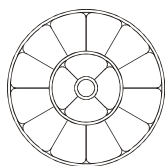


Sabda Newsletter

(A publication of SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605 002)

Number 16

August 2000

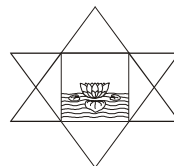


The Mother's Symbol

The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.

The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.

The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.



Sri Aurobindo's Symbol

The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both — the central square — is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme — the lotus.

The water — inside the square — represents the multiplicity, the creation.

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 RECENT PUBLICATIONS
Works of Sri Aurobindo**Baji Prabhou**

(Illustrated) 28 pp., Rs.45.00
ISBN 81-7060-126-6

An illustrated edition of Sri Aurobindo's poem founded on the historical incident of the heroic self-sacrifice of the Maratha warrior Baji Prabhou Deshpande.

**The Human Cycle**

269 pp., Rs.125.00
ISBN 81-7058-541-4 (now available as a separate book)

An explanation of the growth of human society from a psychological perspective and its evolutionary destiny.

The Ideal of Human Unity

325 pp., Rs.150.00
ISBN 81-7058-542-2 (now available as a separate book)

Sri Aurobindo discusses the possibility of the unification of the human race; the insufficiencies of the past efforts and the principles which are to be followed "in order that real human unity may be achieved".

The Ideal of the Karmayogin

65 pp., Rs.35.00
ISBN 81-7058-543-0

A collection of articles that appeared in the weekly review "Karmayogin" (1909-10), the last two being written by Sister Nivedita. Figuring among these articles are: "The Awakening Soul of India", "The Strength of Stillness" and "The Stress of the Hidden Spirit".

Letters on "Savitri"

113 pp., Rs.60.00
ISBN 81-7058-585-6

Written during the 1930s and 1940s, almost all addressed to K.D.Sethna.

Works of the Mother**On Education**

512 pp., Rs.215.00
ISBN 81-7058-554-6

A collection of articles, messages, letters and conversations on the subject of education.

Contents: Essays and conversations outlining an educational discipline aimed at developing all the principal faculties of the individual.

Correspondence and conversations explaining various as-

pects of the teaching method known as 'free progress system' which is followed at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, India.

Articles dealing with the fundamentals of physical education, with the disciplines and attitudes helpful to developing a strong, healthy and conscious body.

Three dramas, written for the annual dramatic performance of the International Centre of Education.

Prayers and Meditations

(Calligraphic)
132 pp., Rs.150.00

This calligraphic edition contains about one fifth of the complete collection of the prayers and meditations. Most of the prayers in this book were either translated by Sri Aurobindo, or by disciples and thoroughly revised by Sri Aurobindo. The text is generally penned in minuscule, a semi-uncial cursive script with small rounded characters.

**Growing up with the Mother**

— The Mother's Correspondence with Tara Jauhar
222 pp., Rs.100.00
ISBN 81-900175-4-3

Tara Jauhar had the privilege of close proximity to the Mother for many years. This book is a collection of correspondence, messages and conversations of the Mother with Tara, "showing how the Mother patiently and persistently helped and guided a young girl towards the discovery of her inner being and held out Her ever helping hand, nurtured her growth, and led her on to the path of spirituality".

**Compilations****Homage to Sri Aurobindo**

146 pp., Rs.400.00 (hard cover)

An album on Sri Aurobindo with numerous photographs, most of them accompanied by a quotation from 'Savitri' and a passage selected from the writings of Sri Aurobindo. The intention of these passages is to give an idea of the development in Sri Aurobindo's life during that period as far as possible in Sri Aurobindo's own words. A short biography of Sri Aurobindo is also included.

Ideas and Ideals

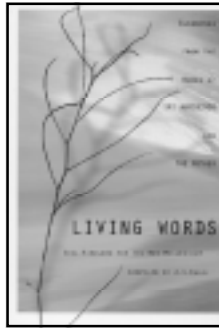
100 pp., Rs.45.00
ISBN 81-7060-142-8

A collection of extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo, covering a wide variety of problems that confront man and society today. Topics range from “The Credits of Materialism” and “Leadership in Politics” to “On Original Thinking” and “Silence and Speech”.

Living Words

198 pp., Rs.50.00
ISBN 81-7058-588-0

The central message of this book is that evolution — which is a progressive unfoldment of the Spirit through progressively higher levels of consciousness — has reached a stage where the next leap of consciousness is preparing to take place, the leap from mind to that which is beyond mind — the Supermind. The writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are felt as communicating not so much to the mind as to the soul. The words do not just convey certain ideas but also induce a psychic or soul state of consciousness. They are living words, vibrant with a consciousness that is greater than that of the mind. The words have the ring of the spirit and are capable of kindling the spirit when one is in a receptive state. The great majority of extracts contained in this book have been selected because of this quality.

**Powers Within**

180 pp., Rs.50.00
ISBN 81-7058-535-X

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

Quotation Calendar

Rs.100.00

A desk calendar with one page per day, each page having a quotation. Only dates are shown and not days of the week, so it can be used for any year.

Sadhana

56 pp., Rs.30.00
ISBN 81-7060-122-3

This compilation primarily from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother attempts to throw some light on basic practical questions confronting the spiritual seeker, such as “how to read the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?”, “what is the meaning of selfless work?” and “what is one’s

role in life?” Also included is an essay of Nolini Kanta Gupta, “The Ideal Centre”.

Sri Aurobindo on The Tantra

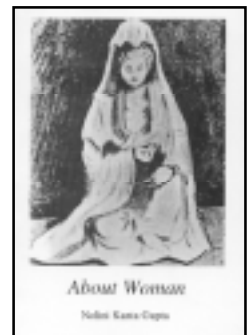
42 pp., Rs.40.00
ISBN 81-7509-039-1

Sri Aurobindo writes “The Tantric system is in its aspiration one of the greatest attempts yet made to embrace the whole of God manifested and unmanifested in the adoration, self-discipline and knowledge of a single human soul”. This compilation from Sri Aurobindo’s writings focuses on a remarkable though grossly misunderstood Yogic system, the Tantra.

Other Authors**About Woman**

— Nolini Kanta Gupta
98 pp., Rs.75.00

A collection of 13 articles on the subject of women. These do not figure in the current English edition of the Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta. Some of the articles are: “On Conjugal Relation”, “Economic Independence of Woman” and “Is Motherhood the Aim of Woman’s Life?” The book gives a unified view of problems concerning women, combining and synthesising the historical, psychological and spiritual perspectives. Spanning the past, present and future, it provides a penetrating insight into the individual, social and cultural aspects of issues relating to women.

**Auroville – A Dream**

(with photographs)
— Ireno Guerci
143pp., Rs.850.00

A collection of photographs evoking the dynamism, the unpredictability and above all, the spontaneous joy and camaraderie of the living laboratory of evolution that is Auroville.

Designing a New Social Order

— Dr. G.P. Gupta
14pp., Rs.12.00
ISBN 81-7060-141-X

Man’s attempts to develop the perfect society have failed because the approach has been external and cosmetic, employing outer institutions and machinery. The only true solution, according to Sri Aurobindo, is to bring forward the spiritual dimension in man and establish, in the individual as well as the collectivity, its direct governance over the physical, vital and mental life of humanity. Focussing on this theme,

this monograph is a collection of excerpts from Sri Aurobindo's writings on the future society with appropriate editorial comments inserted by the compiler.

Glimpses of Vedantism in Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought

— Samar Basu

73 pp., Rs.45.00

ISBN 81-86413-07-3

The philosophy of the Vedanta was an integral vision of life. In its view no area of human activity, including politics, can be fully understood without an insight into the source and goal of life itself. Sri Aurobindo wrote "All political ideals must have relation to the temperament and past history of the race. The genius of India is separate from that of any other race." This book presents the "New Ideal" advocated by Sri Aurobindo ninety years ago. Though the roots of the ideal are ancient, it is of striking relevance to the problems of politics today.

