

Recent Publications

Sabta

A century ago India was swept by a phenomenon as the newspaper *Bande Mataram* inspired the country to resist British rule and demand independence. Bipin Chandra Pal and Raja Subodh Mullick were two of Sri Aurobindo's associates in the launching of the *Bande Mataram*. In this issue there are two articles that recall those early days and the personalities that helped to shape the independence movement.

Pictured to the right is the entrance to the *Bande Mataram* office in Kolkata. It is the first door on the left, next to the commemorative plaque on the wall.



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Bande Mataram and the Revolutionary Struggle

The newspaper *Bande Mataram* was a landmark in the early development of India's independence movement. When resistance to the British was unthinkable to most Indians and independence was a distant ideal, *Bande Mataram* circulated across the country, inspiring people with fiery language and great acumen. Bipin Chandra Pal launched the newspaper in August 1906, a year after the British gave the final announcement that they would partition the presidency of Bengal into two separate provinces. Bengalis responded with protests and initiated the first mass movements of boycott and *swadeshi*, abstention from British goods and the promotion of indigenous goods. The writers of *Bande Mataram*, like Sri Aurobindo who became the chief editor in December 1906, drew attention across India to the struggle in Bengal, attempting to inspire a nationwide movement for independence.

The main nationalist body at the time, the Indian National Congress, emphasized cooperation with the British. Established in 1885, its leadership consisted of middle class Indians who had learned ideas of democracy, natural rights, and nationhood through English educations. Hence, these nationalists had deep trust in the British and confidently petitioned them for various reforms and for greater representation in the government of India. Bipin Chandra Pal himself had joined the Congress in 1886 and had expressed his loyalty to the British thus: "We are loyal, because we believe in the workings of the Divine Providence in our national history, both ancient and modern; because we believe that God himself has led the British to this country, to help it in working out its salvation, and realize its heaven-appointed destiny among the nations of the world."¹

When the British partitioned Bengal in 1905 a new voice emerged within the Congress. The younger generation of members, known as the "Extremists," believed that India must look to itself for advancement, not to Britain. Pal himself was deeply disillusioned by the partition and became a main leader of the Extremists. He wrote, "The belief that England will of her own free will help Indians out of their long-

established Civil servitude and establish those free institutions of Government which she herself values so much was once cherished, but all hope has now been abandoned."² The Extremists declared *swaraj*, "self-rule," as their goal and Pal wrote that "God made man in his own image, essentially and potentially free and pure. . . . The desire for autonomy is constitutional in man."³

Pal and the other Extremists argued that India could become a powerful, independent nation only through struggle, not by petitioning the British. Pal wrote that a new spirit was sweeping the country, one which "accepts no other teacher in the art of self-government except self-government itself. It values freedom for its own sake, . . . it does not believe serfdom, in any shape or form, to be a school for real freedom in any country and under any condition whatever. It holds that the struggle for freedom itself is the highest tutor of freedom."⁴ The type of struggle which Pal advocated was "Passive Resistance, . . . an organized determination to refuse to render any voluntary and honorary service to the Government."⁵ Pal's passive resistance also involved establishing independent administrative structures, such as councils, boards, courts, etc.⁶

Sri Aurobindo was also a prominent Extremist, but he took a different direction than Pal. His nationalistic interests had developed two decades earlier, in conjunction with abuse that his father had suffered at the hands of the British. Sri Aurobindo knew that the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal had great potential in terms of the development of a widespread independence movement. Hence, he began traveling with Pal in spring 1906, as the latter addressed enormous crowds. Later, in August, Pal invited Sri Aurobindo to begin writing for *Bande Mataram*. However, the editorial board strongly preferred Sri Aurobindo, so the relationship between Pal and the newspaper was severed in December, and Sri Aurobindo became the chief editor.⁷

The key issue was that Sri Aurobindo brought a revolutionary approach to *Bande Mataram*. Sri Aurobindo and Pal were both Extremists, but the latter, in comparison to Sri Aurobindo, remained within the

gentlemanly world of the Congress. Pal envisaged a completely peaceful and lawful movement for independence, but Sri Aurobindo was very skeptical of this.⁸ He had not received a British education in India, designed to serve imperial interests, but had been educated in Britain itself, where he learned of the many bloody conflicts by which Western countries had gained independence and had founded strong nations. Hence, in a 1907 article he implied, in a critique of the lobbying efforts of the Indian National Congress, that India might have to undergo the same conflicts as the West had: “It is a vain dream to suppose that what other nations have won by struggle and battle, by suffering and tears of blood, we shall be allowed to accomplish easily, without terrible sacrifices, merely by spending the ink of the journalist and petition-framer and the breath of the orator.”⁹

Sri Aurobindo attempted, in the pages of *Bande Mataram*, to prepare the country for violent conflict. He approved highly of the passive resistance of Pal and the other Extremists, but he knew that the British would not sit idly by while the *swadeshis* jeopardized their economic interests. In a famous 1907 series of articles, “The Doctrine of Passive Resistance,” Sri Aurobindo wrote that if the British continue to respect “life, liberty and property,” then passive resistance is the best approach, but if they should use violence, violence in turn is called for: “Liberty is the life-breath of a nation; and when the life is attacked, when it is sought to suppress all chance of breathing by violent pressure, any and every means of self-preservation becomes right and justifiable,—just as it is lawful for a man who is being strangled to rid himself of the pressure on his throat by any means in his power.”¹⁰

Sri Aurobindo knew that many Indians, though they might be in favor of independence, would object to a violent reaction. He countered such a reaction by reflecting on the Hindu belief in the ultimate unity of all things. Many Hindus object to violence on the basis of this belief, but Sri Aurobindo used it to argue for the use of violence in certain circumstances: “To submit

to illegal or violent methods of coercion, to accept outrage and hooliganism as part of the legal procedure of the country is to be guilty of cowardice, and, by dwarfing national manhood, to sin against the divinity within ourselves and the divinity in our motherland. . . . If the instruments of the executive choose to disperse our meeting by breaking the heads of those present, the right of self-defence entitles us not merely to defend our heads but to retaliate on those of the head-breakers.”¹¹ It is not a sin to commit acts of violence in such circumstances. Rather, a retreat from violence would be a sin: “The morality of war is different from the morality of peace. To shrink from bloodshed and violence under such circumstances is a weakness deserving as severe a rebuke as Srikrishna addressed to Arjuna when he shrank from the colossal civil slaughter on the field of Kurukshetra.”¹²

Sri Aurobindo hence called Indians to a far more dire struggle than envisioned by Pal and many of the other Extremists. It would only be through great personal risk that India would attain freedom: “The path to Swaraj can never be safe. Over sharp rocks and through thick brambles lies the way to that towering and glorious summit where dwells the Goddess of our worship, our goddess Liberty. Shall we dare to aspire to reach her and yet hope to accomplish that journey perilous with unhurt bodies and untorn feet? Mark the way; as you go it is red and caked with the blood of those who have climbed before us to the summit. And if that sight appals you, look up and forget it in the glory of the face that smiles upon us from the peak.”¹³

Sri Aurobindo wrote the above words in tumultuous times, for riots had broken out in spring 1907 between Hindu *swadeshis* and Muslims who opposed the movement. Although not believing such riots to be essential to the independence movement Sri Aurobindo did believe they were the first signs of a prolonged conflict which would take place between the British and the Indians.¹⁴ However, the tumult in Bengal came

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to an end in 1908 when the British imprisoned the Extremists' leaders and suppressed their newspapers. Ten years later the independence movement would resume, but under a different set of leaders, circumstances, and ideals. For instance, Gandhi would reject overt violence, practicing passivity even in the face of direct physical harm. Yet, in spite of the many differences between them all, men like Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose laid an important foundation for India's independence movement. They helped to push Indians from a state of calm acceptance to proud and determined resistance, ready to face prolonged struggles and cruel treatment in order to achieve the independence of their motherland.

— Dr Edward Ulrich

Dr Ulrich is an Assistant Professor of Theology at the University of St. Thomas in the United States. After attending the 2004 National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar, "Religion and Politics in India", he became fascinated by Sri Aurobindo's nationalistic activities.

NOTES

¹Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, *Bipin Chandra Pal and India's Struggle for Swaraj* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1958) 12.

²Ibid., 21.

³Bipin Chandra Pal, *Swadeshi and Swaraj: The Rise of the New Patriotism* (Calcutta: Yugayatri Prakashak, 1954), 59-60.

⁴Ibid., 55.

⁵Ibid., 63.

⁶Ibid., 216-18, 245-49.

⁷Mukherjee and Mukherjee, *India's Struggle*, 61-64; Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, 26:28-29.

⁸Pal, *Swadeshi and Swaraj*, 51-52, 61-63, 68, 216-17, 246.

⁹Sri Aurobindo, *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, 6:299. See also *ibid.*, 6:28-30.

¹⁰Ibid., 6:278.

¹¹Ibid., 6:294.

¹²Ibid., 6:278.

¹³Ibid., 7:480-81.

¹⁴Ibid., 6:314.

No. 12 Wellington Square

The Story of Raja Subodh Mullick and the *Bande Mataram* Office

This August we will celebrate the completion of sixty years of Indian independence. As we look around us there are no signs of any memory of that struggle, neither are there any traces of the ideals that drove people to acts of heroism. The India of today would be unrecognisable to the spirit of those who so readily gave up their lives to bring independence to their motherland.

