

Sabda Newsletter

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Number 17

December 2000

Mahasamadhi — 5 December 1950

Sord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and that henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

The Mother's Message of 7 December 1950

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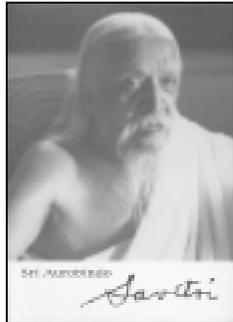
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Works of Sri Aurobindo**Savitri**

(crown size edition, 12x18 cm)
737 pp., Rs.200.00 (hard cover)
ISBN 81-7058-600-3

Savitri is now available in a hard cover crown size edition, with line numbers.



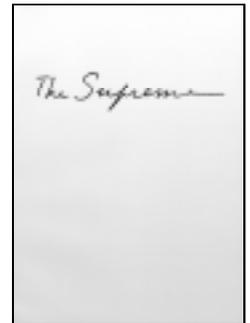
“Savitri — The supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo’s vision”.

Now here is Part Two of *About Savitri* consisting of Book One Canto Two, with the Mother’s explanations on the passages, and including 21 paintings by Huta inspired and approved by the Mother.

The Supreme

Conversations with the Mother
Recollected by Mona Sarkar
97pp., Rs.100.00
ISBN 81-7058-607-0

These conversations with the Mother were noted down from memory by Mona Sarkar. They were originally held in French, and took place in the late 1960’s. The contents include, among others, “Mother — The Supreme”, “The Mother’s Voice”, “The Mother’s Feet” and “The Luminous Gaze of the Supreme”. As expressed in the introductory note, “In spite of the human incapacity to convey the true value of Her words, ... these talks, it has been felt, reflect Her Light and Her Force; they bring something of Her Presence.” The book contains numerous photographs of the Mother.

**Works of the Mother****The Spiritual Significance of Flowers**

462 pages, Rs.2500.00
ISBN 81-7058-609-7

This new set of two volumes on flowers is available in three editions: English, French and German, all priced at Rs. 2500.00.

Each variety of flower, according to the Mother, has its own special quality and meaning. During her lifetime she gave names or significances to 898 flowers. In this book these flowers, with their significances, are arranged thematically in twelve chapters. In each chapter flowers of related significance are grouped together and placed in a sequence that develops the chapter’s theme. Brief quotations from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother accompany many significances as an aid to understanding them. 630 colour photographs help to identify the flowers and reveal their beauty. A separately bound reference volume contains indexes, glossaries, descriptions of the flowers and botanical information on them.

See page 8 and 9 for more details.

About Savitri

With Some Paintings (Vol. II)
— Compiled by Huta
21 colour plates + 45 pp.,
Rs.225.00
ISBN 81-7058-589-9

In 1968 the Mother commenced her work on *Savitri* with Huta. The Mother read out passages from *Savitri* and then after a deep contemplation gave her comments which were tape-recorded and later transcribed by Huta. The Mother named the work *About Savitri*. In 1972 Huta offered to the Mother copies of *About Savitri, Part One* (now out of print), consisting of Book One Canto One. The Mother’s message for the book was:

**Compilations****The Aims and Ideals of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram**

93 pp., Rs. 40.00
ISBN 81-7058-625-9

This compilation deals with the aims and ideals of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, its character and way of life. The subjects covered include living in the Ashram, the practice of the Integral Yoga, the place of work, relations with others, religion, philanthropy, politics and business. The texts are all brief passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; most are letters to disciples who were living in the Ashram. At the end there are notes on Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and the Ashram, and a glossary.

The book will be of interest to anyone who wishes to understand the purpose of the Ashram and its way of life.

Perspectives of Savitri (Volume One)

— Edited by R.Y. Deshpande
555pp., Rs.300.00

This first volume of two is a collection of articles on the epic *Savitri* by a wide variety of authors, many of whom came in direct contact with Sri Aurobindo and thus were able to provide an intimate personal feel to their writings. In the words of the editor, “While making a selection of articles from vari-

ous authors in the present volume the working thumb-rule followed was to see that the compilation is sufficiently broad-based to cover in an over-all way the numerous aspects of the epic." Three letters by Sri Aurobindo and a talk by the Mother are included, as well as articles by Nolini Kanta Gupta, Nirodbaran, A.B. Purani, Dilip Kumar Roy, Amal Kiran and several others.

Other Authors

All Life is Yoga — R.Y.Deshpande

8 pp., Rs.10.00

A brief biography of Sri Aurobindo

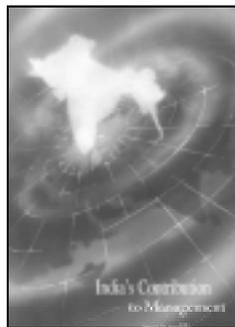
India's Contribution to Management

— Pravir Malik

173 pp., Rs.100.00

ISBN 81-7060-152-5

This collection of articles brings a refreshingly alternative view to "traditional management perspectives which are largely shaped by the experiences of western practitioners". It synthesises western and eastern thinking on management and projects a new, holistic approach to the subject based on spirituality, which can be India's very special contribution in this field.



