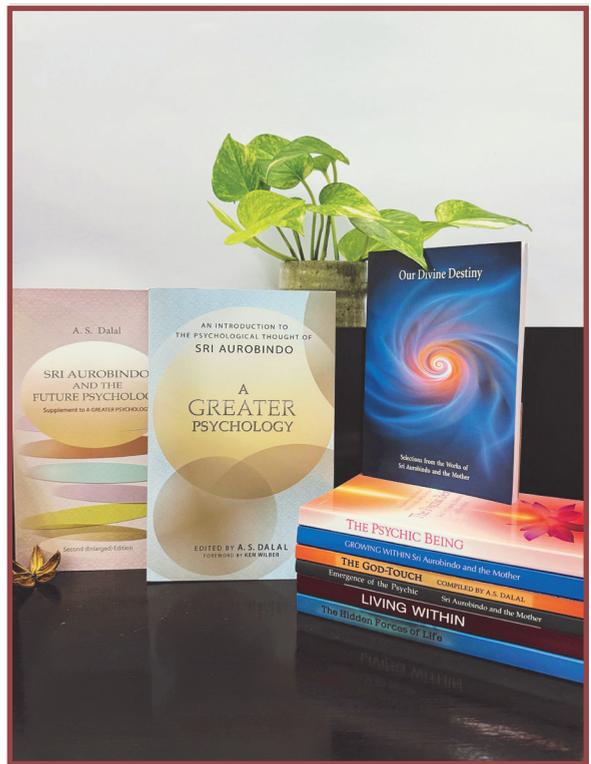


Recent Publications

S a b d a

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In this issue, we celebrate Dr A.S. Dalal's 100th birthday, on 17 February, 2026, with an interview covering aspects of his life: his Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in 1950, how he joined the Ashram, his work in the field of psychology, and what inspires his choice of topics for compilations.

Our second feature is an essay on the beauty of Indian art as a revelation of spirit in form. "The Temple as a Living Cosmos" explores Sri Aurobindo's vision of art as embodied spirit, accented with photographs evoking what Sri Aurobindo called "a fidelity to the deeper vision within".

An Interview with Dr A.S. Dalal



To mark his 100th birthday on February 17, 2026, we interviewed Dr Dalal, who over the last forty years has brought out sixteen compilations from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

How did you turn to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?

When I was studying in college, intermediate arts in Bangalore, I was staying at a hostel run by a theosophist, and one of the wardens there was a disciple of Sri Aurobindo. I used to borrow books from him, basic books such as *Bases of Yoga*, *Lights on Yoga*, *More Lights on Yoga*, and they had quite a strong influence on me. So after finishing my college study in 1950, I came to Pondicherry for a visit (before returning to Tanzania where I came from). That was around 24th April, 1950, which happened to be a Darshan Day. So that was my first visit and my first Darshan.

And during your first visit on 24th April, did you have Sri Aurobindo's Darshan also?

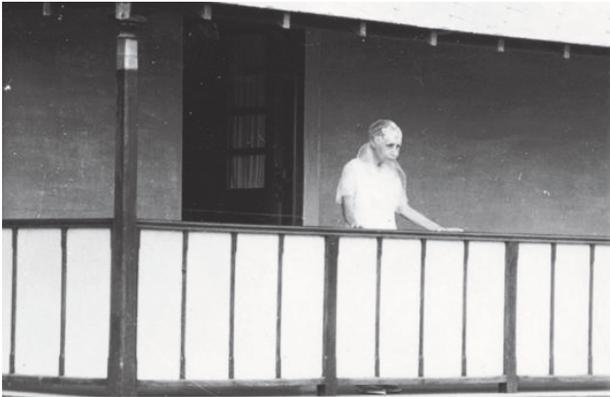
In the old days, I had very weak eyes. I had a history of myopia, short-sightedness in the family, and mine had been the worst. I could not even use glasses for a long time; I used to get pain. So, when I went to have Sri Aurobindo's Darshan, I did not wear my glasses. When I went to Sri Aurobindo's room, I could not move out. I just stood there. The person standing on the side had to make a sign to me to proceed onward. Something powerful resulted from the experience.

Before coming to Sri Aurobindo and turning to him I was a theosophist; from quite a young age. I gave talks to the public on theosophy in the Theosophical Society. But after the Darshan I turned from theosophy to Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. I started a Sri Aurobindo Centre in Dar es Salaam (Mother readily gave me permission and also a symbol for it). So the Darshan was a turning point for me.



Darshan of 24 April, 1950

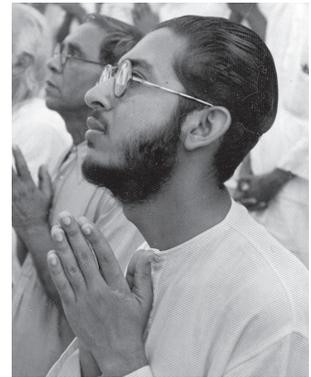
Mother of course came out for Darshan every day. It started with the early morning Darshan from the balcony behind the Ashram. Mother used to come, stand there, and turn her eyes to where people were standing on the street below the balcony. She looked around at everybody. When somebody was missing once, she noticed that person had not come. It was not a superficial sight; she really looked at each one and blessed them.



On 24 April the internationally known photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson had come to take photographs of the Ashram, particularly of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. I had the impression that he was beside me during the Balcony Darshan. He knelt down with his camera and took my photo [shown below]; I heard the click. Later on I inquired at the Department of Physical Education and saw the photograph was there.

Before I returned, I requested the Mother to accept me as an Ashramite. She remained silent. She didn't say yes or no. So, I returned to Dar es Salaam where I was born, but my heart was not there.

Later, Khodabhai Patel, a long-time Ashramite who was very close to the Mother, came for a visit to Dar es Salaam and asked me, "Why don't you come and stay in Pondicherry?" I told him that I had asked the Mother, but she remained quiet, and she didn't give me any reply. He said that he would talk to the Mother. When he told the Mother about my wish to come to Pondicherry, Mother said, "Let him take a long leave, not resign. Let him come on a long leave."

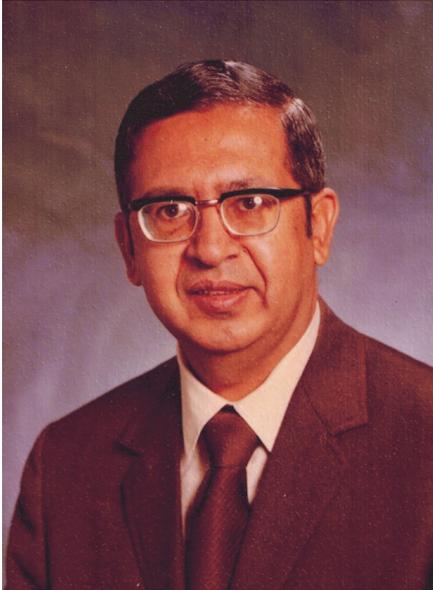


I had only a short period of service. I could not get a long leave so I resigned and came here in 1951, towards the end, as a visitor. I asked Mother to be taken as an Ashramite, and again she remained quiet. Didn't say yes, or no. I waited for almost three months, November '51 to February '52. Finally Mother gave me an interview on my birthday... and after quite a long interview she accepted me. So on my birthday, February 17, 1952, I became an Ashramite. She gave me work in the Ashram Press. The manager was Narendranath Das Gupta; I worked as his assistant for 7 years from 1952 to 1959.

*

After becoming an Ashramite I had a number of interviews with the Mother, approximately one interview per year. I was there for seven years and I had, I think, eight interviews. I asked questions mainly about *sadhana*. I remember I also asked about a student of mine in high school; he was studying science and then he became interested in yoga and felt that he had lost interest in science. He wanted to change to arts, so he sent a question to me whether he should do that. The Mother said, "Since he has started in science let him continue with that". This was always the Mother's policy – when you start something you go to the end until you feel compelled to change – follow the same line of progress.

Then about another *sadhak*, Louis Allen; he was an architect and engineer from South Africa who wanted to come here. He sent me an album of his constructions to show to Mother. Without even having any letter from him, Mother just looked at the album and said he could come. He was put in charge of Lake Estate and used to have interviews with the Mother every week.



*

I needed experience of the outside life, because after finishing my studies, I had come straight here. In 1959 I went back to the university. I already had my BA in philosophy. I did my MA in psychology. Later I was an intern in clinical psychology at Boston University and had a postdoctoral fellowship in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in New York. From 1971 to 1981, I was in Klamath Falls, Oregon as the director of a mental health centre. I resigned from there and then went to a number of places, had jobs here and there. Then in 1986 I returned to Pondicherry.

What made you return to Pondicherry?

In America I continued to be a devotee even though I worked in the field of psychology. I tried to integrate Western Psychology with Yogic Spiritual Psychology and started a training programme called Transpersonal Psychology. Western Psychology deals with the study of the ego, the individual ego is the highest goal, but transpersonal psychology is something that deals with the reality that is beyond the person—transpersonal. Psychologists interested in spiritual psychology came from all over America in that program, which lasted for about two years before I left.

I came back to Pondicherry in 1986 and worked at the Trésor Nursing Home. My main training was in Psychology, but here I practised mostly homeopathy. I had studied homeopathy on my own, passed an external exam, and got registered. When I was in my 80s, I came to Care [a home for senior members of the Ashram], where I still am, and during this period I have done my compilations.

When did you start doing compilations?

Living Within was my first [published] compilation. I started during my last year in the States [1986] and sent the manuscript to the Ashram Press. It got finished after my coming here in 1987. Then Jayantilal Parekh, who was in charge of the Ashram Archives, asked me to do some more compilations. I did in all 16 compilations. The last one came out in February 2023.

My very first compilation was on *Savitri*. It was not published in those days. I showed it to the Mother. She asked me if I had shown it to somebody. I said no. I was cocksure of the goodness and rightness because it was a selection. Years later, Manoj Das wrote a foreword, so I felt confident that I had carried out Mother's advice to show the compilation to somebody, and it was published [in 2009] and titled *The God-Touch and other Lights*.

Your compilations have very distinct and powerful titles like The Hidden Forces of Life and Our Many Selves. How do you choose the title and the topic for compilation?

It came to me spontaneously. While I was working on one topic another topic would suggest itself. So I didn't really have to search for a topic. I was interested in integrating Western Psychology with Sri Aurobindo's Integral Psychology, so I chose topics which helped in that direction.

Sri Aurobindo says, "The significance of the lotus is not to be found by analysing the secrets of the mud from which it grows here; its secret is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above... you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest. That is the province of a greater psychology awaiting its hour..." Can you elaborate a little on this "greater psychology", its methods and efficacies? It is also the title of one of your books.

