

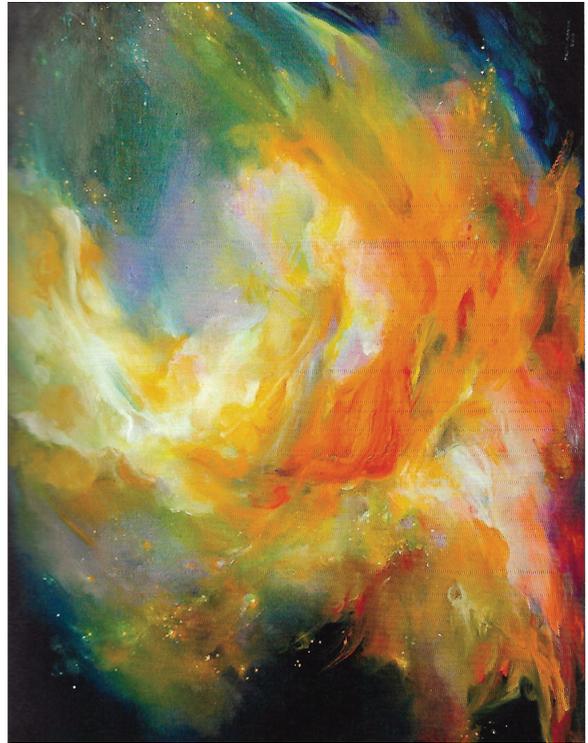
Recent Publications

S a b d a

CONTENTS

The Play of Light: Understanding the Artistic Process	2
RECENT PUBLICATIONS	9
Ordering Information	14
BOOK REVIEWS	
Manifestation of the Divine	15
Reading Sri Aurobindo	16
Among the Not So Great Part II	19
Understanding Contemporary India in the Light of Sri Aurobindo	21
Sri Aurobindo: The Grand Synthesis	23
Talks on <i>Savitri</i>	25
Writings on <i>Savitri</i>	27

In 1909 Sri Aurobindo wrote a series of penetrating essays on the value of art in the life of a nation. Years later, the Mother, for her part, guided those disciples who showed an interest in learning painting and drawing, encouraging them to consciously go within themselves to find a true expression in their art. Inspired by the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the author of our lead essay writes on several conceptions of light and how they are depicted in the work of a few artists, citing representative paintings and comments by art critics and historians.



*On the hearth of Space it kindled a viewless Fire
That, scattering worlds as one might scatter seeds,
Whirled out the luminous order of the stars.*

Savitri, Book II, Canto V

from the book *Dream Walk: Paintings Inspired
by Sri Aurobindo's Savitri* by Priti Ghosh

Priti began painting while a student at SAICE and continued after becoming a teacher. The Mother guided her artistic aspirations, as did several Ashram artists. [See page 10 for informaton about the book.]

The Play of Light: Understanding the Artistic Process

Behind a few figures, a few trees and rocks the supreme Intelligence, the supreme Imagination, the supreme Energy lurks, acts, feels, is, and if the artist has the spiritual vision, he can see it and suggest perfectly the great mysterious Life in its manifestations brooding in action, active in thought, energetic in stillness, creative in repose, full of a mastering intention in that which appears blind and unconscious. ...To suggest the strength and virile unconquerable force of the divine Nature in man and in the outside world, its energy, its calm, its powerful inspiration, its august enthusiasm, its wildness, greatness, attractiveness, to breathe that into man's soul and gradually mold the finite into the image of the Infinite is another spiritual utility of Art. This is its loftiest function, its fullest consummation, its most perfect privilege.

Sri Aurobindo, "The National Value of Art", CWSA vol 1, pp. 451–52

Nature engulfs us in its magnanimous beatitude. We're often so awestruck by its grandeur that we fail to notice the innate characteristics and power that are hidden in its detail. Very few are able to appreciate the range of tonalities in each shade of leaf or the textural differences between the skin of the trees, or to ascribe a definite tone or form to water. Over eons each of these elements has been depicted in their symbolic forms, shapes or colours for ease of communication. For example, water is a dew-shaped drop in the colour blue, mountains are depicted as brown or green triangles and the sun is always in a yellow-orange or red circular shape. As much as these form an artistic symbolism for Nature, derived by philosophical-psychological means, and have also been modified through the ages, we have been conditioned to perceiving and expressing Nature through these symbols.

How are we to then feel 'the supreme Intelligence, the supreme Imagination, the supreme Energy' that 'lurks, acts, feels,' behind a few figures?

Painters, poets, musicians, sculptors and dancers, broadly categorised as artists, are those few who fathom this multidimensional aspect of Nature. Perceiving it as a rhythm, form, textural light or pattern, the artists resort to all the senses to experience Nature's plurality. It is a process that begins with a disciplined observation for a visual artist, listening for a musician and feeling through all senses for a poet. These processes of course get synthesised, combining more than one aspect for creating the artwork, but the artist usually begins with a disciplined mastery of any one of them. As the Mother has said, 'The discipline of Art has at its centre the same principle as the discipline of Yoga. In both the aim is to become more and more conscious; in both you have to learn to see and feel something that is beyond the ordinary vision and feeling, to go within and bring out from there deeper things.' [*Questions and Answers 1929–31*, 105]

For the purpose of this essay, I will focus primarily on the visual arts – painting –, sharing examples of artworks and writings from across geographies and time periods, highlighting the concept of light, which inspired most artists through the ages. The intention is to not define the differences in their historical/hierarchical parameters, but to break existing norms and redefine terms through a broader inclusivity and observe the many forms and expressions around the concept of light. It will mean relooking and appreciating the art for art's sake, with a humanistic gaze and understanding of the varied approaches artists have taken: expressing light as colour, light as shadow, light as energy, light as freedom, light as *rasa-bhava*, light as *pranashakti* and much more. This re-examination will encourage observing light as a synthesis of all these expressions, waiting to be explored in yet another form that represents 'the supreme Intelligence, the supreme Imagination, the supreme Energy'.

Sri Aurobindo states in the *Record of Yoga* that knowledge, according to the Vedic system, is attained through four functions of the human mind—that of seeing (*drishti*), hearing (*shruti*), intuition (*ketu*) and discernment (*viveka*).[16–17] The artist relies on these faculties, in varying intensities and combinations, for their artistic pursuits.

Light as a Synthesis

Light is primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative; material light is a subsequent representation or conversion of it into Matter for the purposes of the material Energy. [*The Life Divine*, 979]

Light as Colour-Atmosphere

Light is the agent that makes nature and objects visible to the human eye. Its technical representation in the history of painting, especially in the West, evolved into techniques such as shading, *chiaroscuro* and *sfumato*. These techniques were prominently widespread during the Renaissance, the Baroque period of the seventeenth century, and in the later art movements of



Impressionism and Fauvism. J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851), an English Romantic painter known for his expressive landscapes, realised that 'light is therefore colour'. His paintings were mostly imaginative and convey a sense of movement, pace and impermanence, which during his later years transformed into an expression of colour as atmosphere and its relationship to light: a shift from the vitality of nature to its ethereality. It was in the nineteenth century that artists began

J.M.W. Turner, *Rain, Steam and Speed—The Great Western Railway* (1844)

Oil on canvas, 91 x 121.8 cm, The National Gallery, London

experimenting with the technique of light, shifting from the realistic interpretation of nature to a suggestive perception of light and its effects on colour, perspective and pace.

Claude Monet (1840–1926), a French painter and a founder of the impressionist movement, experimented with the dimensions of light by attempting to capture its momentary effect through changing colours. ‘He presented it as a series that incorporates the concept of changing time into the frozen moment of art. The word “series” itself is not an art term but rather is borrowed from mathematics and connotes sequence. Sequence is the backbone of time.’ [Schlain] Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), the Italian polymath, beautifully wrote about the characteristic of light, ‘Look at light and admire its beauty. Close your eyes, and then look again: what you saw is no longer there; and what you will see later is not yet.’



J.M.W. Turner, *Norham Castle Sunrise* (1844)
Oil on canvas, 90.8 × 121.9 cm, Tate Collection
London



Monet painted more than thirty views of the Rouen Cathedral in 1892–93, moving from one canvas to another as each day progressed.

Light as Rasa-Bhava

Ragamala paintings, on the other hand, are described as a set of Indian Miniatures depicting a certain time of the day, a season or a particular mood, *rasa-bhava*. The trend of Ragamala paintings can be traced back to a fifth century text, the Narada Shiksha,

which explores the relationship between sound and emotion. Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, this trend became popular in different courts of India across Rajasthan, Central India, the Deccan, the Ganga-Yamuna plains and the Pahari region.

A raga, literally ‘colouring, tingeing, dyeing’, is a melodic framework for improvisation akin to a melodic mode in Indian classical music. Each raga is an array of melodic structures with musical motifs, considered in the Indian tradition to have the ability to ‘colour the mind’ and affect the emotions, the *rasa-bhava*, of the audience.

These approaches (light as colour-atmosphere and light as *rasa-bhava*) are different and yet significant in our understanding of artistic process. Turner and Monet experimented with the materiality and character of light, its speed, impermanence and atmospheric transience whereas the Ragamala paintings, conceived through imagination, illustrate an emotion-*rasa-bhava* associated with a particular sound-time. Light does not translate into perspective, shadows, shades, colour or dimension in the Ragamala paintings. Light transforms into a psychological, sensory and psychic rendering of time. There is no direct source of light one can observe; light and time are entwined in a harmonious experience.