See review on page 9



Gopal Dass Gupta – A Little-Known Sadhak

38 pp., Rs.15.00

ISBN 81-86413-09-X

Articles by various acquaintances of Gopal Dass Gupta recalling their association with him. Gopal Dass Gupta lived in the Ashram from 1969 till he left his body in 1998, the major part of which was spent working in the Archives department.

Images of the Future

— Archaka

83 pp., Rs.90.00

ISBN 81-86413-11-1

Philosophical essays inspired by Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution and vision of the future, based on the sense of inevitability of man's passage to a new consciousness. The goals of science and mysticism, both determined by the same cosmic necessities, are reconciled.

See review on page 19



Management with a Difference

— Dr. G.P. Gupta

71pp., Rs.40.00

ISBN 81-7060-144-4

A collection of articles expounding a new approach to the field of management, based on Sri Aurobindo's teachings:

"Management by Consciousness", "Changing Values in Business", "Emerging Dimensions in Business" and "The Mother's Ministry of Management".

Musings On the Mother's "Prayers & Meditations"

(Volume 2) — Shyam Kumari

351 pp., Rs.250.00

This second volume in the series covers the prayers the Mother wrote between April 1 and September 14, 1914. K.D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) observes regarding this book: " 'Musings' strikes us as reverberations of the author's inmost contact with the depths of spirituality that shine out from the Mother's Prayers and Meditations. It will make the readers aspire for such reverberations for themselves".

The New Panorama

— Raman Reddy

138 pp., Rs.60.00

A collection of short stories and reflections, striking for bringing out in humorous fashion the eternal human predicament of reconciling knowledge of and belief in an ideal, and its application in practice, often resulting in tragi-comic situations full of hypocrisy and embarrassment.



On Democracy and Secularism

— Edited by Dr. G.P. Gupta & M.S. Srinivasan

36pp., Rs.15.00

ISBN 81-7060-140-1

The first part of this book is a compilation from Sri Aurobindo's writings bringing together His penetrating insights on democracy and secularism. These have a living relevance for the present and future of the political life of India and the world and can serve as a 'guiding star' to the politicians, statesmen and administrators of Free India. The second part is an essay by the editors on 'Religion, Humanism and Secularism', based on Sri Aurobindo's views.

On the Threshold of a New Age with Medhananda

199 pp., soft cover Rs.250.00, hard cover Rs.295.00

ISBN 81-86413-14-6

In this volume, containing fragments of conversations recorded in French by Yvonne Artaud, Medhananda "plays the role of an invisible teacher or guide, who unveils on the screen of our intelligence the different mantles that constitute the universe as well as ourselves. He starts from the physical one — all vibratory in spite of its material appearance; and reaches the most fundamental mode of movement of the absolute One towards Oneself. Then everything becomes possible, beneath the baton of some invisible and unpredictable Conductor, who can only be Ourselves".

Paging the Unknown

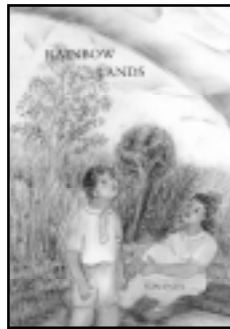
— Dr. R.Y. Deshpande
63 pp., Rs.50.00
ISBN 81-7058-590-2

Poems by Dr. R.Y. Deshpande

Rainbow Lands

— Sunanda
65pp., Rs.40.00
ISBN 81-86413-12-X

A story for children, with illustrations.

**Reminiscences**

— Nolini Kanta Gupta and
K.Amrita (old edition rebound)
190 pp., soft cover Rs.20.00,
hard cover Rs.40.00

Reminiscences of two well-known sadhakas who were present in Pondicherry during the early days of Sri Aurobindo's stay in the French enclave. They span a period of over sixty years, and are splashed with wit and humour.

Sri Aurobindo and the New Millennium

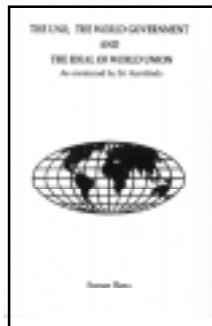
— Dr. R.Y. Deshpande
340 pp., Rs.150.00

This collection of diverse articles is an endeavour to provide a multiform glimpse of all that Sri Aurobindo attempted and achieved, touching upon various aspects such as the role of the Avatar in this creation, the problem of inconscience opening itself to the sense of its concealed divinity, the recognition of the role of death in the process of transformation and the possibility of the arrival of the New Man.

**The UNO, The World Government and The Ideal of World Union**

— Samar Basu
118 pp., Rs.100.00

This book in the form of correspondence with an imaginary character, traces the evolution of various World bodies such as the League of Nations, the UNO and the Federal World Government. It analyses their shortcomings and failures and shows, in Sri Aurobindo's light, the steps that need to be taken at the global level to move closer towards the ideal of human unity. *See review on page 13*

**Sri Aurobindo - The Poet**

— K.D.Sethna
436 pp., Rs.180.00
ISBN 81-7058-578-3

The essays collected in this book are the result of a penetrating search for the soul of poetry and the possibilities of its highest expression. Readers will find in this volume critical perceptions which will enable them to come into an intimate contact with Sri Aurobindo's poetry in all its varied range. The author gives a succession of interpretative insights, attempting to reveal the "many-splendoured" poet in his essentiality.

**The Spirit's Manifest Home: The Story of Sri Aurobindo Ashram Delhi Branch**

— Edited and Compiled by Makarand Paranjape
168pp., Rs.50.00

The New Delhi branch of Sri Aurobindo Ashram was founded over forty years back. This book attempts to tell the story of this unique spiritual centre, of its birth, growth, and development over the decades to its present position of influence and eminence.

The Story of a Soul

— Huta
103pp., Rs.100.00
ISBN 81-87372-20-6

'The Story of a Soul' runs from 1954 to 1973. This first volume covers the period up to the end of 1955. It contains extracts from the spiritual diaries of Huta in which day-to-day experiences, aspirations and visions are recorded. These were all seen and corrected by the Mother. The book includes many letters and messages from the Mother to Huta, as well as records of conversations between them, mainly touching on spirituality and art.

**Sri Aurobindo Mandir (Annual) 1999**

— Edited by Manik Mitra
109pp., Rs.50.00

Gavesana (Annual) 1999

— Edited by Dr.Arabinda Basu
20pp., Rs.30.00

Sri Aurobindo Circle — 1998

— Edited by Dr.S.Ambrirajan
85pp., Rs.50.00

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88 pp., Rs.75.00

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120 pp., Rs.100.00

— Edited by Ameeta Mehra

These three books form part of a series of compilations from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. They have emerged from workshops and interactive sessions on the concerned subjects, and therefore show a strong practical orientation.

Beyond Man

— Georges Van Vrekhem

544pp., now available in soft cover, Rs.250.00

ISBN 81-7223-327-2

This book is a fount of information on the life and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Covering the entire period of their lifetime, it is “based on documents which have never been presented before as a whole by other authors. It gives a surprising look behind the scenes of the history of this century. It presents a positive evaluation of the crisis our Earth is subject to at this very moment and it opens a vertiginous but hopeful perspective on the coming of a superhuman species and a divine life upon Earth”.

A Dual Power of God

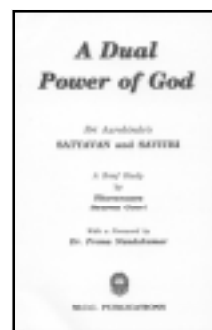
— Sitaramayya & Swarna

Gouri

79pp., Rs.60.00

Without the Conscious-Soul, Prakriti cannot act; without the Nature-Soul, Purusha must remain unmanifest. This philosophy of ‘dual power’ becomes an experienced reality in Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem ‘Savitri’. ‘Savitri’ presents a Conquest of Death. The role of Satyavan and Savitri — we cannot think of one without the other — as the Dual Power of God in the great endeavour of conquering Death is the object of this study.