Integral Health

— Dr. Soumitra Basu

147pp., Rs.75.00

ISBN 81-7060-157-6

This book expounds an integral approach to healing. The relationships between health and the psychic being, faith, Yoga and culture are discussed in the light of Sri Aurobindo's teachings, as well as the impact of the different planes of human consciousness on health. Illustrative case studies and a glossary are included. *See review on page 10.*

Musings on the Mother's Prayers and Meditations Vol. 3

— Shyam Kumari

347 pp., Rs.250.00

This third volume in the series covers the prayers the Mother wrote after September 14, 1914.

Reprints from All India Magazine: Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Body and the Physical Being

32pp., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-153-3

Fundamentals of Sadhana

48pp., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-160-6

Happy New Year (The True Living)

14pp., Rs.15.00

Know Thyself and Forget Thyself

48pp., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-154-1

Reminiscences and Observations of Sri Aurobindo

80pp., Rs.20.00

Reprints

Flame of White Light

— T.V. Kapali Sastry

59pp., Rs.160.00 (hard cover)

ISBN 81-7509-000-6

This book contains excerpts from the letters and other writings of T.V. Kapali Sastriar on the Mother. It includes numerous photographs of the Mother.

The Mother — A Short Biography

104pp., Rs.40.00

ISBN 81-7060-015-4

Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Sri Aurobindo

— Edited by M.P.Pandit

216pp., Rs.75.00

ISBN 81-7509-019-7

The contents of this volume are compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and from the reports of Sri Aurobindo's talks by A.B.Purani and Nirodbaran

Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo

334pp., Rs.80.00

ISBN 81-7058-099-4

Received from other Publishers

Education, Life and Yoga

— Compiled by Prof.Sitaram Jayaswal

876pp., Rs. 500.00 (hard cover)

An exhaustive encyclopedia compiled from the Mother's works, covering a vast range of subjects arranged alphabetically. References to the Mother's Collected Works are provided.

Problems of Ancient India

— K.D.Sethna

306 pp., Rs.500.00 (hard cover)

ISBN 81-7742-026-7

In this collection of essays the author re-examines available evidence relating to various events in the history of the Indian

sub-continent, shedding new light on old problems. With his original handling of existing data he convincingly points out subtle weaknesses in the received wisdom relating to the location and chronology of certain historical events as reflected in modern textbooks. A sampling of the essay titles best conveys the wide range of material analysed: "The Aryans, the Domesticated Horse and the Spoked Chariot-wheel", "Rama, Ravana, Lanka: Legitimate Reconstructions and Dubious Speculations", "The Time of Kalidasa" and "Hiuen Tsang on the Time of the Imperial Guptas".

Towards the Divine Life

— Sukhvir Arya

144 pp., Rs.40.00

In the words of the author, "'Towards the Divine Life' is the first compilation of my experiences I had through the journey of my Sadhana, in the course of discovery of the Self. It is a record of my contemplations, thoughts and perceptions that I had and which seized me in course of my life activities".

