30 p.m. till the evening hours. Robi Ganguli, one of the regular players, asked the Mother, "We are playing tennis but what *sadhana* are we doing?" Mother's answer was very revealing indeed: "When you play – that is your *sadhana* – it is not playfulness, it is your *sadhana*. Your body becomes conscious. It should be conscious till your fingertips." Robi asked, "Mother, how much have I become conscious?" "Till your elbow" was her answer!

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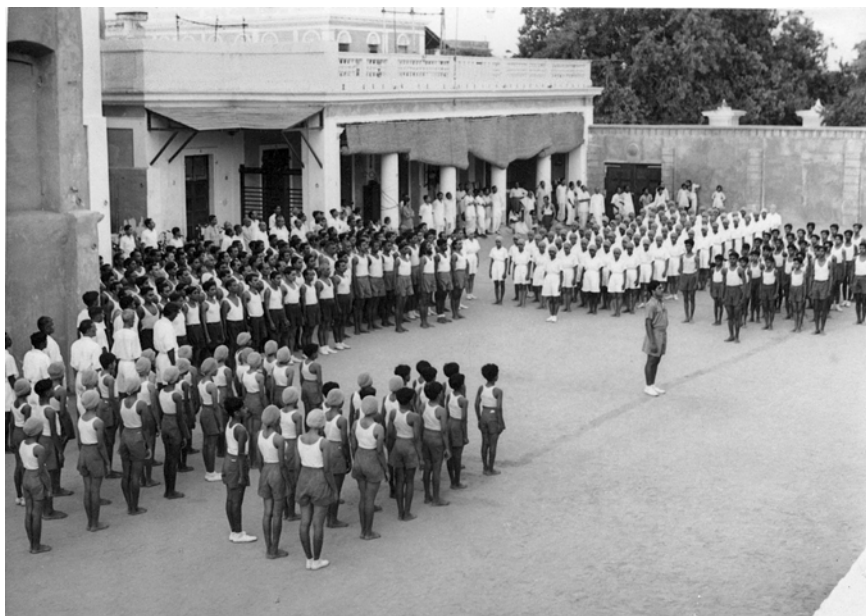
In 1951 my father bought a new tennis racket for me. I showed it to the Mother. “What do you want to do with it?” She asked me. “Play better” was my answer. She was happy. It seems that someone once told her that he wanted to win at tennis. The Mother said: “Wanting to win a game tightens the consciousness for some people. I was told that if the wish to win is taken out, then tennis cannot be played quite as well. But it is not true. I experimented and now I play just to play well. You hit a hard and well-placed shot, not so the opponent cannot take it or that you should get a point but because that was the best way of sending that particular ball. If the opponent can take it you should feel happy, for it becomes more interesting, and that is because he has played well. You can play just for the joy of the game and yet play your best. If it is played in this way, it can liberate the body from many vital and mental influences.”

* * *

An interesting development occurred after the March Past and salute to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on 24 April 1949. According to Pranab-da, “About ten days before this great day, we received the permission of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo for the March Past. The grown-up people wanted to present themselves in good form and asked whether a training course could be arranged for them. So a time was fixed in the evening and a regular training in marching was given to the elderly ones. After ten days, we marched past the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and it was a great success.

“The elders wanted to continue their marching training, as they liked it. Gradually the number of trainees increased and an idea arose to mix some simple free-hand exercises with the marching. Thus gymnastic marching was born.” It was meant for the older members of the men’s group, and the Mother watched the whole programme of gymnastic marching being performed in front of her in the Playground. When the regular sports activities were over for the boys’ and girls’ groups, we rushed to the Playground

and joined the gymnastic marching, which had already started. How happy we were when we could join the line which was in front of the Mother!



March Past at the Playground, 23 April 1949

Pranab-da continued: “Something else developed since that time, parallel with the gymnastic marching. The whole formation was at attention for about half a minute and then the order of dismiss was given. When the Mother was free, we finished by standing in front of her. Now all the different groups wanted to join this silence and so a regular formation was

arranged for the groups to stand around, with the Mother in the centre. The time was gradually increased to about ten minutes. During this time everybody concentrates on their highest ideal, in the Mother’s presence, with her help and guidance, and hence it was called Concentration.”

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

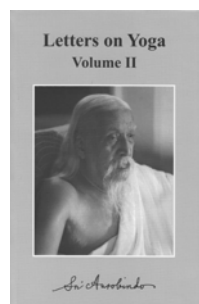
Sri Aurobindo

Letters on Yoga: Volume II (New CWSA edition)

— Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department,
Pondicherry

522 pp, ISBN 979-81-7058-060-6, Rs 260



Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Letters on Yoga-II comprises letters written by Sri Aurobindo on the practice of the Integral Yoga. It is the second of four volumes of *Letters on Yoga*. The letters in these volumes have been selected from the large body of letters that Sri Aurobindo wrote to disciples and

others between 1927 and 1950, but primarily in the 1930s. A considerable number of them are being published for the first time.

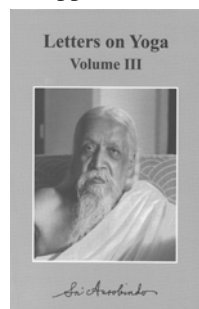
This second volume is arranged by subject in three parts: the path of the Integral Yoga, the synthetic method of the Integral Yoga, and the Integral Yoga and other spiritual paths. Individual letters deal with many subjects relating to its practice, including the true object of spiritual seeking, the basic requisites of the path, the foundation of the *sadhana*, the yoga of knowledge, works, devotion, and self-perfection, and the distinction of the Integral Yoga as a yoga of transformation.

Letters on Yoga: Volume III (New CWSA edition)

— Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department,
Pondicherry

508 pp, ISBN 979-81-7058-061-3, Rs 260



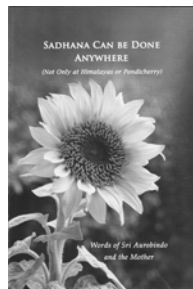
Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Letters on Yoga-III comprises letters written by Sri Aurobindo on the experiences and realisations that may occur in the practice of the Integral Yoga. It is the third of four volumes of *Letters on Yoga*.

This third volume is arranged by subject in four parts: the place of experiences in the practice of yoga, the opening of the

inner senses, experiences of the inner consciousness and the cosmic consciousness, and the fundamental realisations of the Integral Yoga. Individual letters deal with many subjects relating to these themes, including the development of the inner vision, the nature of symbolic visions, becoming aware of the inner being and the witness attitude, the psychic and spiritual realisations, and the meaning of spiritual transformation.