See review on page 16

**Essential Writings of Sri Aurobindo**

— Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo

388pp., now available in soft cover, Rs.195.00

ISBN 0-19-564976-1

This selection from the major works and letters of Sri Aurobindo attempts to give a balanced coverage of the different phases and aspects of his concerns. It will interest students of Indian history, philosophy and literature, as well as spiritual seekers.

On Indian Independence and on War and Peace

— Edited by Amalendu De

57 pp., Rs.25.00

A selection of Sri Aurobindo’s views and messages on topics such as Swaraj, India’s independence, the Second World

War and Germany after the War, and of the Mother's views and messages on the Freedom of India, the India-Pakistan War of 1965, the Bangladesh crisis and other such events.

Sri Aurobindo on Indian Art

226 pp., Rs.2000.00 (Hard cover)

ISBN 81-85822-61-1

This book contains the complete text of the chapters on architecture and sculpture from 'The Foundations of Indian Culture' as well as excerpts from this text. It is lavishly produced with over 150 duotone photographs depicting a wide variety of Indian sculpture and architecture.



Sri Aurobindo on English Poets (Part 1)

131 pp., Rs.80.00

A selection bringing together most of the important writings of Sri Aurobindo on some of the major poets of English literature such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton, compiled mostly from "The Future Poetry" and "Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art".



Auroville — An International Township

Rs.995.00

A CD-ROM on Auroville with extensive text, photos, music, slide shows and video clips.

The CD-ROM also contains extensive information on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The entire text of the CD-ROM is in English.

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Vedarthada Avagahane ISBN 81-86595-08-2	Sri Aurobindo	12.00	Jeeva Geetangal	Janani Dasan	12.00
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REVIEWS

Glimpses of Vedantism in Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought

(By Samar Basu; Published by Sri Mira Trust; Price Rs.45/-, pp.73)



Samar Basu's attempts at bringing out the Vedantic ideals in Sri Aurobindo's political thought only confirms that with Sri Aurobindo "spirituality explained politics and politics fulfilled itself in spirituality". All along his brief political engagement, Sri Aurobindo's life was based on spirituality of which politics was only an outer expression. And the underlying realisation of this spirituality was the Vedantic ideal:

"The ideal is that of humanity in God, of God in humanity, the ancient ideal of the sanatana dharma but applied, as it has never been applied before, to the problem of politics and the work of national revival. To realise that ideal, to impart it to the world is the mission of India. She has evolved a religion which embraces all that the heart, the brain, the practical faculty of man can desire but she has not yet applied it to the problems of modern politics. This therefore is the work which she has still to do before she can help humanity."

This is the Rebirth of India for which Sri Aurobindo fought during the first decade of the last century. He was confident of his inner strength: "I know I have the strength to uplift this fallen race", he wrote. He knew the reason for this fall - it was a blind imitation of the European ideas and culture. There was an uprooting "from their own ideas and culture founded on Vedic teachings". So, Sri Aurobindo revived, rekindled the Vedantic idealism for restoring India, but, for such a regeneration, India needed to be liberated from the alien domination:

"The world needs India and needs her free. The work she has to do now is to organise life in the terms of Vedanta, and that is a work she cannot do while overshadowed by a foreign power and a foreign civilisation. She cannot do it without taking the management of her own life into her own hands. She must live her own life and not the life of a part or subordinate in a foreign Empire."

So, Sri Aurobindo worked simultaneously on both the levels — the inner and the outer. On the inner, he focussed on the awakening of India's soul to her noble mission in the world. On the outer, he gave a concrete action-plan for the political leaders of the day who believed in his ideal of *sampoorna swaraj* for India. In the first phase of his political

life, Sri Aurobindo worked from behind the scene to create:

- a) "a secret organisation for the propagation of the idea [of freedom], the central object of which was the preparation of an armed insurrection;

- b) a public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence which was, at that time, regarded by the vast majority of Indians as unpractical and impossible, an almost insane chimera;

- c) an organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition and undermining of the foreign rule through an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance.

Sri Aurobindo used passive resistance as a means in the struggle for independence but he was not an ardent champion of the doctrine of non-violence. "He also emphasised that he had neither been an impotent moralist nor a weak pacifist."

For spreading these ideas and the Vedantic ideal Sri Aurobindo used largely the daily news journals - 'New Lamps for Old', '*Bande Mataram*' and '*The Karmayogin*'. A habit of 'free and healthy national thought' was the first requisite. The second was "to establish a popular authority which will exist side by side and in rivalry with a despotic foreign bureaucracy." For fulfilling this second task, Sri Aurobindo came out into the open, suffered a year's imprisonment at Alipore, toured around in Bengal inspiring the depressed populace. And the mantric word, thought and substance of his writings and speeches was "freedom".

"If to aspire to independence and preach freedom is a crime, you may cast me into jail and there bind me with chains. If to preach freedom is a crime, then I am a criminal and let me be punished. But freedom does not mean the use of violence — it does not mean bombs; it is the fulfillment of our separate national existence.."

And later, he shifted from British India — where he fought for the freedom of the country — to French India where "his role was that of the leader of evolution to awaken humanity and help it in its march towards its supramental destiny. There he was one among many, here he is One who is the Supreme", concludes the author.

A fine essay on Sri Aurobindo's political life and thought, this book is in a way a timely one in the present circumstances of India when its leaders are still attempting at a material revolution instead of a spiritual one. Sri Aurobindo had warned long back:

"The task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government but at the building up of a nation. Of that task politics is a part, but only a part.... There is a mighty law of

life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the *Sanatan dharma*, the eternal religion.. To understand the heart of this *dharma*, to experience it as a truth, to feel the high emotions to which it rises and to express and execute it in life

is what we understand by Karmayoga. We believe that it is to make the yoga the ideal of human life that India rises today... It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex.”

To the youth of India who are at present confused and feel a political ideological vacuum, this book is a boon.

— Dr. Ananda Reddy

**Sri Aurobindo Ashram:
Its Role, Responsibility and
Future Destiny**

(By Jugal Kishore Mukherjee;
Published by Sri Aurobindo
International Centre of Educa-
tion, Pondicherry - 605 002,
1997;
Price: Rs.50/-, pp. 91)



Has Sri Aurobindo Ashram A Future?

Thirty years ago I found myself in an unusually despondent mood one day. I come from a family that adores the portraits and books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. A few years earlier I had received the doctoral degree for my thesis on Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri". Indeed, that was the first thesis on Sri Aurobindo's epic. The Mother had gifted me the rare privilege of meeting her privately for a few minutes to offer pranam in 1961 and the Ashram had published my thesis. All this had sprung in me hopes of a close interaction with the Pondicherry Ashram but due to family circumstances I found myself far, far away from Pondicherry and years went by and I could not visit the Ashram.

One day I gave vent to my frustration and disappointment to my father (Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar). He gazed at me for a while and then said: "Ashram is where you are". Then he explained to me that it was not right to think that physical distance alone measured the love and guardianship of the Master and the Mother. That wherever a person leads a life of aspiration, tries to achieve perfection in what one does (he gave the example of washing dishes for I had blurted out that there was no need to write a thesis and get a doctorate for humdrum domesticity and I had mentioned the chore of washing dishes day in and day out), studies the words of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, immediately that place also becomes an Ashram.

Thereby father did not depreciate the value of living in Pondicherry. He said that living in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram where one could salute the Mother daily at the balcony darshan and meet the sadhaks was the very best thing one could as-

pire for. But not all could do so; and unless one heard the Call, there was no point in fighting with one's circumstances. Transformation should be attempted where one gets stationed. After all, no child of the Mother is out of her sight at any time. My father then drew my attention to the golden words of Sri Aurobindo in *The Mother*:

"And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible."