Who remembers the Alipore Bomb Case today? Not many. Kolkata was then the capital of India. The importance of the whole episode is that this bomb was thrown and this case was fought right in the capital of the country, and this is what made the British feel that the very seat of their power was being shaken.

Perhaps we will never know all the details of the saga of India's freedom struggle. There were many who played a role in this drama but who remained deliberately in the background. Their contributions remained unseen but it is certain that without their

support the heroes would not have achieved so much. One such quiet figure was Raja Subodh Chandra Mullick.

While Sri Aurobindo was still living at Baroda he began visiting Kolkata to start his revolutionary work. The base for that work was provided by Raja Subodh Mullick through the auspices of Charu Dutt, who had known Sri Aurobindo since his Cambridge days and had since become an I.C.S. officer, posted in Thane. Dutt, who was related to Subodh Mullick by marriage, introduced him to Sri Aurobindo. When Sri Aurobindo finally left Baroda and arrived in Kolkata, it was in Subodh Mullick's house that he first lived until he established his own household.

Mullick's palatial house at No.12 Wellington Square still stands today, but in a state that brings tears to the eyes. It is a large, three-storey mansion of pinkish orange colour. From the road one can see a high wrought-iron gate which in the past was opened to let in horse carriages. Everything about the house

evokes an age of graceful luxury. It is said that the room at the corner, which has one window on the side of the main thoroughfare and the other facing a narrow lane, used to be occupied by Sri Aurobindo. A century ago this grand house was lit up with chandeliers, and the exquisitely carved wooden balcony must have had a regal beauty, while today it is covered in dust and wild plants. The architecture is more European than Indian and in its glorious days even the decoration inside was European; the rooms had carpets, book-lined shelves, and paintings.

Tagore had published his "Homage to Aurobindo" while the prosecution was going on, in anticipation of a sentence. But, as Sri Aurobindo was acquitted, when he came to congratulate him, he said ironically in Bengali as he embraced him: "What! You have deceived us!" (by not going to jail). Sri Aurobindo replied in English: "Not for long will you have to wait," implying that he would not be out of prison much longer.

It was also in this mansion that Nolini Kanta Gupta first met and spoke to Sri Aurobindo. Nolini-da had



An early, undated photograph of the mansion at 12 Wellington Square.

This mansion is a historical monument where some of the high moments of the freedom struggle were lived out, the fruits of which we are enjoying today. When Sri Aurobindo was acquitted in September 1907 in the case resulting from a police search of the office of the nationalist newspaper *Bande Mataram*, Rabindranath Tagore had come to 12 Wellington Square to meet and congratulate him. Sri A.B. Purani vividly describes the scene in his biography, *The Life of Sri Aurobindo*:

been sent to invite him to the Manicktolla Gardens where the young revolutionaries were staying. The lifelong tie that bound them for decades began here. As we know, Sri Aurobindo could not go with him that day, but Nolini-da remembers how he politely declined the invitation and how he expressed himself in Bengali. He spoke softly and slowly since speaking in Bengali did not come naturally to him, having spent his childhood and youth in England.

Just behind the mansion is the house where the *Bande Mataram* office was located. It was part of a series of houses which belonged to the same property; perhaps it was meant for distant relatives. A very narrow, virtually private lane separates the mansion from this block of more modest houses. One can even now see the back gate of the mansion almost facing what used to be the front door of the office, thereby suggesting that people could go easily from one house to the other. Although the paper had been started by Bepin Chandra Pal it was Subodh Mullick and his cousin Nirod Mullick who were its chief financial supporters. They had even given the place for housing the office.

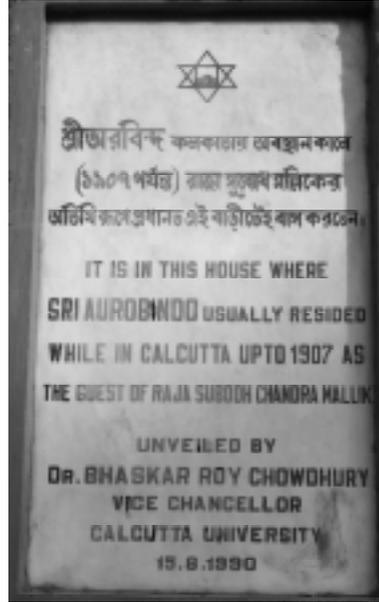
A little door in a narrow lane—this is all one can see today. But it was from this tiny office, a hundred years ago, that the call for revolution had gone out. From here started the fire that was to rage all over Bengal. The work of waking India from her *tamas* was done from this tiny lane. Page after page of stirring prose came out from here, written in English, in a style which had both lucidity of mind and intensity of feelings. These words would provoke the British, arrests would be made, some would be trapped in prisons, and others would walk unwavering to the gallows. A nation would rise up and fight for its rights.

Who was Subodh Mullick and how closely was he associated with Sri Aurobindo? He came from a wealthy family which owned vast properties. Subodh Chandra Mullick was not really a “*raja*” (king). It was a title given to him by the people, owing not only to his vast wealth but also to his generosity. He had donated a sum of one *lakh* rupees to the National College at Kolkata, of which Sri Aurobindo was the first Principal. It is popularly believed that the title “*raja*” might have been affixed to his name after this act of generosity. What that sum represented a hundred years ago can only be imagined from the way it impressed the people.

Subodh Mullick had studied at Presidency College and later had run away to England to join Trinity College at Cambridge. Apparently he never took a degree from the University since he left without completing his studies. He may even have made an effort at studying law while he was in England. Perhaps this common background brought him closer to Sri Aurobindo.

Not only did he give his full support, morally and financially, but he was also a political associate. So much so that after Sri Aurobindo was arrested in Kolkata on 2nd May 1908, Subodh Mullick's other house in Varanasi was searched by the police on 8th May. Then two days later, on 10th May, while the Mullick family was away at Varanasi the police searched this beautiful house in Kolkata and turned it upside down in their effort to get hold of any incriminating documents. The police knew very well that Subodh Mullick had made his mansion in Wellington Square the centre of political activities

headed by Sri Aurobindo. Meetings were held there and important decisions were taken. Few people know that he too was arrested and jailed in Almora for fourteen months. After his release in February 1910 when he returned to his Wellington Square mansion, Sri Aurobindo paid him a visit. It was the last time they ever saw each other.



Commemorative marble plaque next to the main gate of Subodh Mullick's mansion.

Just behind the mansion at 12 Wellington Square is the house where the *Bande Mataram* office was located. A little door in a narrow lane—this is all one can see today. But it was from this tiny office, a hundred years ago, that the call for revolution had gone out.

Today this historic building stands in faded splendour, a reminder of the days when the entire nation was inspired to sacrifice so much. The country has not forgotten Raja Subodh Chandra Mullick. There is a park in Kolkata named after him as well as a road, and even

Wellington Square has been renamed in his honour. He was a man who had lived a life of luxury befitting a king and yet was prepared to face hardships and even imprisonment for upholding his beliefs and asking the freedom of his country.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS
ENGLISH***Sri Aurobindo*****Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest**

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication
Department, Puducherry

612 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7058-827-6, Rs 190

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover



This book consists of notes, letters, telegrams, and public statements written by Sri Aurobindo at various times. It includes approximately three hundred pages of material not included in the SABCL edition: well over a hundred pages are published here for the first time and the rest were previously published only in journals or as parts of different books. Of the material already published in the SABCL edition and included in this new book, half is from the now-discontinued volume *Sri Aurobindo On Himself* and the other half from *Letters on Yoga* and the *Supplement* volume, which was never brought out as an independent book. Most of the rest of the letters from *On Himself*, written by Sri Aurobindo after 1927 and touching on the subject of himself and his *sadhana*, will be included in a new volume entitled *Letters on Himself and the Ashram*.

This documentary volume is divided into four parts: autobiographical notes, which consist primarily of things he wrote to correct statements made by others about him; letters of historical interest, mostly written before 1927 to family members, political and professional associates, people interested in his yogic practice, and public figures; public statements on Indian and world events; and public notices concerning his ashram and yoga. It contains a detailed table of contents and nearly sixty pages of editorial notes, containing information on the people and historical events referred to in the texts.

*see page 13 for an article
on Autobiographical Notes*

Compilations**Sri Aurobindo and the Freedom Struggle of India (Bharater Swadhinata Sangrame Sri Aurobindo Abirbhab)*****A bilingual compilation of Sri Aurobindo's writings on political events of India***

— Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Kolkata

288 pp., Rs 150

Size: 14x22 cm; Binding: Soft Cover

This book is a bilingual compilation of Sri Aurobindo's early political writings in English and Bengali, brought out as a tribute to him on the centenary of his return to Bengal from Baroda. The English section consists largely of articles from *Bande Mataram* and from the "New Lamps for Old" series in the *Indu Prakash* as well as some of his political speeches and essays from *On Nationalism and Man—Slave or Free?* The Bengali section includes *Jagannath Rath*, or *The Chariot of Jagannath*, an editorial from *Dharma*, several articles on nationalism from *Karmayogin* (translated from the original English), excerpts from *Karakahini*, or *Tales of Prison Life*, and letters to his wife, brother, and political colleagues.

