

Sabda Newsletter

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

Number 19

December 2001

After granting me the joy which surpasses all expression, Thou hast sent me, O my beloved Lord, the struggle, the ordeal and on this too I have smiled as on one of Thy precious messengers. Before, I dreaded the conflict, for it hurt in me the love of harmony and peace. But now, O my God, I welcome it with gladness: it is one among the forms of Thy action, one of the best means for bringing back to light some elements of the work which might otherwise have been forgotten, and it carries with it a sense of amplitude, of complexity, of power. And even as I have seen Thee, resplendent, exciting the conflict, so also it is Thou whom I see unravelling the entanglement of events and jarring tendencies and winning in the end the victory over all that strives to veil Thy light and Thy power: for out of the struggle it is a more perfect realisation of Thyself that must arise.

The Mother

Prayers and Meditations June 22, 1920

Translated by Sri Aurobindo from the original French

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Works of Sri Aurobindo**Record of Yoga****Part I** — 777pp.

soft cover Rs.250.00

ISBN 81-7058-650-X

hard cover Rs.**300.00**

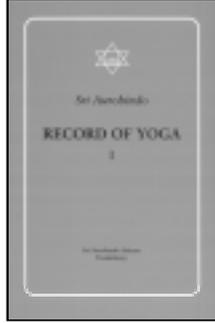
ISBN 81-7058-651-8

Part II — 728 pp.soft cover Rs.**230.00**

ISBN 81-7058-652-6

hard cover Rs.**280.00**

ISBN 81-7058-653-4



The diary of Sri Aurobindo's yogic experiences between 1909 and 1927. Most entries are from 1912 to 1920. Other materials he wrote relating to his practice of yoga, such as *Sapta Chatusthaya* which formed the basis of the yoga, are also included.

See page 12 for further information

Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Reprints from All India Magazine:

Catastrophes and Accidents

40 pp., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-165-7

Right Object of Education

48 PP., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-171-1

The Silence and Beyond the Silence

56 PP., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-173-8

The Way to Happiness

48 pp., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-167-3

What is Hinduism

32 pp., Rs.15.00, ISBN 81-7060-169-X

Shrimad Bhagwat Gita

343 pp., Rs.200.00

(Published by Sri Nautambhai Bhatt Memorial Prakashan Trust, Gandhinagar)

This book presents the original Sanskrit text of the Bhagavad Gita with verse by verse translation in English, followed by notes on them compiled from *Essays on the Gita*. It contains translation and commentary in Gujarati also.

Other Authors**Talks with Sri Aurobindo**

— Nirodbaran

Vol.1 – 514 pp., Rs.250.00,

ISBN 81-7058-634-8

Vol.2 – 517 pp., Rs.250.00,

ISBN 81-7058-635-6

(Now reprinted with the entire content comprised in 2 volumes)

Talks with Sri Aurobindo is a thousand-page record of Sri Aurobindo's conversations with the disciples who attended him

during the last twelve years of his life. The talks are informal and open-ended, for the attendants were free to ask whatever questions came to mind. Sri Aurobindo speaks of his own life and work, of the Mother and the Ashram, of his path of Yoga and other paths, of India's social, cultural and spiritual life, of the country's struggle for political independence, of Hitler and the Second World War, of modern science, art and poetry, and of many other things that arose in the course of conversation. Serious discussion is balanced with light-hearted banter and humour. By recording these human touches, Nirodbaran has brought out the warm and intimate atmosphere of the talks.

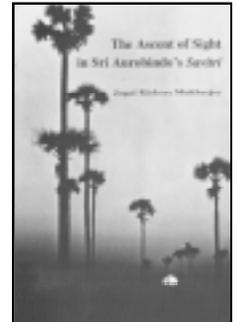
**The Ascent of Sight in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri**

— Jugal Kishore Mukherjee

92 pp., Rs.70.00

ISBN 81-7058-656-9

Savitri is “a revelatory vision that gives to the unmanifest a luminous shape in manifestation.” In reading *Savitri* “Objects beyond the reach of mortal sight come into sudden view and everything appears luminous with a perfect sense of congruity.” *Savitri* is “replete with references to scores of types of sights and visions and gazes and eyes pertinent to different planes of consciousness of man and functioning in various fields of supraphysical manifestation.” In this monograph the various levels and hierarchies of sight-perception are traced in the context of *Savitri*, from “the sightless sight of the inconscience through its ascending grades all the way up to the superconscient sight.”