From that day the truth of what he said has been the guardian-amulet for me and I never have had the feeling of being away from the Mother's ambience. At the same time, I have had the privilege of receiving an uninterrupted flow of affection and wisdom from many Ashramites residing in Pondicherry. Nolini Kanta Gupta, A.B. Purani, M.P. Pandit, Navajata, Kishor Gandhi, Jayantilal and Parubai Patil readily come to my mind, and though they have withdrawn from the physical scene, they are guiding lamps for my journey in the realms of the Spirit.

There are also others, the Mother's dear children all, who continue to help me with words, gestures, aye, even by their very presence in the Ashram like Nirodbaran, K.D. Sethna, Manoj Das, Vijay, Kishorilal, Shyam Sundar and Udhar Pinto. How can words express the direct movement that led me into the Ananda consciousness when I heard Madanlal Himatsingka recite the "She is the golden bridge, the wonderful fire" passage for a few minutes, standing directly under the Pondicherry sun, in front of the Vak bookshop? The Ashram has been a spiritual dynamo which has recharged me whenever I found myself walking its spaces in Pondicherry, browsing in the bookshops, gazing at the Service Tree or placing my forehead on the Samadhi, the Gayatri Mandapa for me:

“All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life...”

Living thus outside the Sri Aurobindo Ashram but carrying the Ashram consciousness within has had its share of problems. There have been needling questions from colleagues, relatives and strangers on the structure and functioning of the Ashram. Occasionally *apaswaras* have been heard too, thanks to the sensation-mongering media. Also, the halfway messages from one or two inmates who have been critical. For instance, a scholar whose sincerity is palpable and who has been brought up in the Ashram under the direct supervision of the Mother, feels that the Ashram has remained a closed book and has rejected even healthy inspirations from the world outside. There is also a feeling that many tend to think of the Ashram as a haven for retirement and no more.

Besides, there is no *parampara* leader to look to for day-to-day guidance. There have been more serious charges too. At the same time, so far, none of these criticisms has had any deleterious effect on the devotees outside the Ashram. They usually shrug it off as the shortcomings of the human element. Which ashram has not had its share of such attacks, they contend. Which is very true for even several hundred years ago, Mahendrarman Pallava had to write the *Matta Vilasa Prahasana* to warn the managers of the Buddhist Viharas in Kanchipuram.

Spiritual life is ever a divine battle. Those who opt for it have to battle against enemies of the spiritual way of life from outside as well as the enemies of promise within the spiritual fold. It is at this juncture that the 125th birthday of Sri Aurobindo gave a chance to analyse the problems that beleaguer the Ashram. Jugal Kishore Mukherjee's *Visada Yoga* (Yoga of sorrow) literally gave birth to an intense heart-searching, and the result is a testament of faith in the future destiny of mankind as one of abiding Ananda consciousness.

Jugalda is not willing to wound but he is not afraid to strike at the penury that often devastates the human heart. There is a poverty of the heart when it is rendered weak in sincerity, love, faith. Jugalda is quite conversant with the reasons that often create convulsions within a spiritual community which seeks to master material nature. For, the Aurobindonian Yoga uses elements of the Tantric way too “for it seizes upon the obstacles to the spiritual life and compels them to become the means for a richer spiritual conquest and enables us to embrace the whole of Life in our divine scope as the Lila of the Divine.” Necessarily, as with the Tantric disciplines in the past, this way gets clouded due to the powers of Rajas and Tamas that hold sway over the material world. The danger of slipping into mere religiosity is very real and hence Jugalda's self-questionings:

“Do many Ashramites still aspire after and make an effort for the acquisition of spiritual consciousness? And if yes, who guide and illumine the sadhaks in their spiritual endeavour? Can one contact the Presence of the Mother and Sri Auro-

bindo as a really living reality here? Why are there at times serious conflicts in the Ashram? Has the Ashram outlived its value as a spiritual institution? Is there any fear of its transforming itself with the passage of time into a thriving cultural community, forgetting the pristine character given it by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo?”

Jugalda's questionings are like those flung by Arjuna and do reflect the nagging doubts in the minds of millions of followers who consider the Ashram as a sacred spot and the Ashram community as made up of “the Omnipotent's flaming pioneers.”

Armed with a rare generosity of understanding, Jugalda who is himself an Ashramite of an older generation, sets out to answer the questions. Writing briefly on the circumstances in which the Ashram came into being, he sets out Sri Aurobindo's basic and primary aims for the Ashramites:

“(i) to seek liberation from Ignorance, self-fulfilment and perfection; (ii) to ascend from the present purely mental and material being to the spiritual-supramental being and life; (iii) to outgrow the state of ignorance and half-knowledge and acquire instead a nature of self-knowledge and world-knowledge.”

As for the external life, no work is to be categorised as “high” or “low” (no, not even the washing of clothes) since “all life is yoga”. Today the Ashram has 1200 regular inmates and also a good number of people from outside who participate in the Ashram life. However, in all this variety of external life (teaching, painting, plumbing, cooking, doll-making, to name but a few) there lies the danger of forgetting the primary goal. Genuflexion to the portraits or the Samadhi alone is not enough. No doubt such thoughts flitted across Sri Aurobindo's mind even during the early days of the Ashram as he said that the Ashram work is but “a *preparation* for a work — a work which will be founded on yogic consciousness and Yoga-Shakti and can have no other foundation.”

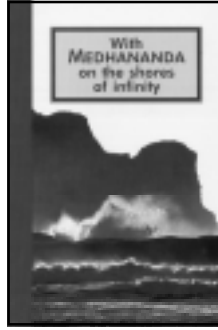
Interweaving his argument with telling illustrations from *The Life Divine*, Jugalda seeks to educate the reader on the ideal group life where “the individuals constituting any collectivity should move away from their surface existence which is at present the field of unbridled play of ego and try to dwell more and more in their inner consciousnesses.”

Such an *antahkarana*-approach is not too easy to come by in this Age of Visual Culture. But then one has to exercise eternal vigilance not to succumb to the Tamas but hold on to “an ardent and one-pointed practice to reach the Goal”, though Jugalda finds this ideal conspicuous by its absence. Hence, one who wants to become an Ashramite should do so only if he hears the ‘Call’. How is the Call to be recognised? Jugalda quotes the Mother (13 August, 1958):

(Continued on page 17)

With Medhananda on the Shores of Infinity

(By Medhananda, Edited by Yvonne Artaud; Published by Sri Mira Trust;
Soft Cover Price: Rs. 125/-
Hard Cover Price: Rs.175/-
pp. 144)



THE BOOK

“With Medhananda on the shores of Infinity” is an unusual, in fact a remarkable collection of letters, poems, reminiscences, meditations and transcriptions of interviews, chronologically arranged in order to recount the story of the author’s life from its beginning in Germany right upto his last years in Pondicherry. But it does not really qualify as a biography in the habitual sense because events of external life are only incidental, play a very subordinate role, and are used exclusively to situate or illustrate a subjective experience and the essence gleaned from it. Therefore, perhaps, it can at best be described as an autobiography of inner life. For, even while speaking about his own name, the details regarding the how, why, when and in what circumstances he came to be called Medhananda are blithely ignored; instead something more interesting and meaningful is offered:

*Medhananda is
not a name —
it is a verb,
an adjective, an adverb
and a proverb.
and*

The program that has been set for me, as far as bliss is concerned, is ‘Medhananda’; and it is not limited to a single life. It is bliss in the mind. This does not mean that I cannot know the other forms of bliss; but to taste ananda in the mind is particularly difficult, because the analytic mind is the main root of the ego.