White Roses (Enlarged Edition)

— The Mother's Messages and Correspondence with Huta

Publisher: The Havyavahana
Trust, Puducherry

Part I: 263 pp., ISBN: 978-81-87372-00-4, Rs 200

Size: 18x24 cm; Binding: Soft Cover

Part II: 241 pp., ISBN: 978-81-87372-06-6, Rs 200

Size: 18x24 cm; Binding: Soft Cover

This enlarged edition of *White Roses*, a collection of the Mother's correspondence with Huta, differs from the previous version in that it contains many more of the Mother's letters as well as both facsimiles of her handwritten notes and their transcriptions. Published in two volumes, Part I covers the years 1955 to 1962 and Part II the years 1963 to 1973. In addition to the correspondence there are quotations from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works sent to Huta by the Mother as well as many of the *Darshan* and New Year messages.



Reprints from All India Magazine

Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry

Mahakali***Mahakali Aspect of the Mother***

— Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

48 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7060-254-5, Rs 15

Size: 12x18 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

**A New World is Born**

— Words of the Mother

56 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7060-255-2,

Rs 40

Size: 19x25 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Selected passages from the Mother on the supramental manifestation, arranged in chapters such as “The Great Transition”, “The Supramental Action upon Earth”, and “The Yoga for the Earth”.

Spiritual Exercises for Everyday Practice

— Words of the Mother

48 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7060-262-0, Rs 15

Size: 12x18 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

**Work: an offering**

— Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry

103 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7060-259-0, Rs 45

Size: 12x18 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This compilation highlights the unique role of work in the Integral Yoga, beginning with a section on the necessity of work as a “field of endeavour and a school of experience” for the *sadhana*. Originally presented as an exhibition, the book is organised into short sections that cover topics such as how to prepare yourself, have the right attitude, and then offer your work; how to face the difficulties in your daily work environment; and how to move away from the illusions of ego-centred work toward becoming a true instrument for the Divine’s work.

Towards Perfect Health

— Selections from the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication

Department, Puducherry

159 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7058-840-5, Rs 75

Size: 12x18 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

This compilation focuses on the health of the body and its necessary role in the total transformation of the being as part of the manifestation of a divine life on earth. The material has been organised into sections that explain the importance of a healthy and conscious body reflecting an inner harmony and consecration, the origin and causes of illness, how the right attitude towards sleep, food, physical culture, and medicine, for example, can make the body healthier, and the secret of perfect health in the practice of Sri Aurobindo’s integral yoga. *see review on page 15*

Other Authors**Flame of Love**

— Compiled and edited by Roshan

Publisher: Divyanand Kripianidhi, Bardoli

50 pp., Rs 50

Size: 12x18 cm

Binding: Soft Cover



This book is a collection of vivid memories of two Ashramites: Motiba (Champaklal’s aunt) and Bansidhar (Champaklal’s brother). Both joined the Ashram in its early days, the mid-1920s, and had the privilege of personally serving Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In addition to the fond recollections by those who knew them well, there are the reminiscences of Motiba and Bansidhar themselves, who shared some events of their early lives in the Ashram, and close to a dozen photographs depicting them over the years.

Pallava Rock Architecture and Sculpture

— Text and Photographs by Elisabeth Beck

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry, in association with EastWest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd.

262 pp., ISBN: 978-81-88661-46-6, Rs 1200

Size: 21x28 cm

Binding: Hard Cover

Divided into sections devoted to the eras of two great Pallava kings, Mahendravarman and Narasimha Mahamalla, this book describes the development of the Pallava cave temples in Tamil Nadu from their early,

primitive outlines to the intricately sculpted creations of Mamallapuram. Enriched by more than 200 black and white photographs and illustrations and printed entirely on art paper, it provides both extensive historical backgrounds to these eras and the panoramic details of rock architecture and sculpture as developed during these times. The author has used quotations from Sri Aurobindo's works, primarily *The Renaissance in India and Other Essays on Indian Culture*, to add a spiritual dimension to the historical, cultural, and traditional religious explanations behind the temple depictions.



Deliberations on *The Life Divine*: Volume One (Book I: Chapters I-VI) Chapterwise Summary Talks

— Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Puducherry

187 pp., ISBN: 978-81-901891-5-6, Rs 160

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

The first in a series of projected volumes, this book is a transcribed edited version of talks delivered by the author on the first six chapters of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*. Dr Reddy's approach is to explain in the simplest of terms the main philosophical arguments presented by Sri Aurobindo by showing how he takes up an argument from multiple viewpoints and then finds a natural and unifying synthesis through spiritual experience and intellectual thought. The author has kept intact the direct, expository tone of the talks, making this an easily approachable book. Each chapter studies the main arguments in brief and is followed by lecture notes that encapsulate the contents in outline form. *see review on page 23*

Understanding Thoughts of Sri Aurobindo

— Articles by various authors

Publisher: D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi in Association with Jadavpur University, Kolkata 317 pp.,

ISBN: 978-81-246-0402-1, Rs 520

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Hard Cover



This anthology of penetrating essays that explore and explain the avenues of thought laid out by Sri Aurobindo in his major writings offers to the reader a deep and wide look at philosophy, evolution, education, poetry and art, man and his relations, politics and the state, and yoga and psychology. The contributors are committed and serious scholars who feel that Sri Aurobindo's thought offers the surest basis for understanding the past, present, and future dilemmas facing man. The book begins with an overview of the seminal ideas of each essay and concludes with some suggestions for new research, based on Sri Aurobindo's work, in view of contemporary advances in science and technology and the current interest in transformative practices throughout all fields of study.

Nama-Japa in the Yoga of Transformation

— Ramkrishna Das

Publisher: Auro Seva Trust, Puducherry

81 pp., Rs 60

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

Translated and revised from the original Oriya text, this book is a passionate argument for the effectiveness of *nama-japa* in Sri Aurobindo's yoga. The author's premise is that through all the difficulties and arduous trials of the yoga of transformation, the safest and least difficult path is that of complete surrender to the Mother, and that the most direct way to achieve such a surrender is by the constant repetition of the Mother's name. In concise and affirming language, he describes how to use *nama-japa* in work, in worldly life, to overcome obstacles from within and attacks from adverse forces, and how to make its practice natural, spontaneous, and effective. *see review on page 16*

Sri Aurobindo and the Advent of the Supermind

— Gopal Bhattacharjee

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Ranchi

228 pp., Rs 125

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Hard Cover



In his role as a Secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Society, the author has travelled widely and addressed many different types of audiences, often introducing his listeners to Sri Aurobindo's thought and integral yoga. This book is a collection of Bhattacharjee's lectures and talks dealing with a range of topics: Sri Aurobindo's vision of the

future society, human unity, human evolution, integral education, what it means to do the Mother's work, Sri Aurobindo's role in the movement of national awakening, and two of Sri Aurobindo's major works, *The Life Divine* and *Savitri*.

(Revised edition 2006, now available with SABDA)

Image, Symbol and Myth in Sri Aurobindo's Poetry

— G. S. Pakle

Publisher: Harman Publishing House, New Delhi

356 pp., ISBN: 978-81-86622-84-1, Rs 700

Size: 14x21 cm

Binding: Hard Cover

Beginning with a literary survey of the terms image, symbol, and myth, this critical study of Sri Aurobindo's poetry sets his unique use of these devices in the context of English poetic development. The author analyses Sri Aurobindo's use of imagery and symbolism by examining in detail the entire range of his poetry. He concludes by placing Sri Aurobindo as one of the greatest symbolists of modern English poetry for the way he uses image, symbol and myth to represent not only past and present realities but also the future. This fusion creates a new poetic mode, crafted to express Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision of the future.

see review on page 19

The Garden of Man and other stories from ancient times

— Medhananda

Publisher: Sri Mira Trust, Puducherry

87 pp., ISBN: 978-81-86413-35-7, Rs 150

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

An avid student of ancient symbol-languages, Medhananda wrote this book of translations and interpretations, almost meditations, on the meanings behind three symbol-texts: a 3500-year old hieroglyphic message from an Egyptian tomb, the iconic image of the tree as presented in several ancient cultures, and an old Egyptian fairy tale. He views and presents these as teaching images, symbols that lead the reader towards self-awareness.

see review on page 21

Immortal Wisdom from ancient times in myths, tales and legends

— Medhananda

Publisher: Sri Mira Trust, Puducherry

177 pp., ISBN: 978-81-86413-32-6, Rs 190

Size: 14x22 cm; Binding: Soft Cover

Medhananda, a German disciple who served as the librarian of the Sri Aurobindo Library for many years, was also a researcher and interpreter of the symbols in ancient cultures. In this book he examines several myths, tales, and legends in the light of mystic experience. What he sees are not stories about nature gods or tribal histories of kings and warriors, but facts, events and powers of the inner life. For him Heracles is not the muscle-bound hunter and hero of Greek myth, but the seeker of ultimate Truth, a symbol of the awakening consciousness of man. Other interpretations concern tales from ancient Egypt, the Bible, and the Brothers Grimm. *see review on page 21*

Narad's Arrival at Madra

— R. Y. Deshpande

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry

471 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7058-839-9, Rs 150

Size: 14x22 cm

Binding: Soft Cover

The author takes the 83-line opening passage from *Savitri*, "The Book of Fate", which announces and describes the arrival of the sage Narad at Aswapati's palace in Madra, as the focus of his study, suggesting it as a point of entry to plunge into the very heart of the mystery of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem. He follows several discussion threads suggested by the passage, including the ancient theory of five elements and their deeper subtle-occult chemistry, a varied look at evolution's scientific and occult-yogic aspects and its fullest gnostic possibilities, and a deeper examination of a few key phrases from these lines of poetry that illumine the significance of Narad's appearance in the narrative. *see review on page 17*



Seeds

— Maggi

Publisher: Maggi, Puducherry

104 pp., Rs 450

Size: 20x28 cm

Binding: Hard Cover

Maggi Lidchi-Grassi introduces her new volume of poems by recounting her experience of the force that descended on 1st January 1969 and how its descent released a wave of poetic activity in her. The poems in this collection are intensely personal reflections, recording the inner experiences of a seeker through her spiritual struggles, awakenings, and moments of grace at the feet of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Integral Education***A Foundation for the Future***

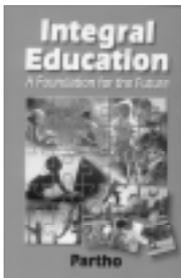
— Partho

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry, in association with UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd.