Compilations from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Reprints from All India Magazine booklets

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society,
Pondicherry

Sri Aurobindo's Teaching, Method of Practice & How to Begin

50 pp, ISBN 978-81-7060-359-7, Rs 30

Size: 14x20 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Practice of Spirituality in Everyday Life

41 pp, ISBN 978-81-7060-353-5, Rs 30

Size: 14x20 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Sadhana Can Be Done Anywhere

41 pp, ISBN 978-81-7060-348-1, Rs 30

Size: 14x20 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Other Authors

Sunil: The Mother's Musician

— Clifford Gibson

Publisher: Kokilaben Mehta

361 pp, Rs 275

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover



This portrait of Sunil Bhattacharya as composer, teacher, *sadhak*, and friend consists of his correspondence with the Mother on his music, and his exchange of letters, dating from the early 1960s to the late 1990s, with the many friends all over the world who admired his music. Interspersed throughout the story told in these

letters are reminiscences by residents of the Ashram that serve to highlight Sunil's character and talents. In the first few pages of the book, Sunil describes his early

childhood in Krishnagar, West Bengal, and his life in Calcutta, where he learned to play the sitar.

Auroville Architecture
towards new forms for a new consciousness

— Concept & Layout: Franz Fassbender
Publisher: PRISMA, Auroville
213 pp, ISBN 978-81-928152-3-7, Rs 750
Size: 21x24 cm
Binding: Soft Cover

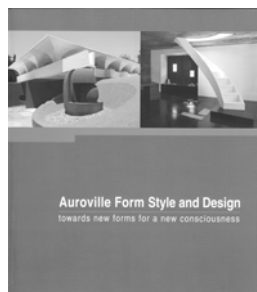
As a photographic and textual chronicle of the architectural approaches taken since Auroville's founding in 1968, this book outlines the development of the city plan, with its four distinct zones, describes the first experiments in residential housing and public buildings, and addresses design issues and challenges tied to the topography and climate of the region as well as the demands created by its broad cultural and socio-economic diversity. The book highlights the creativity of Auroville's buildings, the commitment to integrate renewable energy, water management, and other infrastructure needs in its architecture, and recent designs that will serve the urban nature of the city's future. In the final section, many of the town's practising architects talk about their work, their inspiration, and their future vision.

See review on page 25

Auroville Form, Style and Design
towards new forms for a new consciousness

— Concept: Franz Fassbender
Publisher: PRISMA, Auroville
145 pp, Rs 550
Size: 21x24 cm
Binding: Soft Cover

This is a collection of 365 mostly colour photographs that depicts interiors and details of Auroville homes,



gardens, and products. It includes pictures of such buildings in Auroville as the Matrimandir from the time it was a work-in-progress up until its completion, the Last School, and Aspiration. The photographs are accompanied by text excerpted from Sri Aurobindo's *The National*

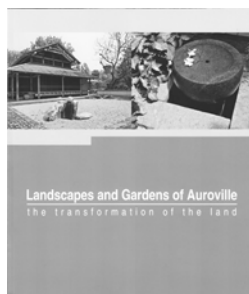
Value of Art and from the Mother's writings. These pictures capture the outward expression of the unique consciousness of Auroville.

See review on page 25

Landscapes and Gardens of Auroville
the transformation of the land

— Concept: Franz Fassbender
Publisher: PRISMA, Auroville
171 pp, ISBN 978-81-928152-2-0, Rs 650
Size: 21x24 cm
Binding: Soft Cover

This book, printed entirely on art paper, presents Auroville's gardens and landscapes in 310 photographs,



with accompanying text from various sources. Many of the gardens featured in the book are inspired by Japanese garden design. The book contains essays and pictures on such themes as the creation of the Matrimandir gardens, Auroville's afforestation work, and the water challenge facing

the community. The first sixty pages depict the history of the development of Auroville's landscape.

See review on page 25

Interacting with UNESCO during the Mother's Years

— Compiled by Paulette Hadnagy
Publisher: Stichting De Zaaier, Holland
154 pp, Rs 250
Size: 14x22 cm
Binding: Soft Cover

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) played a role in helping to establish Auroville in the eyes of the world as an experiment in promoting peace and human unity. This is a compilation of extracts from *I am with you* by Kailas Jhaveri, that relate to her work from 1965 to 1972, under the Mother's guidance, with UNESCO and other organisations that could assist in the material realisation of Auroville. The book also includes facsimiles of the Mother's handwritten messages to Kailas, images and extracts from *The UNESCO Courier* of 1972 regarding Auroville, extracts from Sri Aurobindo's works, resolutions on Auroville passed by the General Assembly of UNESCO, and many photographs of Auroville life, especially in its early years.



Two who are One: Sri Aurobindo & The Mother

— V. Madhusudan Reddy

Publisher: Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad

66 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-14-7, Rs 225

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This book is part of a series that presents selections from some of Dr Madhusudan Reddy's works. The author's descriptions of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as one are interwoven with his depiction of their common mission to supramentalise earthly life.

See review on page 20

Domains of Light

The Upanishads & The Life Divine

— V. Madhusudan Reddy

Publisher: Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad

227 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-16-1, Rs 375

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This book is part of a series that presents selections from some of Dr Madhusudan Reddy's works. The author seeks to establish parallels between the Upanishads and *The Life Divine*, elaborating upon the secrets of the Upanishadic *mantras* as revealed in Sri Aurobindo's work.

See review on page 20

Science, Spirituality and Culture

An Evolutionary Perspective

— V. Madhusudan Reddy

Publisher: Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad

225 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-13-0, Rs 375

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This book is part of a series that presents selections from some of Dr Madhusudan Reddy's works. These chapters reflect the author's Aurobindonian perspectives on the congruence of science and spirituality. The author attempts to demonstrate Sri Aurobindo's views on how science, spirituality, and culture are interconnected.

See review on page 20

The Next Step In Individual and Social Development

— V. Madhusudan Reddy

Publisher: Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad

232 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-15-4, Rs 400

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This book is part of a series that presents selections from some of Dr Madhusudan Reddy's works. Sri



Aurobindo's individual and collective psychology, and his views on the evolving human unity, are discussed and elaborated upon in two parts. The emphasis is on the individual change of consciousness leading to the evolution of a spiritual society.

See review on page 20

The Creative Word: The Veda & Savitri

— V. Madhusudan Reddy

Publisher: Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad

252 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-12-3, Rs 450

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This book is part of a series that presents selections from some of Dr Madhusudan Reddy's works. The author expands on Sri Aurobindo's insights into Vedic terminology and the power of the Creative Word. Dr Reddy expatiates on Word, speech, sound, philology, and linguistics to further our understanding of the Vedic *mantras* and of *Savitri*.

See review on page 20

Pebbles on Shore

An Anthology on Sri Aurobindo

— Dr Dilip Kumar Roy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, Kolkata

196 pp, Rs 250

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This collection of ten essays on Sri Aurobindo's thought begins with a chapter on how to approach Sri Aurobindo's writings through the intellect and by widening the consciousness. Subsequent essays deal with some important themes in Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics, including such key subjects as the supermind, the Self, the psychic

being, and the principles of the evolutionary process. The problem of evil and suffering in the world and the evolutionary crisis facing modern civilisation are addressed as adjuncts to the metaphysical discussion. The final essay focuses on *The Life Divine* as a treatise on the evolution of consciousness, leading to the possibility of a divine life on earth for man.



Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga

Vedic & Christian Spirituality Readdressed Towards a Humane Society

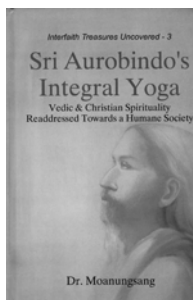
— Dr Moanungsang

Publisher: Christian World Imprints, New Delhi

481 pp, ISBN 978-93-5148-009-9, Rs 1590

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Hard Cover



Beginning with an overview of Sri Aurobindo's life and thought, this scholarly work then analyses the metaphysical background of the Integral Yoga, its origins and objectives, its distinctive characteristics, and its synthesis of the inherent truths of traditional systems of yoga. The author then introduces Sri Aurobindo's method of *sadhana*, explains its essential requisites, and looks at some of the complexities and difficulties one may experience during *sadhana*. The final chapter studies the impact of globalisation on human society, religious fundamentalism as a source of conflict, and how the Integral Yoga may offer a possible response to these issues. It concludes with a consideration of how the Integral Yoga can enrich Christian spirituality.

Transforming Lives

An Introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga

— Larry Seidnitz

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Pondicherry

204 pp, ISBN 979-81-901891-5-5, Rs 250

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This introductory book on the Integral Yoga is based on the author's talks and papers, most of which have appeared previously in Ashram-related journals. The chapters highlight the basic teachings of the Integral Yoga, its contributions to the Indian spiritual tradition, some of its methods and practices, and its concept of an integral psychological perfection. Other essays examine the nature of human emotions and how they are to be transformed to serve a higher truth, discuss the true foundations of a spiritual activism, and provide glimpses of the Mother's work on the supramental transformation of the body. The book includes a glossary of yogic and Sanskrit terms.

See review on page 22

Veda of the Body

— Dr Alok Pandey

Publisher: AuroPublications, Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry

387 pp, ISBN 978-81-7060-338-2, Rs 450

Size: 15x23 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Looking at the human body and its natural state of health from a spiritual perspective, this is a study that ranges across such diverse aspects as the physical consciousness, the key to educating the body, the seeds and roots of illness, health as a dynamic equilibrium, the mystery of death, various approaches to stress management, and an integral model of health. Drawing inspiration from the vision of the seers of the Vedas and from the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, it echoes the sentiment that the spirit within is the true guide to health and healing, and to the conscious evolution of the body as an embodiment of that spirit.

See review on page 19

Sonnets (Set of 2 Audio CDs)

Rs 300

Recitation of Sri Aurobindo's sonnets



OTHER LANGUAGES

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Die Mutter – Mit Briefen über die Mutter — Sri Aurobindo

ISBN 979-81-7058-042-2 Rs 350

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A lélek fejlo"dése — Compiled from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

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La Madre è con noi : Riflessioni finali 1973-1983

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

Rs 230

ISBN 979-81-7058-064-4

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ISBN 978-81-7483-066-1

Savitri : Swadhyay ke Sutra Rs 300
— Compiled by Suresh Chandra Tyagi, Prem Tyagi
ISBN 978-81-85289-16-8

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Luminous Past

— Pramila Devi

Publisher: First Feature Ltd., London, UK

195 pp, ISBN 978-0-9562923-3-9, Rs 175

Size: 12x18 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

At the outset, this review calls for a full disclosure. I was very fond of Pramila-di, and she was, I suspect, even fonder of me. The relationship between a boarding-house in-charge (*Didi*) and her ward, as typified by the bond between Sunayana Panda and Pramila-di, is always a healthy mix of love and hate. Since I was in her charge for just two-and-a-half months, it was only love.

There is no dearth of books on life in the Ashram during the forties and fifties of the last century, but most, if not all, are through the eyes and intellect of an erudite author. The innocence and freshness that Pramila-di's diary offers to the reader makes it quite unique and, at times, just takes one's breath away.

Sample this. Talking of the Mother's participation in the Sports Ground in the chapter "The Early Days", Pramila-di writes:



The Mother at the inauguration of Jhunjhun Home

For the walking and running events, the Mother herself would stand with the tape at the finishing line.... When one person finished, she waited for the next. It seemed to us that the Mother showed more compassion for the one who came last. She kept looking at him so that he would not give up midway...The Mother, with her soothing smile, made it clear that he had come first in the test of perseverance.

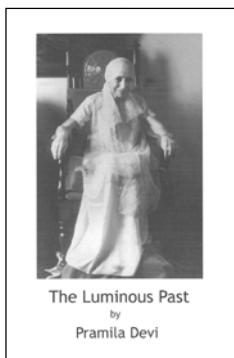
Visualise the pure joy in the innocent heart of a young girl when she is touched by the compassionate wisdom of her Mother.

A few pages later, Pramila-di records the interaction between the Mother and Nolini-da, Amrita-da, and Pavitra-da during a rainy evening when she takes an impromptu session of poetry recitation. We have always looked at that triumvirate as the three pillars of the Ashram, and to read how the Mother indulgently saw each of them as just one of her many children, gives the reader an insight into the magical world of the Ashram in those glorious days.

In the chapter "Teacher at the School", there is a priceless anecdote, about a despotic landlord named Ramaswamy, which almost gets lost in the abundant garden that is *The Luminous Past*. Pramila-di records

the Mother's decision to pay the expenses for electricity and water to this tyrant against the wishes of Amrita-da. Patiently, she explains to her Administrator-in-Chief that she was "not giving the money to buy his good behaviour" but because this generous act would be good for *him* (Amrita-da). How eloquently the Mother teaches her children the true values of life!

In the chapter "Jhunjhun Home", Pramila-di tells us an amusing story of an unwelcome nocturnal visitor in the wee hours.



The most interesting part, however, comes towards the end of this tale of a thief when we learn of the Mother's instructions, conveyed through Pavitra-da, to continue to keep the doors unbolted at night, so that fear does not enter the minds of the children. "Courage is the greatest possession of the young," Mother said. "Courage brings

wisdom." The beautiful simplicity of these few words defines the quality of education that a fortunate few received at her feet in the Ashram.

These are just a few of the guileless observations of an impressionable young mind that you will find in this wonderful book. A pleasurable read that you would not want to miss. I especially recommend this book to all ex-students of yesteryear.

Before I end this review, a second part of the full disclosure is required. Both Pramila-di and I believed that the essence of growing up is all about good food, a meal that does not exclude the occasional non-vegetarian fare.

The Ashram was strictly *shakahari* in those days, and food used to come to our boarding from the Dining Room. In the early sixties, I had written to the Mother that, having grown up eating meat and fish in the initial decade of my life, I was finding the herbivorous diet rather inadequate. Within a few days, Mother wrote back saying that we could have meat and fish once a week in Jhunjhun Boarding!