The words "Greater Psychology" are Sri Aurobindo's words. He says we're moving towards the Greater Psychology. The Greater Psychology is based on the whole being. Western Psychology has emphasised or dealt with one part of the being or another. Mostly the mind and the subconscious. They don't distinguish between the physical and the vital. The physical is also an aspect of consciousness. Nothing is without consciousness. The body has its own consciousness. They don't talk about the vital at all. They do talk about emotions and impulses but they don't recognise the vital as a distinct part of the being. So a Greater Psychology takes into account the different parts of the being. The being is complex; it is not this part or that part.

How do you organise the material for a compilation. What is your process?

While reading any book of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother I always made notes at the end of the book, points which were relevant to a particular subject, of things that impressed and interested me. Using my notes and the indexes that are found at the end of the published works, I did the compilations.



What would you say is the value of a compilation as compared to reading the original works?

The Mother has said that Sri Aurobindo “ought to be studied... by subjects”^{*}, not by books. Instead of reading various works, it is better to read on subjects for a better understanding of the matter. I came across this later but prior to that, that is what I was doing — I was selecting a subject and selecting material from different books. Each compilation deals with a number of books. That was my inclination.

Has this work of compiling books helped you in your own sadhana?

It helped me to understand mentally the teachings of the *sadhana*. But mental teachings don't help you very much. They're a good beginning but it is practice that gives one a better, deeper understanding of *sadhana*. So that's how I got interested in the practice more and more. And then difficulties come naturally. But Mother has said that once you say to the Divine I want only you, then the Divine arranges life in such a way that all obstacles go away gradually and you turn more and more to the Divine. Sri Aurobindo has written a good deal on the Divine guidance. There is a guidance in every turn of our life. Things happen. We are not aware how they happen. We are unconscious. But every event leads us to the Divine. So as I look back, I see how I was guided from one thing to another, leading me closer and closer to *sadhana*. There was not a mental plan.

At the age of 100 you are active both physically and mentally. What is your secret?

I don't have any secret. It is grace I think. I had told you I had weak eyes, so weak that for my final BA exam I had to dictate my answers. When I came to the Ashram I told Mother about the problem and she said, “I hope as you progress your eyes will get better”. After that I could not only read on my own but also wrote all those compilations which I had never even dreamt of.

[He mentioned that his very last compilation Our Divine Destiny (2023) was his favorite amongst all his compilations. We asked why.]

Because some of the most powerful words that Sri Aurobindo has used are in that book. “The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness”. The term ‘decree’ is a very powerful word. It means an order from the highest authority. The highest court gives a decree; it cannot be challenged. You cannot appeal. It is final. So supramentalisation is something decreed by the Divine. It is inevitable.

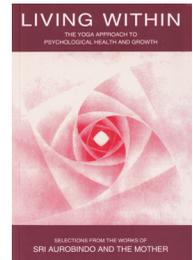
* In answer to another question on whether entire books or selections were preferable, the Mother answered, “For the *school*, selections are better.”

Books Compiled by Dr A.S. Dalal from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Living Within (1987)

The Yoga Approach to Psychological Health and Growth

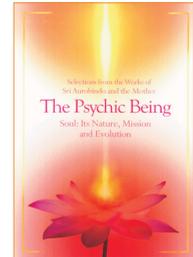
Some of the principles and methods of Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga for overcoming psychological disturbances and for attaining positive mental health.



The Psychic Being (1989)

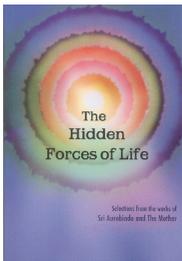
Soul — Its Nature, Mission and Evolution

On the inner constitution of the human being and on various related questions such as inner growth, the after-life, rebirth.



The Hidden Forces of Life (1990)

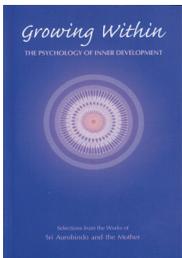
On the hidden forces which, unaware to almost all men, influence their thoughts, feelings and actions, determining the course of events in life.



Growing Within (1992)

The Psychology of Inner Development

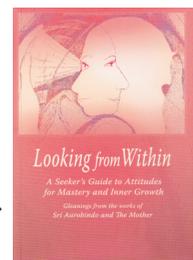
On the meaning, nature, and psychological processes of inner growth which will help seekers in understanding and also in fostering inner development.



Looking from Within (1995)

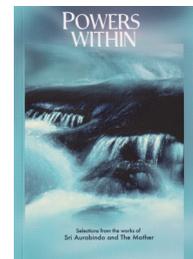
A Seeker's Guide to Attitudes for Mastery and Inner Growth

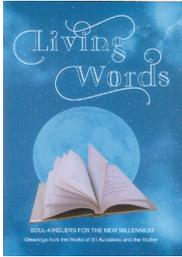
On the cultivation of attitudes and psychological states for the attainment of mastery and inner growth, in the light of Sri Aurobindo's yoga.



Powers Within (1998)

On the dynamic inner faculties inherent in man, though more or less dormant. This book covers the various ranges of human consciousness, from the powers of thought and imagination to the powers of immobility, intuition, and Yoga-Shakti.

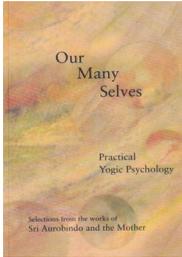




Living Words (2000)

Soul-Kindlers for the New Millennium

Extracts selected for their mantric power to induce in the reader a soul-state of consciousness.



Our Many Selves (2001)

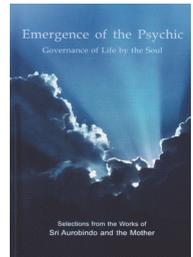
Practical Yogic Psychology

Presents yoga as consisting essentially in inner psychological work aimed at the transformation of consciousness, rather than in set practices and rules pertaining to one's outer life. Describes in detail the various planes and parts of the being.

Emergence of the Psychic (2002)

Governance of Life by the Soul

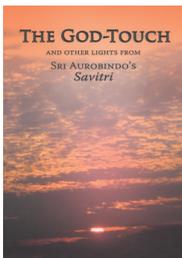
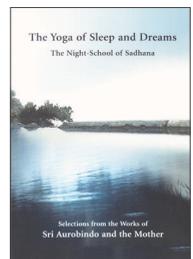
Expanding on *The Psychic Being* with greater focus on the practical aspects, this book helps us to become more conscious of the action and influence of the soul in our lives.



The Yoga of Sleep and Dreams (2004)

The Night-School of Sadhana

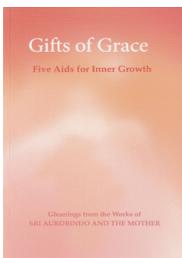
Contains guidance for making sleep more conscious, thereby replacing subconscious dreams with conscious experiences. The ultimate goal is to transform sleep into a state of yogic repose.



The God-Touch (2009)

And Other Lights from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri

These selected passages from *Savitri* are arranged thematically under twenty headings. Each passage expresses a more or less complete thought and represents a certain aspect of Sri Aurobindo's vision as revealed in the poem.



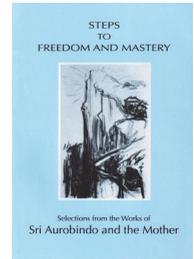
Gifts of Grace (2010)

Five Aids for Inner Growth

A compilation which looks at aspiration for progress, will for progress, faith and trust, difficulties and suffering, and the psychic being as five aids for inner growth, gifts of the Grace which is acting to advance man's spiritual evolution.

[Steps to Freedom and Mastery \(2012\)](#)

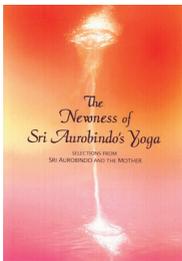
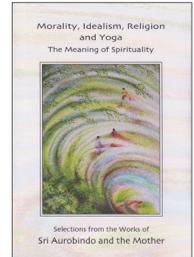
Passages highlighting how to free oneself from the imperfections of the lower nature on the path to spiritual freedom and self-mastery: becoming conscious of one's inner movements, purification of the lower nature leading to self-mastery, and detachment from the movements of the outer being.



[Morality, Idealism, Religion and Yoga \(2014\)](#)

The Meaning of Spirituality

Clarifies the meaning of spirituality (or yoga in its general or wider sense) by distinguishing it from morality, idealism, and religion. Describes yoga as a process of growing out of the ordinary ego-centric consciousness into a higher, wider mode of consciousness that liberates the being.



[The Newness of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga \(2021\)](#)

A compilation that highlights Sri Aurobindo's contributions to a new understanding of Reality, the evolution of consciousness, the planes and parts of the cosmos and the human being, and the need for a radical change of consciousness.



[Our Divine Destiny \(2023\)](#)

Sri Aurobindo on the Spiritual Significance of Evolution

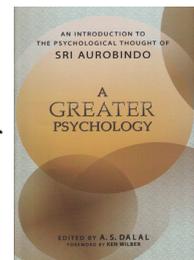
This compilation highlights the role of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga in the process of the spiritual evolution, a conscious collaboration in the realisation of the divine destiny of the world.

Books Edited by Dr A.S. Dalal

[A Greater Psychology \(2001\)](#)

An Introduction to the Psychological Thought of Sri Aurobindo

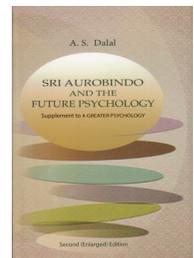
An anthology of Sri Aurobindo's writings on topics such as the nature of consciousness, self and ego, sleep and dreams, the psychology of faith, cosmic consciousness, and the psychology of collective development; and essays by the editor.



[Sri Aurobindo and the Future Psychology \(2007\)](#)

Supplement to A Greater Psychology

Essays on Sri Aurobindo's thoughts on topics such as the cosmic consciousness, and the relationship between yoga and psychology. Includes contributions by three experienced practitioners who have attempted to apply Sri Aurobindo's psychological thought in their clinical work.