Storm, turbulence, and turmoil are depicted in the miniature painting here, despite the calmness that pervades the composition, a calmness enhanced by the serene expressions of the three women—one calmly gazing up at the storm, the other one turning away and covering herself, and the third disinterestedly lying down, maybe longing to meet her lover. The turbulent skies, which could also metaphorically represent the turmoil of love, are rhythmically composed, adding to the cadence of emotions. Painted in shades of blue and white with a streak of orange to illustrate the effect of lightning, the painting is devoid of the impressionistic use of colour. Colour was not viewed as a consequence of a refraction of light but instead as a reflection of emotions.

The idea of *rasa* and *bhava* are entwined and form the crux of theories in Indian art, aesthetics and metaphysics—theories that connect the *bhava* (individual emotion) to the supreme essence of beauty (*rasa*) reflected in all animate and inanimate forms of existence. Thus, the continuous experience of beauty (*rasa*) through the channel of emotions (*bhava*) enhances the relationship of the individual with the supreme/universal, of which Indian miniatures are the finest examples of expression and appreciation.

Painting, according to Sri Aurobindo, 'is naturally the most sensuous of the arts, and the highest greatness open to the painter is to spiritualise this sensuous appeal by making the most vivid outward beauty a revelation of subtle spiritual emotion so that the soul and the sense are at harmony in the deepest and finest richness of both and united in their satisfied consonant expression of the inner significances of things and life.' (*The Renaissance in India*, 302)



Andhrayaki Ragini (1710)
Ink, opaque watercolor, and
gold on paper, 21.6 x 15.6 cm
The Met Fifth Avenue
New York City

Light as Space-Time-Energy

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), a French artist and Post-Impressionist painter, studied the relationship between space, light and matter. In the process, he discovered that space was not

empty. John Canaday, a contemporary art historian, said of Cézanne's innovations concerning time and light, 'Cézanne discards the idea of capturing transient effects. His forms exist in a universal light in the sense of directed rays from a single source, not even the sun. It is not

light as an optical phenomenon to be investigated and experimented with. It is a uniform and enduring light, steady, strong, clear and revealing, not a light that flows over objects and not a light that consumes them. It is light integral to the canvas; it is "painted in" with every stroke of color. It is a static and timeless light.'



Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (1902–1906), Oil on canvas, 57.2 x 97.2 cm
The Met Fifth Avenue, New York City

Shankar Palshikar (1917–1984), an artist and professor at Sir J.J. School of Art, often recounted an *abhang*¹ to his students which translates as: 'The painter may paint a very good painting of the sun, but he cannot endow it with light.' He goes on to write about his experiences with art, noting that 'one can endlessly eulogise about the wonders of light, but it takes a lot to really absorb the essence of light. It is not the outer dimension defining light but the own inner light of the person that establishes an indefinable relation between the painter and the person he is trying to capture on his canvas. And this light, I would think, is what is *aatmaprakaash*, or the light of the soul. When I dealt with these questions and reflections in conjunction with what Swami Vivekananda had spoken of, a thought fled through my mind: that the life force *pranashakti* might be no different from pure light itself.'

Vincent Van Gogh (1853–1890), a Dutch Post-Impressionist painter, is recognised for his iconic painting *The Starry Night*, which exudes luminosity of light as patterns of energy. Achieved through swirling brushstrokes and a contrasting colour scheme, the canvas pulsates with vibrancy. Researchers analysing this painting compare the swirling structures to the molecular clouds that give birth to stars. In 2004, using the Hubble Space Telescope, scientists saw the eddies of a distant cloud of dust and gas around a star, and it reminded them of Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*.

One observes through these various explorations of light how artists have depicted the same in different forms/expressions, each one observing, perceiving and disciplining the way of seeing into its deeper attributes and further expanding into the other faculties of

1 *Abhang* or *Abhanga* is a form of devotional poetry sung in praise of the Hindu god Vitthala also known as Vithoba.

hearing, intuiting and discerning, so as to experience and express an integral synthesis. As Sri Aurobindo affirms in *The Life Divine*, 'An integral knowledge is the aim of the conscious evolution; a clean cut of the consciousness shearing apart one side and leaving the other cannot be the whole truth of self and things.' (541)

—Jesal Thacker

Jesal Thacker, an artist by training, is relooking at the history of art and aesthetics in the light of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, with a focus on Indian Art and Miniature Painting.

References

1. Palshikar, Shankar. "My Experiences with Art"
2. Shlain, Leonard. *Art & Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time & Light*, 1991
3. Sri Aurobindo. *Early Cultural Writings*, CWSA vol 1
_____*The Renaissance in India and Other Essays on Indian Culture*, CWSA vol 20
_____*The Life Divine*, CWSA, vols 21–22
_____*Record of Yoga*, CWSA, vols 10–11
4. The Mother. *Questions and Answers (1929–1931)*, CWM vol 3



Vincent Van Gogh, *The Starry Night* (1889)
Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York City

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

*COMPILATIONS FROM THE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO
AND THE MOTHER*

Manifestation of the Divine

Prayers given by the Mother to Mona Sarkar

—Conversations with the Mother; recollected by
Mona Sarkar

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication
Department, Pondicherry
265 pp, Rs 685, ISBN: 978-93-5210-241-9
Size: 23 x 29 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Written between 1949 and 1973, this collection of about a hundred prayers is divided into several sections. “Daily Prayers” were sent to Mona during 1949–1950. The facsimiles, written in French, are followed by their English translations. The prayers encouraged in the young Mona the qualities that would lead him closer to the Mother, closer to a knowledge of his soul. The “Occasional Prayers” were written to help Mona through some difficulty, to teach him how to call intently for the Mother’s presence, her help. From 1967 to 1973 the Mother wrote a prayer for him at the beginning of each month, declaring that with each prayer she was preparing an inner path for him to follow. These “Monthly Prayers” had a flower painted at the top of the page and the prayer written below. The Mother’s explanations and colour facsimiles of the monthly pages enrich this last section.

See review on page 15

Crossroad: The New Humanity

—A compilation from the trilogy of *The Human Cycle* by Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Auroville Foundation, Auroville
104 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-81-957301-6-2
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, and War and Self-Determination form the source material of this compilation. Taken together, they call for a new world order, the creation of

an ideal society that favours the perfection of the individual, completed by progress towards a perfect society, and ultimately moving towards a united humanity based on the ascendancy of the spiritual age. Sri Aurobindo traces the cycles of human development through all the stages of societal evolution and foresees a world union of nations. His vision of self-determination rests on the principle of finding the law of the divine being in each unifying with the law of the divine being in all, culminating in a human unity expressly lived out as a religion of humanity.

OTHER AUTHORS

Reading Sri Aurobindo

—Edited by Gautam Chikermane and Devdip Ganguli
Publisher: Penguin Random House India, Gurugram
289 pp, Rs 599, ISBN: 978-0-670-09703-6
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

Encompassing the thirty-six volumes of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, this anthology of readings by twenty-one contributors introduces the reader to the broad scope of Sri Aurobindo’s writings on his work in the spiritual realms as well as some of the prominent political, sociological, cultural, literary, and philosophical themes that absorbed his attention during his lifetime. Written by a varied group of scholars and practitioners of his Integral Yoga, each compact chapter is devoted to one volume of *The Complete Works* and provides insights on the knowledge, vision, and experience reflected in these panoramic writings of Sri Aurobindo. *See review on page 16*

Among the Not So Great (Part Two)

—Prabhakar (Batti)

Publisher: Sri Mira Trust, Pondicherry
77 pp, Rs 100, ISBN: 978-81-86413-66-1
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In this continuation of Batti’s reminiscences of several *sadbaks* from the early years who have since passed away, there are nineteen brief portraits,

each accompanied by a photograph that embellishes the author's evocation of the person. Among the company are both well-known figures such as A. B. Purani, Udar, and Mona Sarkar as well as some equally admired but perhaps lesser-known disciples. All are treated with the author's obvious affection and sense of humour. The title, inspired by Dilip Kumar Roy's book *Among the Great*, suggests how the achievements of these figures may not have been great in the conventional sense, but their utter devotion to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and the moments of joy their memories evoke reveal that often true and lasting greatness lies in the profoundest simplicity and humility.

(previously introduced in the August 2022 issue)

See review on page 19

Understanding Contemporary India in the Light of Sri Aurobindo

—Dr Beloo Mehra

Publisher: AuroPublications, Sri Aurobindo
Society, Pondicherry

207 pp, Rs 390, ISBN: 978-81-7060-430-3

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

As the title of Dr Beloo Mehra's book suggests, this collection of essays written over a period of time provides a bird's-eye view of contemporary India in the light of Sri Aurobindo's thought. The essays capture current Indian mindsets on social and cultural issues confronting the country and emphasise the relevance of Sri Aurobindo's views on revitalising India in ways that will allow the nation to live out its essential characteristic, spirituality, in all walks of life. Dr Mehra stresses the importance that Sri Aurobindo placed on original thinking for a vibrant national life, affirming its power to add vigour and strength to the character of a people.