306 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7476-535-2, Rs 525

Size: 14x22 cm; Binding: Hard Cover

The premise of this book is that if the goal of man is to evolve into a higher being capable of manifesting a divine consciousness, then this ideal must move beyond the realm of individual yogic practices and be seriously and purposefully taken up by societies through the propagation of a new kind of education. Based on his own practice as a teacher and teacher educator, the author describes the characteristics of an integral teacher and an integral learning environment and how these differ, in essence and in detail, from the current mode of education generally followed in the modern world. Set within the framework of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's thoughts on integral education, the book is an experimental manual for changing the way most teachers view both the process of learning and the child who is at the centre of that process.

**Introduction to Integral Education*****An Inspirational Guide***

— Sraddhalu Ranade

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo International Institute for Educational Research, Auroville

288 pp., ISBN: 978-81-7509-097-2, Rs 300

Size: 14x22 cm; Binding: Soft Cover



Based on a series of teacher-training workshops conducted across India, this book aims to introduce and orient parents and teachers to integral education: a new approach to learning and teaching, a new attitude and mindset that focuses on responding to each child's unique needs and learning style. Chapters are organised first to reveal the foundations of this new approach, then to provide strategies to help move from the old ways of teaching to the new, followed by practical classroom projects and techniques, and finally an examination of the kinds of changes teachers and parents must undergo to become the inspirational guides their students and children need.

OTHER LANGUAGES**GREEK**

The Mother — Sri Aurobindo Rs 120
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Lights on Yoga — Sri Aurobindo Rs 120
ISBN: 978-960-430-287-1

The Riddle of this World — Sri Aurobindo Rs 120
ISBN: 978-960-430-289-5

ITALIAN

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ISBN: 978-81-7058-829-0

BENGALI

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Bharater Swadhinata Sangrame Sri Aurobindo
Abirbhab — Compilation Rs 150

(see page 7)

Aamar Ma — Surendra Nath Jauhar Rs 60
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Ved o Sri Aurobindo — Gauri Dharmapal Rs 50

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**Extract from one of Sri Aurobindo's letters
published in *Autobiographical Notes and Other
Writings of Historical Interest***

27.1.35

Durgadas

I have written to you in my last letter about sending money—I would have sent at once on receiving your letter of the 14th, but you have asked me not to do so till you write to me—you indicate also an uncertainty about your address. I hope you will write at once and let me know what you need. There is no reason why you should have to rely on others....If a clear and precise arrangement can be made so that you may not be in embarrassment at any time, that will be the best. Otherwise you ought not to hesitate to write to me each time as soon as it is necessary.

...

As to your ill-health, what do you wish me to tell you? Treatment (if it is good) and change of climate when necessary suggest themselves; but at bottom the difficulty is a difficulty experienced by us all—the disharmony between the light and power that is coming down and the obscure body consciousness which is accustomed to respond to disharmonious forces. It is precisely this point at which we are labouring here—and, as always happens, the difficulties to be met become immediately acute. Take treatment if you find it helps you and change climate; but the inner victory here is the means of the final solution.

Sri Aurobindo

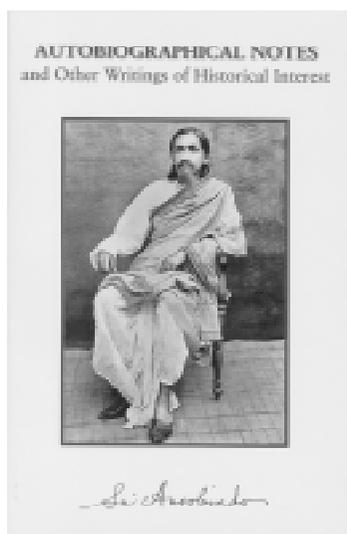
From Note on the Texts: Durgadas Shett, a member of a wealthy family of industrialists based in Chandernagore, sent significant amounts of money to Sri Aurobindo through Motilal Roy before 1922. In 1934 his family property was distributed, and he gave most of his share to Sri Aurobindo. Afterwards he lived an austere life; at times he was dependent on Sri Aurobindo for cash for ordinary expenses.

Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest

FROM PERSONAL PREDICAMENTS TO TRANSPERSONAL ALTITUDES

“...when I came to Calcutta in 1913, Aurobindo was already a legendary figure. Rarely have I seen people speak of a leader with such rapturous enthusiasm and many were the anecdotes of this great man, some of them probably true, which travelled from mouth to mouth,” wrote Netaji Subhas Chandra in *An Indian Pilgrim*. By then Sri Aurobindo had already ‘disappeared’ from the palpable political scene for three years. One can imagine the overabundance of rumours and anecdotes in circulation when the news spread, early in 1910, that a warrant had been issued against Sri Aurobindo but that the police were unable to trace him. The quality and quantity of such rumours can be assessed from the statement the *Karmayogin*, that had come under the editorship of Sister Nivedita, was obliged to issue in March 1910, declaring that Sri Aurobindo had, indeed, not gone over to Tibet and “if he is doing any astral business with Kuthmi or any of the other great Rishis, the fact is unknown to his other *Koshas*.”

Once it was authentically known that Sri Aurobindo had chosen Pondicherry for his abode and that he was engrossed in Yoga, the curiosity about him and interest in him among the intelligentsia of the time took a new turn and several authors came forward to write his biography. In fact, the very first biography of him in English, *Life of Aurobindo Ghose* by R. Palit, came out the very next year, in 1911. While the well-written book had tried projecting the ideas of Sri Aurobindo as they were known by then, in his enthusiasm the author did not care to check his facts and mentioned, instead of Surat, Pune as the site of the historic Congress split. (Alas, even recently, writing about Sri Aurobindo, a celebrated contemporary writer refers to the ruler of Baroda as Madhavrao Sindhia.)



But some of the early biographers had the great good fortune of getting their errors corrected by Sri Aurobindo himself, though he did it because of the persistent appeals from the authors and because he could not have shut his eyes to the glaring “inaccuracies of fact” staring him in the face. He, however, saw no point in these well-meaning endeavours of his would-be biographers. As he wrote to one such aspiring spirit: “I see that you have persisted in giving a biography—is it really necessary or useful? The attempt is bound to be a failure, because neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for man to see.”

The last clause in the quote is the precise-most statement on the cause of nobody being able to write a biography of Sri Aurobindo. We are still far from mastering any insight into his actions in the planes of Consciousness, glimpses of which we may have in the epic *Savitri*. Probably nowhere else his real task, his struggle to accomplish that task, his sacrifice and success – to whatever extent our human terms and values could describe them – had been more precisely summarized than on his *Samadhi*, through the Mother’s words.

Here then we can sense yet another trait of supreme nobility – or call it divinity – of Sri Aurobindo. Engrossed though he was in exploring the alpha and omega of Consciousness, he did not pass over as simply shallow, superficial or phony the emotions, attitudes, beliefs, philosophies, fancies and fascination of the people around him. With infinite patience he corrected them, disarmed them of their petty notions and appreciated, helped and blessed wherever there was a sign of openness towards the light he sought to bring down into the twilight of our sensibility.

Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest is a compendium of these interventions of Sri Aurobindo: of numerous corrections and remarks on the efforts of authors trying to reconstruct the events constituting his life on the surface, of his observations on several matters of historical importance both national and international, his letters to newspapers, as well as his statements on his Yoga and the Ashram, spanning a period of about six decades. While some of these pieces had

been compiled earlier in *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* and in one or two other books, this volume presents several items hitherto unpublished in any book. This apart, what imparts to the volume a new character is its editorial arrangement and cardinally important footnotes.

Most of the items are Sri Aurobindo's letters, written to a wide range of people including seekers, his associates in the earlier phase of his life and his relatives, as well as to political personages including Bipin Chandra Pal, Joseph Baptista, B.S. Munje, C.R. Das, S. Radhakrishnan, Morarji Desai, Surendra Mohan Ghosh, Kailash Nath Katju and K. M. Munshi. The communications are personal, yet what arise from them are transpersonal illuminations.

Issues which had remained a question for many – such as Sri Aurobindo's unwillingness to see Gandhi-ji despite the latter's eagerness for it – get explained through Sri Aurobindo's own words. Those who think that there was no difference between the political ideologies of Sri Aurobindo and Tilak should feel enlightened in reading Sri Aurobindo's letter of December 1, 1922, to Barindra Kumar Ghose. This was in response to Barindra Kumar informing him that C.R. Das proposed to publish a portion of a letter he (Das) had received from Sri Aurobindo. Out of context, the passage intended to be reproduced could mean that Sri Aurobindo supported some policies of Gandhi or of Tilak. But, says Sri Aurobindo: "My own policy, if I were in the field, would be radically different in principle and programme from both, however it might coincide in certain points. But the country is not yet ready to understand its principle or to execute its programme."