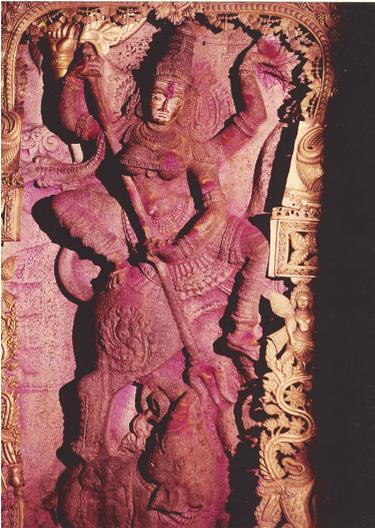
The Temple as a Living Cosmos:

Sri Aurobindo's Vision of Indian Art as Embodied Spirit

“Indian Art demands of the artist the power of communion with the soul of things, the sense of spiritual taking precedence of the sense of material beauty, and fidelity to the deeper vision within; of the lover of art it demands the power to see the spirit in things, the openness of mind to follow a developing tradition, and the sattwic passivity, discharged of prejudgments, which opens luminously to the secret intention of the picture and is patient to wait until it attains a perfect and profound divination.”¹

The beauty of Indian art ...

is in the revelation of spirit through form. As articulated by Sri Aurobindo, the Indian temple is the most complete embodiment of this vision, a living cosmos carved in stone. Aesthetic experience, spiritual reality, and cultural continuity converge in this structure. These monumental marvels from the past are as relevant in the present as they are in laying the foundation for the future.



Durga

pot-bellied people, strange combinations of creatures, and depicts people involved in life in every aspect—from musicians and dancers to kings and lovers.

The spirit is not other than life; it is not removed from the world. Every aspect of life is thus embraced in this art. The spirit is all, it is the infinite, the source and the goal. Here, you will find the moulded face of God in granite and divine strength in the goddess's limbs. Human emotions are raised to a cosmic level. We see divine temper in Rudra, love and flowing grace in Yamuna, equanimity in Shiva as Dakshinamurti, and controlled intensity as *shakti* in Durga. This art also sculpts little



Darasuram

1. CWSA 01: 467

“An Indian temple, to whatever godhead it may be built, is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine Self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite.”² The seen and the unseen, the moving and the unmoving, the human and the divine, the temple is where apparent duality merges into a monism where the all becomes the one, and the one is represented by the all. This understanding of unity is also the foundation of the Indian sense of beauty. As Sri Aurobindo observes, “Beauty is the way in which the physical expresses the Divine—but the principle and law of Beauty is something inward and spiritual which expresses itself through the form.”³

The temple is a condensation of energies ordered in alignment with cosmic truth, such that aspiration acquires force. The faith of the thousands who come to pray, the sculptures that adorn the walls made possible by sculptors who spent years in devotion and service to the gods, the fragrance of flowers at the gods’ feet and in women’s hair momentarily bridge the gap between this manifested world and the unmanifest. This abode of god, made of granite or sandstone, is a revelation rather than a construction, as if divinity were disclosed through matter itself and not summoned into it by human hands. “These sacred buildings are the signs, the architectural self-expression of an ancient spiritual and religious culture.”⁴

In earlier times, the temple was the heart of the city. Kings would act as patrons to build temples as a way of showcasing their power and reign over their kingdom. Art was the way to flaunt wealth, and at the same time, a way to fulfil religious duties to earn the gods’ favour. The temple ordered the day, the year and the life of the devotee. Starting from the waking of the deity, the return of prayer at measured intervals, all following the course of the sun, connected rituals to cosmic events. Festivals and celebrations of light and joy all coincided with the movements of the moon and nature’s seasons, opening to life’s secret rhythm. The deity emerges



Chandeshanugraha-murti
Shiva bestowing grace on Chandesha

2. CWSA 20: 273

3. CWSA 27: 699

4. CWSA 20: 272

from the sanctum and moves through the streets, drawing the wider community out of their homes, flooding the streets with music, light and devotion. Although many of the practices still continue in the present, the focus has drifted from its original motives. A temple is visited once in a while during special occasions for the vast majority of people. Painted in bright



Nataraja

green and pink synthetic paints, adorned with gaudy machine-cut sculptures, the temples now look overly colourful and manufactured. The spaces, buildings, and temples that surround us now are vastly different from the way they were in the past. The glories of the past call us, but we

must make our home in the future. Yet to understand, to endorse with passionate conviction, and to love what we have left behind us is the only possible foundation for tomorrow. As Sri Aurobindo observes:

Indian sacred architecture of whatever date, style or dedication goes back to something timelessly ancient and now outside India almost wholly lost, something which belongs to the past, and yet it goes forward too, though this the rationalistic mind will not easily admit, to something which will return upon us and is already beginning to return, something which belongs to the future.⁵

It is in this continuity where the past is neither abandoned nor imitated, but inwardly assimilated that the possibility of renewal lies: “The beauty of tomorrow manifesting the Divine: a beauty that exists only by the Divine and for the Divine.”⁶ As Mother reminds us, “Beauty is not sufficient in itself, it wants to become divine.”⁷

5. CWSA 20: 273

6. CWM 15: 233

7. Ibid.

The journey inward begins with a gradual transition: from the glare of the outer world into the tempered half-light of pillared halls, and finally toward the dim stillness of the sanctum. Each step alters consciousness from the sense-bound mind to the awareness of the psychic heart. The bustle of streets gives way to the muted echo of footsteps, the measured ringing of bells, and the quiet murmur of prayer. This passage from noise to silence is experienced first by the body, long before it is understood by the mind. Architecture guides this learning. The devotee moves horizontally across courtyards and corridors, only to be drawn upward by the rising lines of pillars and towers, where outward movement slowly turns into inward aspiration.



Chidambaram

Even the act of circumambulation shapes awareness, teaching patience, attention, and rhythm through repeated motion. Doorways compress and release space, thresholds mark subtle transitions, and darkness prepares the eye for a more inward kind of seeing. In this way, the temple educates perception, refining it through experience rather than explanation. Meaning is absorbed gradually, through touch, sight, and sound, until the visitor arrives at the centre already changed. The body comes to understand what the intellect may grasp only later: that approach to the divine is a movement both outer through space and inner through consciousness.

In the beginning, there was the One; all else since has been a movement toward embodying the formless through an infinite array of forms. This vast multiplicity ultimately rises *tala* by *tala* architecturally and symbolically to the One *shikharā*. Within the temple space the threefold reality of the divine – the individual seeker, the cosmos gathered and condensed into architecture, and the indwelling spirit housed in the sanctum – come together.



Shiva

The eternal, the manifesting force, and delight converge within these sculpted walls. In Indian thought, the temple is envisioned as a living body: its base rests like feet upon the earth, sometimes with wheels symbolising the temple as a chariot. Its halls open like a torso to movement and gathering amidst the adorned pillars, and its sanctum holds the divine within the darkness of the apparent void. Above, the tower rises in aspiration, crowned by the *kalaśa*, echoing the point of inner awakening. “But the seeing of the Indian mind and of Indian art is that of a great, a limitless self and spirit, *mahān ātmā*, which carries to us in the sea of its presence a living shape of itself, small in comparison to its own infinity, but yet sufficient by the power that informs this symbol to support some aspect of that infinite’s self-expression.”⁸

The Indian temple gathers stone and space, ritual and time, body and perception into a continuously unfolding experience of the All, in which the beautiful and the aversive coexist, admitting no separation between life and spirit. What begins as an outer journey gradually becomes an inner recognition. Form leads toward spirit, and spirit returns to inhabit form. Matter is helped by human hands guided by an inner vision to rise to serve truth. The temple endures because it



Sculpture at Belur

8. CWSA 20: 271

preserves an ancient law of beauty that is truth incarnate in harmony of form. This awakens in each generation the capacity to feel the divine as something immediate and tangible. Its sculptures carved by the laws of an inner vision, its architecture cosmically aligned, and the sanctity of devotion burning as the steady flame invite those who enter to participate in a vision larger than themselves. In this way, the temple becomes a meeting ground where past tradition converses with future possibility. To approach it with openness is to discover that beauty is not ornament added to life, but a path by which life learns to recognise its own deepest truth. When this recognition ripens, the aesthetic sense fulfils its highest purpose, as Sri Aurobindo writes:

When, fulfilled in our growing sense and knowledge of beauty and delight in beauty and our power for beauty, we are able to identify ourselves in soul with this Absolute and Divine in all the forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive and embody of the All-Beautiful, then the aesthetic being in us who was born for this end, has fulfilled himself and risen to his divine consummation.⁹

—Kaninika Majumdar

Kaninika, a graduate of SAICE, is an arts professional working at Artworld gallery in Chennai, while keen on pursuing further studies in art. She engages with exhibitions, artists, and projects within the contemporary cultural landscape.

9. CWSA 25: 145



Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

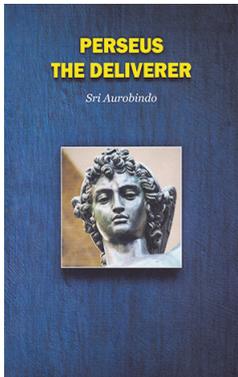
Perseus the Deliverer

—Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: La Mère Books, Kolkata

206 pp, Rs 300, ISBN: 978-93-5813-632-6

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover



Sri Aurobindo wrote this play during the period of his political activity. Published serially across several months in *Bande Mataram* during 1907, Sri Aurobindo would later revise the text, adding a new ending. It was the only play of his published during his

lifetime. The plot of *Perseus the Deliverer* derives from the ancient Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda. Sri Aurobindo transformed the original heroic myth into a story of human nature ruled by its attendant unthinking urges, much on the Elizabethan model, and set in a romanticised Syria. Sri Aurobindo acknowledged in a foreword that “myth, romance and realism” are rolled into an imaginative recreation of the legend, whose “stage is the human mind of all times”. The story is one of growth from a relatively primitive consciousness to the intellectual and humanistic state of a more civilised man. Constantly faced with the threat of the lower life-forces usurping that new poise, he experiences the initial stirrings of a higher consciousness, psychic and spiritual in essence. Perseus embodies the evolutionary man.

Prayers of the Mother

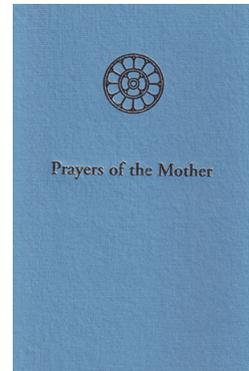
123 Prayers Translated by Sri Aurobindo or Translated by Disciples and Revised by Him
—The Mother

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, Pondicherry

102 pp, Rs 170, ISBN: 978-93-5210-216-7

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The 123 prayers in this collection constitute all of the known translations of the Mother’s early prayers in which Sri Aurobindo had a hand. These prayers, originally written in French by the Mother, fall into two groups of 64 (published in



Prayers and Meditations of the Mother) and 59. Sri Aurobindo directly translated 24 of them in whole or in part. A few prayers were translated partly by a disciple and partly by Sri Aurobindo. The remaining prayers were translated by disciples and carefully revised by Sri Aurobindo. Of the second group of 59 prayers, 58 are published here for the first time. The Note on the Text at the back of the book provides translation details for all the 123 prayers.