Commentary on**Sri Aurobindo's Poem *Illion***

— V.Murugesu

344 pp., Rs.250.00 (hard cover),
ISBN 81-7509-047-2

The blurb states regarding Sri Aurobindo's poem *Illion* that it "ranks as one of the world's masterpieces among heroic epics. A magnificent composition in hexameter, unique in English poetry, its lines carry a musical melody uplifting the reader to heights of enchanting ecstasy. Its nobility and grandeur are brought out in beautiful imagery and exquisite poetical language abounding in figures of speech. The characters in the poem are of a high calibre and the references to Greek Mythology add to the depth and richness of the poem." "... human nature itself in its range and subtlety is revealed in the poem." The author's commentary "takes the reader into a journey of discovery. His deep study and detailed analysis highlight the subtler dimensions of poetry, revealing new depths of meaning. His lucid explanations of prosody and the science of versification help us to enter new realms of poetic appreciation."

See review on page 8



knowledge and philosophy as well as the revelation of the inevitable destiny of man's Superhumanity. Ananda or Bliss is the soul and secret of all existence. The Spirit dwells in all and all is Spirit. Evolution is the progressive revelation of Spirit, the truth behind the succession of biological forms. Ultimately Matter and Spirit are one. *The Life Divine* is realistic Advaita, Advaita in its most comprehensive and final form.

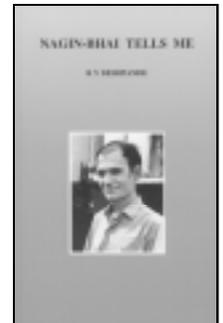
"*The Life Divine*, a volume of nearly 1000 pages, is summarized chapter by chapter as an aid to the study of the master's magnum opus."

Nagin-bhai Tells Me

— R.Y.Deshpande

82 pp., Rs.60.00

Nagin-bhai came to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram as a young boy in the 1930s. He had a regular correspondence with Sri Aurobindo regarding his sadhana, the role of Avatarhood, etc. Quoting from the introduction, 'He always regarded the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, to put it in his own words, "like my own mother and father" and there is no doubt that it is they who were doing Yoga in him as his spiritual parents.' The author had regular conversations with Nagin-bhai from 1994 to 1997 when Nagin-bhai passed away. Records of Nagin-bhai's experiences as narrated to the author comprise Part 1 of this book. Part 2 consists of miscellaneous material on Nagin-bhai.

**Daily Dozen for Men**

— Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya

10 pp., Rs.15.00

Set of exercises with illustrations.

Gavesana 2001

— Edited by Arabinda Basu

25 pp., Rs.30.00

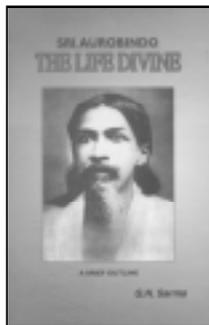
"Gavesana" (quest for light) is an annual with research articles on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and yoga, as well as selected passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The Life Divine: A Brief Outline

— G.N.Sarma

163 pp., Rs.200.00 (hard cover),
ISBN 81-87544-01-5(Published by Ultra
Publications, Bangalore)

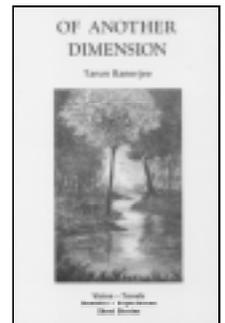
The blurb says, "Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* hailed as the most outstanding spiritual philosophical work of our age is an integral view of all

**Of Another Dimension**

— Tarun Banerjee

64 pp., Rs.50.00

A collection of short stories, reminiscences and experiences. In the author's own words, "this work has a strong undertone of Ashram colour". One of the highlights of the collection is a moving account of the author's disillusionment with the ordinary life as a young boy and of his first visit to Pondicherry and meeting with the Mother.

**Psychic Education - A Workbook**

Based on the Writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

— Neeltje Huppés

284 pp., Rs.100.00

ISBN 81-900175-7-8

This workbook is in two parts. The first, "Self-Preparation", is "to help all those who want to take the first steps in integrating spirituality in every day life" and for those "who would like to intensify the search for the psychic being". The second part, primarily though not exclusively for teachers, deals with the theme of Integral Education — education



"centred around the soul, as distinct from holistic education where the soul is just one of the areas of concentration." Numerous exercises are included, based on those the Mother herself gave during her questions and answers sessions. Worksheets and checklists to assist and assess one's progress are provided.