French

La Signification Spirituelle des Fleurs

ISBN 81-7058-610-0 The Mother 2500.00

German

Die Spirituelle Bedeutung der Blumen

ISBN 81-7058-611-9 The Mother 2500.00

Dutch

De Moeder Sri Aurobindo 80.00

Italian

Come Educare Un Bambino Compilation 120.00

La Risata Divina Compilation 300.00

ISBN 88-8093-195-4

Energia Sessuale E Pratica Compilation 60.00

Dello Yoga

Spanish

El Valor Nacional Del Arte Sri Aurobindo 90.00

Bengali

Suryalokit Path The Mother 60.00

ISBN 81-7058-608-9

Sri Aurobindo Bhabna Dr. Geeta Ghosh 40.00

Sri Aurobindo Parichay Hiren Chakraborty

ISBN 81-86036-60-1 hc 30.00

Swapnadeep (Part 2) Nirodbaran 75.00

ISBN 81-86413-17-0

Hindi

Gita Prabandh Sri Aurobindo 150.00

ISBN 81-7058-595-3

Shiksha (Sampoorna) The Mother 150.00

ISBN 81-7058-584-8

Sri Ma Ka Divya-Agaman (Part 1) Compilation 45.00

Nolini Kanta Gupta 80.00

Smritiyan

ISBN 81-86413-15-4

Divya Jeevan Ki Aur Sukhvir Arya 40.00

Kannada

Savitri Ondu Kiru Parichaya S.S.Patil 15.00

Oriya

Pratika O Tara Artha Compilation 25.00

Amari Ma Anuben Purani 10.00

Pilanka Sri Aurobindo Anuben Purani 5.00

Orissare Purnanga Shikha: Kichchi Smriti Kichchi Anubhuti 25.00

Panchanan Mohanty

Parama Bhakta Dilip Kumar Roy 20.00

Panchanan Mohanty

Dibya Krupa hc 20.00

Surendranath Jauhar

Sanskrit

Surabharati 1 Ed. Narendra 22.00

ISBN 81-7058-601-1

Tamil

Durgai Thuthi (Tamil/English) Sri Aurobindo 2.00

Sri Aravindarin Sila Ninaivugalum

Parvaigalum Compilation 15.00

Udalum Baudeega Jeevanum Compilation 15.00

ISBN 81-7060-156-8

Yoga Sadhanaiyin Adithalam Compilation 15.00

ISBN 81-7060-161-4

Annaiyin Amudhamozhigal Compilation 40.00

Annaiyin Anmiga Malargal 25.00

Ed.G.Panneerselvam

Savitri Maha Kaviya Saram M.P.Pandit 120.00

ISBN 81-7509-075-8

Bharathiyarum Aravindarum 55.00

Dr. S.Subburathinam

En Annai 20.00

Surendra Nath Jauhar

Vennira Chudaroli hc 160.00

ISBN 81-7509-058-8

T.V.Kapali Sastry

Telugu

Upanishad Kathalu 20.00

Nolini Kanta Gupta

Srimata — Sangraha Jeevitamu Wilfried 50.00

REVIEWS

A Captive of Her Love

(Letters and Paintings of Janina Stroka; Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram;

Price: Rs.175/-, pp.106)

This is a truly fascinating book that should interest readers of many backgrounds and persuasions. Employing a primarily epistolary mode, through the use of letters, it combines several interesting categories as well: spiritual travelogue, quest narrative, period history and East-West encounter. Above all, it bridges the gap between the falsity of public image *vis a vis* the reality of our private self.



Poet, painter, educator and spiritualist, Janina Stroka was born in Lyov, Poland on 18 July 1909, the younger of two daughters. Her parents were both professionals: father Jan Stroka was an engineer and mother Jadwiga Krasuka, a teacher.

With the Nazi annexation of Poland and the beginning of persecution, Janina joined an exodus of refugees and fled to Slovakia and then to other countries such as Hungary, Yugoslavia and Turkey, finally reaching Palestine. In Jerusalem, she happened to attend a lecture on Sri Aurobindo and discovered miraculously *The Life Divine* in a second-hand bookshop. It is then that she began her career as a painter and her real mission in life: spirituality. Initially, Janina looked after a boarding school for Arab girls in Jerusalem. In 1948, World War II over, and the rise of Zionism in Palestine for Israel, Janina, a non Jew, went back to Poland, this time to the equally oppressive and unwelcome arms of Soviet Communism. She fell ill and later, destiny brought her through a long and arduous journey to Pondicherry. It is here that she became, in her immortal words “a captive of the Mother’s Love”. From her arrival on 17 December 1957 till her untimely passing on 17 July 1964, her 55th birth anniversary, Janina was to remain under the care of the Mother’s everlasting love. She took charge of the Nursing Home for surgical cases. Yet, her personality was versatile: she took keen interest in nursing and painting, was involved in educational experiments and wrote poems in English and French.

Janina’s account of her life in Pondicherry in this book is divided into three parts. The main part of the text consists of extracts from letters written to a Dutch friend with whom Janina lived first in Palestine and later in Germany, from December 1957 to June 1958. The letters in the next section were written between 1960 and 1963 to a young Bengali, a writer and social worker. Next, the book contains selected poems and paintings

by Janina and concludes with a comment by the Mother on Janina’s passing. And what a profound observation it is!

All of these provide an invaluable glimpse into Janina’s inner life in the Ashram, no less than her observation of the details of the seemingly trivial but no less significant aspects of the day to day life in the Ashram and Pondicherry during the late fifties and early sixties. We find, for instance, a perceptive description of meal-time atmosphere in the Dining Room. Those who habitually crib against the Dining Room food would do well to see Janina’s sense of reverence towards this food (“We always get two bananas and a wonderful yoghurt, just a dream!”). She talks memorably of a number of events and impressions of the supramental force spread over Pondicherry, *vis a vis* the ubiquitous presence of the town’s dirt, filth and squalour; about “bad people in the Ashram”; regarding the problem with maid-servants, their perpetual intrigues and the need to constantly humour them in order to extract work out of their reluctant selves and so on. She also records her encounters with Pavitrada, Nolinida and Medhananda and the quota of luscious mangoes from Bombay that she receives from X, a friend: “What a pity that I do not have a husband” she observes with self-deprecating humour.

Remarkably, Janina’s idealism regarding spiritual life is constantly balanced by her observation of the unseemly and less flattering aspects of life: “When I was outside the Ashram,” she says, “I had faith, now I know!” Yet it comes to her with a sense of profound disappointment that “people take extra rations and sell them to have money for a rickshaw or the cinema.” She shows us that although a stickler for discipline, the Mother was never a dogmatic disciplinarian. For instance, one day when it rained, she advised that people could go home and meditate!