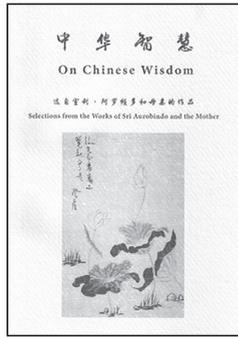
COMPILATIONS FROM THE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

On Chinese Wisdom (English/Chinese)

—Selections from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, Pondicherry

167 pp, Rs 450, ISBN:
978-93-5210-337-9
Dimensions: 14 x 20
cm, Binding: Soft
Cover

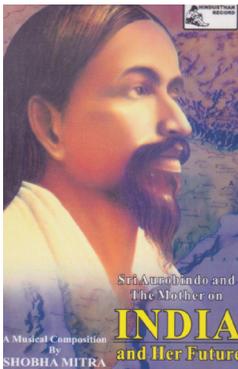


This Chinese/English compilation comprises selections on the Chinese culture and character from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It also includes an article on Hu Hsu, a Chinese scholar, linguist and artist who lived in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for many years and translated several major works of Sri Aurobindo into Chinese. Paintings by Hu Hsu and facsimiles in the Mother's hand of sayings by Chinese masters add beauty and interest to the volume. The first half of the book is a Chinese translation of the second half, the original English text.

[Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on India and Her Future \(USB Media Card\)](#)

A Music Video: A Musical Composition by Shobha Mitra

—Compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
Publisher: Indian Record Mfg Co. Ltd.,
Chennai, Rs 800 (inclusive of taxes)



This USB media card contains a music video of songs and hymns in Sanskrit with recitation in English from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings. It also contains an audio-only file of the same songs and hymns. Duration: Approx. 69 minutes.

All India Magazine

[Sanatan Dharma](#)

—Selections from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry
49 pp, Rs 60, ISBN: 978-81-7060-504-1
Dimensions: 14 x 20 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

[Dharma](#)

—Selections from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry
42 pp, Rs 60, ISBN: 978-81-7060-501-0
Dimensions: 14 x 20 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

[Enemies of the Soul](#)

—Selections from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry
42 pp, Rs 60, ISBN: 978-81-7060-494-5
Dimensions: 14 x 20 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

OTHER AUTHORS

[Explanations of Essays on the Gita: Vol. Three \(First Series: Chapters 8–10\)](#)

—V. Ananda Reddy
Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research Trust, Pondicherry
177 pp, Rs 265, ISBN: 978-93-85391-34-7
Dimensions: 14 x 22, Binding: Soft Cover

In these talks delivered in 2007 and 2008, the author examines Chapters 8, 9, and 10 of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. The first two chapters, "Sankhya and Yoga" and "Sankhya Yoga and Vedanta" deal with philosophic and metaphysical subjects. The author points out that the Gita's foundation is Vedantic; it is primarily a practical system of yoga. In the first of these chapters, Sri Aurobindo brings clarity to the differences between Sankhya, Yoga, and the Gita and in the second he delivers a synthesis of Sankhya, Yoga, and Vedanta. In Chapter 10, "The Yoga of the Intelligent Will", the author comments on Sri Aurobindo's understanding of the deep truth of the Gita. Sri Krishna's yoga will

free Arjuna from his fears, from all bondage of the soul to its works. Commanding Arjuna to offer his thoughts, his love and adoration, and his sacrifice to Him, he reveals the message of the Gita: the act of surrender is the surest, safest path to the Divine.

*previously introduced in February 2024 issue
See review on page 28*

Explanations of Essays on the Gita: Vol. Four

(First Series: Chapters 11–18)

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research Trust, Pondicherry
258 pp, Rs 375, ISBN: 978-93-85391-50-7
Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In these talks delivered in 2010 and 2011, the author examines Chapters 11 to 18 of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. The first three chapters on "Works and Sacrifice", "The Significance of Sacrifice" and "The Lord of Sacrifice" explore the concepts of yagna, karma, and Brahman (sacrifice, work, and the Absolute). The remaining chapters examine the principle of divine works to be done not for the sake of the world but for a spiritual unity with the Divine; the Gita's introduction of the concept of the Avatar through Sri Krishna, giving rise to the devotional aspect of yoga; and the process of avatarhood representing the divine descent into a human vessel for the work of overseeing the dual process of inner individual progress and outer collective advancement in the spiritual evolution of consciousness here on earth. Last is the injunction for the divine worker to live in a state of equality, free of any attachment to works, free from the egoism of the doer, free from even the desire to serve.

*previously introduced in August 2025 issue
See review on page 28*

Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy in Savitri

—Larry Seidnitz

Publisher: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville
215 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-81-974549-1-2
Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The very title of this book, *Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy in Savitri*, promises a study of how the substance of its high thought is at the heart of its innovative poetic style, its revelatory mantric poetry. The first chapter introduces how these two aspects of the poem unite in some of its most visionary and incandescent passages. Subsequent chapters partner timely prose passages from his major works with selections from *Savitri* on such principles as the duality of Ishwara-Shakti, the Divine Mother, the psychic being, fate, karma and free will, the occult worlds, involution and evolution, the realisation of the spiritual Self, and the Supermind and its transformation of life on earth into a life divine. The author's commentaries on the selected passages from *Savitri* and their corresponding grounding in excerpts from his prose works weld language and import in a nuanced understanding of Sri Aurobindo's teaching.

See review on page 38

Poetry of the Future

In the Light of Sri Aurobindo

—Madhumita Dutta

Publisher: Overman Foundation, Kolkata
352 pp, Rs 550, ISBN: 978-81-967004-5-4
Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The study of Sri Aurobindo's *The Future Poetry* and his theory of poetics is the subject of this scholarly work, which grew out of a series of talks on the book, streamed on YouTube. The author reflects on Sri Aurobindo as both critic and philosopher and focuses on the book's exploration of what would be the ideal spirit of poetry. Part One considers how Sri Aurobindo

defines and comments on the essential aspects of poetry and his theory of mantric poetry. Part Two is a lengthy analysis of the character and the evolution of English poetry. In Part Three we find the high philosophy that grounds the poetry of the future, the philosophy of Poetic Truth, which Sri Aurobindo describes in discourses on “The Five Suns of Poetry”. The future poetry will demand a new manner of speech capable of holding and expressing the direct self-experience of the soul.

previously introduced in August 2025 issue

See review on page 33

Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Culture

—Dr Prema Nandakumar

Publisher: Overman Foundation, Kolkata

350 pp, Rs 650, ISBN: 978-81-960391-8-9

Dimensions: 16 x 24 cm, Binding: Hard Cover

Sri Aurobindo’s profound exploration of Indian culture revealed the magnificent truths and secret knowledge hidden within the Vedas and Upanishads, the richness of spirit reflected in various hymns and sagas, and the underlying essence among different religions and their impact on shaping life and activities across centuries. Originally published as a series of essays in the journal *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, this book provides a literate, accessible introduction to Sri Aurobindo’s interpretation of Indian culture. Choosing to focus on Indian literature, Prema Nandakumar examines Sri Aurobindo’s insights in a comprehensive manner covering the Vedic age, the great Indian epics, Kalidasa’s place in world poetry, the classical age of Sanskrit writers with their cultured thought and high imagination, the Puranas, and several chapters on Indian religion and spirituality, culminating in the Sanatana Dharma, the eternal religion. The depth and breadth of his observations bring a new dimension to our understanding of Indian culture and its relevance in reclaiming

her heritage for the modern age.

See review on page 35

Reflections on Passages in Savitri

—Larry Seidlitz

Publisher: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville

188 pp, Rs 250, ISBN: 978-81-974549-2-9

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In this book the author comments on a sampling of significant passages in *Savitri* that convey a wide-ranging yet insightful view of Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual teaching. He often draws on prose works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for context in understanding the themes of *Savitri*. Beginning with the highly symbolic opening passage of the poem, he proceeds in subsequent chapters to examine themes such as the parallels between King Aswapati and Savitri, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, respectively, in the context of their work for the world. Love in its higher possibilities, the role of the soul, the layers of our inner being, the question of fate and free will, the debate with Death, and the higher reaches of spiritual consciousness are other themes explored. The final two chapters highlight passages about the divine, supramental worlds pressing for manifestation in our material world as the pioneering spiritual work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

See review on page 24

Explanations of Essays on the Gita: Vol. Five

(First Series: Chapters 19-22)

—V. Ananda Reddy

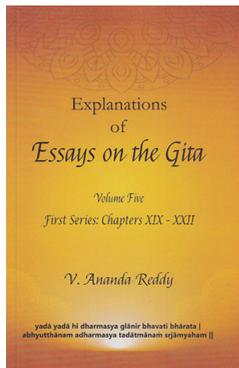
Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research Trust, Pondicherry

313 pp, Rs 590, ISBN: 978-93-85391-51-4

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

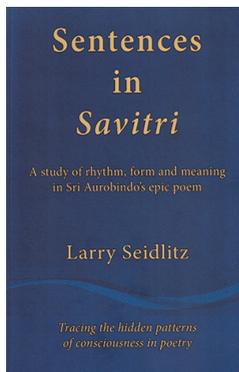
In these transcribed talks from 2012, the author examines Chapters 19 to 22 of *Essays on the Gita*. The subjects are equality, equality and knowledge, the determinism of Nature, and what lies

beyond the modes of Nature. Explaining Sri Aurobindo's vision of equality and liberation in *Essays on the Gita*, he notes that equality is not



a state of indifference or withdrawal but the soul's calm poise, an equality of spirit, when faced with life's complexities and difficulties. Works done without desire, with equality, as an offering to the Divine, bring self-knowledge, drawing one closer to the Divine. Although it

appears that man is bound by the determinism of Nature and the three gunas, he can rise to a higher consciousness, free from ego and desire, where it is the Divine Will that acts through him. The final chapter deals with sorting out the thorny issue of fate and free will. Although our free will is an illusion, we must, as Krishna insists to Arjuna, still choose to act. The message of the Gita is to act while remembering the Divine, offering all our actions to the Divine.



Sentences in Savitri

A study of rhythm, form and meaning in Sri Aurobindo's epic poem

—Larry Seidnitz

Publisher: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville
108 pp, Rs 150, ISBN: 978-81-993879-2-8
Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm,
Binding: Soft Cover

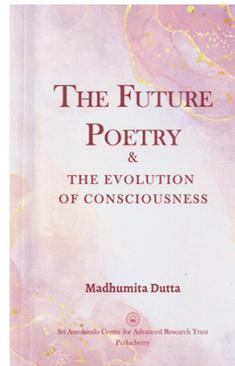
The inspiration for this detailed study came from Sri Aurobindo's correspondence with a disciple that concentrated on his composition of *Savitri*. He wrote that among the aspects he lays most stress on is "the right distribution of sentence lengths (an immensely important thing in this kind of blank verse)". The author has done an

extensive analysis of the length of sentences in *Savitri*, inspecting the unique qualities of the various sentence lengths and their relation to the ideas they express and how they are expressed. He illustrates these considerations with selected examples from each category of sentence length (one-and-two line, three-and-four line, five to seven line, eight-and-nine line, and ten to thirty-five line sentences), examining how these variations create a rhythm that is integral to the meaning of the poetry. The author concludes that listening to the poem's rhythms, feeling how form and content, sound and sense, converge in mantric verse are central to fully understanding the poem's vision and its call to a higher consciousness.