There are his observations on the Second World War, Cripps proposal, Wavell Plan, the assassination of Gandhi-ji, etc. that by now are widely known, but put together, they give us a firm angle to look at the situations of those days.

The *Mother India* that in its early phase was being published from Bombay and edited by K.D. Sethna was believed by all to be the journal projecting more or less Sri Aurobindo's views on men and matters.

The topics covered by the volume are varied, and a reader emerges amazed and enlightened about the incredibly wide reach of Sri Aurobindo's comprehension and compassion.

Once, Sethna proposed to write a passage that ended with "till we put ourselves in the care of some Rishis among leaders". Sri Aurobindo of course advised him to change it to "till the eyes of India's leaders see more clearly..." etc. But feel the laughter in it: "I do not know of course who may be acclaimed as the Rishi in question,—the only one with a recognized claim to the title is not likely to be called from Tiruvannamalai to Delhi and would certainly refuse his consent to the transfer. But it is evident that the eyes of your readers will turn at once towards Pondicherry and consider that it is a claim to my appointment either to the place filled so worthily by C.R. or the kindred place admirably occupied by Nehru. I am a candidate for neither office and any suggestion of my promotion to these high offices should be left to other announcers and the last place in which it should occur is *Mother India*. So out with the Rishi."

Some of the letters on the psychological problems of *sadhaks*, elaborate and pointed, are like a tender ray into the consciousness of men, a guide for introspection by seekers; for example, the letter explaining the delusions nurtured by a disciple (pp. 309–12). Thus, mundane and spiritual, political and historical, the topics covered by the volume are varied, and a reader emerges amazed and enlightened about the incredibly wide reach of Sri Aurobindo's comprehension and compassion. He knew the pits to which man could descend and the sublime heights one could touch. But a feeling the reader has is: he was constant like the polestar in his vision of man's destiny. Suddenly, a few lines from a poem by an old, good poet, Longfellow, assumed a new import in this author's mind:

*Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.*

— Manoj Das
Shri Manoj Das is a well-known writer. A Padma awardee, he is a recipient of the Saraswati Samman and Sahitya Akademi award.

see page 7 for pricing and other information

BOOK REVIEWS
**Towards Perfect Health**

— Selections from the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo;
Published by Sri Aurobindo
Ashram Publication Department;
159 pp., Rs 75

Health is a subject of perennial interest, given the precarious balance of human existence. Much has been written and debated on the subject and each is useful in its own place. But nowhere does one find the depth and wideness of vision as in the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This vision includes all details, putting each in its just measure, right proportion, and true relation to the total scheme of things.

For this very reason it is not easy to bring out a compilation of their writings. Every compiler has a tendency to look at the vastness of the Truth they have given to earth and men from his own narrow angle of vision, to express his own subjective tilt and preference. The average reader, perhaps unable to appreciate the exact shade and context of the excerpt, may run the risk of sometimes turning a wide and plastic truth into a fixed formula. It is important therefore not to use a compilation for quoting purposes, but to try living some of the truths that naturally and spontaneously appeal to us. For only when we live a vision can we truly begin to understand its depth and subtlety. The Mother cautions us:

Each one has his own idea and finds out suitable sentences from Sri Aurobindo's writings to support his views. Those who oppose such views can also find suitable sentences from his writings. That is the way mutual opposition works. Nothing can be truly done until Sri Aurobindo's total view of things is taken.

10 October 1954

Words of the Mother CWM 13: 22

Most compilations suffer from this difficulty and this one is no exception. By choosing a few out of the many more things said about the subject, the compiler often ends up overstressing some points while omitting or downplaying others. Unless care is taken, this may create an impression in the mind of a novice reader that this is all that has been said on a subject and

sometimes tend to turn an axiomatic truth into a dogmatic one. Sri Aurobindo cautions us against this tendency:

It is not always safe to apply practically to oneself what has been written for another. Each sadhak is a case by himself and one cannot always or often take a mental rule and apply it rigidly to all who are practising the yoga. What I wrote to X was meant for X and fits his case, but supposing a sadhak with a different (coarse) vital nature unlike X were in question, I might say to him something that might seem the very opposite, "Sit tight on your lower vital propensities, throw out your greed for food—it is standing as a serious obstacle in your way; it would be better for you to be ascetic in your habits than vulgarly animal in this part as you are now." To one who is not taking enough food or sleep and rest in the eagerness of his spirit, I might say, "Eat more, sleep more, rest more, do not overstrain yourself or bring an ascetic spirit into your tapasya." To another with the opposite excess I might speak a contrary language. Each sadhak has a nature or turn of nature of his own and the movement of the yoga of two sadhaks, even where there are some resemblances between them, is seldom exactly the same.

Letters on Yoga

SABCL 22-24: 859-60

Given these inherent limitations, this compilation (as well as other compilations) still serves very useful purposes. Firstly, it gives us a sort of overview of the subject, a general and broad outline as it were.

Purity in the cells cannot be obtained except through conquest of desire; it is the true condition for good health.

— The Mother (p.120)

Secondly, it presents the subject in a very handy and easily referable format. Each entry is subtitled and the passages are relatively short and simple. It is this which makes it an easy-to-read book. Though the subtitles sometimes do not seem to flow smoothly into each other, this is a minor and incidental flaw, perhaps the inevitable result of transposing an exhibition directly

into book form. Thirdly, the passages selected give a direct and practical feel. Many of the sentences chosen have a strong mantric appeal, musing on which can change one's entire perspective on life. Finally, as in all compilations, it brings us directly in touch with the Force inherent in the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

No doubt there are some omissions; also the stress is largely on the aspects of physical health. Perhaps that is why the title *Towards Perfect Health* is justified; the 'towards' holding out a hope of several other companion volumes to come that would cover all aspects of health from every side and give us a more complete picture. The present volume is rather like a trailer that gives us beautiful hints and suggestions; or as if the compilers have led us to their chosen spots on the banks of a wide river of knowledge and insight, inviting us to enter its purifying waters. It is now for the reader to decide how far and deep he or she wishes to go in their personal exploration.

— Dr Alok Pandey

Dr Pandey, psychiatrist and philosopher, is a seeker on the path of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. He writes and lectures extensively on varied issues of life and yoga.

Nama-Japa in the Yoga of Transformation

— Ramkrishna Das; Published by Auro Seva Trust, Puducherry; 81 pp., Rs 60

Sri Ramkrishna Das begins this work with a bold and uncompromising statement: "In the Yoga of Transformation, there is only one sure and certain way to overcome all seemingly insurmountable obstacles, to pass securely through even the most cunning and subtle attacks of the hostile forces and to safely reach the goal. This way is to surrender at the feet of the Mother like a small child and repeat her name. It is never safe to tread the path of this yoga without this impenetrable armour." The rest of the book consists of a lucid and compelling illustration of this central theme.

The words of a realised man carry a natural authority, power, and simplicity that cannot be imitated. Very few people can be said to be in a position to write about this yoga with any true authority and even fewer still could presume to write on the yoga of transformation

from a perspective of illumined experience. But the stamp of Truth can always be recognised. Therefore the discriminating reader will immediately perceive that when writing *Nama-Japa in the Yoga of Transformation*, Sri Ramkrishna Das was doing so as a man who had lived the yoga and embodied it in his own person.

Nama-japa has always been recognised as a potent means of realisation, not only in India but in all countries where mysticism has been practised. The Mother, however, took up *japa* for a new purpose—the transformation of the body. It is this practice of *japa* by the Mother herself and the statements that she made about it that support Sri Ramkrishna Das' thesis that *nama-japa* is the only way to achieve the physical transformation. The Mother stated in 1959: "I have also come to realise that for this *sadhana* of the body, the *mantra* is essential...because only *japa* has a direct action on the body."



But according to the author, it is not only in the final stages of the yoga that *nama-japa* should be practised, rather that it is desirable to practise it from the very outset. For Sri Ramkrishna Das puts forward an idea of immense significance; namely, that there exists an essential identity between the supramental power, the Mother and the Mother's name—'Ma'. The natural implication of this is that the Mother's presence and the transforming action of the supramental power are always with those who constantly repeat the Divine Name with a sincere attitude of aspiration and surrender. Sri Ramkrishna Das further emphasises that in this way even those who have only just begun their *sadhana* can quickly develop constant awareness and intense aspiration.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, what the reader actually encounters in this remarkable text is a powerful impulse pushing him to fulfil his ultimate spiritual destiny. He is shown the goal and shown also a straightforward and entirely safe and dependable means to achieve it—a simple reliance upon the name of the Divine Mother.

— Jonathan Cooke

Jonathan is a sculptor from England and has been a devotee of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo for a long time. Every year he spends several months here in Puducherry.

Narad's Arrival at Madra

— R. Y. Deshpande

Published by Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry; 471 pp., Rs 150

Narad's Arrival at Madra by a *sadhak* of the Integral Yoga, R.Y. Deshpande, is like one of Narad's own devotional hymns, but offered to the profound knowledge of Deshpande's master Sri Aurobindo, who revealed it in his magnificent epic *Savitri*. The fact that Sri Aurobindo put his revelation into a story from the Mahabharata and did not invent his own has its deeper implications, for it reaches into our historical and evolutionary depths, orienting us to the realization of the Vedic Knowledge, providing us with new keys, and integrating our new discoveries with the ancient knowledge.