(previously introduced in the August 2022 issue)

See review on page 21

Sri Aurobindo: The Grand Synthesis

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the
Arts, New Delhi

227 pp, Rs 285, ISBN: 978-93-91045-71-5

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

This survey of Sri Aurobindo's major works traces his fundamental line of thought, the evolution of consciousness, in a series of chapters that approach his oeuvre in the light of his contribution to humanity. "Sri Aurobindo's Realisations" delves into *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, and *Essays on the Gita*. The chapter on the significance of Indian culture looks at the evolution of consciousness through *The Secret of the Veda*, *Isha Upanishad*, *The Renaissance in India*, *The Human Cycle*, and *The Ideal of Human Unity*. "Sri Aurobindo's Revelations" considers *The Future Poetry* as a spiritual aesthesis and *Savitri* as his supreme message for humanity. The Epilogue sums up the grand synthesis of his message, culminating in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga of transformation.

See review on page 23

Talks on Savitri

Transcripts of Selected Talks from 2005–2020

—Alok Pandey

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Yoga Foundation of
North America, USA

331 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-1-7378943-0-8

Size: 14 x 22cm, Binding: Soft Cover

These talks on *Savitri* are selected from concluding sessions of the *Savitri* Study Camps sponsored by Sri Aurobindo Society biannually in February and August. Arranged by subject matter rather than chronologically, the talks treat some of the themes found in *Savitri* with the intent of stimulating an interest in understanding both their profound meaning and the magic of the sublime poetry that expresses them. They cover subjects such as the journey of love, the Book of Yoga, the mind worlds, the problem of pain, the challenge of death and the conquest of immortality, and the Divine Mother in *Savitri*.

See review on page 25

Writings on Savitri

*Overview Articles, Canto-Wise Reader's Guide and
Essays on Book One*

—Alok Pandey

245 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-1-7378943-8-4

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

This collection of writings on *Savitri* is aptly described in its subtitle. The overview articles look

at the epic from various perspectives: as the story of the Divine Mother, as the song of the Infinite, as the story of creation, as the ancient story, as a revelation, and as a modern Veda, the supreme mystery of God's birth in Time. The second part begins with an introduction to the main characters and is followed by a short, usually two-page guide to each canto. The third part consists of an in-depth summary of Book One followed by essays on all its five cantos. *See review on page 27*

The English of *Savitri*, Volume 11

(Book Four: The Book of Birth and Quest and Book Five: The Book of Love)

Comments on the language of Sri Aurobindo's epic Savitri
—Shraddhavan

Publisher: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville
315 pp, Rs 600, ISBN: 978-81-955260-6-2
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

Volume Eleven in the series *The English of Savitri* covers Book Four, The Book of Birth and Quest, and Book Five, The Book of Love. In Book Four Sri Aurobindo begins to tell Savitri's story by describing her birth, the kind of country she grew up in, and how, when she reached maturity, her father sent her out on a journey to find her future husband. In Book Five she finally meets Satyavan. These two books reveal different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's poetry. The nature poetry and love poetry are not only rich depictions of the seasons and landscapes through which Savitri travels and the momentous recognition of love between her and Satyavan, but also carry the deeper significance behind their persons and their roles in the evolution.

Dream Walk

Paintings Inspired by Sri Aurobindo's Savitri
—Paintings by Priti Ghosh

Publisher: The Golden Chain Fraternity, Pondicherry
182 pp, Rs 1600, ISBN: 978-93-87175-01-3
Size: 22 x 28 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

Having studied painting under several Ashram artists, Priti Ghosh, who is also a teacher in the Ashram school, painted in both watercolours and in oil. This book features eighty-two of her paintings,

mostly inspired by lines from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, some by his poems, and others by the Mother's writings. Most of the paintings are appearing here for the first time. Also included are some sketches by Priti and a few communications between the Mother and Priti on her early artistic efforts.

Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of History

—M. P. Ajith Kumar

Publisher: Kurukshetra Prakasan, Kochi
304 pp, Rs 300, ISBN: 978-81-952379-8-2
Size: 14 x 21 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The author sets out to consider Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of history from several viewpoints. First, as the progress of history determined by humanity's mental evolution, Sri Aurobindo sees history as the path humanity treads towards truth through the ages. History reveals truths about man himself, about his struggles in search of self-perfection. The author discusses Sri Aurobindo's views that the nature of history is cyclical, that culture is an integral part of historical development, and that the role of nationalism has shaped the progress of history. Finally, it is the ideal of human unity based on the recognition of the universal oneness of all things that will lead to a new world order. The author's research also looks at other philosophers of history in the light of his appraisal of Sri Aurobindo's thought.

Sri Aurobindo: An Intimate Biography

—M. P. Pandit

Publisher: Dipti Publications, Pondicherry
424 pp, Rs 600, SBN: 978-81-7509-143-6
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

As announced at the start of this biography, the author has attempted to present the human side of Sri Aurobindo—loving, witty, undemanding, humble, poised, and equanimous. Drawing on Sri Aurobindo's own comments as well as published biographies and reminiscences of friends and disciples, the narrative covers his life in short, informative chapters that often highlight Sri Aurobindo's interactions with others. There is an appendix, "Sidelights on Sri Aurobindo's Thought", compiled from his writings and arranged

alphabetically by subject. Originally published in 1983, this is a revised and enlarged edition.

Sri Aurobindo: A Survey

—M. P. Pandit

Publisher: Dipti Publications, Pondicherry

95 pp, Rs 180, ISBN: 978-81-7509-145-0

Size: 12 x 18 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In this brief introductory work the author surveys, in chapters of four or five pages, Sri Aurobindo's writings on philosophy, integral yoga, sociology, literature, Indian culture, the Veda, the Upanishads, and the Gita. One chapter is devoted to his epic poem *Savitri*. The author bookends these short chapters with longer treatments: the first on Sri Aurobindo's life and work and the last outlining his major works. The concluding chapter discusses Sri Aurobindo's dreams for the progress of humanity and his vision of a spiritual evolution culminating in the descent of a new consciousness that will liberate man and transform his existence into a divine life on earth.

**Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume VI
(Book II Part I: Chapters I-IV)**

Chapterwise Summary Talks

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced
Research Trust, Pondicherry

223 pp, Rs 300, ISBN: 978-93-85391-13-2

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

**Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume VII
(Book II Part I: Chapters V-VII)**

—V. Ananda Reddy

165 pp, Rs 275, ISBN: 978-93-85391-14-9

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

**Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume VIII
(Book II Part I: Chapters VIII-X)**

—V. Ananda Reddy

145 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-93-85391-15-6

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

**Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume IX
(Book II Part I: Chapters XI-XIV)**

—V. Ananda Reddy

290 pp, Rs 350, ISBN: 978-93-85391-16-3

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In the above four volumes, Dr Reddy uses simple language and illustrations from everyday life to introduce the main philosophical arguments that Sri Aurobindo examines in great depth on the fundamental nature of existence, the process of evolution, the power of self-knowledge and self-consciousness, the range of our ignorance and the nature of its origin, and the problem of falsehood and evil and its action and hold on the individual being. It also includes some of the practical aspects of Sri Aurobindo's teaching. Each chapter studies the main arguments in brief and is followed by lecture notes that encapsulate the contents in outline form.

Glory of The Divine Mother as revealed in *Savitri*

Annotated Selections from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri

—Alok Pandey

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Yoga Foundation of
North America, USA

225 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-1-7378943-2-2

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

As the title suggests, this book is a selection of passages from *Savitri* that reveal different aspects of the Divine Mother: the transcendental, cosmic, and individual. The author has assigned titles to the selected passages in four major categories: The Divine Mother's personality and earthly mission, her role as the great creatrix, her incarnation as *Savitri*, and the transforming power of her love. The intent of these selections is to bring the reader into contact with her transforming consciousness and absolute power.

Glory of The Lord as revealed in *Savitri*

Annotated Selections from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri

—Alok Pandey

143 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-1-7378943-3-9

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

This book is an annotated selection of passages from *Savitri* that reveal the different poises and statuses of the Divine Lord, especially as the conscious descent of the Supreme in a human

form, the Avatar. The author has organised the selected passages under themes such as the Lord in the becoming, the transcendent Lord, the Lord as all, the Supreme Lord, the Lord as the world-redeemer, the lila of the Avatar, and the promise of the Lord. The intent of these selections is to bring the reader into contact with the Divine as Lord and Master of the Creation.

Epigrams in *Savitri* with Commentaries

—M. P. Pandit

Publisher: Dipti Publications, Pondicherry

275 pp, Rs 340, ISBN: 978-81-7509-144-3

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The author has chosen epigrams from *Savitri*, single lines or sentences of poetry that combine a profound message with an arresting beauty or power of language. The author's commentaries can help to lead the reader to explore the image and depth of thought behind these pithy expressions in Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, revealing perhaps a mental illumination, a spiritual experience, or even an inner psychological realisation.

Sri Aurobindo's First Major Spiritual Experience

—Shraddhavan

Publisher: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville

26 pp, Rs 120, ISBN: 978-81-955260-2-4

Size: 14 x 21, Binding: Soft Cover

In this booklet the author cites passages from Sri Aurobindo's own writings to describe how he came to have the first of his four major realisations on which his Integral Yoga and spiritual philosophy are founded. This was the realisation of the silent, spaceless, timeless Brahman reached while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi Vishnu Baskar Lele at Baroda in January 1908.