The Future Poetry and the Evolution of Consciousness

—Madhumita Dutta

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research Trust, Pondicherry
224 pp, Rs 525, ISBN: 978-93-85391-53-8
Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover



Part of an initiative from the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, this book is a study that examines Sri Aurobindo's poetics in the fields of poetry and literature and across disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, and literary and critical theory. It references poets of the East and the West, ancient and modern, including the Upanishads, Natyashastra, Chhandashastra, and Kalidasa as well as Aristotle, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Eliot. Its culmination instills in the reader a deeper understanding of Sri Aurobindo's theory of poetics and the ideal spirit of poetry, the future poetry, akin to the mantra, the highest form of poetic thought and expression. As a literary

critic, poet, and visionary, Sri Aurobindo's perspectives are always firmly situated in the evolution of consciousness.

Curly Wee (12 books sold separately)

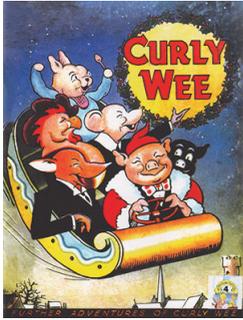
—Written by Maud Budden; Illustrated by Ronald Clibborn

Publisher: Matri Store, New Delhi

25 to 45 pp, Rs 75 or Rs 100

Dimensions: 18 x 24 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

A cartoon series that once delighted parents and children alike, the comic strip *Curly Wee* ran daily in the *Irish Independent* from 1937 until the late 1950s and was syndicated worldwide. In India, it appeared in *The Daily Mail* and, as attested by Tara Jauhar and Nirodbaran, Sri



Aurobindo enjoyed reading the adventures of Curly Wee, the aristocratic pig, and his furry and feathered friends. The lively cartoon figures and amusing rhymes are still entertaining. Twelve books, each telling a different story from the celebrated strip, are from Tara Jauhar's collection given to her by the Mother each Christmas from 1950 to 1953. Books 1–12 can be purchased separately.

Dino and the Mystery of the Sea

—Dr Alok Pandey &

Natasha Patel Nema

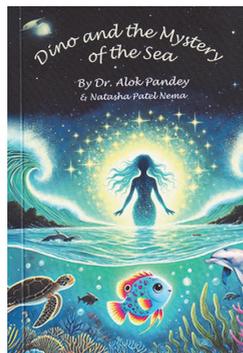
71 pp, Rs 100, ISBN:

978-93-341-3764-4

Dimensions: 10 x 14 cm,

Binding: Soft Cover

Dino and the Mystery of the Sea, a parable for readers of all ages, recounts the story of a



little fish who uncovers the hidden secrets of the great big sea. Dino, guided by the wise Mauna, faces many challenges during his journey of discovery through the mysterious sea.

Talks by Nirodbaran (December 1971 – September 1972)

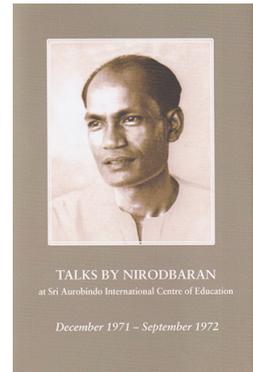
—Edited by Sunayana and Maurice

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, Pondicherry

236 pp, Rs 310, ISBN: 978-93-5210-345-4

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

In this fourth and final volume of the talks given at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education from 22 December 1971 until their end in September 1972, Nirodbaran continues to share his reminiscences about Sri Aurobindo. He also invited some senior sadhaks to speak to the students: Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, Vasudha Shah, Kireet Joshi, Arindam Basu, Manoj Das Gupta,



and Manoj Das. Nirodbaran and the guest speakers talked on various topics, among them: the meaning of the terms Avatar and tapasya, how to feel the presence of Sri Aurobindo even though he is not physically present, Sri Aurobindo's parents and his childhood, Nishikanto as a poet, the way Darshans were observed in the early years, events that happened in the days before the Mother left her body, and Sri Aurobindo's prediction about the advent of the superman.

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo: Essays on Spiritual Life

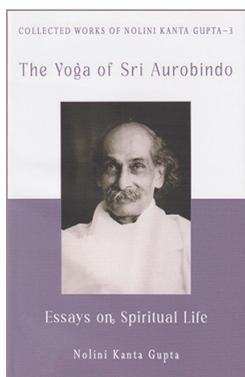
(Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta Vol.3)

—Nolini Kanta Gupta

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry

439 pp, Rs 510, ISBN: 978-93-5210-338-6

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover



This third volume of the revised and enlarged edition of the Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta comprises short essays that deal with different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and Yoga. Most were first published in

The Advent or *Mother India*, two journals brought out by the Ashram, and made up the first edition of these Collected Works. At the end of the volume, there is an appendix with seven writings or talks that did not appear in the first edition of the Collected Works, a life sketch of Nolini Kanta Gupta, and a general note on the second edition of his Collected Works. The seven writings and talks included in the Appendix were originally published in *The Advent* or *Mother India* between 1951 and 1971, with titles such as "The Master Is Always Here", "The New Body", and "1971—A Sweet Year".

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—Dr Murali Sivaramakrishnan

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ISBN: 978-93-5210-333-1, Rs 640

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ISBN: 978-81-979602-1-5, Rs 250

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—V. Madhusudan Reddy
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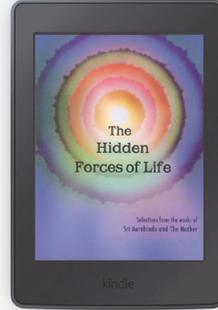
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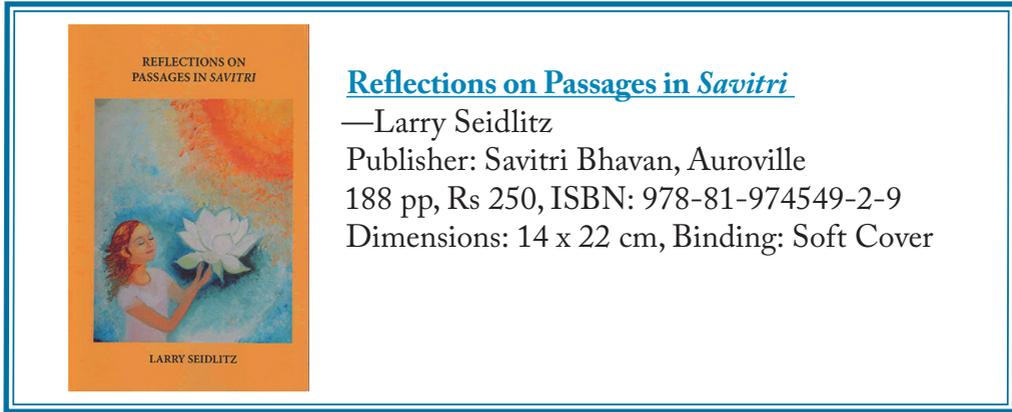
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BOOK REVIEWS



Reflections on Passages in Savitri by Larry Seidlitz presents an analytical commentary on select passages of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri: a Legend and a Symbol*. The passages chosen are significantly relevant in the context of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as a whole and make for an important and meaningful study of the epic. It is an extensive study of substantial passages spread over twelve chapters, whose titles give an initial clue to their contents. Each chapter is an illuminating discussion on profound themes in the poem and on Sri Aurobindo's complex spiritual vision. In exploring *Savitri* thus, through some significant passages, the author focusses on how the epic poem was related to the poet's "development of his own spiritual consciousness", and also for the "transmission of his spiritual teaching and influence into the world".

The first chapter, aptly titled "The Symbol Dawn", considers the opening passage of *Savitri* in Canto 1 of Book I, giving a wide view of the subject, even while introducing it to the reader. The first 185 lines are selected for discussion, in which the author gives an account of all the six phases of dawn and their symbolic meanings and spiritual significance in relation to the poem. The discussion also rounds in on the concept of Death, the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and the explanation of 'dawn' in the Vedic meanings of Usha/Aditi. Focussing on the concept of dawn, the author points our attention to Sri Aurobindo's unusual mystical poetry in *Savitri* as capturing the "expression of the divine in nature".

The next two chapters examine the parallels of the main characters in the poem, Aswapati and Savitri, with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. By linking Aswapati with Sri Aurobindo, Dr Seidlitz has provided illuminating insights into Sri Aurobindo's own being and consciousness. We get a solid view of Book I, Canto 3, including a very interesting exposition of the issue concerning the name 'Aswapati', a name not actually mentioned in the poem till near the end of Book III. Sri Aurobindo generally uses the pronouns 'he'/'his', and this has awakened the curious inquiry of many a reader. Seidlitz's analysis further arouses the interest of the reader to look more keenly into the text. As he observes:

To put a name on him would emphasize the outer form and diminish the spirit of the 'Unknown' hiding within. Similarly, we too may be deceived by the outer form of Sri Aurobindo, and overlook the vast and eternal spirit that he was within. (22)

Aswapati's avatarhood is seen in the cosmic and eternal dimensions of his inner being, and this line of analysis widens the scope of discussion further as it relates to the yogic life of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The author also examines the relation between the divine and human sides of the Avatar. Explanations given by Sri Aurobindo in his letters are referred to for a better understanding of the concept. In the process, the author makes an elaborate commentary on the spiritual destiny of humanity and the spiritual philosophy and teachings of Sri Aurobindo.

The theme of love, which is at the core of *Savitri*, is explored in an important chapter titled simply 'Love'. In addition to delving deep into the human manifestation of love and the divine dimensions of love in the context of *Savitri*, the author also focusses his analysis on the predicament of the soul's love descended into the material planes of Ignorance. The higher possibilities of this divine love are also considered. Commenting on the 'immortal' element in this context, the author draws out its relation to Aurobindonian aesthetics and art. The discourse on the soul is more elaborate in the next chapters, detailing the soul's slow and gradual emergence out of its mortal sheath through evolution. This indeed makes for an interesting analysis of the passages selected from Book VII, Canto 2. As we read Dr Seidlitz's book, we delve deeper into the exploration of the occult layers of the inner being. The different levels of Mind and Consciousness, as Sri Aurobindo has described them, are highlighted especially in the context of the poem.