THE PERSONALITY

Scholarship is the ability to gather facts in a sustained manner for a specific purpose in a given field of inquiry. Knowledge comes with the development of the faculty to marshal the data collected into a body of perception forming a coherent whole. When experience, well assimilated and distilled, can create insights into realities lying hidden behind the veil of apparent phenomenon and at the same time goad you on to seek after truths yet beyond your grasp, then wisdom is born. To find all these qualities harmoniously fused in a single human being is indeed rare. Medhananda, who

possessed each of them in ample measure, was definitely such an individual. He fully vindicated his name, given to him by the Mother which in Sanskrit means “delight of the mind”. For, not only was he an intellectual of a high order — I am using the word in the Platonic sense of the term denoting one who can freely move about in the lofty realm of pure thought and ideas — but he also had the exceptional gift of creative understanding; in other words he could grasp the implications which the surfaces only hinted at. Read with him a most prosaic passage and it becomes fascinating all at once because he has drawn by reading in between the lines what the author has missed out on; an utterly insignificant and colourless event of daily life suddenly turns into a thrill when seen through his eyes. For instance, a moulted feather is lying on the ground. He picks it up and tells you with a gleam of childlike delight in his eyes that in the pictorial language of Egyptian hieroglyphs this denoted “Truth” – why? Because, he continues after a pause, unlike some later civilizations which confined it to dogma and weighted it down under the heavy tablets of religious commandments, the ancient wisdom of Egypt conceived of Truth as something light, ethereal, something that helps you to fly and frees you of the downward pull of materiality - in short, something like a feather. But you can also look at it from another angle: observed carefully it turns out to be not a solid uniform mass but formed of innumerable smaller feathers stuck to a tapering central stem. So with Truth. It can be viewed as a whole, and it can be viewed as a whole with many parts. This was the Medhananda I knew, this was essentially the way he operated, this is the personality which the book acquaints the reader with, very commendably.

THE STYLE

Generally reticent by nature Medhananda used speech with great economy making every word he uttered, count. His language was always simple, the meaning precise, the expression lucid and the power of narrative quite captivating. His style of writing echoes the manner of his speech. So one runs through the pages carried on by their deceptively easy flow, often overlooking what the anecdotes mean to reveal - a method and a Tao of viewing life anew with enhanced freshness and curiosity. Whether he is talking about his goldfish:

For a long time she remained disdainful and distant. When you have a whole line of imperial ancestors behind you... But gradually we became more intimate. She had digestive difficulties, she was very constipated. Perhaps the food I gave her didn't suit her very well. Those dried foods are constipating. She should have had more fresh food. For fast moving fish it doesn't matter, but for more lymphatic fish it is a problem. I discovered a way to give her enemas of one or two drops of oil, using a small hypodermic syringe with the sharp point of the needle removed. So in the end we became very intimate. or of his encounter with Richard Wilhelm, the

famed translator of the "I Ching":

We were only three students. When the old Professor came in, he uttered the ancient university rule that three is enough for a course to take place, and he began. So we read the "I Ching". From time to time he would ask, 'have you understood?' I would answer, 'Yes'. Annoyed, he would say, 'No, you have not understood: This is not for understanding, it is for silencing the understanding.'

or about his apprenticeship in a factory:

Belonging to the factory for a year enabled me above all to discover a consciousness that one might call mechanical. You arrive in the morning and get into the rhythm of manual task that requires a few repetitive movements. And suddenly it is four o'clock in the afternoon.

Slowly you wake up, you become a human being again. You take a shower, change your clothes, and the day begins. Passing from the mechanical life to the human life is only the first



Medhananda

step, the first awakening.

or describing an evening in Germany:

It is the evening hour when swallows skim the surface of the swimming pool to drink. The big rubber seal floats in quiet circles. I am seated in a canopied hammock that swings me gently. Family and friends have left me alone for a moment. And eternity, the beloved, comes secretly to visit me.

Medhanada treats each with equal care and value, deriving apparently the same level of "rasa" from every one of them. This attitude is maintained throughout.

One must thank Yvonne Artaud for her commendable work in making this publication possible. Her introduction and the few relevant

notes inside help greatly in the reading. To sum up: a fascinating little book about the fascinating life of a fascinating person.

— Shaupon Boshu

The UNO, the World Government and the Ideal of World Union

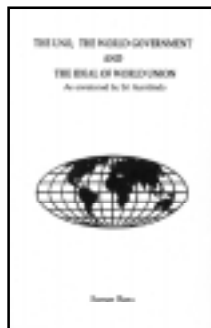
(By Samar Basu; Published by World Union; Price Rs.100/-, pp. 118)

This book is a fine historic review of the ideals of human unity as propounded by Sri Aurobindo. The author, Samar Basu, supplies to the ideals of a World Union historic facts and figures and thereby brings out the validity and the feasibility of Sri Aurobindo's ideas as given in his several writings. The book thus serves as Foot-notes to his Master's book *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

However, the author focuses only on some of the major burning issues from the past as well as the present and tests them in the light of the future of mankind. These momentous issues are: The League of Nations, the Second World War, the United Nations Organisation, a Federal World Government and the World Union.

"The League of Nations, born at the end of the First World War, had some intrinsic defects because of which it could achieve neither universality nor permanence. The reason for this still-born League was that "the delegates of the League were not called upon to defend the interests of mankind, but to serve the interest of the nation-states..."

It was not happy in its conception, well-inspired in its formation or destined to any considerable longevity or a supremely successful career. But that such an organised endeavour should be launched at all and proceed on its way for



some time without an early break-down was in itself an event of capital importance and meant the initiation of a new era in world history, especially, it was an initiative which, even if it failed, could not be allowed to remain without a sequel but had to be taken up again until a successful solution has safeguarded the future of mankind, not only against continued disorder and lethal peril but against destructive possibilities which could easily prepare the collapse of civilisation and perhaps eventually something even that could be described as the suicide of the human race. Accordingly, the League of Nations disappeared but was replaced by the United Nations Organisation..."

But, the U.N.O., after its existence for more than fifty years is looked upon with dissatisfaction. In the constitution of UNO, the defects of the League of Nations were sought to be overcome, "but the attempt was not thorough-going and not altogether successful". The principal reason for its failure is purely political, opines the author:

"My federalist friend," continued Mr. Mehta, "was firm in his opinion that the principal reason for its poor functioning was political. For the essential condition for its steady and right functioning depended solely upon the renouncement of sovereignty by all its member nations — big and small alike. But unfortunately none of them liked it.

"When I asked him why; his replies stunned me. With suppressed anguish the Italian federalist exclaimed: "because the principal producers and suppliers of weapons of mass destruction are the Permanent Members of the Security Council. The international community today is the passive and cynical spectator of massacre by blood-thirsty tyrants all over the world, even in Europe."

"Then he abruptly asked me if I have studied the book

entitled *One World or None* by *Errol Haris*. My reply was in the negative. Then he said, 'just go through the book when possible and you'll understand how certain old problems have recently assumed global character. Broadly they may be enumerated in three categories:

- (i) nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction,
- (ii) massive environmental degradation and ecological imbalance, and
- (iii) unchecked industrialisation and growth of human population.

"As a matter of fact the U.N. is not in a position to properly tackle these problems. For it is a league of sovereign nation-states held together by agreements. Its decisions are not binding upon its members. Its members — the sovereign nation-states — can decline to accept the decisions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the World Court. And many nations — small or large, east or west, north or south — have done so."

As mentioned Albert Einstein:

The United Nations is an extremely important and useful institution provided the peoples and governments of the world realize that it is merely a transitional system towards the final goal, which is the establishment of supranational authority vested with sufficient legislative and executive powers to keep the peace.

The establishment of 'the supranational authority' would be establishment of a world-government. Two significant movements towards such a world-government can be noted — the collapse of USSR and the formation of European Community. Another regional federation that could or should precede the world-federation is the confederation of India-Pakistan-Bangladesh.

In spite of the slow march forward, a world federation is

the next step in Nature's evolution. The author quotes from Sri Aurobindo, 'a federation of free nationalities in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would have disappeared and, though some might preserve greater natural influence, all would have an equal status.... A world-union of this kind would have the greatest chances of long survival or permanent existence.' The author then goes on to say, "This is what would be evolved out of the present institution — the U.N.O.