Discourses on *The Synthesis of Yoga* - Volume I

"Introduction": Chapters I-V

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced

Research Trust, Pondicherry

236 pp, Rs 300, ISBN: 978-93-85391-17-0

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The first five chapters of *The Synthesis of Yoga* serve as an introduction to the book. Chapter One looks at the relationship between yoga and life, noting Nature's evolutionary trend to converge towards unity and diverge into multiplicity, to develop forms and then break up forms. Sri Aurobindo concludes that when the conscious yoga in man becomes like the subconscious yoga in nature, outwardly connected to life in all its forms, one begins to see that "in a more perfect and luminous sense, all life is Yoga." Subsequent chapters summarise the three steps of Nature's yoga and analyse the threefold life—the material, the mental, and the spiritual. The final two chapters look at the core of the three traditional forms of yoga and the ways in which they differ from and connect to each other, and how Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga proposes a new synthesis, providing the flexibility to suit each aspirant on the path.

Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume X

(Book II Part II: Chapters XV-XVII)

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced

Research Trust, Pondicherry

261 pp, Rs 320, ISBN: 978-93-85391-21-7

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume XI

(Book II Part II: Chapters XVIII & XIX)

—V. Ananda Reddy

198 pp, Rs 275, ISBN: 978-93-85391-22-4

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume XII

(Book II Part II: Chapters XX-XXII)

—V. Ananda Reddy

250 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-93-85391-23-1

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In these three volumes, Dr Reddy introduces the main philosophical arguments that Sri Aurobindo examines in depth on the subjects of Reality and the integral knowledge, four theories of existence, and the process of evolutionary consciousness; the nature of ignorance, and how the spiritual evolution is an ascent out of the sevenfold

ignorance into the integral knowledge; and the philosophical and logical necessity of the existence of the psychic being, the existence of other worlds that support the process of spiritual evolution, and the concepts of karma, the soul, and immortality. Each chapter studies the main arguments in brief and is followed by lecture notes that encapsulate the contents in outline form.

Mystic Fire: *The Life of Sri Aurobindo*

—Atulindra Nath Chaturvedi

Publisher: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd.,
New Delhi

192 pp, Rs 395, ISBN: 978-93-5520-778-4

Size: 12 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

This biography of Sri Aurobindo concentrates on his involvement in the political life of India as a participant and later, after he retired from politics, as a keen observer of Indian and world affairs who even made public statements supporting the Cripps Mission and the Allied Powers during World War II. The author aims to deliver Sri Aurobindo from a limited historical role and relocate his life and work as a visionary who elevated India's role in modern history. He highlights the relevance of Sri Aurobindo's writings to the world today and to its future, calling them a living, provocative mass of ideas. Pointing out the themes of evolution and the liberation of the human being in Sri Aurobindo's teaching, he claims that the importance and necessity of freedom is the critical lesson from Sri Aurobindo even today.

Musings on the Mother

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced
Research Trust, Pondicherry

326 pp, Rs 380, ISBN: 978-93-85391-18-7

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Musings on the Mother comprises the thirty-four talks delivered by the author at Savitri Bhavan in 2012 and 2013. It is a study of Chapter Six of Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother*, letters written to his disciples in 1927 and later collected and published as a book. The author comments on the sixth chapter in three sections; "The One whom

we adore as the Mother" looks at the philosophical background of the concept of the Divine Mother. "Aspects of the Mother in Manifestation" explains the four great aspects and powers of the Mother as well as the Ananda aspect that supports the other four and whose presence is indispensable for the supramental manifestation. "To Keep open to the Mother" focuses on the practice one needs to follow so that the Mother can act in and through us.

Savitri Bhavan: *The Buildings*

Publisher: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville

83 pp, Rs 350, ISBN: 978-93-82474-21-0

Size 18 x 18 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Created in response to interest received from students and professionals who wished to know more about the architecture of Savitri Bhavan, this booklet references the vision behind the architectural concept of the buildings, both the original vision and the ongoing additions and organic changes required as the complex grew its services to the public. Architectural drawings and specifications as well as a description of the purpose and design of each building in the complex complete the narrative, enhanced by photographs.

Avatar: A Lotus Colouring Book

*15 Meditative Colouring Pages, A Pullout and
Frame Colouring Book*

—Artist: Uttama Dhandhanian

Publisher: Soulscapes, Mumbai

32 pp, Rs 975, ISBN: 978-81-947103-7-0

Size: 30 x 30 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The Lotus Bud

—Story by Krishna Roy Dundur, Illustrations by
Sayuri Mima

Publisher: Navavihan, Sri Aurobindo Ashram,
Pondicherry

56 pp, Rs 550, ISBN: 978-81-935227-2-1

Size: , Binding: Hard Cover

A charming story for children, this tale of a solitary lotus bud takes place in a garden that slowly comes to life as the day dawns. All of Nature's elements – the trees and flowers, the sun, wind and water, the birds and beasts – lend their particular energy

and force to help the lotus bud's petals open in all their beauty. Brightly illustrated with simple but colourful drawings, it is an appealing picture book for very young readers.



BENGALI

Yogasadhanar Tattwa—Sri Aurobindo
ISBN: 978-93-5210-244-0, Rs 65

GUJARATI

Vednu Rahasya—Sri Aravind, Rs 460
Savitri Shabdarnut-14—Shraddhavan, Rs 300
Jagadguru Bharatarnata ane Sri Aravindana
Panch Swapno—Compiled from the Writings
of Sri Aurobindo & the Mother, and other
sources, Rs 60

HINDI

Sri Aravind Apne evam Ashram ke Sambandha
mein (Bhag 1)—Sri Aravind, ISBN: 978-93-
5210-240-2, Rs 200
Srima ka Prateek: *Adhyatmik Vyakhya Aur
Mahattva*—Srima tatha Sri Aravind ki Rachnao
se sankalit, ISBN: 978-81-7060-433-4, Rs 200
Chetana ke Shikhar—Suresh Chandra Tyagi
Rs 400

ITALIAN

La Madre (La Sua Vita) —Testimonies collected
and commented on by Adriano Baldo,
ISBN: 978-93-5210-268-6, Rs 1200

MARATHI

Ishwari Samay—Sri Aravind
ISBN: 978-93-5680-029-8, Rs 160
Savitri (Bhavanuvad-Saransh)—Pradnya
Sukhatankar, ISBN: 978-93-5659-707-5, Rs 60

ORIYA

Saja Sakala: *Kabita Sataka*—Sri Aurobindo O
Srimanka Lekharu Sangruhita
ISBN: 978-81-86413-68-5, Rs 100
Sri Aurobindonka Samadhi O Tara Dibyatwa
—Nirmal Chandra Sahoo, Rs 60
Manab Seva—Compiled from the Writings of
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
ISBN: 978-81-7060-428-0, Rs 30
Param, ISBN: 978-81-937498-3-8, Rs 150

SANSKRIT

Adikavyat Prerakaprasangah—By Narendra;
Illustrated by Swetapadma, ISBN: 978-93-
5210-252-5, Rs 60

TELUGU

Durga Stotram—Sri Aurobindo, Rs 25
Suvarnavaradhi Savitri (Book IV, V, VI)
—Suneetha Sekhar, Rs 100
Vidyapai—Sri Mataravindula Rachanala nundi
Sankalanam, ISBN: 978-93-5210-248-8, Rs 105

Ordering Information

Our complete catalogue of books and other items, with images and content descriptions, can be viewed at our website. Submit your order through the website's shopping cart facility, which will instantly generate an online quote including postage and forwarding. You may then proceed to pay online or by other indicated options.

In India: For orders of total book value above Rs 1500, shipping of books is free. Below this limit, shipping is charged. Payment can be made by bank draft favouring *SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram* payable at Pondicherry, or online via our website. On receipt of payment, the books/items will be sent by registered post/surface courier.

Overseas: Place your order through our website as indicated above. Those without internet access may contact us to receive quotes for the various available mailing options.

SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry 605 002 India
tel: +91 413 222 3328, 223 3656
email: mail@sabda.in
web: https://www.sabda.in

BOOK REVIEWS

Manifestation of the Divine

Prayers given by the Mother to Mona Sarkar

—Conversations with the Mother, recollected by Mona Sarkar

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication

Department, Pondicherry

265 pp, Rs 685, ISBN: 978-93-5210-241-9

Size: 23 x 29 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

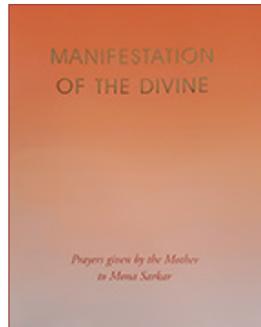
Spiritual experiences tend to be, necessarily, intensely personal journeys. But the beauty of *Manifestation of the Divine: Prayers given by the Mother to Mona Sarkar* is that it is, at once, both intensely personal and all-encompassing, universal in nature. This beautifully produced volume includes a collection of prayers that the Mother wrote for Mona Sarkar over a period of twenty-four-odd years. The prayers, reproduced in her own handwriting in the original French, are followed by their English translations, and sometimes by the Mother's explanations or clarifications. Like the Mother's teachings, the book is both about the right here, right now of one journey as well as the always and forever of all aspirations. It talks to both the individual and the multitude and in doing so offers a roadmap that we can all follow to the best of our abilities.