Janina reveals in her engrossing accounts that despite their rootedness in reason, science and rationality, (or perhaps because of it!) a dedicated westerner, drawn powerfully to spirituality, is likely to blossom more fully *vis a vis* his/her eastern counterparts. Her life — full of ordeals, hardships and agony — is testimony to the indomitable human spirit forever in search of the deepest meaning of life. Her narrative offers us a lesson in humility.

We, who take our spiritual legacy for granted and fill our daily life with a litany of complaints — both real and imaginary — have much to learn from an “outsider” like Janina. I asked Y of her early impressions of Janina. “To us children of the Ashram during the 50’s, Janina with her in-drawn life and private self presented a strange sight”, Y recalled with a touch of remorse. “It is her present book that contains her true life!”

Y is indeed right! Our eyes for ever fixed on the public image, we are seldom mindful of the inner self.

These days, I begin my daily life with a few pages of *A Captive of Her Love*. That is what the book has meant to me! As Michèle Lupsa aptly observes in her introduction to the book: “Janina was herself a flame of God’s living Fire.” If only we could follow her footsteps!

— Dr. Sachidananda Mohanty

The Isha and other Upanishads: Essays in Interpretation

(By Professor N Jayashanmugam;
Editor S Rajendran; Published by
Mrs.R.Savithiri, Annamalai;
Price: Rs.150/-, pp.104)



If we regard the Vedas as the honeycombs of God then the Upanishads can be regarded as the honey itself. And, among the available Upanishads, the Ishvasyopanishad is the very essence of the honey, — the sweetness and delight that flow through the exquisite style and substance of this magnificent poetry. The Isha Upanishad has rightly been given the pride of place among the twelve principle Upanishads. The shortest in body, yet in its stature it soars to the very highest truth of God and man and the world. The terse verses, knit in a rare and sublime perfection, reunite God and man and nature in a profound synthesis. It is this vastness of vision, combined with the deepest penetration into the secret sanctuary of truth which gives to the Isha this great significance. Sri Aurobindo acclaims the Isha as one of the best scriptures of the world — “A statement of inspired thought each part of which has been perfectly seen by the revelatory faculty and perfectly stated by the inspired expression in itself, in relation to the others and in its place in the whole. Not only every Sloka but every word in each Sloka has been perfectly chosen and perfectly placed” (Sri Aurobindo, SABCL vol.27, p. 301). The Isha is in short, a key to the right understanding not only of the other Upanishads but provides equally an insight into the main body of Vedantic thought itself.

And yet many have been the attempts to decipher the key ranging from the puerile efforts of Max Mueller to the interpretation by gigantic intellects as of Shankara. Yet, all these interpretations suffer from a one-sidedness which renders the synthetic spirit of the Upanishadic thought into a narrow system of philosophy. It is as if we were trying to capture the grandeur of the Himalayas on a two-dimensional screen. It is in Sri Aurobindo that we find for the first time, the restoration of the original spirit of Vedantic thought to its pristine glory.

Professor N Jayashanmugam’s essays are directly in line with Sri Aurobindo’s revelation of the Upanishads. The book is a compilation of articles that originally appeared in journals like *Mother India*, *The Advent*, *Gavesana*, etc.. The basic drift of the thought is towards rediscovering the original Vedanta which reconciled God and this world. The profound practical implications of this is the possibility of realising the very highest status of consciousness while doing works in the world. The author, with a deep and penetrating insight rejects the ascetic interpretation of the Upanishadic thought. He brings back to us the truth of the original formula of *ekamevadvitiam*, the One without a second, and ‘that having known which all else is known’. And he does all this with a rare subtlety of intellect which seems to move with natural ease in the pure air of the Upanishadic thought. Here is no pedagogue playing with words lost in the maze of semantics. Nor do we find here a dry and labouring intellect throwing darts blindly into the unknown. Here is rather the ring of an inspired one open to wisdom and truth and therefore authentic in his insight. Here is someone rightly qualified to interpret the great scripture because he knows it not by thinking but through perceptive reflection, *pratibodham*. “He by whom It is not thought out, has the thought of It; he by whom It is thought out, knows It not.”

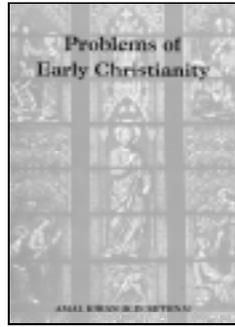
Many are the jewels that this book contains. Many a rare and priceless treasure come out through the pages as one explores with the author the splendours of the Upanishadic Sun-worlds. Many a darkness it destroys, many a veil of Ignorance it tears and removes. Neatly printed and jacketed, the book is easy to read and reflects the clarity of the author’s mind that moves from one giant step to another with sure and swift stride. The reader is amply rewarded in his inward striving. One may say that the phrase of the Gita applies here to this great Upanishad as well :

Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat.
Even a little of this law delivereth one out of great fear.