"Human intellect may believe it or not the drive of Nature, the compulsion of circumstances and the present and future need of mankind make it inevitable. 'We may rely,' said Sri Aurobindo a wee bit emphatically, 'if on nothing else, on the evolutionary urge and, if on no other greater hidden Power, on the manifest working and drift or intention in the World-Energy we call Nature to carry mankind at least as far as the necessary next step to be taken, a self-preserving next step.'"

This interweaving of historical facts with the prophecies and ideals of Sri Aurobindo makes the book a very interesting and absorbing reading. And "the technique of discussing in detail various aspects of the problem through correspondences with an imaginary character, " Mr. Mehta is indeed very novel. By this technique the author becomes a multi-faceted writer, for, he then becomes his own critique, his own reader, and a commentator. This technique adds life to the narration of an ideal, a style which could otherwise have turned into an erudite and academic essay.

All students of political history and all those wanting to have political wisdom and political insight into the future of mankind must read through these footnotes to the Future presented by Samar Basu.

— Dr. Ananda Reddy

SABDA regrets that no issue of the Newsletter could be brought out after the April 1999 issue. However as per schedule a second issue for the year 2000 will appear in December. We apologise to our readers and thank you for bearing with us.

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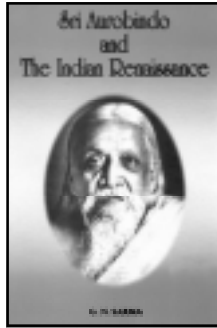
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Sri Aurobindo and the Indian Renaissance

(By G.N.Sarma
Prof of Political Science (Retd.)
Marathwada University
Aurangabad
Published by Ultra Publications
Bangalore; Price Rs. 150/-,
pp. 180+)



Does the phrase Indian Renaissance convey only the sense of a nation arising out of the slumber of mediaeval ages? "Awake! Arise!"—that was the call Vivekananda gave about a hundred years ago to the youth of the country. But the call is deeper than that. It is not just the question of coming out of the state of sloth and tamas and inertia; it is concerned more with an opening to the possibilities that the awakened spirit presents in the creative delight of life itself. The arrival of spiritual luminaries and great souls in the last 150 years or so already marked the beginning of a new era. Indeed, it looks as though the Indian Renaissance was willed by a higher power and sooner than later it had to happen. This new birth of India has the significance not only for the country; the world as such has to be born in that wonderful birth. This birth is functional also, marking not just the flowering of art and science and thought, not just discarding old dogmas and rites and customs, as was largely the case in the European resurgence. It is in this context of the new dawn that we should see the day-bright future Sri Aurobindo has brought to us, the millennial dimension of growth that has been offered to us.

Prof. Sarma's book presently under review is essentially a brief secular account of the work and vision of the Master-Yogi and the Builder of New Humanity. It is not meant to be a scholarly treatise for a select audience but is, as he says in the Introduction, "for the general reader and the student of Social Science." It provides a quick elementary non-pedantic basis to Sri Aurobindo as a social philosopher. No doubt, the "transformation of life is possible only when the supreme Reality is realised and the light of that Reality brought down to the very lowest plane of Matter" - which is the mission and message of Sri Aurobindo - there is also the need to take human life in its fold and shape it into that reality. Enormous amount of preparatory as well as educative work is to be done and that is what Sri Aurobindo did through his prose writings and thousands of letters to his disciples. In that sense Sarma is right in stating that "Sri Aurobindo is to be approached not as a formal philosopher or an academic intellectual but as the

interpreter and creative exponent of Indian philosophical and spiritual tradition dating back to the Vedas and the Upanishads." Yet, told Sri Aurobindo to his disciples who had gathered around him in the evening talks, "What I wrote was the work of intuition and inspiration working on the basis of my spiritual experience." And when it is the intuition, and inspiration, of a Yogi there is always an encompassing wideness, and also infallibility of the truth-expression, in it. The author gives broad indication to these in the course of discussions in the book.

Thus while talking about the Individual, Society and the State, Sarma writes as follows: "As Aristotle expressed it, man becomes a member of society for life but continues to live in society for the sake of good life. The final explanation of this process of development of individuality through social interaction and cooperation, as Sri Aurobindo points out, is neither economic nor psychological.... Individuality is... a historical formation, developing in social space, in the continuous stream of time. Society, too, grows in the same manner and the individual shares in the growth of society besides contributing to its development and enrichment. They form, in this manner, an inseparable partnership.... When the limits of ego are transcended, the self becomes aware of its universality and attains freedom in the positive sense of self-realisation.... This is the spiritual basis of individuality and personality." True, indeed.

In the same way, Prof. Sarma draws our attention to what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *Bande Mataram* on 16 March 1908, regarding Rights and Duties: "It has been said that democracy is based on the rights of man; it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man; but both rights and duties are European ideas. Dharma is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action, and regain their deep and eternal unity. Dharma is the basis of democracy."

It is this message, more than 90 years old now, which must reach our social reformers, human resources development agencies, economists, political scientists, journalists, the so-called secularists, even religious leaders, bureaucrats, industrialists, trade unionists and all those organisers who have in their heart the concern for the country. It is for this group of people that Prof. Sarma's *Sri Aurobindo and the Indian Renaissance* will form a worthwhile introduction in diverse activities of the individual and society.

— Dr. R. Y. Deshpande

The strangest of the soul's experiences is this, that it finds, when it ceases to care for the image and threat of troubles, then the troubles themselves are nowhere to be found in one's neighbourhood. It is then that we hear from behind those unreal clouds God laughing at us.

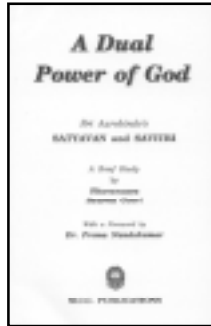
— Sri

Aurobindo

A Dual Power of God

(By Sitaramayya and Swarna Gowri; Published by M.C.C. Publications, Bangalore; Price: Rs.60/-, pp. 79)

Savitri is 'the picture' of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's "joint adventure into the unknown or rather the Supermind," reflected in the inner lives of Savitri and Satyavan. Savitri is the Subjective - description of the work of Savitri and Satyavan who represent:



"A Dual Power of God in an ignorant world...
Bringing down God to the insentient globe,
Lifting earth-beings to immortality...
You are my Force at work to uplift earth's fate,...
He is my soul that climbs from nescient Night
Through life and mind and supernature's Vast
To the supernal light of Timelessness..."

Satyavan is 'the Avatar', says the Mother. "He is the incarnation of the Supreme". So too, "Savitri is the beautiful body of the Incarnate Word". The difference, if at all, between these incarnates is:

"One leans to the earth, the other yearns to the skies..."

However, it is only together that Satyavan and Savitri can

bring down the supermind upon earth:

"The incarnate dual power shall open gods' door,
Eternal Supermind touch earthly Time."

This is the central theme of Savitri and the co-authors of this booklet, 'A Dual Power of God' have used it as a connecting thread upon which they string together apt passages from Savitri.

These passages progressively reveal the story of Savitri keeping at bay any interpretation, explanation or elucidation. Perhaps the authors had in mind to write the story of Savitri only in the words of Sri Aurobindo. In this they have succeeded. This booklet, or a lengthy essay, is a faithful biography of Savitri and Satyavan in the words of Sri Aurobindo.

Thus, in a way, the booklet which is an introduction to the new reader of *Savitri*, maintains a kind of purity and faithfulness, for the authors have not disturbed much the atmosphere of the book, *Savitri*.

The authors have aptly chosen the title, 'A Dual Power of God' in delineating the characters of Satyavan and Savitri, for truly they are Two who are One, 'the secret of all power' and 'the might and right in things'.

But the cover design could have been, keeping in line with the theme, a lot more representative and symbolic.

If the authors' aim in writing this booklet has been to communicate to the reader 'a fraction of their joy in reading' *Savitri*, well, they have amply succeeded in it.