Sri Aurobindo — Thinker and Yogi of the Future

— M.G.Umar

286 pp., Rs.100.00

ISBN 81-86413-20-0

The author has found in Sri Aurobindo "a unique synthesis of the Eastern Wisdom and Western Rationalism, and a perfect reconciliation of ancient spirituality and modern thought." "This work is essentially a collection of essays on Sri Aurobindo's thought and Yoga, based upon his major works. Brief life-sketches of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are included to give a sense of fullness to it. "A sampling of the contents exemplifies the wide sweep covered by the essays: The Philosophy of Life Divine, All Life is Yoga, The Ideal of Human Unity, Education, and Future Poetry and *Savitri*."

Teilhard de Chardin and Our Time

— Amal Kiran (K.D.Sethna)

343 pp., Rs.150.00

This book starts with comparative studies of Roman Catholicism, the scientific-spiritual philosophy of the Jesuit priest and palaeontologist, Teilhard de Chardin, and Pantheism with which Teilhard has been linked. The author concludes after analysing Teilhardism from all possible angles that it is "rather akin to the ancient comprehensive Vedanta of the early Upanishads" and that when "that Vedanta as revived in the Bhagavad Gita" is "modernised", "by setting it in the context of Evolutionism, with many of whose religious overtones it will be in tune, ... you have the prototype of the full world-view of Teilhard".

Reprints

A Savitri Dictionary

— Rand Hicks

73 pp., Rs.50.00

ISBN 81-7509-032-4

The blurb says, "To follow Sri Aurobindo's use of words is always an education. The same words may carry different meanings in different contexts. The poet in him has an eye to suggestion, *lakshana*, which is so important in poetry. His classical background in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, is evident in many of his usages, particularly in an epic like *Savitri*."

"This dictionary is an indispensable companion for all who read and enjoy Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*."

On Women

— Compilation

117 pp., Rs.45.00

ISBN 81-7060-158-4

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La Luz Que Brillo En El Oscuro Abismo	Maggi-Lidchi Grassi	
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Vedmantra	Nolini Kanta Gupta	65.00
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Gujarati

Savitri	Sri Aurobindo	hc 250.00
ISBN 81-7058-644-5		
Yoganan Tattvo	Sri Aurobindo	20.00
Shrimad Bhagwat Gita	Compilation	200.00
<i>(see page 2 for description of contents for the above book)</i>		
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Sri Aravind Mahayogi	Sundaram	20.00
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Hindi			Hasyamanjari	Sampadananda Mishra
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SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

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

E-mail : sabda@sriaurobindoashram.org Website: <http://sabda.sriaurobindoashram.org>

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Readers in India may add on 5% of the total value of books as well as Rs.30.00 towards postage and packing. For example, for books worth Rs.240.00, the amount to be remitted is Rs.240.00 + Rs.12.00 + Rs.30.00 = Rs.282.00.

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3. The Supramental Evolution (2)	6:57
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5. The Object of Integral Yoga (2)	4:42
6. Spiritual Life: Renunciation or Action (1)	5:26
7. Spiritual Life: Renunciation or Action (2)	6:07
8. The Fundamental Attitude	4:59
9. Sadhana and Work	6:32
10. Education, Physical and Aesthetic	5:59
11. Need for Control and Criticism	3:43
12. Difficulties and Obstacles	5:36
Total Duration	65:48

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5. Human Relationships in Yoga (1)	6:29
6. Human Relationships in Yoga (2)	7:05
7. One must not Forget	7:23
8. Up the Hill	4:35



9. The Purpose of Avatarhood (1)	6:09
10. The Purpose of Avatarhood (2)	6:48
11. The Guru	4:36
Total Duration	63:11

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on India and Her Future

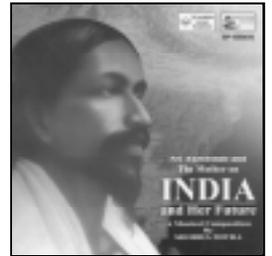
— A Musical

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Audio Cassette: **Rs.50.00**

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Songs and hymns in Sanskrit with recitation in English from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings.
Total Duration 68:30



The Four Aspects of the Mother

Audio Cassette: **Rs.40.00**

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Audio recording in the Mother's voice of the following from Sri Aurobindo's work *The Mother*: Chapter VI, Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati, Supramental Mahashakti.