— Dr. Alok Pandey

Problems of Early Christianity

(by Amal Kiran (K.D.Sethna);
Published by The Integral Life
Foundation, U.S.A.; Price:
Rs.150.00, pp.276)



In his Foreword to another masterpiece on a Biblical theme Amal says, "It is a fighting piece of work". Which piece of work of Amal's is not "fighting"? To challenge the received opinion of anything in the light of Sri Aurobindo is his *swadharma*. But before he draws his sword he arms himself sufficiently. The number of books and articles he refers to shows his thoroughness. His knowledge of the Bible in its different editions, especially the Jerusalem Bible, would astound any Christian.

Even apart from the issues of controversy the details he places before the reader are illuminating. How many Christians know there is a possibility that Jesus was born not on the 25th of December in the year 1 B.C. but in 7 B.C. sometime between March and November? It is not impossible that he was born on the 25th of March 7 B.C. since the spring season began on that date according to ancient calendars. How many are aware of the similarities between Augustus Caesar and Jesus who were contemporaries? Even Augustus was credited with divine powers. In any case, together, both are responsible for what Europe is today. Not many account for Paul's views on Christ's resurrection by the Judaic concept of Death: the Jews did not believe in an immortal soul and the death of the body was the end of life.

We learn that when Jesus asked his disciple to teach his gospel in "all the world" and "to the ends of the earth" the world and the earth comprised of the Roman Empire and no farther. Augustus wanted "all the world to be taxed". Was India thought of by him? The Apostle Thomas, on the same grounds could not have visited India nor have been martyred at "Mailapore" (Mylapore), Madras!

In recent newspapers we read about "The Shroud of Turin" being exhibited at the Abbey of Turin (Italy) from the 14th of August to the 22nd of October 2000. Before expressing his agreement with the view of scientists that the Turin Shroud could not have been of an earlier date than the 13th Century and could not have covered Jesus, he gives a vivid account of it and examines from all possible points of view. One of the delightful essays in the volume is a discussion of the line in Luke. It reads in the King James version, "The Kingdom of God is within you." The original "entos" in Greek is also rendered

"among". Suggesting that the best rendering would be "pervades" he points out that the meaning could be brought out with a hyphen between "with" and "in" in the King James version.

One of the main topics of discussion in the book is whether the Virgin-Birth of Jesus is literally true. Amal Kiran has no two thoughts on its symbolic significance. He has the authority of Sri Aurobindo himself to say the Avatar is derived from the higher spiritual nature - *Para Prakriti* or *Para Maya*, the Divine Shakti, the Virgin Mother of all Beings. In the companion volume "A Follower of Christ and a Disciple of Sri Aurobindo" Amal states beautifully,

"I consider this doctrine (of Virgin Birth) the most beautiful component of the ensemble (of many traditions), bringing into the new religion (Christianity) the vision of God the Mother... with a finer and closer approach to the Indian insight of the *Adya Shakti*, the *Para-Prakriti*..."

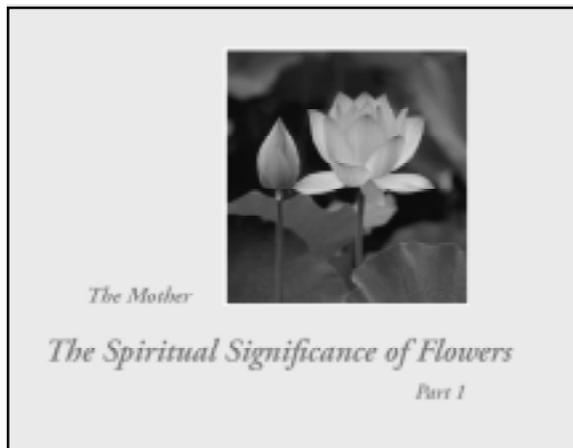
What he contests is the acceptance of it as a literal fact. Only two of the twenty-seven Books of the New Testament mention it and an authority like St.Paul ignores it. Many modern scholars including the well-known Roman Catholic priest and scholar Raymond Brown do not take it seriously.

Closely linked with the question is if Jesus had brothers and sisters. Scholars not only claim Virgin Birth for Christ but say that Mary remained a virgin after the Divine Birth. Arguing powerfully with the support from the Bible itself and of Biblical scholars that Jesus did have brothers and sisters, the learned author shows how Luke who mentions Virgin Birth in the Gospel was different from the author of the Acts of the Apostles. He also shows Mark, the evangelist, was different from Mark, the friend of St.Paul.

The other question he discusses is the time of the Second Coming of Christ, according to St.Paul. Contrary to the received opinion he demonstrates how it was expected in the First Century itself. The one question discussed in great detail is the nature of Jesus' Resurrection. Did the corpse of Jesus after crucifixion come to life? Analysing all the evidence Amal Kiran, while admitting the appearance of the Lord after crucifixion, shows how he did not appear in the physical body that died on the Cross. It was in a spirit-body.

Even those who differ from Amal cannot fail to admire the painstaking work of a master-mind to whom deeper experiences are not strange.