Professor of Physics at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Puducherry, R.Y. Deshpande is a well-known author and editor of several books and publications dedicated to studies of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, many of which, such as *Satyavan Must Die* (now out of print), *The Ancient Tale of Savitri*, *Vyasa's Savitri*, and *Perspectives of Savitri*, have become books of constant reference, serving a great deal to assist and guide us to a deeper understanding and appreciation of *Savitri*.

This book is somewhat different from the author's previous ones. It has its own depth of subjective reflection into the matter and meaning of creation. Using a wide scope of knowledge from different perspectives, including the mythological, historic, poetic, psychological, philosophical, and even scientific, to arrive at a better comprehension and understanding of the subtle processes of life and the evolutionary ascent that mankind is undertaking, the author brings all of them into the focus of a profound knowledge of *Savitri*, as if offering them to its light to find out and probe their truths, as it were, on the ground of this knowledge-experience. The author is openly engaged in the discovery of his own understanding without the "hesitation of an intellectual," sometimes even daring to step on shaky ground where he could be easily criticized by the reasoning mind, but, carried by the light and force of his deeper intuition, finding his way through to very subtle truths, which may otherwise have remained hidden from him. Here we meet him as a researcher, a scientist, a philosopher, a

yogin, and a poet, who has his luminous insights from his studies of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works and his happy truths, *sunrita* in the words of the Veda, that he wants to share with us.

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* first appeared in 1950–51 and since then it has attracted a varied readership. A number of studies at different levels have also been made during the last fifty years. This book is based on the opening passage of 83 lines from *Savitri*'s "The Book of Fate." It is divided into four major parts and has in all 26 chapters plus a poem on Narad. In the book Sri Aurobindo's Narad comes out in a unique way.



While the *Arrival* introduces the heavenly sage Narad and describes his urgent and important visit to Aswapati's palace in Madra, the focus is on a spiritual being taking a physical form. The ancient *Sankhya* theory of Matter is presented in considerable detail. The discussion of the primordial five elements and the occult-subtle chemistry associated with them is a rewarding exposition. Even as Narad is on his way to Madra, he sings five songs related to this mortal creation and the gnostic possibilities that are open to it. An elaborate discussion on the theories of evolution, finally leading to the appearance of an intermediate race governed by the Mind of Light, the work the Mother was busy with, makes a comprehensive study covering scientific and occult-yogic aspects, metaphysical issues, and the evolution of spiritual Man. There are several discussions related to a few key phrases in the 83-line passage.

The following excerpt might give some idea of *Narad's Arrival at Madra*:

Savitri is a poem, a magnanimous literary work. Not only that.... it is a ... conquering Force.... She is the Daughter of Infinity who speaks with the tongue of an occult fire and has the power to bring to closed sight the forms of the far and the invisible; what is silent takes in her the shapes of sound. By living in her the Real becomes realisable. Let us always live in *Savitri* who gives us the Truth and the things of the Truth....

The Book of Fate itself is unique in several respects. It is crucial; it is strategic too: subject-wise it occurs right in the middle of the story; it marks a sudden turning point in the narration of episodes; in the development of ideas it brings an altogether new element with a forward moving thrust; as a facet of poetic art, we have in it the unexpected rushing unto us with the swift flood of poignant and breathtaking uncertainties; its spiritual lyricism has the enthralling sweetness to remove all anguish from the frail heart of the mortal creature ... if heaven has already been conquered, then it speaks of the victory that shall be won over the night who is standing across the path of the greatly consequential divine Event, the event that must occur; the forces of the past have been quintessenced in it and the possibilities of the evolutionary future at once opened out; in its secret purpose and functioning, with its weighty occult charge, it initiates Savitri, the incarnate divine Power, in a unique and decisive manner to the double Shakti Yoga, the Yoga of gathering the might of God in her soul and of total surrender to the Supreme, in order to prepare herself for the missioned task, to do the work she had come here to accomplish as the heaven-sent Force, the work that she must carry out for which the foundation has been laid by the tapasya of Aswapati; its prophetic declarations make sure that the things that were promised long ago shall now be fulfilled, that the world-destiny in God's will shall be shaped directly by her. Hazardous may be the attempt, and deep and painful the travail, yet in it must be put all, everything, so as to secure the delightful Wager of the Wonderful. It seems that the Yogi-Poet has established in this revelation, in this far-consequential mantric pronouncement the completeness of his mighty Siddhi itself.

This great knowledge of the Veda and of *Savitri* cannot be reached only by reading or even by academic studies but by a constant opening to it and invoking it to illumine our understanding. It will not be visible to our mind, which tries to grasp and understand it, if this higher knowledge is not activated within; it should first enter our consciousness and illumine it and only then we will be able to penetrate into the depth of its content.

The author is openly engaged in the discovery of his own understanding without the "hesitation of an intellectual", carried by the light and force of his deeper intuition.

This growth of a new consciousness within us requires time and sincere aspiration towards self-discovery and self-realization and only then, after some time, it starts gleaming within us with the golden illuminations of the hidden treasures of our self-existence, invoking and nourishing in us, in the words of the Veda, the upward movement of the honey-waves of the ocean-heart towards the upper ocean of the Supreme Existence and the ecstasy of the supreme fulfillment.

The author has entered the premises of that secret knowledge of *Savitri*, traveling and wondering about all matters, delighted with its truths, "mad with the luminous wine" of its Bliss.

— Vladimir Yatsento

Vladimir is a teacher of Sanskrit and Vedic literature in Auroville; having graduated from St. Petersburg University in Sanskrit and General Linguistics, he studied Sanskrit Grammar in Poona University in 1991-92.

*Hesang of the glory and marvel still to be
born
Of Godhead throwing off at last its veil,
Of bodies made of vine and life made bliss,
Immortal sweetness clasping immortal night,
Heart sensing heart, thought looking
straight at thought,
And the delight where every barrier falls,
And the transfiguration and the ecstasy.
And as he sang the demons swept with joy
Foreseeing the end of their long dreadful
task
And the defeat for which they hoped in vain,
And glad release from their self-chosen doom
And return into the One from whom they
came*

Savitri, Book VI, Canto I

Image, Symbol and Myth in Sri Aurobindo's Poetry

— G. S. Pakle; Published by Harman Publishing House, New Delhi; 356 pp., Rs 700 (hard cover)

There have been critics who do not acknowledge Sri Aurobindo as a poet at all. They maintain that he might have been a great yogi or a philosopher or even a critic, but he can never be recognised as a poet. According to them the concrete, the tangible, the sense-perceived so necessary as a poetic faculty is lacking in him. The English critic and poetess Kathleen Raine considers his *Savitri*, for instance, a colossal failure. She argues that he has no capacity to go into William Blake's "minute particulars" which give to acceptable poetry its depth and subtlety. There are Indian critics also, such as Nissim Ezekiel, Alphonso-Karkala, and Keki Daruwala, among others, who go to the extent of saying that following Sri Aurobindo can only be disastrous to the creative spirit. Those who have defended him so far have been his own disciples, therefore creating the general tendency of dismissing them as idolaters. Some of the qualified professionals, on the other hand, tend to remain taciturn, partly awed by his personality, partly because of their inability to research patiently and perceptively some 3000 pages of his poetic work consisting of two epics, narratives, short poems, long poems, sonnets, experiments in different metres, poetic dramas, translations, and an equally vast body of his criticism in the form of essays and letters. Sri Aurobindo has yet to be thoroughly studied as a poet. In that respect the present work of Dr Pakle can be considered a commendable attempt. Coming as it does from an academician, it has the merit of a well-organised presentation rapidly covering a couple of aspects, essentially the aspects of simulacrum. Simulacrum in the broadest sense can be defined as "something that has a vague, tentative, or shadowy resemblance to something else". It could include features such as image, myth, symbol, simile, and metaphor that become powerful aids in describing what otherwise escapes representation. More than just algebraic substitutes or notations, they carry a breathing vibrancy which gives to them their true meaning and significance. Dr Pakle's work is concerned with these features that give poetry its unique character.

In his short introduction to the volume the author says that though there has appeared an enormous amount of literature in the form of books and articles, "there is

very little in all this critical writing that attempts to understand how Sri Aurobindo's poetry operates." If there were attempts, they were only of the nature of "observations". Regarding the literary merit of Sri Aurobindo's poetry there has been raging a debate for a long time, but Dr Pakle feels that in the context of Indian poetry in English there is no useful set of critical values by which to decide the issue. "One must, therefore, fall back on the familiar grounds of 'New Criticism'... so as to arrive at a tentative value judgement." But, surely enough, we already have a vast corpus of Sri Aurobindo's own critical writings to help us enter into the spirit of his poetic creations. If people

do not study them and yet make comments, then they themselves have to be blamed for their inelegance in this respect.