Without losing much time, I went to the market and bought twelve fair-sized fish for a rupee and, armed with a cookbook, Pramila-di produced the first delectable Sunday lunch for her nine carnivorous wards. Pranab-da, predictably, was the guest of honour! Though I was her ward in Jhunjhun Boarding for just over a couple of months thereafter, she invited me for dinner twice every week during my entire stay of ten years in the Ashram, serving a dozen *parathas* with a generous helping of meat curry!

I always thought of Pramila-di as my surrogate mother, and she talked to me about her experiences and many other things, while I gorged on her culinary offerings. *The Luminous Past*, written in an almost childlike vein, brought back those precious memories, memories of the Mother and the wonderful life in the Ashram.

— Debabrata Haldar
Debabrata, together with his sister, Debjani, and brother, Debashish, joined the SAICE in December 1961. He was in the second batch that completed the engineering course, which was started by Vishwanath-da, and graduated in 1972.

Excerpt from *The Luminous Past*

During the Second World War the Mother would not sit on a chair. She remained standing while people did their pranam. With her head bent forward, repeating the gesture hundreds of times, untiringly and with a beautiful, gentle smile on her face, she continued to bless with her soft hands the heads which were placed on her feet. Flowers used to be counted for which the Mother had to work endlessly in those days. Someone would, for example, come during the evening pranams and give her a plate full of bokul flowers while offering pranam. The Mother would ask if the flowers had been counted or not. If the answer was "No" then Chinmayi would take the plate of bokul flowers and keep it apart from the other plates. At night the Mother and Chinmayi would together count the flowers and write the number on a piece of paper.

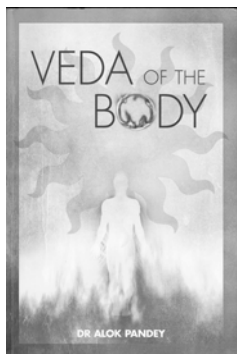
One morning I went into the Flower Room (which is now the late Pujalal-ji's room) and asked as soon as I got in whether I could help in counting the flowers for an hour or so. Jatin-da of the Flower Room happily gave me permission.... After counting them we had to write on a piece of paper the name of the flower and the number. Then the flowers had to be placed on a plate in a decorative way and sent to the Mother. If this was not done then the Mother and Chinmayi would stay up late at night and count thousands of flowers. There was an occult purpose for this. After the war was won by the Allied Forces this practice was stopped.

Veda of the Body

— Dr Alok Pandey

Publisher: AuroPublications, Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry

387 pp, ISBN 978-81-7060-338-2, Rs 450



Size: 15x23 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

The mainstream spiritual tradition of India preferred to eulogize the soul at the expense of the body. Sri Aurobindo changed the password in spirituality from liberation to transformation. This

necessitated giving as much importance to the soul's

instruments, notably the body, as to the soul itself. After Sri Aurobindo passed away in 1950, The Mother continued the work of exploring the deeper realms of body consciousness to accelerate the work of transformation for the benefit of the human race at large. In a significant development, Western scientists began in the 1950s studying the effects of meditative practices on the body. Many of the early studies had flaws, but with improved instruments like fMRI and EEG, it has been possible to study how the body and brain change after one begins to meditate regularly. The Mother passed away in 1973, but her work had sent ripples through the realm of consciousness. Herbert Benson's work titled *The Relaxation Response*, published in 1975, was the first comprehensive document recording the benefits of meditation through changes in metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and brain chemistry. Since then many studies have been conducted on the different aspects, phases, and types of meditation. With increasing interest in consciousness studies throughout the world, it is now felt that the ambit of research in the area of consciousness and the body has to expand from merely studying the effects of meditation to a more comprehensive and wholistic framework of reference. It is here that Sri Aurobindo's consciousness perspective, with its evolutionary and simultaneously integralist dimension serving a transformational aim, becomes increasingly relevant.

Alok Pandey follows the trail of seed-ideas implicit in the transformational yoga initiated by the experiential realizations of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in his attempt to construct a 'Veda of the Body'. The endeavor

has led to two significant directions. The first is a unique understanding of the body through a consciousness perspective with important implications for health, psychology, and well-being. The second is a transformational trajectory where the body itself has the potentiality for a qualitative change to prepare itself for a further evolutionary leap.

Dr Pandey takes pains to elaborate on the false opposition between Spirit and Matter, and describes how the spiritual dimension not only includes the material, but has the capacity to alter the laws, and to change the course of material and biological forces. To understand these forces calls for new approaches to research and enquiry. He explains how the whole universe is concealed in a single body, and thus, through a process of awakening, the higher spiritual forces implicit in the body can be harnessed for greater gains. He uses a consciousness paradigm to explain the journey from illness to health as a progression from disharmony at one level to harmony at a higher level of consciousness, a journey where drugs are merely palliatives, and the real power of healing lies in the very consciousness of the cells. In this healing journey, the sufferer and the healer have equal opportunity for inner progress. He observes how illness progresses in a phased manner, starting as a seed implanted in the falsehood implicit in the inconscience, then manifesting in the roots of desire and its allies, facilitating wrong patterns of energy-flow and maladaptive habits, and finally consolidating in physical pathology and organ affliction. Pandey rightfully pleads for a new taxonomy to classify illness as arising at different levels of our nature, and manifesting at different planes of consciousness.

Pandey gives a lucid description of the workings of life-energy (*prana*), and explains how imbalances in its flow can result in illnesses. His clinical expertise enriches his analysis of the working of the mind-principle at different planes of consciousness with clinical implications. He gives a fresh orientation to the understanding of stress by viewing it as an evolutionary challenge. Problems arise at different planes of consciousness, and diverse remedies also act at different planes, and both the illness and its intervention can be used as opportunities to discover the healer within in the matrix of the ego-surpassing soul (psychic) consciousness. This psychic consciousness is in contact with the universal healing energies and spiritual force. Thus Dr Pandey's book

effectively demonstrates that it is not only meditative practices that Western scientists study, but also that every opportunity of life, including even illness and stress, can enrich us with secrets of consciousness, and provide an opportunity for inner progress with ramifications in the body's functionings. He advocates an integral model of health that gives equal leverage to physical and psychological self-development, and brings the fundamental parts of the being under the direct influence of the soul-element, a movement that marks the quintessence of integral health. He also briefly touches on how changing from within can initiate a change in the world around, leading to newer sociological insights based on unity and harmony, a topic that justifies a more elaborate exploration. Finally, the book dwells briefly on the evolutionary transformation of the body, which can be initiated by the power of consciousness from within.

The book has a brief chapter on the mystery of death explaining how the inevitability of death represents a habitual movement of consciousness. His recipe for surpassing the movement of death dwells on the necessity of the principle of immortality being consolidated in the collective psyche of the human race, and on the need for awakening and activating the subtle physical consciousness. His innovative idea in the preface that death can be viewed as a phenomenon of complete organ transplant is significant in a world view that acknowledges how consciousness qua consciousness extends beyond the ordinary life span.