Another absorbing analysis addresses the "elusive and complex philosophical problem" of Fate. The treatment of this seminal philosophical concept reflects the efficiency of a prolific writer and passionate reader. We get a dynamic view of the meaning of Fate; the most interesting part is the distinction drawn and explained between Fate and Destiny—terms which are often used synonymously. The philosophy and also the psychology of Fate are elaborately explored, in part through an analysis of how Fate is related to the

philosophical distinction between Being and Becoming. The concepts of the subliminal and subconscious are also described in the context of Fate. As the author says, “Our individual fate and destiny are part of a wider, universal existence and process of evolution that is occurring on earth.” (125)

Chapter Nine, which deals with the debate of Love and Death, “encapsulates the essential points of both sides”. For this, Dr Seidlitz has selected passages from Book X, Cantos 2 and 3. To support and validate commentaries on these concepts he has drawn references from modern discoveries in physics, giving a new direction to our thoughts on the subject, especially on the materialist standpoint propounded by Death.

Towards the end of his book, the author takes up for consideration the subject of higher consciousness and the summits of spiritual consciousness. These discussions lead us further to passages on the absolute divine existence and the supramental worlds. All these are related to Sri Aurobindo’s own experiences, hints of which are there in the Vedas and Upanishads. The author also references relevant corollaries to the Mother’s experiences described in her writings.

In the final chapter, there is a most interesting and illuminating treatment of passages from Book I, Canto 4, “The Secret Knowledge”, in which the author discusses a portion of one of the seven sections of the canto and how it develops in three movements. This chapter offers a befitting conclusion to the whole analysis by discussing one of the main themes of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy in general and particularly significant in *Savitri*, the unfolding of the Supramental in our material world.

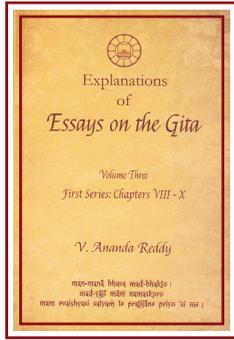
The author has referenced *The Life Divine*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *The Mother*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita* and other writings of Sri Aurobindo, as well as noted *Savitri* scholars, various journals and recorded interviews, and some mystic poets to help in unravelling key aspects of the epic, thus widening our perspectives and adding new insights into the text. Relating the text to researches in modern quantum science or genetics does not distract the reader but rather helps bring focus to the issues under discussion. Even elaborate discourses such as those on the “ideal mind” and “Heavens of the Ideal” do not become dull or uninteresting as the author’s style engages the reader in a compelling way to follow his observations and arguments. His language, which lends clarity of expression to such a searching analysis, enables the reader to grasp the essential points without a mental struggle. Long passages have been selected, but the treatment of each segment is neat and logical and affords easier comprehensibility. A special stylistic feature here is the explanation of certain words, some common, some uncommon, and their many connotations in the context of *Savitri*. Words like ‘afflatus’, ‘prescience’, ‘epicure’, ‘Aadytum’, and ‘diapason’ are given full explanations, while ordinary words like ‘near’ are explained in

their special relation to the Mother's experiences, such as how the Superhuman is 'near'. Similarly, the simple word 'march' is seen in the context of the passing of time and the march of destiny as well as soldiers 'marching' into death in the context of World War II. In the same manner, the author has reflected on symmetries in *Savitri*; for instance, while drawing parallels between Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and Aswapati and Savitri respectively. All topics are treated with accuracy and comprehensiveness, showing the author's command of the subject matter. The title is modestly suggestive, as we get more than just reflections in Dr Seidlitz's interpretations of some very profound themes central to *Savitri* and at the core of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Many perspectives are offered, many layers of meaning exposed, and we draw powerful lessons and also the inspiration to read and study Sri Aurobindo's poem. It is no errant or random selection of passages, but a measured and purposeful one. And the logical progress of ideas through the book helps maintain the interconnectedness of the narrative. In selected passages from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, and through them, Larry Seidlitz has discussed almost all the important tenets of Aurobindonian philosophy. He says in his Preface that "this book attempts to help guide the reader to a fuller appreciation of the incredible spiritual adventure revealed in Sri Aurobindo's most magnificent literary masterpiece." On any principle, it is a highly successful attempt.

—Madhumita Dutta

Dr Dutta, an Associate Professor of 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 Poetry of the Future: in the Light of Sri Aurobindo; Sri Aurobindo's Poetry: The Many and the Harmony; Savitri: A Study in Style and Symbolism; and Sri Aurobindo: A Legend.

In Chapter Eleven of his book, Dr Seidlitz reflects on passages in *Savitri* that take us "to the summits of the spiritual consciousness, what Sri Aurobindo calls the supramental worlds, divine worlds where all is infused with divine light and power and bliss, and which now are pressing for manifestation in our world of matter, thus foreshadowing our world's divine destiny".



Explanations of Essays on the Gita: Volume Three

(First Series: Chapters 8–10)

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research Trust, Pondicherry

177 pp, Rs 265, ISBN: 978-93-85391-34-7

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

Explanations of Essays on the Gita: Volume Four

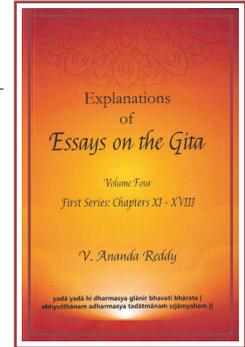
(First Series: Chapters 11–18)

—V. Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research Trust, Pondicherry

258 pp, Rs 375, ISBN: 978-93-85391-50-7

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover



“The Gita...is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience and the view it gives us embraces all the provinces of that supreme region. It maps out, but it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision.” (CWSA 19: 9) Sri Aurobindo explains in the opening chapter of *Essays on the Gita* that the ultimate truth cannot be confined to a single book or religion. No scripture, philosophy, or wise figure can fully express it because truth is boundless and beyond anything that tries to describe it in time and space. In simpler words, the eternal cannot be completely understood by what is limited. What then can be seen as the ultimate truth? A truth which is universal, is expressed by vision, is lived and experienced, and goes beyond the intellectual mind.

Most scriptures belong to specific eras and are shaped by the culture and circumstances of their time. The Gita, however, transcends these limits because it reveals deeper and living truths that remain universally relevant. It is not a text restricted to one religion, one culture, or one historical period. It is a living doorway into the understanding of life, action, choice, faith, and the inner presence that guides us. Though it was delivered at a specific historical moment on a battlefield, its teachings move far beyond that moment. It speaks to anyone who struggles, hesitates, searches, or stands between doubt and duty. In that sense, the Gita belongs to every age and to every individual who seeks to progress.

Sri Aurobindo explored the universality of this scripture in great depth in his *Essays on the Gita*. His aim was not only to explain the text, but also to help the reader understand

how its teachings should be perceived and how one can go deeper into its living truths. In harmony with this intention, many thinkers and teachers have reflected on Sri Aurobindo's interpretation and have offered their own observations. Among them is Dr V. Ananda Reddy, who has published a series of books titled *Explanations of Essays on the Gita*, which are transcriptions of his summary talks on the book. The talks that form the basis of Volumes Three and Four were delivered at the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR) between 2007 and 2008 and between 2010 and 2011.

These two volumes in the series cover Chapters 8 to 10 and 11 to 18 of *Essays on the Gita*. Here, Dr Reddy offers detailed but simple explanations on sections of Sri Aurobindo's book. He enriches his discourses with numerous examples and analogies from daily life. By doing this, he helps the reader see the Gita not as a distant religious text meant only for Arjuna or for a particular historical situation. Instead, it becomes something living and practical, something that any individual can turn to again and again while facing the challenges of daily life.

Volume Three begins with a brief recap of the ideas discussed in earlier volumes. Dr Reddy then gives an overall summary of the chapters he will cover: "Sankhya and Yoga," "Sankhya Yoga and Vedanta," and "The Yoga of the Intelligent Will." He explains that from these chapters onward, *Essays on the Gita* takes a more philosophical turn. The first seven chapters, as readers may have noticed, focus more on the background of the Mahabharata war, the setting of the battlefield, and the larger meaning of the situation. Sri Aurobindo first helps the reader understand the Gita as a whole: its spirit, its characters, the Divine teacher, the human disciple, and the significance of the battlefield itself. In this way, he prepares the ground so that the reader is ready to follow the teachings and truths that come later.

This structure also reflects the text of the Gita. The first seven chapters of *Essays on the Gita* mainly relate to the first chapter of the Gita. Then the text becomes more philosophical because it moves into the explanation of the second chapter of the Gita, where the real conversation between Sri Krishna and Arjuna begins. Here Arjuna starts asking questions, and the Divine Teacher slowly reveals the deeper truths by giving him practical solutions based on Vedantic knowledge. Sri Aurobindo even remarks in the tenth chapter, "I have had to deviate in the last two essays and to drag the reader with me into the arid tracts of metaphysical dogma." (CWSA 19: 94) Dr Reddy points out that it is remarkable how clearly Sri Aurobindo presents a synthesised way of looking at the various schools and systems of Yoga.

"Become My-minded, My lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me... to Me thou shalt come." This is one of the most powerful verses of the Gita. Dr Reddy,

while analysing how Sri Aurobindo has understood it, remarks that this verse carries the very essence of the Gita's teaching, which is to merge one's entire being into the Divine consciousness. It commands the seeker to integrate all the three paths of yoga, Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma, in the journey towards the Purushottama.

To be "My-minded", he says, is to constantly remember the Divine. To be a "lover and adorer" is Bhakti. To "bow down" and "sacrifice" is Karma Yoga. This is how all three meet in a single path of complete surrender; it is then that the Lord says that the one who lives like this "shall come to Me".

Dr Reddy also finds a connection between the three paths of yoga and the three ways in which the Gita describes the Divine: the Kshara Purusha, the Akshara Purusha, and the Purushottama. The Kshara Purusha is the changing and active Self present in Nature and in all living beings. It is the aspect of the Divine that "enjoys, participates and is involved" in the world. The Akshara Purusha is the silent, unmoving, and changeless Self. Beyond both is the Uttama Purusha or Purushottama, the Supreme Lord, who holds within himself both unity and multiplicity.

The author uses a beautiful image from the Mundaka Upanishad to explain this. He says that the Kshara and Akshara are like two birds sitting on the branches of a tree, and that tree represents the Purushottama. He continues by explaining that those who practise Karma Yoga are linked with the Kshara Purusha because they live and work in the world. Those who follow Jnana Yoga, or meditation, leading to samadhi, seek the Akshara Purusha. But the Gita explains that the fullest truth is the Purushottama, who includes both the world and what lies beyond it. If we turn only to the Akshara, we may withdraw from life and reject it. If we turn only to the Kshara, we may get lost in ignorance and forget the higher reality. But in the Purushottama, we discover a harmony; we can live and act in the world while remaining inwardly detached from it, and continue our journey towards the Divine. Only then can a complete transformation of the being become possible.