Image, Symbol and Myth broadly deals with four categories: a review of the terms image, symbol, and myth; short poems, poems in new metres and fragments, sonnets; longer poems; and epics. There is an extensive bibliography covering some 350 references. Apropos of myths in Sri Aurobindo's poetry the author says in the conclusion that Sri Aurobindo practised what he prescribed for others to do: "The modern poets should take up old myths and burnish them in order to give them a fresh appearance with some ancient strength, simplicity and sublimity and depth of meaning. It is here that he seems to have chosen the tale of Savitri for the epic. The theme of love's triumph over death in *Love and Death* based on a solemn idea found in the Ruru-Priyumvada tale from the Mahabharata; and the uplifting of a mortal by a divine being in *Urvasie*, both... compositions of the Baroda period, certainly bear companionship to *Savitri*." It is arguable that even *Savitri* was started by Sri Aurobindo when he was in Baroda; but to say the *Savitri* we have can bear "companionship" with the other two will be an unpleasant mistake. There is also the question if the modern poets should take up ancient myths for their creative expressions at all; it will be generally wrong to make any suggestion of any kind to a creative writer. For instance, why can't World War II be an excellent theme for a modern epic?

While reviewing the terms of image, symbol, and myth, the author first goes into their origins and discusses a

few aspects connected with them. This presentation forms a basis for him to examine the poetic creations of Sri Aurobindo. Then we have a chronological survey of the short poems covering the entire period of his writings. Thus, commenting on one of the earliest lines of the poet, “Her life is but a bath of love”, it is suggested that the word “bath” could mean a tub-bath, or a shower bath, possibly both, but the sense of being saturated in love is what is conveyed by it, an original and apt image indeed. The sonnets of the later days, mostly written in the mid 30s, have a different character. Dr Pakle takes a number of them to illustrate the visual aspect present in them. To illustrate: “the symbolic visual image of golden light dominates the sonnet ‘The Golden Light’. The colossal transformation due to the Divine descent within the protagonist’s self is expressed by using visual images of ‘flame’, ‘wine’, ‘temple’, ‘playfield’ and ‘seat’ illustrating the veritable changes that took place in his brain, throat, heart and feet.” This indeed is an important sonnet, written on 8 August 1938, with rich autobiographical contents about the *siddhi* the yogi-poet had achieved. In that sense, his symbols, or visual images, go far beyond their immediate descriptive or literary connotations; they become living realities, powers that stand in front of us in vibrant and luminous form.

The author then goes through the longer poems, mostly written during the Baroda period. He gives a number of examples of the poetic imagery present in them, bringing out the quality of the poems written in those early days. As an illustration, let us see the remark about the ‘star’ image in *Urvashi*: “The poet sets before his readers the symbols of ‘star’ and Pururavas and Urvashi with purpose. They set an example of a Divine adventurer; and they anticipate the descent of the Light into the inner being of the whole human race, which gains thereby immortality. Immortality to Sri Aurobindo is the spiritual continuity of the divinised soul rather than that of bodily existence. Really, it seems a very difficult task to separate the yogi from the poet, the mystic from the worldly man in Sri Aurobindo and this unique achievement is the true mark of his exploration of symbolic potentialities in the objects that surround mankind.” Very true indeed.

For Sri Aurobindo a symbol always expresses a living reality or inward vision or experience of things, making that experience a realisable possibility for awakened souls.

Coming to the epics, about *Ilion* written in quantitative hexameter natural to the English language, Dr Pakle says that “the poet has achieved the rare accomplishment of making the abstract thing like the divine reality.” This has been done successfully “with the help of images of particularly visual and kinaesthetic and abstract kinds”. A fairly elaborate discussion of some of these aspects follows. Thus, about the images of Troy, we have a beautiful example in the following:

Dreamed by the harp of Apollo, a melody
 caught in the marble,
 Out of his mind it arose like an epic canto by
 canto;
 Each of its halls was a strophe, its chambers
 lines of an epode,
 Victor chant of Ilion’s destiny...

This Apollo’s epic, perfect in beauty as a visual symbol, has the power to set the destinies of men and countries into motion.

The *Savitri* section in *Image, Symbol and Myth in Sri Aurobindo’s Poetry* covers roughly one-fifth of the book. The author writes: “Sri Aurobindo has used here the myth of Savitri that certainly comes from the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Mahabharata. The myth of Savitri that he calls a legend, he intends to present in a more realistic vein. And he has presented it as a symbol of the triumph of Love over Death, his most favourite theme.” About the symbolism in *Savitri*: “The symbolism in *Savitri*, even by way of a tentative generalisation, one could say is multiple and complex. If the poem were considered as one integrated symbol, it could be read to mean (i) the poet’s spiritual autobiography, (ii) the genesis and history of human evolution, (iii) the dialectics of consciousness and reality, and (iv) the poet’s quest for an aesthetic perfection.”

Surely, *Savitri* is all this. But, in the case of Sri Aurobindo, reality is as much a symbol as symbol a reality; they become indistinguishable. What we get in that fused identity is the shining concretisation of the potentialities. When symbolism arrived in Europe following Mallarmé, who proposed the view that the act of creation lies in not naming but in suggestion, it was thought that the ever-changing objective world was not a reality but only a reflection, that all that one could

do was to hint at the inner, eternal truth underlying it. “The resulting poetry of this philosophy was intense and complex, full of condensed syntax and symbolic imagery. Their poetry also emphasised the importance of the sound of the verse, creating music through words.” No wonder, these sounds and these words, these charged symbols, will find a most appropriate place in any genuine mystical poetry, poetry coming from the depths of the soul or descending from the heights of the superconscious spirit poised for expression. It is good this aspect has been quite perceptively presented by our author. Yet there are other considerations also.

About the opening line of *Savitri*—“It was the hour before the Gods awake”—the author conjectures if one of the gods mentioned in it is the Muse, Saraswati. There is a tradition that epics open with an invocation to the Goddess of Poetry, and here too it could be so. “Because when on the temporal level of the poem the gods do wake up the change in the atmosphere assumes a lyrical tone. Suddenly the universe becomes synonymous with poetry, as if the waking up of the gods were the revelation of a divine poetry.” The suggestion could be that Sri Aurobindo was invoking Saraswati before he started writing the epic. Is it so? But this line appeared for the first time in his twenty-fifth draft. This would mean that only after those many attempts did she oblige him in giving him the opening line; or else that he realised late in the day that he should make an invocation to her. We wonder. One has to make a distinction between the poetry written by a seer-poet and others, and this must be borne in mind in every respect when comparisons are made.

In that respect the tools of poetry for the poet of *Savitri* acquire the luminosity and keenness of something else, shaped by the powers of the spirit itself. He is the hearer of the Ineffable’s Word and the seer of the Invisible’s Truth-and-Beauty in the calm delight of the creative rush; he is *kavayah satyaśrutah*. In his case a symbol, for instance, always expresses a living reality or inward vision or experience of things, making that experience a realisable possibility for awakened souls; it never is just a “conceptual representation”, an abstraction of some observation, as the professional critics might like to maintain. A symbol in mystic poetry can never be considered as a “detachable ornament”. This is particularly so in the case of Sri Aurobindo’s later sonnets and *Savitri*. Therefore, while studying the literary aspects of his works, a distinction has to be

made as far as his several works are concerned. In other words, there seems to be a difficulty in combining the predictable academic criteria with what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind Aesthesis. Maybe some of these issues could be tackled with focused attention in a future work by the author.

On the whole we must say that Dr Pakle’s *Image, Symbol and Myth in Sri Aurobindo’s Poetry* is a fine piece of professional examination. It should prove to be a valuable aid in scholarly and academic work. In fact, it can very well serve as a textbook at the postgraduate level for students of English literature. However, an exhaustive index and careful proofreading would improve its value. The publishers should also check if the price could be made more affordable for the student community.

— R. Y. Deshpande

Deshpande-ji, a research physicist and currently a professor of physics at SAICE, is a published poet and the author of several book-length studies of Savitri, in addition to other prose works. He also served as associate editor of Mother India for several years.

By Medhananda; Published by Sri Mira Trust, Puducherry

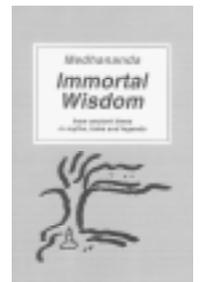
Immortal Wisdom from ancient times in myths, tales and legends

177 pp., Rs 190

The Garden of Man and other stories from ancient times

87 pp., Rs 150

It is an age-old practice in many lands to express the esoteric truths of inner life through the medium of rituals, myths, legends, and fairy tales. Shri Medhananda in his book *Immortal Wisdom* reinterprets these legends, myths, and fairy tales in order to bring out their true significance vis-à-vis the inner spiritual life of man. The interpretations of the symbols – for these myths and tales abound in them – are coherent, consistent, and well-connected to give us a true



understanding of the materials presented. The psychological and spiritual significances escape the normal, uninitiated individual, but Shri Medhananda ferrets them out with consummate ease. The tales then cease to be mere stories but reveal themselves to be storehouses of spiritual knowledge and sempiternal wisdom. The astounding variety of myths and legends from the East and the West reinforce the fact that amid such cultural diversity inner truths are the same everywhere. I shall cull two accounts which have appealed to me very much: “The Gospel according to Thomas that was buried in the sand” [page 93] and “The Birth of the Golden Child” [page 125].

Shri Medhananda’s treatment of these two themes, the former Christian and the latter pagan, is at once original and illuminating, highlighting his quest for that single truth, the one truth expressed differently in different times, climes, and cultures: *ekam sat, viprāh bahuda vadanti* (the truth is one; wise men express it in various ways).