Total Duration 58:58

(Already listed in SABDA Newsletter June 2001)

Bengali

Aamar Aakul Praner Prarthana

Audio Cassette: **Rs.40.00**

— Bengali Songs on The Mother and Sri Aurobindo
Singer: Minnie (Anima Ganguli)

THE MANTRA

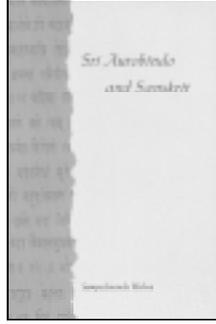
The theory of the Mantra is that it is a word of power born out of the secret depths of our being where it has been brooded upon by a deeper consciousness than the mental, framed in the heart and not constructed by the intellect, held in the mind, again concentrated on by the waking mental consciousness and then thrown out silently or vocally -- the silent word is perhaps held to be more potent than the spoken — precisely for the work of creation. The Mantra can not only create new subjective states in ourselves, alter our psychical being, reveal knowledge and faculties we did not before possess, can not only produce similar results in other minds than that of the user, but can produce vibrations in the mental and vital atmosphere which result in effects, in actions and even in the production of material forms on the physical plane.

Sri Aurobindo

REVIEWS

Sri Aurobindo and Sanskrit

(By Sampadananda Mishra; Published by Sri Aurobindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, a unit of Sri Aurobindo Society; Price: Rs.50.00, pp.118)



There is no doubt that the Sanskrit language made a very deep impression on Sri Aurobindo. It might even be said that he approached the ancient language as though reacquainting himself with an old friend. He was already familiar with the European classical languages, in addition to the major modern languages, yet he placed “the ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue...in the front rank among the world’s great literatures”. Even personally, Sri Aurobindo has given in his writings some glimpses of the effect which Sanskrit had upon him. In *On Himself* (SABCL 26:367) he has said “...when I first read the Om Shanti Shanti Shanti of the Upanishads it had a powerful effect on me.” And in the *Record of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo has made extensive use of Sanskrit words for expressing the subtleties of his inner experiences, quite apart from formulating the ‘map’ of his own path of yoga, the ‘Sapta Chatushtaya’ in Sanskrit. The influence of Sanskrit can be seen in his magnum opus *Savitri*; its theme is taken from a story in the Mahabharata, its arrangement of lines attempts “to catch something of the Upanishadic and Kalidasian movement”, and its content is replete with the substance of Veda, the eternal knowledge.

In trying to estimate Sri Aurobindo’s contribution to Sanskrit literature, we find a vast labour and endeavour in numerous fields. His work on the Veda might be called a pioneering work, as his translations and commentaries give a coherent sense to the Veda, whereas the earlier work of the major commentators and translators had left our thirst for the spirit unsatisfied. Sri Aurobindo spent a considerable amount of time working on the Upanishads while in Baroda and afterwards. His translations and commentaries on the Upanishads, especially the Isha deserve special mention. The *Essays on the Gita* were first published serially in the *Arya* from August 1916 to July 1920. The translations and commentaries on Kalidasa, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, in addition to his original compositions...all these constitute a wealth of material

for anyone interested in Sanskrit.

The book under review, *Sri Aurobindo and Sanskrit* gives a general outline of Sri Aurobindo’s translations and writings on Sanskrit, and his original writings in Sanskrit. It is divided into six main sections, followed by five appendixes. After a brief introduction, there is a section on the Sanskrit language itself, in which we find a neat summary of Sri Aurobindo’s ground-breaking essay ‘The Origins of Aryan Speech’. Section three on ‘Sanskrit Literature...’ deals with Sri Aurobindo’s main work under the following headings: ‘Vedic Literature’ including the Vedas and the Upanishads, ‘The Epic Literature’ including the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas and ‘Classical Literature’ including Kalidasa, Bhartrihari and other poets. Section four deals with the translation of Sanskrit texts, a difficult problem which Sri Aurobindo certainly spent a great deal of time grappling with. We find here some quotations from the master himself on the various principles he has used in solving problems of translation. Section five covers Sri Aurobindo’s original writings in Sanskrit, including Bhavani Bharati, Sri Aravindopanishad, Saptachatushtaya and Tantrikasiddhiprakaranam. A general summary is given for each, together with some other details concerning dates of composition, etc. The final section is a list of references to the many quotations from Sri Aurobindo’s works.

The book closes with five appendixes. The largest of these is a selection of Sri Aurobindo’s translations of Sanskrit texts, including the Veda, Upanishads, some longer passages from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and selections from Kalidasa, Bhartrihari, Bharavi and Shankaracharya. The original Sanskrit text is given with each of these selections. The other appendixes are ‘The Mother on Sanskrit’, ‘Root meanings of Vowel and Consonant sounds’, ‘Outline of a proposed work on Kalidasa’, and ‘Selections from Sri Aurobindo’s original Sanskrit writings’.