— Dr. Ananda Reddy

The SABDA Head Office has moved from its previous location at No.3, Rue de la Caserne to a new three storeyed building at No.123, S.V. Patel Salai, formerly and popularly known as the North Boulevard. The new premises are situated on the south side of the street, between the junctions with Mission Street and Mahatma Gandhi Road.



“You are going to wake up all of a sudden to something you never noticed but which is deep within you and *thirsts* (Continued from page 11)

Has Sri Aurobindo Ashram a Future?

for the truth, thirsts for transformation and is ready to make the effort required to realise it ... You will suddenly feel an *irresistible* need not to live in unconsciousness, in ignorance, in that state in which you do things without knowing why, feel things without understanding why, have contradictory wills, understand nothing about anything, live only by habit, routine, reactions — you take life easy. And one day you are no longer satisfied with that.”

Jugalda understands the problems of those who deviate from the goal. There are reasons. The close concentration of a large number of people within a small space, the absence of a code of conduct spelt out in militarist terminology, a lack of stress on personal relationships are but some of them. Relationships have to work on the wavelength of the Divine and this is hard to achieve for human beings. To “trust the true warmth of the pure flame of psychic love but beware of the flawed fuel of ego-desire” (K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar) calls for very deep sincerity indeed.

And yet, Jugalda will neither compromise (no, our aim is not merely another cultural centre or religious retreat) nor give up the Aurobindonian ideal as an utopian dream. He finds many positive points for optimism. Though Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are not physically with us, their writings are very much here, speaking with maternal love and scriptural certainty. The attention to detail evinced by the Mother is amazing. Here is an example of her utter common sense:

“A good advice to all the Ashramites in their dealings with visitors and foreigners (and even among themselves): When you have nothing pleasant to say about something or somebody in the Ashram, *keep silent*. You must know that this silence is faithfulness to the Divine’s work.”

Ego is the Vritra and it takes a long time to overcome it, but we shall overcome. Freedom, yes. Permissiveness, no. Jugalda warns that permissiveness is an evil that should be rooted out on the spot. As Sri Aurobindo said, “Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because she is,

indeed, always present.”

Not as the Big Brother watching, though. This is a mother’s watching over her children and she will exult when there is growth and intervene when help is needed. The children should make the best use of such maternal guardianship and not fritter away the chance in inanities and immediate satisfactions.

In the Ashram there are no subordinates. Everyone is a helper. The heads of sections are there only for administrative convenience. Jugalda does not gloss over the negative details like the desire on the part of some Ashramites to move out of the Ashram often or the urge to acquire personal wealth. Though Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had no use for the Ascetic’s refusal, they did not favour superfluities in one’s life. There is then the question of man-woman relationships. Fortunately, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have dealt with all such wrong movements and have given firm directions.

An Ashram life is meant for a growth in consciousness. Sri Aurobindo’s vision of a Deva Sangha saw a collectivity of aspirants pursuing the Integral Yoga for a rise in consciousness. The aim was never lost sight of even when the Ashram extended its parameters of action. The original afflatus that began the Ashram is still a guardian power, for Jugalda marvels that in spite of all the problems the Ashram life flows on smoothly and quietly.

Jugalda’s *Sri Aurobindo Ashram* is thus a timely work on the state of the community and is a plea to apply the needed correctives so that the Ashram will not cease to be the leader of the Aurobindonian organisations around the world. After all, the Mother and the Master are very much a presence in Pondicherry known as Vedapuri in earlier days, the city of Vedic Illumination. Jugalda’s concluding words are a meditative utterance meant not only for the Ashramites but all of us who walk in our own destined ways holding on to the life-sustaining message as our priceless inheritance:

“... let us try by all means to keep the hearth clean and the flame of aspiration burning bright and the Mother’s Flag flying high, and, when the need will arise with the passage of time, let us pass on the baton of spiritual endeavour to those sun-eyed children of the Mother who are destined to appear ‘in the march of all-fulfilling Time’, join this Ashram and turn it by their Tapasya into the divine Dream-Home of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother upon earth. *Victoire a la Douce Mère*: Victory to the Mother Divine!”

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER

— Dr. Prema Nandakumar

Work has commenced on the printing of a new second edition of the Collected Works of the Mother. The full set will be available in about three years. Meanwhile separate paperback editions of most of the individual volumes of the set will continue to be issued.

Sri Aurobindo and Greece

(By Amal Kiran; Published by The Integral Life Foundation, U.S.A.; Price: Rs.80/-, pp. 98)

Mega biblion, mega kakon (A big book is a great evil), runs a Greek adage. But to do full justice to Amal Kiran's little book of ninety eight pages on Sri Aurobindo and Greece one needs the great evil of very big book!

What can we say about it in a brief review? Noting every reference to Greece, Greek life, Greek literature and poetry, art and culture, philosophy and politics not to speak of persons and personalities however distantly related to the subject on hand in Sri Aurobindo's voluminous work, the author has packed worlds of fact and idea, experience and vision into the few pages. The marvel with Amal Kiran is that each of the forty odd books he has written none is like the other and this little book is unique in its own way bringing out the full mastery of what he writes, his penetrating intellect, his fine taste and incisive judgement.

The author, besides illustrating to us the truth of Sri Aurobindo's statement that he had steeped himself in the Hellenic spirit, brings before us the multifoliated Rose that the Master is. We get a full picture of Sri Aurobindo's educational career in England where he distinguished himself in examination and poetry competition in the Greek language. His earliest verse breathes with Greek spirit and eight lines of his could be mistaken easily for a snatch from *Greek Anthology*. His play written in the Baroda days, *Perseus, the Deliverer* is often Aesclyean in tone and there are passages in which we have Classical Greece hit off to a nicety.

One of Sri Aurobindo's greatest contributions to the Hellenic studies is his discovery of the secret of the Greek hexameter and his own sequel to Homer's *Odyssey* in the same metre. Amal Kiran not only expounds all the technicalities of the metre but show how *Ilion* even more than a modern sequel to *Odyssey* by a well-known Greek poet, Nikos Kazantzakis, reveals the Greek soul.

We are shown Sri Aurobindo's mastery in Greek grammar when contradicting a Greek and Sanskrit scholar Ranade points out the power of the language in making compounds.

Sri Aurobindo always thought France nearer Greek spirit than England. But he reveals his mastery of the spirit of both the cultures when he shows the limitation of France by say-



ing that France deals with life not from the standpoint of inspired reason (as Greece does) but thinking intellect, not the enlightened aesthetic sense but of emotional sentiment.

We may now make a brief reference to Sri Aurobindo's understanding of Greek sculpture, philosophy, religion and politics.

A normal Indian would think that a Greek sculptured figure would provide only sensuous delight but Sri Aurobindo points out that though the stress in Greek Sculpture is on the body it expresses a certain divine power of beauty beyond sensuous aesthetic power. Yet the Greek gods are more magnified and uplifted human beings with a certain divine calm and impersonality than the cosmic figures we see in Indian sculpture. Sri Aurobindo never agrees that the Greek art influenced the great Indian art. He condemns the Gandharan figures as bastard hybrids.

In the matter of religion and philosophy the mistake the Greeks did was to travel away from the early Mystics. That led to the destruction of the Greek religion. "The sunny terrestrial (Greek) mind commonly met the idea of the beyond, the limitless, the unknown" with fear, gloom and aversion. Amal Kiran underlines the words, *commonly met*. The elite were themselves the seekers of *aperion*, the infinite. The ideas of the Upanishads can be rediscovered in philosophers like Pythagoras, Plato and others. Plato could intuit into much of the higher truth. To Heraclites, whom Plato followed, Logos was not inconscient reason in things but Fire which was Zeus and eternity.

Politically Greece was home of all forms of government known to us. A word about the Greek idea of democracy may be relevant to us. They had two main ideas about it: first, an effective and personal share by each citizen in the actual government, legislation and administration of the community; secondly a great freedom of individual temperament and action.