— K.B.Sitaramayya



The Mother ***The Spiritual Significance of Flowers***

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram announces the publication of a new book on flowers. This set of two volumes is available in three editions: English, French and German, as follows —

The Spiritual Significance of Flowers — 81-7058-609-7
 La Signification Spirituelle des Fleurs — 81-7058-610-0
 Die Spirituelle Bedeutung der Blumen — 81-7058-611-9
 - The Mother

462 pages. All three editions are priced at Rs.2500.00.
 Overseas rates: US\$ 66.00 (sea mail); US\$ 82.00 (air mail);
 US\$ 73.00 (surface air lifted mail — only for buyers in the
 USA, UK, Germany and Singapore)

Gentle and lovely, flowers share their beauty with us and bring us a touch of eternal things. According to the Mother, each variety of flower has its own special quality and meaning. By establishing an inner contact with the flower, this meaning can be known.

“Flowers speak to us when we know how to listen to them,” the Mother said. “It is a subtle and fragrant language.” As if to provide a key to this language, she identified the significances of almost nine hundred flowers. In this book these flowers and their messages are presented in the light of her vision and experience.

This 462-page book consists of two separately bound parts. Part 1 is printed on glossy art paper, Part 2 on woodfree paper. The contents of these parts are briefly described below.

PART 1. TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS

The 324-page text of Part 1 is arranged thematically on the basis of the Mother’s flower-significances. In each of the twelve chapters, flowers of related significance are grouped together; these groups are then placed in a sequence that develops the theme of the chapter.

For each of the 898 flowers, the Mother’s significance is given, her comment on the significance, the botanical name of the flower, and its colour or colours. Quotations from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother accompany many significances as an aid to understanding them. 630 colour photographs help to identify the flowers and bring out their beauty.

PART 2. INDEXES, GLOSSARIES & DESCRIPTIONS

The second part is a 138-page reference volume containing indexes, glossaries, descriptions of the flowers and other information. The three indexes make it possible to locate the flowers in Part 1 by the Mother’s significance, the botanical name and the common name. The two glossaries - one of botanical terms, the other of philosophical and psychological terms - define the technical terms in the book. The largest section, “Descriptions of the Flowers”, provides detailed descriptions and full botanical information about the flowers. There is also a note on the symbolism of colours.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SIGNIFICANCES

Mother, when flowers are brought to you, how do you give them a significance?

By entering into contact with the nature of the flower, its inner truth. Then one knows what it represents.

There is a mental projection when one gives a precise significance to a flower. . . . A flower does not have the equivalent of a mental consciousness. . . . It is rather like the movement of a little baby, neither a sensation nor a feeling, but something of both; it is a spontaneous movement, a very special vibration. Well, if one is in contact with this vibration, if one feels it, one receives an impression which may be translated by a thought. This is how I give a significance to flowers and plants. There is a kind of identification with the vibration, a perception of the quality it represents.

THE MOTHER



The Spiritual Significance of Flowers

EXAMPLES OF THE MOTHER'S SIGNIFICANCES

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

898 flower-significances identified by the Mother, arranged thematically in twelve chapters
 Brief quotations from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
 630 colour photographs of the flowers
 Indexes, glossaries, descriptions of the flowers
 Size: 21.5 x 27.5cm (8 1/2 x 10 3/4"), landscape format
 Paper: Part 1: 130 gsm glossy art paper
 Part 2: 120 gsm offset paper
 Binding: thread-sewn forms, hardbound in cloth; with jacket.
 Parts 1 and 2 bound separately

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>The Mother's Significance</i>
Bougainvillea	Protection
Gladiolus	Receptivity
Hibiscus	Power
Iris	Aristocracy of beauty
Ivy	Lasting attachment
Jasmine	Purity
Orchid	Attachment to the Divine
Petunia	Enthusiasm
Rose	Love for the Divine
Water lily	Wealth
Zinnia	Endurance

PRINTING

The book is printed in Singapore at Ho Printing

SAMPLE PAGE

Original 21.5 x 27.5 cm, photograph in colour



Integral Health

(By Dr. Soumitra Basu; Published by SAIHR, Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, Price: Rs. 75/-, pp.140)



With multiple avenues in the field of complementary therapies opening up “The physician today is placed in an unenviable position. His decisions have to be often based on factors beyond his prescribing limits. He has not been taught what to do if his conscience conflicts with the legal sanction of euthanasia. Would the withdrawing of hydration from a comatose subject to facilitate passive euthanasia affect the physician himself?” These and many other problems are tackled through this simply written book.

The basic approach is consciousness. As the author writes, “The difficulty in integrating the physical, social and mental dimensions of health and then linking them with a spiritual dimension need not debar us from the pursuit. Indeed, an attempt to harmonize these myriad value-systems (which are not totally independent) can only be possible if we take into account a substrate to which all these value-systems can relate in a hierarchised manner. This substrate, most appropriately found in the yogic description of consciousness, can relate to the different dimensions of health. The seer-wisdom of ancient India considered consciousness to be the essence of all existence — a concept to which Sri Aurobindo, in recent times, gives an evolutionary perspective.”