To be honest, I started reading the book with a searing interest and not a little trepidation. As one of the senior *sadhaks* in the Ashram community, Mona Sarkar, or Mona-da as he was generally known, was a ubiquitous presence in the community,

handing out message cards on Darshan days, conducting the March Past of group members, and reading the names of competition prize winners in the Playground for as long as anyone can remember. He was and continues to be held in high esteem not only by those who knew him personally but by many like me who didn't and simply went by what others said about him. He was such an intrinsic part of the Ashram community – his association with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo stretching back to 1943 when he became part of the first batch of students to join the Ashram school – that any treatise that traces his close connect with the Mother's divine presence is bound to be both illuminating and uplifting.

Many of the prayers – particularly those that are part of a set of calendars that Mona-da compiled – come with beautiful paintings. These include paintings of flowers that bring out their spiritual significance as explained by the Mother. So bougainvillea is protection, leopard flower is attachment to the Divine and nerium oleander is surrender of all falsehood. Some of these are already well known among the SAICE student community and the larger circle of devotees. But this book makes the spiritual qualities of these flowers easily understandable for and accessible to those who are not aware of them or have never been exposed to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The prayers themselves contain the force of the Mother's grace—they are profound, powerful and pithy. But they are also amazing in their simplicity. They are of course a wonderful treasure—not only for those of us who are part of the Ashram community or are interested in the Integral Yoga but also for the lay intellect looking for a step-by-step guide towards greater realisation. The beauty



of the prayers is that they, as the context given in the book explains, are specific to a person and an occasion but can easily be absorbed by almost anyone looking for a higher cause and willing to offer an ardent aspiration for it. An example will prove this point. On March 17, 1949, the Mother wrote a simple prayer for a young Mona-da:

Perfection is not a maximum or an extreme.

Perfection is an equilibrium and a harmonisation.

Always do what you do with care.

Any work done with care becomes interesting.

Given the personal nature of the prayers, this one too has a definite context and is intended for a specific person—indeed the Mother annotated it with “to Mona with my blessings”. But for someone like me – very far from the elevated connect that Mona-da enjoyed with the Divine Mother – this is a powerful mantra not only for a higher aspiration but also for my very humdrum everyday pursuits as well. That’s the beauty of these prayers. They are meant for the lofty and illumined but speak beautifully to the little, nameless and unremarkable as well. Just as they spoke to me.

My favourite in the book is the Mother’s conversation with Mona-da sometime in February 1972. It is Sri Aurobindo’s centenary year. Her message on the first month of that golden year said it all: “In this year of Sri Aurobindo’s centenary let us try to be worthy of him by faithfully following his teaching in order to prepare the coming of the superman.” For February, Mona-da presents her with a painting of a white dahlia, which the Mother called “Superhumanity, the aim of our aspirations”. The Mother writes the prayer under the painting: “Nature

rediscovers the Divine in a blissful surrender” and below that she writes OM in Devanagari script. Why OM? Mona-da recounts his conversation with the Mother. “With the help of OM one can realise the Divine. OM has a transforming power. OM represents the Divine.” The sound of OM, she explains to him, is important because “all the aspirations of the world when going towards the Divine make O...M.”

Can anything be more soul-stirring? Can anything be more transformational?

—Nandini Sengupta

Nandini is a Pondicherry-based journalist and author of historical fiction and narrative history books. Her books have been published by HarperCollins India, Hachette India and Penguin India. She moved to Pondicherry from Delhi in 2010, and her young daughter attends the SAICE, where Nandini teaches in the Higher Course.



Reading Sri Aurobindo

—Edited by Gautam Chikermane and Devdip Ganguli

Publisher: Penguin Random House India, Gurugram

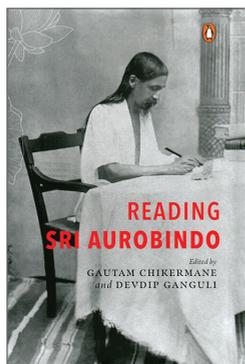
289 pp, Rs 599, ISBN: 978-0-670-09703-6

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

Unlike other spiritual seers, Sri Aurobindo was a prolific and versatile writer whose works, mostly in English but also in Bengali and Sanskrit, cover an eclectic mix of topics and formats. The vast body of this literature runs to 22,000 pages containing a staggering six million words. They bear not only the stamp of his erudition and scholarship but are actually the transcription of his deep spiritual experiences. In fact, the touch of spirituality permeates all his writings. Few of us would probably have read the entire works of Sri Aurobindo, especially the subjects that require a substantial background knowledge

of history, philosophy, and mysticism. While some have tried and faltered, others not brave enough have shied away from delving into the depths of *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, or *The Secret of the Veda*, and other works whose topics would be of more interest to and in the ambit of academics and scholars.

Published by Penguin Press, *Reading Sri Aurobindo* is the collaborative effort of editors Gautam Chikermane and Devdip Ganguly to address the above issue and demystify to the extent possible the entire thirty-six volumes of the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA), condensed to a mere 250 pages of relatively easy reading. Contributions from the editors as well as a host of scholars, well-known authors in India and abroad, and faculty of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (SAICE), make up the chapters of the book, offering more of a deep introductory insight rather than a summary of each volume. According to the editors, the book is their offering to Sri Aurobindo on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary with the hope that it will help to “convey his message, his vision and his deep wisdom for resolving the fundamental issues facing individuals, societies and nations” to a wider audience. The relevance of this book is even more imperative given the present situation where the world, beset with poverty, hunger, geopolitical tensions, armed conflict, political chaos, economic turmoil, the alarming rate of depletion of natural resources, and climate change, is passing through an existential crisis.



The introduction lays out the crux of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy and the aim of his Integral Yoga, while also briefly mentioning the methodology adopted and the challenges faced by members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library who were responsible for deciphering the manuscripts as well as the classification and categorisation of the CWSA. The one area where Sri Aurobindo has not earned encomiums is his handwriting, selected photos of which are available in the middle of the book. The conclusion, apart from hoping that the book will inspire readers to discover Sri Aurobindo’s original writings for themselves, also offers useful tips and a general classification of the volumes by topic for the benefit of readers who would not know where to begin.

Readers will find immense joy in the chapters introducing his lighter writings (Chapters 2, 3, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 30) such as short stories, poems, plays, speeches, and the massive amount of correspondence full of wit and humour as well as deeper philosophical thinking, written to his disciples, giving practical guidance and spiritual sustenance in their *sadhana*.

For the intellectually inclined spiritual seeker, this book imparts, in Chapters 8, 9, 10, 18, 19 and 28, some core concepts of Sri Aurobindo’s thought and teachings. His central message is that evolution, as we have been taught, is not merely the result of an error in DNA replication but is a process by which what evolves is consciousness, and that the new supramental consciousness, incipient yet elusive, will gradually but ineluctably lead to the transformation of homo sapiens and the emergence of a new species on earth. This process can be hastened by the practice of the Integral Yoga by the individual free to seek out his own path without the constraints of

having to follow any set methodologies, rules or rituals.

The chapters that introduce the trilogy of *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, and *War and Self-Determination* (Chapters 20 and 21) fall under the broad category of social and political thought. These works trace the psychological stages that societies undergo in their evolution but refrain from speculations or prescriptions for a futuristic utopian political structure to replace the shortcomings of the Westphalian system of sovereign nation-states, nor for a radically new global economic model to supersede existing fiscal and monetary authorities. Rather, they discuss the underlying principles that ought to shape future societies, with the warning that uniformity should not undermine unity, that peace and order should not come at the expense of freedom and diversity. These works were written during the tumultuous years of World War I when Western leaders, led by American President Woodrow Wilson, were grappling with the immediate and pressing concerns of establishing a new world order based on collective security.

Those interested in Indian culture will discover in Chapters 1 and 17 not only a deeper understanding of Indian philosophy, spirituality, religion, art, and literature, but also Sri Aurobindo's suggestions on how to approach and assimilate the forces of modernity sweeping through the world. All this while preserving India's tradition and spiritual identity without having to adhere to conservative social institutions such as the caste system.

Chapters 5 and 6 contain Sri Aurobindo's fiery political writings and speeches which were published in *Bande Mataram* and the *Karmayogin*, two leading periodicals of the first decade of the twentieth century. These

earned him, in the eyes of the British, the label of 'the most dangerous man in India' for his outspoken advocacy of complete freedom from British rule. The writings also cover a range of socio-economic issues of the day from education and nationalism to agriculture and import substitution.

Sri Aurobindo's reading of Indian scriptures (Chapters 11 to 16) reflects his spiritual insights. His commentaries on the Vedas and the Upanishads reveal a unique and revolutionary interpretation of forgotten meanings found in these ancient scriptures, often in sharp contrast to the attempts of other commentators to debunk them as Vedic ritualism. His re-examination of the words used in these texts throws new light to reveal their deeper meanings. Likewise, his commentary on the Gita goes behind superficial interpretations to deliver its profound message.

His epic poem in blank verse, *Savitri* (Chapter 29), considered the longest example of its kind in the English language, is perhaps the most difficult of his works to understand; probably rightly so because language, except perhaps through symbols and images, is inadequate to express the experiences that originate from higher levels of consciousness. The receptive reader will find in it the entire edifice of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy woven into the story of Savitri and Satyavan taken from the Mahabharata. Having undergone numerous revisions over a thirty-year period, this is poetry written from the higher planes above the mind, the characteristics of which he has elucidated in great detail in *The Future Poetry* (Chapter 22). But even though difficult to understand, it is not difficult to feel the mantric quality of the lines in *Savitri*.