As we read through the pages of this book we can feel something of the ‘poetic warmth and colour’ of the Ramayana, or enter into the meaning of the ‘ninya vacansi’, the secret words of the Veda, as revealed by Sri Aurobindo. I trust that Sampadananda Mishra’s researches will bear the fruit of encouraging readers to delve deeper into Sri Aurobindo’s works and into the ancient texts of India.

— Bryce Grinlington

A Commentary on Sri Aurobindo's Poem *Iliion*

(By V.Murugesu; Published by Dipti Publications; Price: Rs.250.00 (hard cover), pp.344)
See page2



Homer the Asiatic Greek composed two epics: *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Sri Aurobindo also wrote two epics: *Savitri* and *Iliion*. V.Murugesu, the author of the book under review, writes a full-length commentary on *Iliion*, a maiden venture. Homer composed his *Iliad* about 750 B.C., and Sri Aurobindo contemplated the composition of his *Iliion* in 1894 and finished it by 1915. The name of Troy has different versions as: Troe, Troia, Troy, Ilios and Iliion. Sri Aurobindo is known popularly as only a philosopher, but he is first and foremost a poet. Now *Iliion* opens the window to the West to discover the epic-poet and the master-craftsman in Sri Aurobindo.

English poets like Pope, Cowper and others translated *Iliad*, but without much success. Sri Aurobindo's *Iliion* is a recreation; a reinterpretation of human life. The ancient epics are composed on the themes of 'honour' or 'revenge'. It is felt that the Trojan war came about not for the very reason that Paris had stolen Helen but because in doing so he had violated the sanctions of guest-friendship.

Sri Aurobindo has composed his epic in nine books — the ninth is incomplete. *Iliion* begins where Homer's twenty-fourth book stops. *Iliion* deals with the painful events that took place on the last day of the decade-old war — the fall of Troy. The hero or the heroine of this epic is neither Achilles nor Penthesilea but Iliion itself.

No ancient epic ever came to a finish without the intervention of Gods. So Zeus pronounces:

Troy shall fall at last and the ancient ages shall perish.

...Let not one Nation resist by its glory
the good of the ages...

At dawn on Troy's last day, Achilles sends his emissary Talthibius for a settlement of the issue. The Trojans debate the proposal critically and prominent Trojans like Antenor and Cassandra warn the rulers and disclose the impending doom:

"...the high gods watch in their silence

...the doom may be swifter and greater
...the sword was prepared for our breasts
and the flame for our housetops...

...Hear, O Ye deaf, the sounds in your ears and
the voices of evening!"

But to no avail. Talthibius returns. Later the superhuman Achilles swears not to enter his tent till he defeats the last of the Trojans. Later the unconquerables too perish, like locusts, in the fire of his mythical ire. This is the way all the heroic battles have been fought since time immemorial, and Sri Aurobindo remarks:

"All that is born and destroyed is reborn in the sweep of ages;

Life like a decimal ever recurring repeats the old figure;

... Evil once ended renews..."

Iliion is indeed a crisis poem (present warfare echoes his words).

Homer composed his epic in "Quantitative hexameters". Even poets like Tennyson did not succeed in adapting it to the English language. To an extent Robert Bridges and H.W.Longfellow succeeded. Then the problem of understanding. Sri Aurobindo himself said, "my hexameters are intended to be read naturally as one would read any English sentence...". And Sri Aurobindo succeeded fully in his experiment.

Murugesu divides his commentary into eight chapters and the ninth is a map of ancient Troy and its surroundings. He deals with "Sri Aurobindo, the poet" and "Poetry" in general. His analysis of the epic runs bearing the titles as given by Sri Aurobindo: "the Herald", "the Statesman", "the Assembly", "of Partings", "of Achilles", "of the chieftains", "the Woman", "the Gods" and "the Battle" (last named not by Sri Aurobindo). The events of the last day of Troy are embedded in these nine books.

Murugesu intersperses in his running commentary and exposition, passages and parallels from *Savitri* and the Indian epics, as well. While doing so, it seems the critic has in mind both the scholar and the abecedarian.

Further to enthuse the reader, he explains the rules and basics of Rhetoric and Versification. He tags up a chapter "Appendices" to gloss the topics as "Dreams in Iliion", "Penthesilea", "Gods", "Beauty", "Woman", "Love" and so on.

Perhaps a glossary of names in *Iliion* would have made the book integral and comprehensive.