The plethora of Christian sects such as the Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, and various other denominations bear ample evidence of the fact that Jesus Christ, the mystic, *yogi*, seer, and *avatar* of Love, has been more misunderstood than otherwise. The mystics do not speak a simple, direct language. They use symbols, parables, and even paradoxes to express the holistic truth they experience, which cannot be expressed in trenchant mental terms. Many Gospels purporting to be the authentic recordings of Jesus’ sayings have only added to the divisions in Christianity and the real meaning of Jesus’ utterances has taken a back seat. Shri Medhananda asserts that the Gospel according to Saint Thomas is one of the most authentic Gospels although it is “officially regarded as ‘apocryphal’, unauthentic, not admitted to the New Testament canon”. He has made a significant selection of those *logia* (something like epigrams) which, with his interpretations, indisputably establish Jesus as the harbinger of the unity of Man, Nature, and God “who is all and in all”, which the Semitic people, blindfolded by a dualistic religion, could neither comprehend nor digest. Some quotations from the Gospel according to Saint Thomas are presented here:

“Know thyself.” [Log 3]

“If you are one and undivided you will be filled with light but if you divide (yourself) you will be filled with darkness.” [Log 61]

“Whoever drinks my words from me shall become as I am and I myself will become he and that which is hidden will be revealed.” [Log 108]

“Cleave a piece of wood, I am there: lift up the stone and you will find Me.” [Log 77]

This particular *log* reminds us of the *bhakta* Prahlad who, when challenged by his tyrant father Hiranya to show his Vishnu, said ecstatically that the Lord Vishnu was in everything, in the dust as also in the pillar in front of him, meaning that he was all-pervading. This

Medhananda’s interpretations indisputably establish Jesus as the harbinger of the unity of Man, Nature, and God “who is all and in all”, which the Semitic people, blindfolded by a dualistic religion, could neither comprehend nor digest.

state of immanence, a pantheistic truth, is clearly evident in what Jesus said, though he “emphasises that He does not make this claim for himself alone, exclusively, as the church wants us to

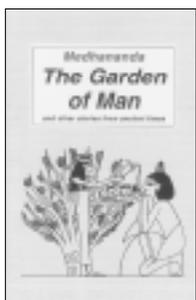
believe, but for everyone”. There is no gainsaying the fact that Shri Medhananda’s selection of Saint Thomas’ Gospel has been done with impeccable insight and excellent judgement.

The second narration is that of “The Birth of the Golden Child”, the birth of Hatshepsut, who became the celebrated Queen of Egypt and the builder of the famous temple at Deir-el-Bahri. The Mother once indicated that she had been Hatshepsut in one of her previous incarnations. At another time she also made a remarkable revelation that her body was specially shaped in her mother’s womb and it was presided over by Mahasaraswati herself. In the account that Shri Medhananda gives, with symbolic pictures, of the birth of Hatshepsut one can see a remarkable parallel to the Mother’s own birth. Hatshepsut’s body was shaped by the high gods of Egypt and she was born embodying the divine consciousness, a golden child.

The apotheosis of Heracles or Hercules, as he is popularly known, is another theme that, under the scrutiny of Shri Medhananda, yields very rich insights

into the labours of Hercules, whose symbolism he unfolds with profound scholarship.

To sum up, right from the beginning to the end, Shri Medhananda gives ample evidence of his erudition and deep understanding of the symbolism in the stories such as Grimm's fairy tales, the myth of Hercules, the Gospel according to Saint Thomas, and the Egyptian tales, legends, and myths, backed up by a profusion of apt pictures, hieroglyphics, and other drawings. The book will be valued by those who want to penetrate deeper into the mystical truths behind the legends and myths of the bygone eras of mankind on earth.



The Garden of Man and other stories from ancient times is cast in the same mould, that of a profound symbolism behind the hieroglyphic depictions of "The Garden of Man", "The Story of the Tree", and "An Old Egyptian Fairytale". The symbolism of the tree connected with esoteric teachings is almost universal. In India, in every

temple, especially in the South, there is not only a *sthala puranam*, the story of the holy place, but also a *sthala vriksha*, the tree associated with the holy site.

Shri Medhananda's interpretations of the Celtic tree of life, the hieroglyphic 'sycamore' (a tree sacred in ancient Egypt) inside a royal cartouche, the archaic cuneiform Elamite tree, etc., underlie the one inalienable fact that the Many, symbolised by the leaves, is nothing but the manifestation of the One, symbolised by the tree. He winds up his expostulations with a reinterpretation of an old Egyptian fairy tale.

On the whole the two books make interesting reading, are valuable additions to the esoteric literature of both the East and the West, and will be an immense aid to the avid and meticulous researchers of such literature.

— K. Balasubramaniam

"Bala-bhai" teaches English, Mathematics, and Numerical Analysis at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education since 1972.

Deliberations on *The Life Divine* (Volume One)

Book I : Chapters I – VI

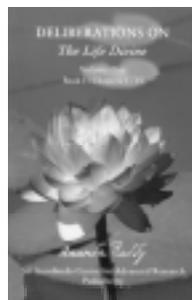
— Ananda Reddy; Published by Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Puducherry; 187 pp., Rs 160

At the end of the first year of publication of the monthly journal *Arya* Sri Aurobindo writes

The problem of thought therefore is to find out the right idea and the right way of harmony; to restate the ancient and eternal spiritual truth of the Self so that it shall re-embrace, permeate and dominate the mental and physical life; to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self discipline and self development so that the mental and psychical life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity; and to seek for the means and motives by which his external life, his society and his institutions may remould themselves progressively in the truth of the spirit and develop towards the utmost possible harmony of individual freedom and social unity.

He continues later,

Our first preoccupation in the "Arya" has therefore been with the deepest thought that we could command on the philosophical foundation of the problem; and we have been so profoundly convinced that without this basis nothing we could say would have any real, solid and permanent value that we have given perhaps too great a space to difficult and abstruse thought whether in the shaping of our own ideas or in the study and restatement of the ancient Eastern knowledge. Our excuse is that we come forward as ourselves learners and students and must begin at the roots to proceed forward safely.



This then is Sri Aurobindo's apology for giving the pride of place among his writings to *The Life Divine*. It is true that *Savitri* is the *ne plus ultra* of the Master's writings, yet I would aver that without first acquiring the philosophical basis of *The Life Divine* the reader is likely to miss some of the profound significance in which the lines of *Savitri* are couched.

The book under review is titled *Deliberations on The Life Divine, Volume One*. Its author is Ananda Reddy. Dr. Reddy is the Director of Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR). The volume under consideration is the transcribed and edited version of the first of his series of talks on Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*. It presents a simplified explanation of the main arguments of the first six chapters of *The Life Divine*. The book is meant for the lay person and the neophyte. By his own admission, Reddy points out that the focus of editing has not been to produce a well-written book but rather to retain the tenor of the original talks. Reddy dispenses with the literary and philosophical idiom and presents his ideas plainly. Yet this is not a bald presentation. Reddy quotes from various sources to buttress his explanations. Each chapter is followed by lecture notes which are a concise summary of the arguments. The book also emphasizes the continuity of thought that links the various chapters of *The Life Divine*. This will be very helpful for a newcomer to Sri Aurobindo's thought, or even to philosophy in general.

Man can be distinguished from other creatures of the earth because of one basic element in him—discontentment! Man is the only creature who is dissatisfied with what he is or what he has. And that is the greatest quality or *guna* of the human being.

p.174

forbidding to some people as they first approach this monumental work. Reddy's lectures are easy to digest and will help allay any concern a lay reader may have of *The Life Divine* being beyond the scope of his ability to understand.

"Things should be made as simple as possible but not simpler." If one may point out a flaw in an otherwise welcome volume it is this: in his eagerness to be intelligible to the layman Reddy sometimes compromises on the real purport of Sri Aurobindo's words. To give but one example, on page 16 of his book Reddy

points out that human progress towards the next step in evolution comes through revolutionary individuals like Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, Swami Vivekananda and others. Now in this example Vivekananda is the only spiritual figure. When Sri Aurobindo talks about the higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity as coming through "by a revolutionary individual effort", surely he did not have Leonardo da Vinci or Albert Einstein in mind—however great by human standards they might have been. In fact in a letter Sri Aurobindo writes, "One man who earnestly pursues the Yoga is of more value than a thousand well-known men."

When we consider the value that Sri Aurobindo attached to *The Life Divine* the didacticism of Reddy's approach can be justified. Part of *The Life Divine*'s complexity stems from the complexity of the subject matter itself, which is mostly far removed from the workaday world. The other element is the architectonic style which Sri Aurobindo adopts for his rational presentation of spiritual experience. These, coupled with Sri Aurobindo's austere classical prose, may appear

For a person not trained or gifted in meditative or even speculative reason this volume can be of immense help. And if it leads aspirants to read *The Life Divine* on their own it would have fulfilled its humble but useful purpose.

— Hemant Kapoor

Hemant is an M.Sc. in Chemistry from I.I.T., Kanpur. He is on the editorial team of the Mother India journal. His interests include poetry and philosophy.

An omnipresent Reality is the truth of all life and existence whether absolute or relative, whether corporeal or incorporeal, whether animate or inanimate, whether intelligent or unintelligent; and in all its infinitely varying and even constantly opposed self-expressions, from the contradictions nearest to our ordinary experience to those remotest antimonies which lose themselves on the verges of the Ineffable, the Reality is one and not a sum or concourse.

The Life Divine, Chapter V: The Destiny of the Individual