After explaining the synthesis of Sankhya and Yoga, Volume Four turns to the next eight chapters, from "Works and Sacrifice" (Chapter 11) to "The Divine Worker" (Chapter 18). Here Sri Aurobindo begins to write about the third chapter of the Gita, which deals with Karmayoga. At the beginning of this chapter, Arjuna is confused. Earlier, Krishna had told him that actions arise from ignorance and are the principal cause of ego and desire, so Arjuna felt that renouncing action and following only the path of knowledge was the right way. But now Krishna tells him that action is also essential and must not be rejected.

When Arjuna cannot understand what he is really expected to do, Krishna reveals the idea of Naishkarmya. Action should not be abandoned; instead, it should be carried out with complete detachment from its results, with the knowledge that all work is moved by

Prakriti and is part of the Divine play. The fruits of action, whether good or bad, do not belong to the doer. He must act in complete calmness and with inner quietude. But what will this silence awaken within the individual?

To answer this, Dr Reddy uses the image of a still lake. When the water is calm, our reflection is clear. In the same way, the Purusha is reflected in us only when our inner being is silent and the three gunas are at rest. But when the gunas are disturbed, or when a person begins to feel that all action is “mine,” the image of the Purusha becomes distorted and the ego blocks the Divine guidance. As Dr Reddy writes, “If the gunas can be brought back to stillness, the image of the Purusha may once again become accessible to consciousness.”

Volumes Three and Four of Dr Reddy’s *Explanations of Essays on the Gita* work best as guides to Sri Aurobindo’s ideas on the Gita. Because Sri Aurobindo’s explanations can sometimes seem dense for both new and regular readers, a simple and clear analysis is often needed to understand their depth. Dr Reddy does not try to alter or reinterpret the original text. His work depends entirely on what Sri Aurobindo has written. The books do not offer summaries or a detailed academic analysis. Instead, they provide simple explanations of selected passages. What makes these explanations interesting are the frequent references to daily life experiences, personal anecdotes, analogies, imagery from ancient texts, and references to other works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

At the same time, in his effort to simplify, Dr Reddy sometimes repeats or over-explains certain ideas, which may feel redundant or slow-paced for readers who are already familiar with Sri Aurobindo’s writings. However, he mentions at the beginning that each volume comprises transcriptions of talks delivered over a year, and because there were often long gaps between classes, he had to revisit earlier points before moving ahead. Moreover, repetition is almost unavoidable when explaining the Gita, because its ideas are so deeply interconnected.

This style may actually work better for talks than for books, since the tone is conversational and can feel quite lengthy when read continuously. There are, however, two sides to this approach. On one side, the conversational tone makes the book feel less like an academic text and more like a conversation between the author and the reader. This helps new readers understand the insights, especially since Dr Reddy often relates philosophical and metaphysical ideas to everyday life or explains them through simple imagery from the Upanishads.

However, this format also means that readers should ideally keep *Essays on the Gita* beside them. If the commentary is read on its own, one may feel a little lost because Dr Reddy often does not go into the deeper meanings of specific terms or sentences. His explanations usually offer only an overview of the selected paragraph or the central idea of

the chapter. It is therefore better to read the commentary alongside the original text, so that when certain details are omitted, the reader can still refer to the surrounding paragraphs and understand the fuller context.

By repeatedly referring to the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Dr Reddy also draws a connection between the teachings of the Gita and the path of the Integral Yoga developed by them. He shows that their strongest connection is the central teaching of surrender to the Divine. Surrender is the very soul of yoga, because one cannot progress without dissolving the ego and accepting the presence of a higher power that guides all action. Dr Reddy points out that Sri Aurobindo often takes the ideas of the Gita a step further and explores them more deeply. In the Gita, when Arjuna hesitates to act, Sri Krishna reveals that it is the Lord who truly acts, and that Arjuna is only an instrument of His will.

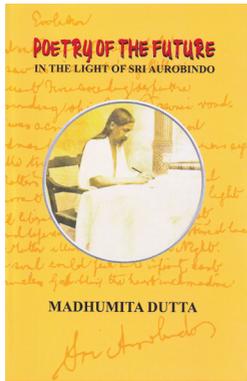
Sri Aurobindo takes this teaching further by explaining how difficult this acceptance can be for an individual. The ego naturally resists the idea of not being the doer. As the individual struggles with this, the process often feels slow and discouraging. A belief begins to arise that surrender is unattainable, that the Divine is distant, separate from ourselves, and completely opposed to us and the world we live in.

Sri Aurobindo therefore clarifies that the Divine is not only outside us, but has always been present within us. As He creates us, He leaves a part of Himself in us. Surrender, then, should not be done out of fear or with the desire to gain something in return, nor should it be treated as a rigid rule to follow. One simply needs to turn inward, become self-aware and conscious of this inner presence. In this way, surrender ceases to be a strict practice and becomes, in Sri Aurobindo's vision, a way of living.

The books may not satisfy readers who are looking for an academic or critical study, but they are helpful for those who want guidance while reading the Gita in the light of Sri Aurobindo's thought. The references and clarifications act as bridges between the seeker and the text, making the ideas not only clearer and easier to grasp, but also more alive and approachable. The reader is encouraged to look around, observe life, and realise that the Gita is not merely a religious scripture, but a living guide to be remembered and practised in everyday life.

—Ritaja Mishra

Ritaja is a recent graduate of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education who is interested in writing and Indian culture.



Poetry of the Future

In the Light of Sri Aurobindo

—Madhumita Dutta

Publisher: Overman Foundation, Kolkata

352 pp, Rs 550, ISBN: 978-81-967004-5-4

Dimensions: 14 x 22 cm, Binding: Soft Cover

The new 350-page publication by the Overman Foundation of transcribed and edited talks by Dr Madhumita Dutta can be read as an introduction to, overview of, and deeper exploration of aspects of Sri Aurobindo's 400-page *The Future Poetry*, Volume 26 of The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo. As always, Professor Dutta's writing is delightful and insightful. Especially in its later parts, the flowing style of her reflections in analysis and commentary of particular aspects of Sri Aurobindo's literary theory and its applications can be immersive and transfixing, transporting us into the world and vision of the seer-poet. Giving examples from different periods of English language poetic developments and their most representative lyricists, as well as translations of and quotes from the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and of poems by the likes of Kalidasa and Tagore, Dr Dutta illustrates Sri Aurobindo's vision of poetry, its history and future evolution.

Sri Aurobindo saw poetry as an expression of the time-spirit and dominant formations and movements in the collective vital mind of a people and culture, and in his vision these trends inevitably move towards a mantric language when the outer instrumentations of expression are taken up by the soul, spirit, and intuition. In this evolution, a sufficiently developed culture of language, literature, and poetry of the outer form, meaning rhythm, movement and style, as well as its inner inspiration and perception, the substance and essence, can culminate in a deeper and higher consciousness elevating speech to the level of mantra. According to Sri Aurobindo, eventually, a future poetry will evolve which is capable of encompassing and expressing the entire human being, nature, states and worlds of consciousness, and various aspects of the divine as well as its oneness in an integral and transformative power of speech and vibration. Then expressive language will become

a conscious conduit of higher beings and forces, allowing them to ride poetic streams of inspiration and sight from the subtle and transcendent oceans beyond through the intuitive, inner and expressive mind to our shores of the manifestation, with the Self, Soul, and Psychic guiding them from behind:

Our words become the natural speech of Truth,
Each thought is a ripple on a sea of Light.

This future poetry represented in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* (the lines above are from Book VII, Canto 5: The Finding of the Soul, p. 531) will come about through the ignition and blaze in the collective consciousness of the Five Suns of Poetry, which Sri Aurobindo wrote about in the *The Future Poetry*:

An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit.
(CWSA 26: 222)

Before diving into the currents of these prophetic visions, the professor leads up to them through a review of the poetry of the Elizabethan, Intellectual, Romantic, Victorian and Modern ages, as well as that of the "Poets of the Dawn". Although it's not linear, the evolution of poetry through the ages follows a general trend of progression of its center of poetic interest, theme, and origin of inspiration from the outer to the inner, from a concern with life in its most material, emotional, and intellectual surface characteristics to a vision of it as a symbol and manifestation of something beyond itself and forms, the ethereal and divine. Dr Dutta fittingly quotes these lines from Sri Aurobindo's poem "Ascent (2) Beyond the Silence" as an example of intuitive poetry:

Vast, God-possessing, embraced by the Wonderful,
Lifted by the All-Beautiful into his infinite beauty,
Love shall envelop thee endless and fathomless,
Joy unimaginable, ecstasy illimitable,
Knowledge omnipotent, Might omniscient,
Light without darkness, Truth that is dateless. (CWSA 02: 582)

As Dr Dutta explains, based on Sri Aurobindo's writings, all of these phases of growth or decline in a people's complexity and range of consciousness and its expression are shaped by cultural forces of which individual poets who rise to prominence are only the most visible or representative symbol, not the ones originating or shaping it from their personal ego. The role of the community of a people united by language in the refinement of expressive power and ability to receive inspiration from more profound and elevated sources within and above is emphasised, although this development is of course in dialogue and exchange with other previous and concurrent communities of language. In Dr Dutta's

understanding, for the future Sri Aurobindo “is proposing a spiritual aesthesis, elevating poetry to the highest status it deserves, but this spiritual poetry will be more universal and created in many languages, especially English. Because, as he said, not only is English the most widespread tongue, capable of greatest mystic expression, but the mind of the future will also be more international.”

—Matthias Pommerening

Matthias, a psychologist, is a frequent contributor of book reviews for Recent Publications.

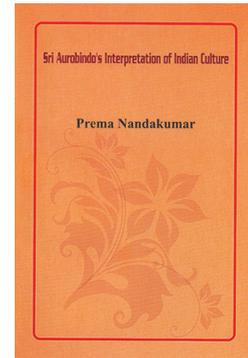
Sri Aurobindo's Interpretation of Indian Culture

—Dr Prema Nandakumar

Publisher: Overman Foundation, Kolkata

350 pp, Rs 650, ISBN: 978-81-960391-8-9

Dimensions: 16 x 24 cm, Binding: Hard Cover



Dr Prema Nandakumar’s book *Sri Aurobindo’s Interpretation of Indian Culture* has its origin in a series of articles published in the annual journal *Sri Aurobindo Circle* beginning in 1979 and continuing up to the mid-1990s. The book gives a sense of the author’s joy both as a budding writer and as a reader entering into the vastnesses of Sri Aurobindo’s writings. As a teenager, she had been gifted a copy of *The Foundations of Indian Culture* by her father, the well-known author K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, and as a student of Indian history, she had made constant use of *The Foundations* over many years.