Alok Pandey's *Veda of the Body* is suitable both for general readers and for therapists and healers. It is enriched with relevant quotes from the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. A more comprehensive referencing of the seed-ideas and significant terms used by Sri Aurobindo would be helpful to academic researchers. A more elaborate exploration of the transformative process of the body would add to the value of the book, and justify the emergence of a new Veda of body-consciousness from the annals of Integral Yoga as something unique that surpasses the already existing science of life encrypted in the traditional Ayurveda.

— Dr Soumitra Basu

Soumitra Basu is a psychiatrist exploring the consciousness paradigm of health, psychology, and psychotherapy from the integral perspective of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Selected Works of Dr Madhusudan Reddy
Published by Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad

**Two who are One: Sri Aurobindo
& The Mother**

66 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-14-7, Rs 225
Size: 14x22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Domains of Light

The Upanishads & The Life Divine

227 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-16-1, Rs 375
Size: 14x22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Science, Spirituality and Culture

An Evolutionary Perspective

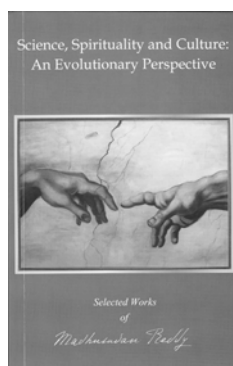
225 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-13-0, Rs 375
Size: 14x22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

**The Next Step In Individual
and Social Development**

232 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-15-4, Rs 400
Size: 14x22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The Creative Word: The Veda & Savitri

252 pp, ISBN 978-81-85853-12-3, Rs 450
Size: 14x22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover



The late Dr Madhusudan Reddy founded the Institute of Human Study fifty years ago. In the golden jubilee year of its inception, his prolific oeuvre on Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and the Integral Yoga and Integral Psychology is presented in five compact volumes brought out in his honor by this Institute. Each volume deals with a theme from the writings of Sri

Aurobindo and the Mother, and contains Dr Reddy's original contributions to Aurobindonian study and scholarship.

In the articles in these volumes, more easily accessible to the reader who is well acquainted with the primary literature, Dr Reddy not only explains Aurobindonian theses but also advances his own thoughts on them. This gives an informed reader a valuable look into the author's mind as well as his contribution to Aurobindonian study. The chapters in these volumes reveal the author's take on the already deep and wide currents of Sri Aurobindo's thought. They also encase the author's own ideas on various topics that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother touch upon.

The first volume, *Two Who Are One*, comprises some paeans to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that celebrate their spiritual unity, and a few of Dr Reddy's articles that deal with certain facets of these spiritual stalwarts' lives. Noteworthy among these articles is one titled "Avatar as the Future", in which the author establishes a strong case for Sri Aurobindo's avatarhood by making plausible connections between him and the avatars of the past. Other arresting articles describe Dr Reddy's own spiritual experiences apropos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, confirming that he was as much of a devotee of these spiritual giants as a student of their works.

In *The Next Step in Individual and Social Development* Dr Reddy, following Sri Aurobindo, discusses the society of the future in the context of individual development. Keeping in mind the close associations between the perfect individual and the perfect state, the selections in this volume are divided into two sections: the first expatiates on Integral Psychology and the second, on the value of interpreting humanity's progress in psychological terms, as well as on some other ideas. The original articles in both sections develop Aurobindonian theses on these subjects, helpfully filling in details that a casual reader of Sri Aurobindo might not pause to work out.

He begins, in the first chapter of Part One, by stressing the need for Integral Psychology, considering what he sees as the relative poverty of Western psychological theories. Useful comparisons between Integral Psychology and prominent Western psychological theories are made here. In Part Two he addresses the core issue of this volume. Echoing Sri Aurobindo, Dr Reddy argues that the world is moving towards a "perfect state", one in which the individual has maximum liberty to fulfill himself in his inner and outer lives, and in which he reciprocally contributes to the perfection of the state. In the chapter "Towards Human Unity", he pictures human history as a to-and-fro movement between societal organizations that are small in extent but rich in culture, and organizations

that are extensive sizewise though not so culturally fecund. This movement, according to him, is a prelude to the attainment of a perfect state.

Science, Spirituality and Culture is a series of articles by Dr Reddy that explore and recast the Aurobindonian synthesis of matter and spirit. In such articles as "Quantum Physics and Consciousness", the author surpasses himself in explicating the Aurobindonian thesis in a unique way. Both science and spirituality are closely linked to culture, and this volume deals extensively with the nexus among these three. So we find here words on the actual synthesis of science and spirituality, as well as discussions on a future world culture based on a synthesis of these two seemingly irreconcilable systems of observing and knowing ourselves and the world.

As we have just indicated, the topics covered in the chapters of this volume go well beyond science and spirituality. Throughout the volume, articles are included that expatiate on history, metahistory, and India's answer to them; also included are Dr Reddy's views on what India can offer to a world culture. In the last chapter, "The Need for a Civilization of a New Consciousness", he exhorts us to adopt a "dynamic 'theory' of the future" that is more than a merely mental view of history. Such a theory would be deeper, and would see and study history integrally.

In the next volume, *Domains of Light*, Dr Reddy offers his insights into the interconnections

between the Upanishads and Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus, *The Life Divine*. In a series of essays in Part One of this volume, the author first explains in detail the upanishadic conception of Brahman. The Upanishads all have a single subject – the One that has become the Many – that by its very nature encompasses the entire field of knowledge. The articles in this part elaborate several theses on Brahman, its nature, the self, and also *maya*.

In Part Two of this volume, he expands on Aurobindonian philosophy, with articles on metaphilosophy, and theories of evolution East and West, and man's relations to them. This part ends with

Dr Reddy pictures human history as a to-and-fro movement between societal organizations that are small in extent but rich in culture, and organizations that are extensive sizewise though not so culturally fecund. This movement, according to him, is a prelude to the coming of a perfect state.

chapters on the triple transformation (the psychic, spiritual, and supramental transformations, with an emphasis on the last), the vision of a divine life, and finally a chapter titled “The New Humanity” in which Dr Reddy explores the nature of the superman. In this article, Dr Reddy says that present-day man must choose between being human and evolving into the divine person or superman, adding that the choice to evolve has already been made by some human beings at least.

Dr Reddy’s contributions to the corpus of literature on the interconnections between the Veda and Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri* occur in the last volume we are dealing with, *The Creative Word*. Once again, this volume is divided into two parts. The first contains some of the author’s essays on the Veda and *Savitri* that deal with the parallels between them that concern, among other things, the use and power of the creative word. Dr Reddy uses the concepts of *sphota*, *vak*, and *mantra* to link the Veda to Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*. Both works, he avers, are similar because they were the result of revelation and intuition; both have a similar vision, for they “describe the evolutionary march of humanity towards its Origin”. Part Two is replete with essays on what the Creative Word is all about. Both the Veda and *Savitri* were created in similar ways, and this similarity is documented in these essays. Several of these essays fall broadly under what we would call in current literature the philosophy of language.