The contents of the book will be a useful reference for those who are familiar with his

writings and a revelation to those who are not. Most chapters cite incidences from Sri Aurobindo's life that inspired some of his writings, or situates them in their historical context, or nuances the technicalities of his prose and poetic style. One cannot help but notice that each chapter reveals the deep and intimate relationship between the contributors and their subject matter, a passion they must have nurtured for many years.

Reading Sri Aurobindo provides keys to unlock the deep mysticism of his texts, gives clues to decrypt his language, and presents a roadmap to navigate the vast ocean of his writings. Reading all thirty-one chapters is like revisiting his life through his writings, his transformation from the heady days as a feisty political revolutionary to the many years as a spiritual master and guide who devoted his life to the uplift of the human condition through the revolutionary path of his Integral Yoga.

What Sri Aurobindo has left behind in his writings is the certitude of the spiritual destiny of the human race currently blinded by the hubris of its own material achievements. In times when doubts and apprehensions creep into the mind, it is worthwhile to remember these lines from *Savitri*:

For man shall not know the coming till
its hour

And belief shall be not till the work is
done.

—Gautam Chatterjee

Gautam, who earned a master's degree from the Institut Universitaire d'Études du Développement in Geneva, has worked as an interior designer, furniture maker, and builder for more than thirty years. Interested in history, economics, sociology, metaphysics, and the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he also teaches history at SAICE.

Among the Not So Great (Part Two)

—Prabhakar (Batti)

Publisher: Sri Mira Trust, Pondicherry

77 pp, Rs 100, ISBN: 978-81-86413-66-1

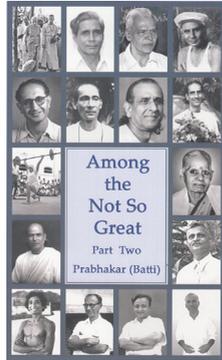
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

It is often difficult to answer questions about how spirituality is lived in the Ashram. *Among the Not So Great – Part Two*, a new book by Batti-da (Prabhakar Reddy), answers some of those questions by revealing glimpses of our community life. Batti-da's book is important for its intimate account of life in the Ashram during its formative years, from the late 1920s to the 1940s. By way of these pen portraits, which include figures such as A.B.Purani, Udar, and Mona Sarkar as well as some perhaps less well-known *sadbaks*, all of whom have passed away, Batti-da draws a picture of the community as seen through the lives of these nineteen people. For readers today, this book becomes a precious source of information as it shows how a life of dedication can be lived by offering all one's time and energy to the Divine's work.

The book's cover tells us that this is "Part Two". The title of the first book, *Among the Not So Great*, was inspired by the book *Among the Great* by Dilip Kumar Roy. The idea of writing about people who were considered special within the Ashram community but unknown beyond it gave birth to that first volume by Batti-da. The *sadbaks* of these earlier years were focussed on their *sadhana* and did not blow their own trumpets, so their lives often went unnoticed, and the examples they set were lost. Batti-da's idea of writing about them and telling their stories in an interesting and readable style bore fruit, and his book was very much appreciated. Those who liked that book wanted to read more, and Batti-da himself felt that there were so many other *sadbaks* and *sadhikas* who deserved to be better known and whose stories needed to

be told. This is why this second volume came to be written.

Batti-da's book stands out because of his style, which is simple to understand and makes enjoyable reading. The stories are told using the vocabulary of the spoken language and common turns of phrases. The book's seventy-seven pages can be read in a few hours, and one can easily re-read an account to focus on the details. Photographs of the nineteen people featured in the book appear at the beginning of their respective chapters (One chapter, "Tri-murtis (of the moon)" tells of three: Rishabchand, Umirchand, and Parichand.) This brings each person alive in the reader's mind. Many of them were personally known to the writer; two of them were even members of his family.



Most of these disciples came in the early years; some came when Sri Aurobindo was still there in his physical body. Others arrived when families were allowed to come with their children. Even though they lived a life so steeped in a spiritual atmosphere, they were humble, aware that their *sadhana* was a work in progress. This is the beauty of the Ashram life, that each one finds his or her path. Having said that, one has to admit that the portraits in this volume are rather sketchy. Another weak point might be that there are only two women among the nineteen people chosen. Also, the book could have done with a thorough copyediting.

During these years the Ashram was slowly growing, but there were still so few people that everyone knew everyone else, and the community lived like a close-knit family. Sometimes, reading between the lines reveals

more than what is on the surface. For this we have to thank Batti-da for taking the pains to put pen to paper. A detail which cannot be overlooked is the fact that these accounts were written after the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. It was during the lockdown that Batti-da lost both his sisters within a couple of months. Death often brings home to us the uniqueness of those whom we have lost and how irreplaceable they are.

Although best read along with the first volume, I am sure those who know the Ashram from far as well as those who know it from near will enjoy this book.

—Sunayana Panda

Sunayana, who holds an MA in English Literature, was a student at the SAICE, and serves on the editorial team of The Golden Chain, its alumni journal. Her books include Seven Dedicated Lives, Mirra Alfassa—The Mother: Her Life and Her Work, Sri Aurobindo and the Cripps Mission, and Following in Their Footsteps: Discovering Sri Aurobindo's Life in England and the Mother's Life in Japan.



Understanding Contemporary India in the Light of Sri Aurobindo

—Dr Beloo Mehra

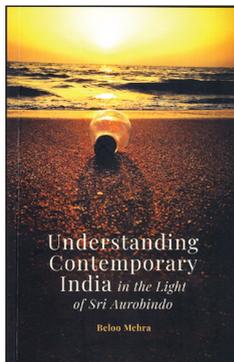
Publisher: AuroPublications, Sri SAurobindo Society, Pondicherry
207 pp, Rs 390, ISBN: 978-81-7060-430-3
Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The reader of this fast-moving collection of essays by Dr Beloo Mehra, each written at different points of time and here woven together around her pervading, easy-to-identify-with theme – her evolving personal as well as intellectual understanding of contemporary Indic sociological and cultural truths in an Aurobindonian light – will no doubt be struck by her ability to see Sri Aurobindo in every topic that she touches

upon. At stake is her commitment to the century-old demand of Sri Aurobindo that the Indic peoples must vigorously espouse once again a robust and original intellectual activity, even as they had done in past ages. As will be evident, even the most skeptical reader will not be left untouched by Dr Mehra's defence of the proposition that it is an urgent necessity for the Indic nations to once again wake up to the need to think for themselves from scratch, casting off in the process what their peoples have been taught as received wisdom.

Those familiar with the literature by or on Sri Aurobindo need only quickly read the essay that introduces his external life; others will find his life sketch useful. This biographical note is followed up with a section on "de-colonising with Sri Aurobindo" that the average middle-class Indian born in the two decades post-independence (1947) will readily identify with. The author presents her autobiographical account of this process of "de-colonising with Sri Aurobindo" that is a happy, forward-looking, ongoing synthesis of all that is useful in both East and West; on what is not useful, she deftly applies Ockham's razor.

The next piece titled "Are We Listening to our Mother?" introduces the main lines of exploration that follow in her book. Assuming the imagined voice of *Bharat Mata*, the soul of India, the author exhorts the children of Mother India to "think hard. Think deep.... Think for yourself." This evocative essay is aptly peppered with quotations from the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's writings.



Of these essays, three may be grouped together – one on spirituality, being the master key of the Indian mind, one on intellectuals and thinkers, and one on reasonable discussion. The author examines these three topics in an Aurobindonian light, thus preparing the ground for many of the essays that follow, each delving into specific issues confronting India and the average Indian. By first expanding on the terms "spirituality", "thinker", and "rationality" as Sri Aurobindo defines them, Dr Mehra arms herself with the tools that she needs to expatiate on her arguments in many of the remaining essays.

In the essay "Are We Quick to Blame the Culture?", the author distinguishes the term "social behavior" from "culture" and deplores the fact that, unlike people in other nations, Indians are too quick to blame their nation's problems on its culture; she takes Sri Aurobindo's broad definition of the latter term and adapts it for her purposes in this essay. Proceeding on these lines, she elucidates Sri Aurobindo's view that there is both an individual soul that is encapsulated by that individual's mind and body, as well as a group soul that lies within the external "body" and "mind" of a people.

Once she does this, she is able to demonstrate in an Aurobindonian light that Indians' external problems, on both the individual and the group level, are really a result of souls in malaise, manifesting as external social behavioral problems. Therefore, she argues, along with Sri Aurobindo, that societal behavior must be set right by first attending to the many centuries of the stagnation and even the decay of what lies within in order to set right what lies without, in mind and body, and act according to the essential truths of the Indian spirit. Here again we find the author's arguments

grounded in Aurobindonian ideas and ideals, taking the sense of key terms she uses from Sri Aurobindo to advance her own theses.

In the essay “On Nation and Nationalism”, the author spells out for us Sri Aurobindo’s meanings of these terms in key pages, clearly explaining his ideas of “nation”, “nationalism”, and finally “internationalism”. Along the way, Dr Mehra shows us that the Aurobindonian program does not stop with just a strong India, but includes a greater commerce among the world’s nations, in which each nation has room to grow to its full potential while conscious of every other nation’s equal right to realise the same.