Years ago Amal Kiran, Prema Nandakumar, Jesse Roarke and C.N.Devy wrote critical articles on *Ilion* and they were published in the Ashram magazines. Murugesu's *Commentary* would serve the student and the scholar to better appreciate the epic *Ilion*.

In the commentator's opinion, "*Ilion* is a unique

poem and its words and phrases, lines and sentences roll with a mantric content — words and phrases producing something that is overhead, resounding and lines becoming magical formulae creating a speck and charm that seep into the soul."

— Dr. D. Venkateswar Rao

A PIONEERING WORK

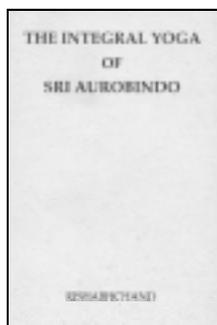
The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo

(By Rishabhchand; Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram; Price: Rs.140.00, pp.473)

In a preface written in 1959 for the 2nd edition of the work under notice, the author wrote, "The demand for this book is one of the minor indications of the growing interest the elite of the West are taking in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's Integral Yoga and philosophy. It is heartening to find that many eminent thinkers of Europe and America are turning to Sri Aurobindo as the only hope and refuge in the dismal bankruptcy in the modern rationalistic, scientific and technocratic culture, and discovering in his teachings the synthetic spiritual vision, the all-reconciling comprehensive outlook, the happy fusion of the ideals of the East and the West, and above all, the authentic, divine dynamism, capable of transforming human nature and creating a new world order, which alone can lift mankind from the morass of degeneracy into which it has sunk."

Much water has since flowed along all the rivers of the earth and numerous works on the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, apart from their original works, have found eager readerships in varied spheres of the world. What for the author was a 'minor indication' has grown to become a major indication of humanity's home-coming, after a long prodigal wandering, to its original quest for 'God, Light, Freedom, Bliss and Immortality'.

The early fifties of the 20th century, when for many seekers Sri Aurobindo's works appeared too formidable to be approached, Rishabhchand's *Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* came as a most welcome introduction to



the lore. Divided into 31 chapters, the book began with the question 'What is Yoga', examined it from the point of view of the Gita — at once putting the reader at ease with that familiar approach — and then went over to presenting a bird's eye view of the 'Varieties of Yoga' and in the next chapter gave a brief account of the efforts made through the ages at bringing about a synthesis of the different systems — the process culminating in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

Chapters that followed focused on several aspects of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo — for example its aims, foundations and the ways of integral surrender. The concepts of key words in the spiritual vocabulary in general and in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga in particular, such as Ego, Nature, Soul and Psychic, were authentically introduced, explained and some of the fundamental queries, anticipated by the author, were ably answered.

The last chapter is an excellent analysis of the characteristics of our time. Even though made decades ago, the author's observations on the paradoxical traits of the age are as relevant today as they were when written. His language is direct yet highly readable. To wit: "The soul of man, like the earth in winter, looks stripped and desolate. Distraught and unhappy with its mean material obsessions, prostrate in the dust in the very hour of its resounding scientific triumphs, drained of hope, drained of spiritual strength and courage, drained even of the will to rise up and advance, it turns an anguished, appealing eye to the Heavens above. Its hour of meek, prayerful prostrations is the hour of its spiritual salvation."

The work had served a laudable purpose when first published and it will serve the same purpose for many more with its latest appearance.

— Manoj Das

SRI AUROBINDO: A UNIVERSAL WRITER

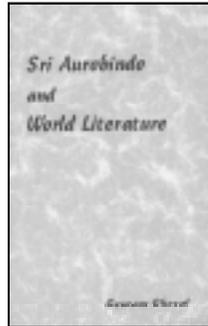
Sri Aurobindo and World Literature

(By Goutam Ghosal; Published by Sri Mira Trust, Pondicherry; Price: Rs.70.00, pp.138)

Years ago while reviewing Dr.Goutam Ghosal's book *Sri Aurobindo's Prose Style*, I wrote: "...A look at the Aurobindoniana accessible in any library worth the name will reveal that there are a good number of studies available on Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Yoga, political thought, aesthetics, poetry, plays and literary criticism. But one doubts whether a study of the stylistic features of his prose is available. Dr.Goutam Ghosal's book fills the gap for his is the first detailed study of Sri Aurobindo's prose style." I added: "Among the beauties of this slim and earnest volume are the clarity and brevity with which it puts its arguments." After eight years and after reading his recent book *Sri Aurobindo and World Literature* I am unable to change my view on his arguments.