In a valuable final chapter in this part, “Fine Arts: Perceptible Mediation between the Visible and the Invisible”, the reader is given an Aurobindonian introduction to the nature of true art. In this last article, Dr. Reddy says that “[t]rue art creation is the result of a suprarational influx of light and power from above.” The true artist who produces superior art always works by vision and inspiration rather than relying on reason as an instrument of creation. In a brief space, Dr Reddy discusses several other art forms such as literature, architecture, and sculpture.

One appreciates in these volumes not only the explication of Aurobindonian concepts and theses, but the way the author seamlessly juxtaposes his own originality in relation to these concepts and theses. It is true that, with perhaps the exception of *Two Who Are One*, the intended audience is an intellectually attuned one. Such an audience, though it may object that there is practically no argumentation from Dr Reddy in support of his own views, will doubtless find sufficient justification from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, especially the former. These volumes are handsome companions to those in search of original contributions to Aurobindonian literature.

— Sivakumar Elambooran

Sivakumar was an academic philosopher who has now turned to writing. After living abroad for some years, he is now settled in his native Pondicherry, where he is associated with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Transforming Lives

An Introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga

— Larry Seidlitz

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Pondicherry

204 pp, ISBN 979-81-901891-5-5, Rs 250

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Transforming Lives is a compilation of essays and talks by Dr Larry Seidlitz, a practitioner of Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga who lives in India and teaches Sri Aurobindo’s thought. The book’s aim is to serve as an introduction to Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, and in that it succeeds eminently. In a collection of this sort it is inevitable that some of the material is presented more than once. However, the themes are approached in different ways, highlighting their subtleties, so that at



the end we emerge with a fine sense of the complexities involved.

Dr Seidlitz opens with a biographical introduction in which he shows us the parallel journeys of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother by giving us alternating glimpses of their lives up to the point at which they meet and two quests

become one endeavour. The emphasis of that endeavour is “the development of the consciousness of both individuals and societies”, their goal to “clear and traverse a path towards a decisive transformation of consciousness that would lead to a divine life on earth”.

In the first chapter we improve our acquaintance with Sri Aurobindo through an overview of his teachings, by discovering his books. In Chapter Two, titled “Contributions to Indian Spirituality”, the author situates Sri Aurobindo vis-à-vis traditional yogas. Spiritual realisation of the Self or Atman is the goal of most such yogas. They view the outer life as well as the mind, will, emotions, life forces, body and behaviour as so many impediments that should be quieted so that they may not interfere with the inner experience, which is the only object. Sri Aurobindo agrees that Self-realisation is crucial – he calls it “the characteristic and essential object” – but he holds that the outer life and its instruments exist to express the Divine in the world, and the seeker must perfect them for that purpose: “This embrace of the world as a field for the manifestation of the Divine is the first contribution of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to Indian spirituality.”

Dr Seidlitz lists two other contributions by them. The first is the discovery and detailed explanation of the levels of consciousness between the ordinary human and the divine consciousness—a roadmap for the spiritual traveller. The second is the Integral Yoga, the spiritual discipline. As Sri Aurobindo wrote about his philosophy and yoga in a “highly sophisticated and complex form”, it is often thought that his yoga is for intellectuals. But the most essential principles of the discipline can be stated very simply and understood and practised by people of many different characters and abilities: aspiration, a fixed and unfailing call to the Divine; surrender, a true giving of oneself into the hands of the Divine; rejection, an active rejection of the lower nature; and finally, the divine answer to the human effort—Divine Grace. In conclusion, the author says: “Actually, one could say that their most important contributions were not at all conceptual, but were inner, occult actions leading to a decisive step forward in the evolution of the earth consciousness.”

Chapter Three is a journey into the world of *Savitri*. The author offers a guided tour of Book One, Canto IV, of Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem. In this Canto, “The Secret Knowledge”, Sri Aurobindo puts aside the story of Savitri, Satyavan, Ashwapati and Yama to address the reader. Dr Seidlitz’s lucid and succinct summary is worth quoting:

To practise yoga with the object of uniting with the Divine is not a pretentious chimera; nor is it a

great, idealistic aim suitable only for rare individuals: it is simply the conscious pursuit of the real purpose and goal of our existence here on earth. God has come down here on earth, has obscured his divinity and become this conscious clay not simply to eat tasty food, spin out philosophies, or help the homeless, but to recover his conscious divinity in individual beings here in this diverse, material world....But we cannot do this through our own power...We must surrender ourselves to the Divine Mother so that she may achieve this divinization in us. This is the secret of our existence, this is the secret knowledge.

In Chapter Four, “The Ideal of Integral Perfection”, the author looks at two issues connected to the practice of the Integral Yoga. The first is about how to proceed as an individual seeker faced with the scale, complexity and remoteness of the goal of this Yoga. Dr Seidlitz recommends a small-steps approach: read and study the ideal and the discipline required for its realisation, learn to discipline one’s vital nature and learn to offer one’s work, food and all activities to the Divine, and acknowledge the one Divine Being behind the appearance of the world and begin to surrender oneself to that truth. The second issue concerns the communication to others of the ideals which inspire us. The author advises us to adopt a be-the-change position: “...the growing expression of these powers [strength and ability, goodness, knowledge and wisdom, love and beauty, joy and delight] in ourselves will be our own greatest aid in unfolding these powers in others.”

The next two chapters provide some practical perspectives on the Integral Yoga. Chapter Five gives a set of outer and inner disciplines for beginners. These include practices to cultivate a growing recognition of the Divine in all that surrounds one, to consecrate all activities, even the most mundane, to bring the spirit of *sadhana* into one’s work, to develop equanimity in the will, the intellect and the emotional being, to cultivate faith through prayer and aspiration, and to keep the consciousness turned towards the Divine, ready to receive what comes from above. In Chapter Six the author focuses on seven psychological attitudes that are essential to progress: aspiration, quietude, equality, sincerity, faith, harmony and beauty, and patience and perseverance. While we have met some of them earlier in the book, here they are looked at in greater detail.

Chapter Seven is about Divine Grace, the all-pervasive power of the divine presence acting in the universe. In the context of the Integral Yoga, it refers to a special mode of its working, when it no longer works through the mechanism of Nature but acts directly on the *sadhak* to remould him. Spiritual humility – a state in which one feels one is powerless without the Divine – is the most important condition for the action of the Grace to intervene.

In Chapter Eight the author deals with the purification of emotions so that they may serve their true purpose of enriching our relation with the Divine: “The fullness of Ananda comes with Oneness of our consciousness and nature with the Divine. A purified Love and a sincere surrender of our whole being to the Divine are at once a path towards, and the very nature of, that Oneness and Delight.”

The penultimate essay concerns the subject of spiritual activism, a term found in New Age spiritual literature that appeared from the year 2000 onwards. The author examines the phenomenon, which defines spiritual activists as those who combine self-reflection “with outward-directed, compassionate acts designed to bring about material change”. These changes are generally political, social or environmental. Dr Seidlitz compares spiritual activism with spiritual change as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo. Thus, from the perspective of the Integral Yoga, the spiritual activist must become “not merely a person fighting for higher principles but a consciously surrendered instrument of the Divine for His Action in the world”.