So Health is viewed as a dynamic equilibrium between the energies acting at different planes of consciousness. These planes are universally self-existent and reflect in all living and non-living creatures as — the mental, the vital, the physical, etc. Illness is seen as a disequilibrium or disharmony that can be corrected by moving to a higher level of consciousness.

This higher consciousness is inherent in the Psychic Being which is the real integrative principle of the human personality — the *Atman* of the Indian tradition in its evolving form. When the Psychic Being replaces the ego the individual has a sense of wholeness, integrity, peace and joy even in adverse situations.

The essence of Health (Integral Health) therefore lies in being aware and shifting one’s consciousness. As the Mother says,

“It is simply when one sees the disequilibrium and is capable of re-establishing the equilibrium that one is cured.”

“The concept of Integral Health is based on a wide and progressive view of human life. The Mother explains the metapsychology of this view: There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.”

The book also discusses various modes of treatment such as homoeopathy, Reiki, acupuncture, etc. Each has an essential truth-idea based on the working of the energy on either the physical, vital or mental consciousness. Thus, modern allopathic medicines and their pharmacological agents could work on the gross physical level, homoeopathy and acupuncture on the vital level of consciousness, Reiki and Pranic Healing through the vital physical envelope, relaxation and bio-feedback on the physical mind and psychotherapies on the vital mind level. Higher energies can modify, transmute and uplift the lower energies and each therapeutic system can be used as the starting point for moving to subtler levels.

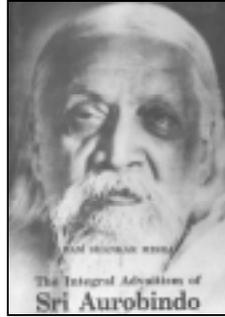
Essentially therefore, the concept and pursuit of Integral Health implies a growth of consciousness. Throughout this book Dr. Basu has quoted exhaustively from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, describing the various planes of consciousness and the concept and role of Psychic Being in Integral Health. The attitude of Faith in relation to healing, the role of culture and society with respect to health and the role of the Pranic Shakti as it acts both in the individual microcosm and the macrocosm are elaborately discussed.

The author has also given illustrative case studies of various patients as illustrations and a very effective glossary that explains the various terms and concepts that may be unknown to a reader not familiar with the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Around 159 references are given at the end of the book and in about 140 pages Dr. Basu portrays quite admirably a comprehensive approach to health and healing.

— Dr. D.E. Mistry

The Integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo

(By Ram Shankar Misra; Published by Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Pvt.Ltd., Delhi; Price: Rs 495/-, pp.437)



Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of integral non-dualism as propounded in his magnum opus *The Life Divine* is a landmark event in our view of Reality. There have been many general and professional discussions about it and many will follow in the course of time. Though the dimensions of this opus seem to escape all our rational as well as intuitive understanding of things, yet even an intellectual occupation with it is greatly rewarding.

Prof. Ram Shankar Misra's effort in this direction is one such noteworthy attempt. The blurb of the work says: "Sri Aurobindo has developed an original system of the Vedanta called Integral Advaitism. This book gives a systematic, thorough and authentic exposition of his thought." We generally agree to this claim.

In fact we have here a fairly comprehensive and well-understood exposition of the Yogi as a Philosopher. While presenting the metaphysics, Prof. Misra has quite pertinently compared this Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo with some Indian and Western systems of philosophy. In it the theory of spiritual evolution finally turns out to be not just ratiocination of the deeper mystery of Nature and God. We have here an experiential foundation which also makes impeccable the Logic of the Infinite. Revelation presented to the ready intuitive mind has the advantage of leading it to higher grades of knowledge.

When that is caught in an exposition it also becomes immediately valuable. "The abstract or formal reason," says the author, "has to deny the reality of one or the other aspect of the Absolute in order to make it consistent with the laws of formal logic, which are empty of content and do not present a picture of reality. Sri Aurobindo has brought this truth into clear focus that the *a priori* and unconditional application of the laws of formal logic, namely, Identity, Contradiction and Excluded Middle to propositions which express the nature of Reality is logically unwarranted and unjustified." (Page vii)

But this Logic of the Infinite is founded on Integral Knowledge. Indeed that Knowledge alone can be the true ground for the activity of dynamic consciousness itself. The system thus offered carries on it the stamp of the knowledge of a spiritual seer, it becomes a *drishtanta* with the infallibility of some higher truth of the Self. We have therefore, metaphysically,

three elements of Sri Aurobindo's Non-dualism: Omnipresent Reality as the creator of all that is and that could be more, the Logic of the Infinite governing the process, Integral Knowledge as the basis of its action.