Dr.Goutam Ghosal is a phenomenon, a titanic force in the history of Aurobindoniana, for he attempts to study in the book under review, another unexamined aspect of Sri Aurobindo. In his 'Foreword' to the book, Dr.Ghosal writes: "The name 'Sri Aurobindo' is not just a name. It means a new movement in literature, a silent revolution which is going to change the entire complexion of future literature. But no writer can be studied in isolation and for a global writer like Sri Aurobindo, it is essential that he should be judged with reference to the other masters of literature. People tend to relate Sri Aurobindo only with the past Indian masters, forgetting that he also has close ties with the West."

The veteran researcher K.D.Sethna clarified this point by writing a scholarly book entitled *Sri Aurobindo and Greece*. In his thesis he observed: "...To make a special point of coupling Greece with him (Sri Aurobindo) might seem to the average informed Westerner an ingenious irrelevance. And yet, within this Indian of Indians, Greece lived with a power not only intimate but also creative as in few moderns of the



West — and, starting with Greece, the cultural genius of all Europe fused with his Indianness."

These words perhaps pulled Dr.Ghosal towards them and emphasized their importance. Sethna is a literary luminary and whoever comes anywhere near his aura is bound to shine. And the result is another slim volume that attempts to show how Sri Aurobindo may be studied with reference to the great Western writers, most of whom are romantics in a special sense.

In this book Dr.Ghosal studies the classics like *A Tale of Two Cities*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Old Man and the Sea* through the Aurobindonian lens. Eminent men of letters like Walt Whitman, Baudelaire, Blake, Emerson, Poe, Keats and Oscar Wilde are compared with Sri Aurobindo and these short comparative studies clarify Sri Aurobindo's position in the history of Western literature.

Dr.Ghosal compares the love sonnets of Petrarch with those of Sri Aurobindo and his verdict runs thus: "Petrarch's love sonnets mirror the psychological motives of the poet, but they lack the suggestive quality of Sri Aurobindo's otherwise immature poetry." In one essay he traces the Cranian (remember Stephen Crane of *The Red Badge of Courage* fame) echoes in Sri Aurobindo's heroic narrative *Baji Prabhau*. In another he compares the two great poetic theories — *Tradition and Individual Talent* (T.S.Eliot) and *The Future Poetry* (Sri Aurobindo) — that appeared in print a few years after the end of the First World War and observes: "Eliot's theory of poetry is not in line with Sri Aurobindo's theory of self-research."

The eighteen short essays found in this book have "fine insights on every page" (to use the words of Sethna from his 'Endorsement' to the 'Foreword') and they are good enough examples of Dr.Ghosal's scholarship. These are days when everyone after post graduation in English frantically searches for topics to write dissertations for the award of M.Phil. or Ph.D. degrees. They will find ample scope here in these short comparative studies of Dr.Ghosal for he leaves enough clues for further research in various fields of comparative criticism.

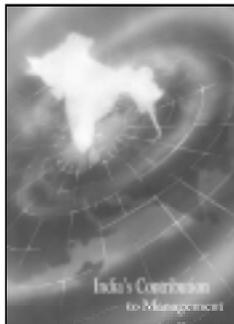
— Dr.P.Raja

 THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

India's Contribution to Management

(By Pravir Malik; Published by Sri Aurobindo Society; Price: Rs.100.00, pp.162)

This is an important contribution to understanding the hard discipline of management in the light of Sri Aurobindonean spirituality. The author of this book Pravir Malik, himself a distinguished management consultant, now offers new approaches to study the ethics of business practices.



Supported by the statement of some of the leaders in the field such as Ratan Tata and Dharani Sinha, the volume carries a valuable foreword by Dr. Karan Singh.

Divided into three sections: “the possibility”, “the imperative” and “the future”, the book attempts to map out imaginative ways spiritual insights regarding the human personality can be used in order to optimise corporate returns and goals.

The first part provides the necessary background. It brings in approaches such as the Asian resurgence, the role of the corporation, the role of India and finally, east-west synthesis.

Similarly, the next section deals with issues such as the new management framework, micro trends in management, the digital economy and leadership development for the digital economy.

Section three attempts a futuristic study of management, focussing attention on the following: business for the new millennium, making quantum based prediction, towards quantum based reality, redefining profit and the new management paradigm.

The significance of this book lies in the fact that much of its contents are based on the experiments the author carried out on scientific lines in the corporate field. Malik's results are notably in consonance with some of the new developments in the field, exemplified in the writings of management Gurus including its popular variants such as Deepak Chopra in America.