Sri Aurobindo’s yoga is one of transformation: he is convinced that the whole of creation is divine and yoga a process to manifest this divinity. This manifestation he calls transformation. The supramental consciousness is a high, divine consciousness which carries the power of transformation. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother made

it their mission to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth and establish it as a new principle in the evolving terrestrial evolution. This happened in 1956. For the next seventeen years, the Mother worked to establish it in her very cells, in matter. The last chapter of this book is dedicated to understanding as much of this phenomenon as we can by studying her comments on the process.

In *Transforming Lives*, Dr Seidlitz breaks down the discipline of the Integral Yoga into its essential components and explains each component in an easily understandable way, without, however, being simplistic. He shows us how we can begin to approach the Integral Yoga in our daily life and gradually progress in it, transforming our lives.

—Sunam Mukherjee

Sunam reads proof at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press.

Excerpt from *Transforming Lives*

Ideals are not simply imaginations, constructions of the mind, or potentialities of the future. They are closer to the ultimate Reality than the actual fact....They derive their power for actualization from the Reality of the higher planes from which they come, and carry this power with them into this lower plane. The greater the ideal, the higher the plane of consciousness from which it descends, the greater its power for realization. To reveal to humanity a great ideal of spiritual and psychological perfection is to unloose a great power for its uplifting and transformation. There is no greater ideal of spiritual and psychological perfection to which humanity can aspire than that of a divine life in a divine body here on earth as put forward by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Published by PRISMA, Auroville
— Concept: Franz Fassbender

Auroville Form, Style and Design
towards new forms for a new consciousness

145 pp, Rs 550

Size: 21x24 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Landscapes and Gardens of Auroville
the transformation of the land

171 pp, ISBN 978-81-928152-2-0, Rs 650

Size: 21x24 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

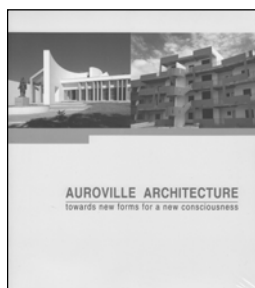
Auroville Architecture

towards new forms for a new consciousness

213 pp, ISBN 978-81-928152-3-7, Rs 750

Size: 21x24 cm

Binding: Soft Cover



I have had the three volumes on Auroville on my bedside table for a while now, mixed up with two of the Mother's volumes and a few copies of *Sri Aurobindo's Action*. I have browsed through them and assimilated their essence. As I now pick up the pen to

write this review, I pause ... for I feel "beautiful".

It is not necessary that every man should be an artist. It is necessary that every man should have his artistic faculty developed, his taste trained, his sense of beauty, insight into form and colour and that which is expressed in form and colour, made habitually active, correct and sensitive. It is necessary that those who create, whether in great things or small, whether in the unusual masterpieces of art and genius or in the small common things of use that surround a man's daily life, should be habituated to produce and the nation habituated to expect the beautiful in preference to the ugly, the noble in preference to the vulgar, the fine in preference to the crude, the harmonious in preference to the gaudy.

Sri Aurobindo, *The National Value of Art*

This universal ideal spelled out by Sri Aurobindo has now started to manifest in the shape of Auroville, the City of Dawn. These three volumes, with concept and layout by Franz Fassbender, will put the reader in touch



The Matrimandir pillars: Maheshwari (south), Mahakali (north), Mahalakshmi (east), Mahasaraswati (west)

with the spiritual and physical foundations of Auroville, its growth from 1968 to the present, and its future.

I marvel at the thought of how many cities throughout the world, those we call great cities, have had their birth and rebirth in war and strife and disease and slavery. Here, in Auroville, we are looking at the foundation of a city steeped in beauty and harmony and being readied for noble souls of the future.

That all three books are based on design, architecture, landscape and construction should not keep away readers who know nothing of these fields, for if we look into history, much that we know about lost civilisations comes from the remains of their architecture and art. On the contrary, Auroville gives us a chance to imagine what this civilisation, whose foundations are so beautiful, shall be like in the future.

Auroville Form, Style and Design

The book starts with a beautiful black-and-white photograph of two bare-bodied children running in a barren canyon with the summer sun beating down on them. Beside this picture are the Mother's words, captioned "A Dream", outlining her vision of Auroville. It all seems like a miracle to us but the Mother had said that "the whole organisation...was ready in the subtle physical".

The book leads us on a visual tour through the early stages of the construction of the Matrimandir and the first settlements and schools in Auroville, including even the details of floor patterns and new roof forms—

showcasing how in letter and spirit the Mother's vision was being worked out. The pages are awash with colours and forms, but it is the words quoted from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that are the most touching. They make you pause and delve a little deeper into the pictures to discover an aspect, unknown yet near, of life and beauty. Carpentry, ceramics, painting, architecture, sculpture, and calligraphy light up the pages, which end symbolically with a photograph of the solar collector, fifteen metres in diameter, atop the solar kitchen. This is beauty in efficiency, sustainability, skill and technology.



An area of red canyon shaped by heavy monsoon rains

A letter from Sri Aurobindo to Dilip Kumar Roy sums up the power of the various arts to touch the extremes of aesthetic delight. On deeper study, it suggests to us how much of the noble that we miss in our daily lives is because of our general apathy to art.

Landscapes and Gardens of Auroville

The title is something of a misnomer, as the first pages of this extremely well-made book actually reveal the making of "The Garden" called Auroville. Today, the biggest story about the building of the city of Auroville is the man-made greening of its absolutely barren landscape.

The Mother's invitation to people who love adventure to come and join Auroville and build the City of Dawn brought men and women from faraway lands. They believed that their calling was true and stayed to work, despite the almost insurmountable difficulties they confronted on reaching here.

This well-documented book, which contains connecting narrative passages by some of the early Aurovilians, links us to the history of the land and its native population, its temples and its legends, and builds up to the inauguration of Auroville and the construction of the Matrimandir, which the Mother called the soul of Auroville. Symbolically, the greening of Auroville underlines all the material presented here, as it is for this greening or as a result of it that Auroville started to get defined and to grow.

[T]he digging of pits in the soil for tree planting unearthed a number of ancient burial grounds.

There is a definite greening going on in the canyons where, a few years back, check-dams were built. Trees, bushes, creepers and other plants have spontaneously emerged.

Poppo had his first taste in landscaping, transforming the space around the huge banyan tree into a garden (10,000 sqm) in Promesse, the first community of Auroville.

Spending hours tending to the garden, he realised how important it was to work with hardy indigenous plants to save time and water.

Observations such as these reveal the greening in different layers, and the photographs lead us from reclaimed canyons to wild paths, from flower beds to paved pathways, from reflections in a body of water to the raked contours of Zen gardens.