Amal Kiran sums up Sri Aurobindo's greatest work in the context of his interchange with Greece at the end of the penultimate section of his book. From a literary point of view the resurrection of the Homeric hexameter with its Olympian pace naturalised in a new language is the highest accomplishment. From the point of view of his life's mission the fullest building up of the Supermind from the Yogic idea found in Plato, apart from the pointers in the Indian Scriptures is his greatest work.

— Prof. (retd.) K. B. Sitaramayya

Divine Love has simultaneously a double play, an universal movement, deep, calm and bottomless like the nether Ocean, which broods upon the whole world and each thing that is in it as upon a level bed with an equal pressure, and a personal movement, forceful, intense and ecstatic like the dancing surface of the same Ocean, which varies the height and force of its billows and chooses the objects it shall fall upon with the kiss of its foam and spray and the clasp of its engulfing waters.

— Sri Aurobindo

Images of the Future

(By Archaka; Published by Sri Mira Trust; Price Rs.90/-, pp. 83)



“Fortunately I did not become famous.” wrote Archaka in the introduction to his book “Le Dieu de Dieu”. Perhaps he is right - he is too deep to become an overnight best-seller. The images of the future which he has etched in the present book are too far for human imagination, too very utopian for man’s faith and too deep for the materialist’s comprehension.

He has drunk deep the Aurobindonian spring and his mind is impregnated with Sri Aurobindo’s vision of the future - a Future which is not concerned with the conquest of the outer space as much as the conquest of the inner space.

The basic attitude in Archaka’s writing is:

“We view the future in our image, rather than viewing ourselves in the images of the future”.

And he views “ourselves” - our human ego, our socio-political formulations, non-violence, ethics, religion etc. - in the light of the Future. “When we imagine the future of the planet,” writes Archaka, “we see ourselves such as we now are, in a milieu which has scarcely changed: harmony between peoples, new arts and sciences, new conquests of Space.”

Another very fresh interpretation of the common notion of non-violence as the path to peace is given by the author:

“Consequently, how can non-violence ever result in peace, which necessarily implies the nullification of the alienating hierarchy according to which nations exist in relation to one another and in the unspoken name of which some endeavour to rule the world, while others are lowered to the status of servants, if not slaves? The gulf which is opened between the just and the unjust, the distinction imposed between superior and inferior, run counter to the goal of which non-violence would claim to be emissary, if not incarnation.”

Theme after theme is loosely inter-connected and the reader moves from one to the other with abated breath, eager to know what more will happen in this incredibly beautiful Future:

“No longer stimulated by desire and refusal, the relationships which we shall maintain with beings and things will no

longer be the same. Psychologically, we shall effortlessly experience the detachment and equanimity from which our present wisdom makes the impossible substance of the only real source of happiness.”

Or, speaking of the disappearance of ego in the Future, the author envisions:

“Free of the sense of me and mine, they will seek nothing for themselves, but will be the docile and blessed instruments of the Force which they will sense in themselves.”

In an inspired language the author announces:

“The world of Death will come to an end, and we shall enter the world of Life. Everything leads us to the goal determined by God, which is to recognize Him and to become Him. No other path can lead us there. For all other paths would necessarily pass by the same frontier which is the end of the world, and we would see the old structures characterized by Death collapse and germinate new seeds of the future governed by life.”

The reader may doubt if these images are not too very utopian. But, I would agree with Archaka when he writes:

“It suffices that at this time other images of the future than those of our annihilation are inscribed in the consciousness of a handful of men for humanity to be saved. It is, in fact, the sign that we are reaching a threshold and that the entire race, from which these men differ not at all, has become capable of living something else.”

Although this book, “Images of the Future”, is a translation from the original French, it carries the authority of language that equals the original. Very cryptic, tense, precise is its language. This adds weight to the prophetic uttering of the author.

Archaka’s or Alexandre Kaldas’s probings into the future are very fresh in their approach. Many have written about Sri Aurobindo’s vision of the Future, but hardly has anyone gone as deep as Archaka in trying to understand the real effects of Sri Aurobindo’s prophecies on man and society. Whilst most are happy to quote or deliberate upon what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have written, Archaka dares to plumb the depth and comes up with scintillating truths of tomorrow’s world.

This book, ‘Images of the Future’ is an irreplaceable reading not only for Aurobindonians but for all those who would like to know if there is any luminous future for humanity.

— Dr. Ananda Reddy

All speech and action comes prepared out of the eternal Silence. — Sri Aurobindo

INFORMATION LETTER

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Readers are aware that the 125th Birth Anniversary edition of The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo is currently being published. So far the following 15 volumes have come out:

- Vol. 03 — Plays and Short Stories Part 1
- Vol. 04 — Plays and Short Stories Part 2
- Vol. 05 — Translations
- Vol. 08 — Karmayogin
- Vol. 12 — Essays Divine and Human
- Vol. 13 — Essays in Philosophy and Yoga
- Vol. 15 — The Secret of the Veda
- Vol. 19 — Essays on the Gita
- Vol. 20 — The Renaissance in India
- Vol. 23 — The Synthesis of Yoga Part 1
- Vol. 24 — The Synthesis of Yoga Part 2
- Vol. 25 — The Human Cycle
- Vol. 26 — The Future Poetry
- Vol. 33 — Savitri Part 1
- Vol. 34 — Savitri Parts 2 & 3

The entire set will be printed in a few years' time. The "pre-publication" rates of Rs.7,500.00 in India and US\$.500.00 overseas are still valid.

**SELECTED WRITINGS OF SRI AUROBINDO
CD-ROM EDITION**

The Ashram has brought out a CD-ROM with selected writings of Sri Aurobindo. It is priced at Rs.600.00. The CD contains the following writings of Sri Aurobindo:

- The Life Divine
- The Synthesis of Yoga

- Essays on the Gita
- Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol
- Letters on Yoga
- The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination
- Essays on Philosophy and Yoga
- Essays Divine and Human
- The Renaissance in India (includes Foundations of Indian Culture)
- The Secret of the Veda
- Upanishads
- Sri Aurobindo: A Life-Sketch

Specially designed programs for Windows and Macintosh allow you to read the texts on your computer screen and to conduct searches on phrases or combination of words. Searching is possible in a single volume or across multiple volumes at the same time. The search capabilities are powerful and fast. The bookmark system allows you to create and control multiple bookmark files and to develop thematic compilations. Bookmarks can be annotated and saved, exported or printed. Page number references are incorporated for the printed volumes of The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo and for the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. There are context sensitive tips and help files.

The CD also includes PDF files of those books that have come out as part of The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo. When read with Adobe Acrobat Reader, these files show the exact screen-image of the printed books. Adobe Acrobat Reader is included in the CD.

SABDA has put up its own full-fledged web site as part of the new web site of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and may be visited at <http://sabda.sriurobindoashram.org>.

To start with all English books available with SABDA have been listed on the site. Later French and German books will be added, and then titles in other languages, Indian as well as foreign. The site will be kept up-to-date and new features and information will constantly be added.

The following features will be available, in due course if not immediately:

- photo scans of jacket covers
- reviews of new books
- interactive lists of new publications since specified dates
- shopping cart facility
- immediate quotations, including quotes in various foreign currencies for overseas buyers.

So far SABDA's home page was hosted on the MIRAURA home page although this does not list prices. We take this

opportunity to express our gratitude to the Miraaura group in the USA and Canada for hosting the page for us.

SABDA'S home page is a part of the new web site of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. This web site presents information about the Ashram and some of its activities, as well as life sketches of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and an introduction to their writings. It is meant primarily for those who are not very familiar with this community or the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but would like to know more. This site is still being expanded and will eventually provide extensive information regarding all aspects of the Ashram including the International Centre of Education and the Physical Education Department. We also hope to be able to provide services of a useful nature. For example, you can already browse through the recent Darshan message cards and print the ones you want. New cards will be available online on the day they are distributed here in the Ashram. You can visit the Ashram web site at: <http://sriurobindoashram.org>.