There are three essays that have to do with religion and harmonious interreligious co-existence in India. In the first of these, there is an informative capture from Sri Aurobindo’s writings of what Hinduism really is, viz., the *sanātana dharma*, the eternal, universal religion. Dr Mehra goes on to expand, in the light of some contemporary thinkers, one particular strain of current ideas on inter-faith harmony in the nation. The second one, on a re-look at what it means to see religious reform through the lens of reason, emphasises that such reform should not be a mere socio-political activism, the last term meaning an expression of the need for a vital and mental sensationalism that always looks for a new cause for its enjoyment. The third essay in this group is an attempt at an interpretive reading of a Hindi novel by Dr Narendra Kohli titled *Abhyuday* that is based on the story of Rama; readers interested in the role of literature in the evolution of consciousness, or in the role of Avatars, will doubtless enjoy the author’s Aurobindonian take on these topics.

Other essays focus on an array of topics such as the movies, the nature of the Age of Commercialism, what womanhood should

be all about according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and what it really signifies in present-day India, and some thoughts on the improvement of the education system in this nation. The two concluding ones, on what is “spiritual practicality” and what is necessary now for India and the world – “A Long, Thorough Work Is Necessary” –, round off this collection of essays. The book will appeal not only to those who are sympathetic to Sri Aurobindo’s ideas because they are his devotees, but also to those who are simply looking for a reinvigorating perspective through which to view the apparent discords in the contemporary world.

—Sivakumar Elambooranan
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.



Sri Aurobindo: The Grand Synthesis

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

227 pp, Rs 285, ISBN: 978-93-91045-71-5

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Sri Aurobindo: The Grand Synthesis presents a brilliant overview as well as an in-depth analysis of the major works of Sri Aurobindo. The various facets of Sri Aurobindo as a writer, thinker, poet, politician, futurist and philosopher are brought into focus as the author takes up for individual analysis each major work, emphasising the contemporary value of Sri Aurobindo’s eternal philosophies. His keen analytical exposition presents Sri Aurobindo as a grand synthesis of the ancient and the modern, the East and the West.

The book significantly begins with the decisive stages, the 'turning points' in Sri Aurobindo's life. What is absolutely novel here is that Dr Reddy has focused on those stages where the turning point led to an 'upward swing' in the ascent of Sri Aurobindo's life, and he has brought out some half-known or misjudged facts and put them in proper perspective. It is refreshing to follow a different route other than the typical manner of being presented with the chronology of a life. The author here has his focus on the striking and the extraordinary, as, for instance, his discussion of the 'deliberate decisions' taken by Sri Aurobindo, from his choice to return to India from England to that of leaving his mortal body. The author considers the year 1926 to be a major turning point in the master's life as it was the 'final step from humanity to divinity'.

That logically takes us to the next chapter of the book where the discussion is about the five dreams of Sri Aurobindo. The author succeeds in establishing Sri Aurobindo in the line of the Upanishadic Rishis by an explanatory analysis of these dreams, which are no less than prophecies. His mention of the dreams of a united India, the resurgence of Asia, a world union, and the spiritual gift of India to the world helps to define Sri Aurobindo as a futurist too, and the author explains the last dream of the 'higher consciousness' as the basis of all the other dreams. Most interesting is the way the author links the past to the present and the future and especially to contemporary crises involving economic issues, the power of and the threat from China, and the inner reasons for the emergence of that power. The analysis of the two World Wars, of colonisation, against a spiritual background and the mission of India to be the leader of the world, is thought-

provoking and powerfully effective. In fact, this chapter is written with keen insight and passion and displays the author's own fund of knowledge and contemporary awareness. In discussing Sri Aurobindo as the guiding spirit of humanity, Dr Reddy lays stress on the optimistic views and spiritual revolution that come as a great solace in human crises. An interesting analysis of the concepts of unity, harmony, and mutuality in the light of Sri Aurobindo's thought fills the pages of this chapter. And it is with firm belief that he comments: 'As time advances, his relevance will increase, intensify and become humanity's inevitable guiding spirit.' The curious reader is sure to be lured into an exploration of Sri Aurobindo's works.

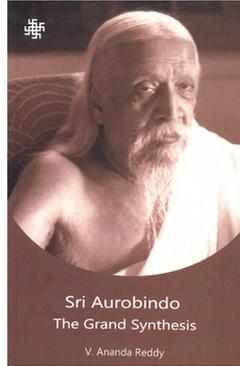
The analysis of Sri Aurobindo's contribution to humanity takes into consideration the literary works, which Dr Reddy presents in various stages of their creation. The author stresses that each person can approach Sri Aurobindo in his own way, whatever best suits him—Sri Aurobindo as visionary, psychologist, educationist, social reformer, revolutionary, journalist, or patriot. And he suggests some methods of approaching Sri Aurobindo, especially the involutory approach which helps the reader trace the growth of consciousness as reflected in the works. The author's suggestion of the three stages of Sri Aurobindo's literary output is unique indeed, tracing the evolution of his thought to higher levels. At the mental stage, Sri Aurobindo wrote mainly as a revolutionary, setting a new ideal for India. The overmental stage was the period between 1910 and 1926, when eight major books were written, all in the complete 'silence of the mind', turning the tide of Indian philosophy. To the supramental stage, the author ascribes the great work of Sri Aurobindo—the transformative and captivating epic *Savitri*. He views Sri

Aurobindo's time spent in England not only as part of Brahmacharya, but as a time for the preparation of a 'mighty intellect', which helped him to translate higher experiences into human language.

The author focuses on the content of *The Life Divine* as an evolutionary process between human aspiration and divine life. Similarly, the exposition of *The Synthesis of Yoga* as the practice and methodology of Sri Aurobindo's own yoga is illuminating.

He draws attention to the fact that Sri Aurobindo's yoga, begun in 1914, concluded only in 1973, and explains the logic of the observation by relating it to the Mother's experiments with the process of physical death. Dr Reddy's confident assertions of the Mother's spiritual experiences as the culmination of the Integral Yoga will surely convince readers to go through the Mother's writings also.

In exploring Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*, the author comments on its contemporary relevance, highlighting the differences between the Yoga of the Gita and the Integral Yoga, and how Sri Aurobindo brought the Tantra and Vedanta together. The author's analysis of *The Secret of the Veda* as a psychological approach to the meaning of Vedas and Vedic words is a tempting invitation for the researcher to delve deeper into Vedic philosophy. The *Isha Upanishad*, the author explains, occupies an important place in Aurobindonian philosophy, with its concepts of integration and supermind. The chapters on *The Renaissance in India* expose



the spirit and soul of India's past and the various stages of its progress and exhaustion, and Sri Aurobindo's defence of Indian culture.

According to the author, 'evolution' is one single term that may describe Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and yoga. And he studies *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* as Sri Aurobindo's vision of evolution, noting that organisations like SAARC and ASEAN are attempts towards the religion of humanity as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo.

The last part of the book takes up for discussion the 'revelations' of Sri Aurobindo in *The Future Poetry* and *Savitri*. The author intelligently guides the reader towards *Savitri* even in discussing the philosophy and spiritual aesthesis of *The Future Poetry*. Apart from the discussion of mystic symbolism, sublime knowledge, mantric poetry, and prophecy as core elements in *Savitri*, he points towards a unique linking of *Savitri* to *The Synthesis of Yoga*, once again drawing the reader's attention to the 'synthesis' in Sri Aurobindo. The author concludes the book with an informative and valuable exposition of Hinduism, the Vedas, the two trinities of the Upanishads and intuitive poetry, and the Bhagavad Gita, with apt references from the Mahabharata, Puranas, devotional literature, and Tantras. He powerfully drives home the point that Sri Aurobindo was the 'grand master' and 'the acme of the third synthesis', and that his works are each a 'path-breaker in the evolution of human consciousness'.

Sri Aurobindo: The Grand Synthesis is compelling and convincing as much for its lucidly engaging style as for its informative, thought-provoking subject matter in its broad survey. Well-researched presentation of facts, complemented with quotations and references from various authors, old and new, arouse the intellectual curiosity of the reader.

It is sufficiently broad-based to cover all major aspects of Sri Aurobindo which are deep and profound, but the smooth effectiveness of the language makes it a bit easier to absorb the contents. The wide-ranging look, the sure-footed analysis, the soulful absorption in the spirit of Aurobindonianism make it a book for the scholar, the researcher, the seeker, and also for the ordinary reader who wants to know about Sri Aurobindo.

—Madhumita Dutta

Dr Dutta, an Associate Professor in English at Vidyasagar College for Women, Kolkata, wrote her PhD thesis on Sri Aurobindo's Savitri. She has presented papers and talks at several national and international conferences, given a series of online talks on The Future Poetry and published articles for journals and books. Her own books include Sri Aurobindo's Poetry: The Many and the Harmony, Savitri: A Study in Style and Symbolism, and Sri Aurobindo: A Legend.