We then arrive at the centrepiece: the Matrimandir gardens. The vision and concept of these gardens, with their ponds and partially realised pathways, their trees, flowers and plants, inspire us to ponder the larger questions of ecological balance. A macro plan explains the impact of the greening of Auroville on its bioregion and the reverse impact of human interventions in the bioregion on Auroville's present and future.

The book concludes by presenting a concrete proposal for a sustainable future for Auroville and its bioregion, including a tantalising proposal for actually realising the lakes meant to surround the Matrimandir. The plan visualises a vibrant, sustainable city of 50,000 inhabitants as envisioned by the Mother.

Auroville Architecture

This book is a fabulous account of the efforts the Mother and her children – “those who thirst for progress and aspire to a higher and true life” – have made in the material realisation of this city of the Future.

Auroville:

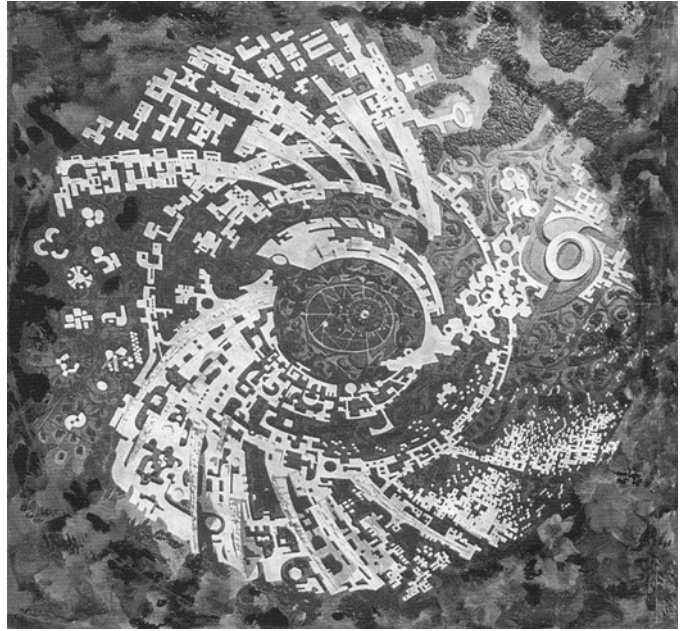
At last a place where one will be able to think only of the future.

At last a place where one will be able to think only of progressing and transcending oneself.

At last a place where one will be able to live in peace, without conflicts and without rivalries of nations, regions and ambitions.

At last a place where nothing will have the right to impose itself as the exclusive truth.

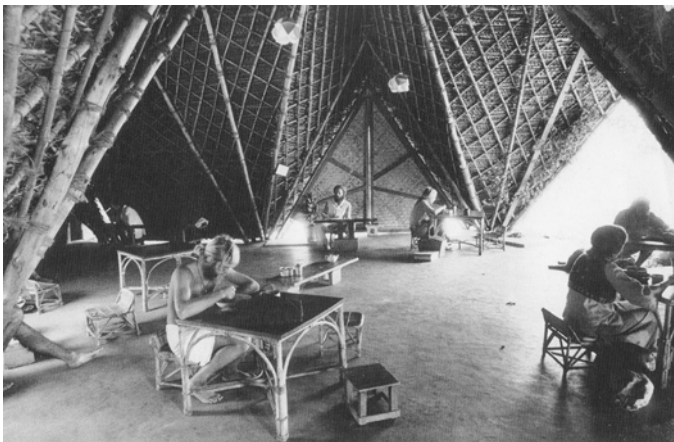
The Mother, February 1968



Galaxy model, 1968

It is wonderful how these words of the Mother represent the power that has liberated the creative spirit that builds Auroville from the clutches of the given into the fathomless lap of the unrealised. What has now started to emerge of the city, the first signs of this great creative endeavour, has been well documented in this book with photographs, quotes, interviews and essays on various aspects of building a city. The early chapters present the Mother's vision of Auroville's city plan: four zones – international, industrial, cultural, and residential – with the Matrimandir at its centre and a green belt surrounding the city area. From Roger Anger, who was Auroville's chief architect, we learn

how the final iteration of Auroville's master plan (now known as the galaxy plan) “would allow the distinct zones to be less segregated, and to be interwoven to completely merge at the city centre as a unified whole”. We also learn that he heard the term “galaxy” used much later. The Mother informed him that an American disciple had brought a NASA photograph of a galaxy and had discussed with her its resemblance to the Auroville city plan. One of the most fascinating parts of the book is Roger Anger's description of the future city in response to his interviewer's request to be taken “through a science fiction pre-visit to Auroville”.



Community kitchen at Protection settlement, in the 1970s

A blast of black-and-white photographs of the first settlement, aptly named Aspiration, puts us in contact with the bare earth, the scorching sun and the oppressive humidity. And as you stare longer at the photographs, you see not only the earthen wall and the deep overhangs, but even the hot air escaping through the *keet* thatch. These early creative experiments led to a few people getting fed up and doing some experiments of their own:

We built it in 1985, very fast. I did the drawings in two weeks, and the third week we started digging foundations. In five months it was finished. After living under *keet* for some time, I'd had enough of the dirt. So in this house, the

roof is a mixture of vermiculite, sand and cement laid over bamboo matting and strips of *pakkumaram* wood, all supported on granite pillars. The walls – which are separate from the roof structure – are brick, the windows ferro-cement.

The chapter “Research in Architecture” gives an idea of the extent of experimentation, and one begins to understand the mammoth task at hand.



Residence, Auromodèle

In all this experimental fluidity we find the fine, perfect and complete Matrimandir standing at the centre, radiating a joy of birth and seeming to hold, as if in its womb, the City of Dawn. The photographer John Mandeon deserves special mention, for it is through his lens that we see the myriad layers of perfection that have shaped the Matrimandir.

The book then takes us through some of the realised buildings in the four zones of the city. There is such a variety on show that you are compelled to slow your pace. The photographs of the public buildings, the schools and the guest houses seem to

invite you to touch and feel them, and to truly understand both the vision and the sweat that has gone into their construction.

The brief profiles of various architects, some of which include a short interview, are a part of the book you would like to read again and again. It reveals just how little we know about our built environment and what inspires the people who build it.

The Mother said that “new forms are needed for the manifestation of a new Force”. These three books constitute a treatise on how to condition a built environment for the souls of the future. They put us in touch with novel value systems that seem so true and real. They should be read by those who already believe or are ready to believe that “Matter shall reveal the Spirit’s face”. As I was touched, so will you be: to say it simply, you shall feel “beautiful”.

—Neelratn

Neelratn is an architect based in Pondicherry.



Housing in Invocation settlement

Excerpt from *Auroville Architecture*

“Mother had given a couple of parameters: the division of the city into four areas, or zones, and the number of people for whom the city is envisaged (50,000). The division into those four zones (industrial, residential, international and cultural) is unique, and has no precedent in town planning....When I talked to Mother one day about Auroville, she said that the city already exists on a subtle level, that it is already constructed, that it is only necessary to pull it down, to make it descend on earth.”

— From an interview with Roger Anger