In the book at hand, the page references are to Volume 14 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (1972). Later, in *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, the same writings are published as Volume 20 under the title *The Renaissance in India and Other Essays on Indian Culture*. The order of the essays, and hence the page numbering, is different in this new edition.

The introductory chapter points out some special features of Sri Aurobindo's view of Indian culture and the situation in India when he returned there after fourteen years in England:

1) Sri Aurobindo's "Occidental-Oriental comparisons, as if he were testing ... [India's] accomplishments by the yardstick of European achievement";

2) The sad fact of India's degeneration into bourgeois mediocrity and almost total subjection to the English 'masters';

3) Sri Aurobindo's conviction that the stirrings of a renaissance could already be felt, which could restore India to its former glory;

4) In line with his vision of India reclaiming her spiritual and heroic past, Sri Aurobindo set about serialising the greater part of his major works in the *Arya*, seeking to embody the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. His original intention to create a vast synthesis of knowledge from the starting point of the knowledge of the West and the knowledge of the East;

5) Several series of essays that appeared in the *Arya* from August 1918 were published later as *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, and it is these which form the basis of the present book. Sri Aurobindo took the opportunity to further Sir John Woodroffe's answer to a book by Mr William Archer (1856–1924) entitled *India and the Future* (1917), which was a 'wholesale and unsparing condemnation' of India and her culture. Mr Archer was a Scottish author and theatre critic who unwittingly ventured into a scathing criticism of India and brought about an unsparing reply from Sri Aurobindo, singling out his ignorance as an example of Europe's pervasive non-comprehension of Indian culture; and

6) Lastly, there is Sri Aurobindo's *A Defence of Indian Culture*. In the SABCL, this covers four areas of Indian culture: religion and spirituality, Indian art, Indian literature and Indian polity.

Following the introductory chapter, the remainder of the book comprehensively deals with two sections of *A Defence of Indian Culture*, namely, Indian literature and Indian religion and spirituality. Chapters Two to Eight cover the Veda, the Upanishads, the great Indian epics, Kalidasa, the Classical Age, the Puranas, and the New Efflorescence. The final six chapters deal with Indian religion and spirituality.

The chapter called “The New Efflorescence” deals with the period from about 1000 A.D. onwards, when earlier Sanskrit works were recreated and translated into the still-evolving modern languages of India. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, “Most of these tongues have felt the cultural necessity of transferring into the popular speech the...central story of the Mahabharata...and, still more universally, the story of the Ramayana.” This was a period of intense and original creativity in the regional languages.

Overall, the book is treasure trove of gems of Indian culture taken from the pages of Sri Aurobindo’s writings and presented in a more accessible form. However, proofreading of the book seems to have not been done, and there are many typographical errors. This stands in contrast to the original articles in the *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, where each page was not only free of misprints but also pleasing to the eye. And that too in the days when the pages were set in lead type.

In conclusion, a small selection of interesting passages from the book:

Some words from a letter of Amal Kiran: “...since India is still the country with the greatest spiritual experience, the spiritual fulfilment of the English speech...will first come – if it already hasn’t – through Indians and not Englishmen...”

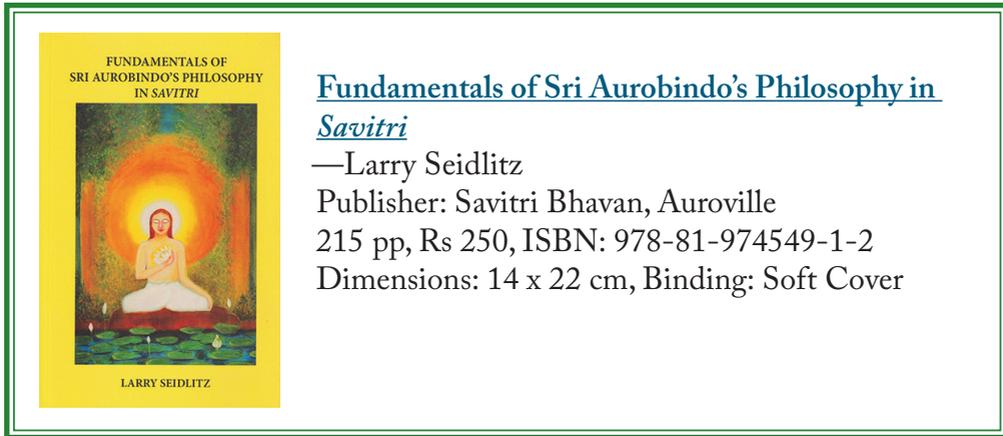
Rather than feeling any bitterness towards his critic, Sri Aurobindo took Mr Archer’s attack on Indian culture positively: “...it is useful to have before us an attack which covers the whole field so that we may see in one comprehensive view the entire enemy case against our culture.”

Again, from Sri Aurobindo: “India must defend herself by reshaping her cultural forms to express more powerfully, intimately and perfectly her ancient ideal.”

The book contains a wealth of suggestions for further reading for anyone interested in Indian literature, and it will be doing its best service if it encourages readers to go to the source texts found in *The Renaissance in India and Other Essays on Indian Culture*.

—Bryce Grinlington

Bryce worked as an electrical engineer in Australia before coming to India. At the Sri Aurobindo Ashram he has worked at the Archives and Research Library and at present teaches music at SAICE.



If ever one despairs of getting a handle on Aurobindonian thought as expounded by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their numerous writings, there is hope in this slim volume by Dr Larry Seidlitz deceptively titled *Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy in Savitri*. Deceptively, because the text of his book draws heavily on the prose works of Sri Aurobindo to describe in detail all that is dealt with in the epic *Savitri*, which, as the author notes, encompasses every facet of Aurobindonian thought in mantric poetry. In lucid and transparent academic prose, the author divides the book into twelve chapters that one by one deal with some of the major components of Sri Aurobindo's experiences and his philosophy, each one drawing on Sri Aurobindo's prose writings to explicate an idea that occurs in not-easily-accessible poetic form in *Savitri*.

As a glance at the table of contents will indicate, the book deals with what are commonly regarded as debating points and fundamental issues in the oeuvre of Sri Aurobindo's thought. Further perusal of each chapter will demonstrate the care the author takes in comprehensively presenting each subject as it arises in *Savitri* based on the prose writings of Sri Aurobindo. The author begins each chapter with a presentation of what he is going to say in that chapter and sticks close to the original work of Sri Aurobindo, inserting his illuminating comments only where he judges them required.

As an example, we may take the chapter titled 'The Divine Mother' (Chapter 4). He begins simply: "In this chapter we will see Sri Aurobindo's explanations and descriptions of the Divine Mother in both his prose writings and in *Savitri*." He continues with detailed explorations on the topic, citing generous quotations from both *Savitri* and Sri Aurobindo's

prose writings, such as selections from his short work *The Mother*, which expound on “the Divine Mother in her Transcendent, Universal, and Individual aspects and her relation to us and our world”. The author points out that in these lines Sri Aurobindo is describing her universal aspect, the Mahashakti:

Above them all she stands supporting all,
The sole omnipotent Goddess ever-veiled
Of whom the world is the inscrutable mask;
The ages are the footfalls of her tread,
Their happenings the figure of her thoughts,
And all creation is her endless act. (CWSA 33: 295)

Other chapters focus on such principles and concepts as the duality of Ishwara-Shakti, the psychic being, the complex questions of fate, karma, and free will, the realisation of the spiritual Self, and the nature of the Supermind and its descent into earthly life. This topic-wise approach to Sri Aurobindo’s thought is most helpful both to those who are new to the concepts here and to those to whom they are familiar. To the initiated the book lends structure to their easy familiarity with Sri Aurobindo’s work. To new readers it provides coherence, linking major themes in *Savitri* to their foundations in his prose writings. One arrives at the end of the book with a satisfying starting point for further exploration.

The first chapter, titled ‘Introduction: The Marvel of *Savitri*’, serves the dual function of introducing the book as well as the epic itself. In this chapter too, the author writes as he writes the rest of the chapters, letting Sri Aurobindo speak on the epic in his own words and interjecting only wherever he feels clarity is called for.

We may close with a few words on this important introductory chapter. The author delineates three dominant themes in *Savitri*: the struggle, suffering, and evil that confront us in life; the persistent growth and evolution of life despite this opposition; and the sheer delight, love, and power of the Divine that supports this evolution. He then chooses sample passages from *Savitri* on the emergence of life in matter, the role and limitations of reason, the presence and guidance of the Divine, the reason for pain, the dark powers, the Avatar’s sacrifice for humanity, the World-Soul, the cosmic consciousness, and the prophecy of a divine life on earth. He introduces each passage with a sentence or two as a sort of framework for understanding the poetry while encouraging the reader to pay close attention to the form and beauty of each line. *Savitri* was a work that Sri Aurobindo fashioned over many years of his life, which he wrote and rewrote as he progressed in the practice of his yoga. Each line had to be complete, the perfect marriage of thought and form. Although representative, this sampling of passages is characteristic of the breadth and profundity of the entire poem.

To get a sense of how accessible Dr Seidlitz makes *Savitri*, we may reproduce his quote from the poem that speaks to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's principal mission, to open the earth-consciousness to the supramental light and power that will transform life on earth. Under the theme titled 'The Prophecy of the Life Divine on Earth' the author quotes a long passage from *Savitri* that opens with these memorable lines:

O Sun-Word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to Light
And bring down God into the lives of men;
Earth shall be my work-chamber and my house,
My garden of life to plant a seed divine.
When all thy work in human time is done
The mind of earth shall be a home of light,
The life of earth a tree growing towards heaven,
The body of earth a tabernacle of God. (CWSA 34: 699)

Dr Seidlitz's book admirably unites the revelatory power of *Savitri's* poetry with the philosophical explications in his prose writings. This is a go-to book for anyone who wishes to contemplate some of the major themes in Sri Aurobindo's vision of life and its future evolution by an author with a long association with his writings.

—Sivakumar Elambooran

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

In the Introduction to *Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy in Savitri*, Dr Seidlitz asserts: "Consistent with the wide sweep of a cosmic consciousness, its [*Savitri's*] thought substance covers a wide field, including the nature of God and divinity, the nature of Avatarhood..., the origins of the universe, the processes and course of evolution from inconscient matter to the heights of spiritual consciousness, the beauty, difficulties, horrors and possibilities of human life, and the destined divinization of man and the earth".