Malik contends that “ten core groups and a total of twenty core skills form the basis for all effective behaviour.” He suggests that “a broad based effective and repeatable leadership model which adequately equips individuals and organizations with the means to develop the higher caliber of leadership is required.” Similarly, he argues convincingly that although business exists to make money, making money is the result of business and not its goal or purpose. In other words, he says, “a company which has helped to develop the possibilities in man will have a higher chance of success.” This is indeed the meaning, one might say, behind the present day emphasis on customer satisfaction and employees' empowerment.

Malik then goes on to underline a series of crippling limitations that business often imposes upon itself. Success for the company, he argues, depends on the extent to which it can “explicitly address these limitations in a systematic manner”.

I believe it is chapter four, “redefining profit” that deserves a closer look by all of us, and especially managers. Simply defined, profit is the difference between “the revenue a corporation generates and its costs.” It is in this chapter that the author shows that in today's mad scramble for profit, companies everywhere take recourse to superficial means that rely on quantitative approaches such as the number of man-hours spent on a given project rather than the quality of the work rendered. As he rightly concludes, “the pressure to perform, to out-do, to conquer and to devour...must inevitably result in dissatisfaction” and negativities such as anger, resentment, envy and politicking.

The answer clearly is for the manager to place his/her loyalty to the inner principle that can have an integrating effect upon all our management practices. Thereby business will serve a higher goal than just the plunder of valuable earthly resources for personal and corporate greed. It will not generate mutually conflicting decisions but optimise harmony with productivity so that in a win-win situation, “combined strengths, perceptions and forces of being can join to create a more organic and embodying solution.”

I believe, Malik's account could have acquired a larger dimension if he had brought in some of the achievements of the western managerial

practices. Although the dichotomies between the east and the west may be a useful conceptual tool, it could also be fruitful to see the way the so-called adversarial positions could complement each other. For instance, even in the capitalistic west, secular philanthropy in the form of foundations such as the Ford, the Rockefeller or Carnegie Mellon are commitments to larger communitarian goals. Practices unfortunately and abysmally absent in the Indian business world, barring of course a few units such as the isolated Tata Trust. To what extent does such a commitment bring in Malik's own prescription for taking business management beyond the pale of private profiteering? I believe, this is one area where Indian business can learn from the western model.

Secondly, Malik seems to assume in his book an audience already familiar with the Sri Aurobindonian

framework and vocabulary. It seems to me that for carrying his thesis to a larger constituency, he could finetune and suitably integrate the Sri Aurobindonian vision into a cross-disciplinary framework beyond the field of management alone. That way his project will have a greater intellectual rigour and academic appeal.

On the whole however, *India's Contribution to Management* is a highly readable and timely publication. It is a valuable addition to the emerging discipline of new approaches to management studies. The Sri Aurobindo Society deserves thanks for undertaking this publication. The book should reach the hands of all managers, corporate or otherwise.

— Dr Sachidanada Mohanty

RECORD OF YOGA

The sixth batch of 3 volumes of the set of the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo was brought out in September. The volumes are:

- Kena and Other Upanishads
- Record of Yoga I
- Record of Yoga II

As of December 2001, 18 volumes of the Complete Works set are available.

Record of Yoga is a diary of Sri Aurobindo's yogic experiences between 1909 and 1927. Most entries are from 1912 to 1920. Other materials Sri Aurobindo wrote relating to his practice of yoga, such as *Sapta Chatusthaya* which formed the basis of the yoga, are also included.

The complete text of *Record of Yoga* was brought out serially in the *Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research* journal. This is the first time that it has been brought out in book form. This material did

not appear in the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL) set. Separate editions of the two *Record of Yoga* volumes have also been printed for independent sale. The soft cover editions of both volumes were printed in October and the hard cover editions are expected to appear in December (*see page 2 for details*). Those who already have the SABCL set of 30 volumes may prefer procuring the hard cover editions as they will be bound in cloth, light cream in colour, with PVC jacket and will match the colour and binding of the SABCL set. However the size (14cm x22cm) will be smaller than the SABCL volumes.

In writing his diary Sri Aurobindo used a special terminology which included words from Sanskrit and other languages, as well as abbreviations, symbols and markings. The special terminology is explained in a separate glossary which will be issued later.

The Divine Eternal is the inhabitant in all existences; he is equal in all and the equal friend, father, mother, creator, lover, supporter of all creatures. He is the enemy of none and he is the partial lover of none; none has he cast out, none has he eternally condemned, none has he favoured by any despotism of arbitrary caprice: all at last equally come to him through their circlings in the ignorance.

— Sri Aurobindo