Talks on Savitri

Transcripts of Selected Talks from 2005–2020

—Alok Pandey

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Yoga Foundation of North America, USA

331 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-1-7378943-0-8

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Writings on Savitri

Overview Articles, Canto-Wise Reader's Guide and Essays on Book One

—Alok Pandey

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Yoga Foundation of North America, USA

245 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-1-7378943-8-4

Size: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

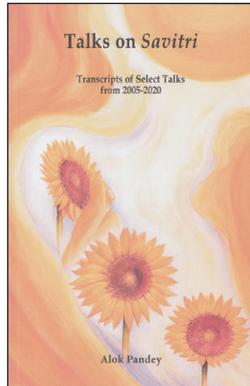
Talks on Savitri

The edited talks are naturally a bit informal, bringing out a lot of the speaker's personal relation to the subject matter as

well his reflections on the implications for the practice of yoga. In his lectures he delves into themes contained throughout *Savitri: A Legend and the Symbol*, such as love, both divine and human, and the symbol and reality of the divine mother in the mantric poem. Other motifs are introduced, summarised and expanded upon philosophically and in terms of practical implications. He takes us through *The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds*, specifically "The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Life" as well as "The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Little Mind" and "The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Mind". *The Book of Fate and The Book of Yoga* as well as Savitri's confrontation with Death in the last part of the epic are taken by Dr. Pandey as jumping-off points to share his interpretations and understandings of their relation to other works by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His perspectives on human psychology, both as a science and in the context of yoga, also form part of his interpretation of the poem's themes.

Dr Pandey observes that "we truly live in paradoxical times" and that "in a way these are times of universal decomposition. Everything is in ferment. There is a general confusion everywhere," and proposes the yogic wisdom and mantric vibration of *Savitri* as one aid for us to go at least inwardly uplifted through our individual and collective challenges. These themes stand out throughout both volumes and are considered by the author in different personal, cultural, historical and philosophical contexts. For example, Dr Pandey asks, "We are so accustomed to truth in terms of Science. Science explores Truth. What about the heart?" and then muses, "There have been ages of Knowledge, there have been ages of Power, but there has not yet been a convincing age of Love."

Although Dr Pandey contemplates big questions and takes sometimes strong positions on them, his sense of humour is also palpable; for example, when he quips that “most people” who don’t realise their souls and, therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lead the most tragic lives, “are pretty cool about it. In fact, the rationalists, the new elite who don’t believe in the soul, take great pride in not believing in it.” While this could be construed as judgemental, it is followed up by a sentence that seems to smooth over any judgement with a more empathetic, compassionate, generous, even wise reframing: “We can leave them at their point, wherever they are. They will still benefit, because the yoga is done for everyone.”



Pandey continues to ponder the role of science in our world views and cultures, commenting on the line “Cast from thee sense that veils thy spirit’s sight” [*Savitri*, 479]:

We are taught from childhood that what we see is real, what we hear is real, we are told to believe in what we see—and now we also have this new thing: to believe in what we hear. Nowadays, Information Technology has caught hold of this falsehood, so all the time we keep hearing everything from WhatsApp to news channels, none of which is the real truth.

Inspired by the line “Annul thyself that only God may be” [*Savitri*, 538], the author humourously reflects on the current Zeitgeist dominated by technological media and the often negative stories it carries, even of

doom and apocalypse, and our psychological entanglements with them:

In one of her prayers the Mother says that earthly realisations take too important a place and that at some point we have to get rid of all this.

He then extends this personal comment:

‘Oh, what may happen? A Third World War? What will happen to humanity then?’ We identify with humanity, therefore we egoistically want to know. Who knows? The Divine may say, ‘I have a plan B.’ What is plan B? If humanity goes away—Dolphins! ... We’ll colonise somewhere or the other—wherever He wants, wherever the Divine sends us; if in the heart of a dolphin, why not? We should not worry about it.

When Dr Pandey takes a winking bird’s eye view or rather dolphin perspective, it seems that he tries to invite us to zoom out a little from our individual, even collective concerns to consider that “He”, the Divine, “knows what nutcases we are”, which is “why there is hope for us”. The author argues against merciless censors who might haunt our thoughts, telling us, “Oh, I am no good” or “You cannot do yoga, you are a failure, your life is miserable, everything is bad in life.” He even invites us to look at collective, possibly global cataclysms, or *pralayas* as the action of Mahakali, who changes Time, clearing the way “for the new creation”: “She was Time and the dreams of God in Time;” [*Savitri*, 557]. Through all these personal, interpersonal and natural vicissitudes, Dr Pandey argues that “just reading *Savitri* can take us to the highest realisations of the yoga of transformation”, and that if we are patient, if we can regard the divine like the Koh-i-Noor diamond that “never belonged to anyone”, then “Yet shall there glow on

mind like a horned moon | The Spirit's crescent splendour in pale skies" [*Savitri*, 703].

Reflecting on the rational-materialistic mind and the question of the soul, he cites that in the Gita creation is imagined as the Aswattha tree, whose roots extend above and its branches below, while the 'rational' mind would see the roots below in matter and the soul "flowering out of the mind". Putting himself in the shoes of potential critics of his ruminations, he addresses a Savitri Bhavan audience:

Very naturally we think soul is nothing but a glandular secretion in the human mind. This is a very homogenous and a very sympathetic crowd, I would say, but if we were to speak about all this in certain other kinds of crowds people might say, 'Oh, it is nothing but neurons babbling,'

Rather than just babbling neurons, Dr Pandey posits other subtle causal factors effective in our sense-based reality, which he also finds represented in *Savitri*, such as the ethereal beings described in Book Two, whom the Mother called the *formateurs*. In reference to the subtle dimension of consciousness and energy these beings seem to inhabit Pandey quips: "I suspect that the malady or disease of middlemen started there!" He further reflects on the limitations of the mind and how we can argue endlessly, in our personal and professional lives as well as in scientific discourse, because "An inconclusive play is Reason's toil." [252] The poet's words "anguish and bliss were pastimes of the heart" [117] and the line "or sat with grief as with an ancient friend" [*Savitri*, 117] prompt some social commentary and observation of the human condition from the speaker:

We are not satisfied with only bliss. We want a little anguish. Our hearts are not happy with only peace, we are not happy

only sitting.... We want to chat, and not only have pleasant, beautiful thoughts. We must also discuss about problems—in other people, not our own of course! That is left to others to discover our problems, so we discuss somebody else's problems, somebody else will discuss our problems, and that is our pastime, a universal pastime....

Reflecting on these challenges of our intra- and interpersonal dynamics and taking inspiration from lines [*Savitri*, 231] in the intense Canto Eight of Book Two, "The World of Falsehood, the Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness", lines that can be read as speaking to the possible acceleration of yoga by going through extreme difficulties, Alok Pandey quotes words of solace from Sri Aurobindo's poem 'To R. On Her Birthday':

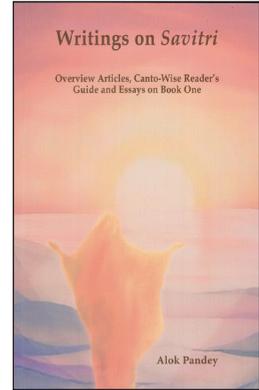
Even those who sink in the victorious flood,
Where do they sink? Into His breast.
He who to some gives victory, joy and good,
To some gives rest.

Writings on Savitri

These collected essays visit themes similar to those explored in the talks, yet the written format allows for more stringent, complex and abstract elaborations. *Writings on Savitri* begins with overview articles on various aspects of and ways of engagement with *Savitri*, continues with a canto-by-canto summary of the complete poem, and finally takes a deep-dive into the entire first book of the epic. In this way the volume provides a varied commentary with low-threshold access points for newcomers to the poem as well as Dr Pandey's in-depth reflections focused on particular themes from relevant (meta-) philosophical perspectives. Reading these essays, one can infer that he sees the treatises contained in the first part of the book as

contributions to the attempt to “speak again to the world the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality”. More specifically, Dr Pandey posits the idea that *Savitri* is a Veda in its own right, that it not only contains all the major realisations of the Vedic mystics but elevates each one to its utmost expression and adds new realisations, delivering the word of a new creation for a new age—all in a language for our current cultural sensibilities and intellectual mindsets.

Actually, this might be why *Savitri* could become increasingly interesting and relevant for young people. As Alok Pandey writes, “new questions...besieged mankind” while Sri Aurobindo was pouring the timeless gold of Knowledge into new linguistic forms, prompted by “the fast-growing strides of modern science” bringing about individual and collective struggles of a “mind caught up between the discoveries of material science and the ancient spiritual truths”. If anything, these tendencies have intensified in our culture today since this modern Veda’s “incomplete completion”. What could fill the gap between “material science” and “ancient spiritual truths” and how might we facilitate opportunities for *Savitri* to “speak again the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality” to younger generations? We could possibly conceive that especially the experience-based “occult and mystical” mantra of someone who had walked his talk, so to say, will draw an increasing curiosity from younger people who might find that “all the rest has failed” [*Savitri*, 257], who are fed up with the leftovers from the “ages of Knowledge” and “ages of Power” and yearn for embodied, living experiences of a new consciousness, a new reality for the future. And what better way to introduce them to “the key to perfect change” [257], to the coming “age of love” than by sharing personal experiences, processes, observations and perspectives with humour and humility? Maybe we can take Dr Pandey’s approach as inspiration to find our own authentic ways to experience the eternal word under a new form, by sharing our own experiences with and perspectives on what we might consider expressions of that “word”: *Savitri*.



—Matthias Pommerening

Matthias, who lives and works in Auroville, has an academic background related to research into consciousness and is fascinated by Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's explorations in the field.



Published by SABDA, Pondicherry. Printed at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry.

© Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, February 2023. For private circulation only.