The author further points out, and rightly so, that "Sri Aurobindo's theory of individual and cosmic evolution and his conception of the destiny of man do constitute novel and notable features of his philosophy." (x) This is a multi-stranded theory with the urge to grow from below and with the constant pressure of higher levels bringing their powers and felicities into the lower manifestation. Avatarhood is one significant aspect of the latter. This evolution is finally to effect the establishment of a race whose governing consciousness shall be the creative Truth operating in the freedom of progressive delight. There will be the race of gnostic beings.

A pertinent question that arises here is: will the gnostic being be any different than the Avatar? The function of the Avatar is to establish a new principle of consciousness and enable evolution to grow more and more into the secret divinity that is pressing to manifest itself with an increasing play of its higher possibilities. Establishment of Dharma, *dharmasansthanam*, has been proclaimed to be the function of Avatarhood. In the case of the supramental Avatar it will be the supramental Dharma that will be founded. If so, we do not understand the following statement of Prof. Misra: "... the Avatar enables humanity to get the light of the divine, to raise itself to higher status, yet he does not effect any radical change in the nature and working of the universe... he does not give any higher and permanent principle to the universe." (p.382) In case we are to accept this statement then it will make the work of the supramental Avatar, for instance, meaningless. Of course in contrast to the push given by the Avatar, the nature of the gnostic being will be always to grow here in the divine dimensions. The Avatar accepts the conditions of the world-ignorance, which cannot be the case of the new race that lives ever in the widening Truth-Consciousness.

Is Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* a book of philosophy? In the strictest sense it is not, though it may have plenty of philosophy in it. It certainly cannot be put in the class of the usual Western philosophies with their heavy bias on academic rationalism. Will then Prof. Misra's presentation possess any professional validity to take the work for a serious scholastic study or as an exegesis of great concern? In this context we may pertinently look into the question that has been raised by him: "supposing that the supramental evolution does not take place, will it not affect the integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo?" (Page 423) In his opinion whether this evolution takes place or not Sri Aurobindo's thought-structure will still uphold the tenets of integral Advaitism. In other words, evolution or no evolution the metaphysical aspects of *The Life Divine* stand undisputed. We are not very sure about it. In his enthusiasm to

endorse and vindicate integral Advaitism the author seems to have gone a bit too far by cutting himself off from the will that is there behind evolutionary reality. If the Logic of the Infinite is the foundation and if it is the natural outcome of Integral Knowledge, then some such similar ever-growing evolutionary manifestation is already implied in it. Otherwise the very *raison d'être* of existence would get knocked off or else make the world again meaningless and illusory.

Notwithstanding these comments, we must say that Prof. Misra has done a commendable job. He is a well-known interpreter of Indian religious and philosophical thought and his present work adds substantially to the understanding of deep spiritual propositions. It is also a significant contribution to the philosophical expositions of Sri Aurobindo. Comparative philosophy as presented here can be an alert guide to approach *The Life Divine* with yet another standpoint.

— R.Y. Deshpande

Sri Aurobindo and the New Millennium

(By R.Y.Deshpande; Published by Aurobharati Trust, Pondicherry; Price: Rs.150/-, pp.340)

Here is a book of the New Millennium! And for the New Millennium! Though only a collection of diverse "Reviews and Reflections" written over a period of time they, together, bring before us not necessarily the Third Millennium on the threshold of which we are but Sri Aurobindo's Millennium of the Spirit to usher in which the Master and the Mother strove all their lives. It is a Millennium in which not merely there will be the reign of God, joy and harmony as promised in the Bible, (Rev.20,1-5) but in which there will be a total transformation of the physical which makes Death die.

Few others could have brought before us what has been and is and to be — the Preparation, the Process and the Millennium to be — more thoroughly than Deshpande with his astounding scholarship which is as wide as it is varied. He has no need to say like Tukaram, one of whose songs he explicates splendidly, "What I say is the *ucchistha* (the left-overs) of the great saints. What do I, a *pamara* (ignoramus), know?" With a



total mastery of the Master's and the Mother's works as of giants in every field, from Amartya Sen to Amal Kiran whom he challenges with a tone of authority he covers the whole gamut of themes concerning Death, its nature, the transformation of the physical and the Future Race. He reminds one of the great Tamil poet Nakkeran, whose name has recently become popular for reasons other than literary, who said that a mistake is a mistake (*kutram kutramthan*) even if Lord Siva said it.

Essays on *Savitri* take the preeminence because it is the "Mantra of Transformation" that will usher in the New Millennium. There are other essays, as indicated above, which deal with the different aspects of the theme.

The book makes it evident that he knows Sanskrit as well as he knows his own mother-tongue. There is reason to feel he knows his French as well as he knows his English. The poems included in the volume show how he has a perfect command over both harmonies of prose and verse.

The scholar speaks of "routine lapses" in the fine work of Amal Kiran. Could others escape them?

The book is a *must* for all aspirants.

— K.B.Sitaramayya

SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

Phone : (+91-413) 334980, 223328, 334072 Fax : (+91-413) 223328, 334836

E-mail : sabda@sriarobindoashram.org URL: <http://sabda.sriarobindoashram.org>

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