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VOL. 46 NO. 1

Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER



Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Essays on the Gita*, p. 386



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LYNDA LESTER is a director of the Sri Aurobindo Association of America and has given a number of presentations at the annual AUM Integral Yoga conference. Her presentation "Our Many Selves: Moving Toward Mastery of Our Complex Being" is online at www.vimeo.com/208724699.

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education and research institutions in India and the U.S. Inspired by the visionary work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, particularly their educational, social, and cultural thought, she writes on related topics to make sense of various shades of life—the one within and the one without.

KAREN MITCHELL is a contributing writer for *Collaboration* and a member of the journal's editorial team. Her work has been featured in previous issues, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have helped inspire her research, writing, and way of life.

GLORIA SAYAVEDRA joined the Sri Aurobindo Association board of directors to help celebrate difference in Unity, especially by bringing forward additional expressions of the collective Soul. She facilitates a weekly bilingual (English/Spanish) reading group of Sri Aurobindo's magnificent epic, *Savitri*.

ABOUT THE COVER

A being in meditation, experiencing colors of the soul. As the chakras emanate their hues, wavelengths transform into a soothing rhythm before, like breath itself, they pass through. Cover design by Saili Sawant using watercolor art, digital painting, and graphic illustration. Originally from India, Saili works as a graphic designer in California and holds a master's in graphic design and digital media from the Academy of Art University. To learn more about her work and to view her portfolio visit www.sailisawant.com.



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Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

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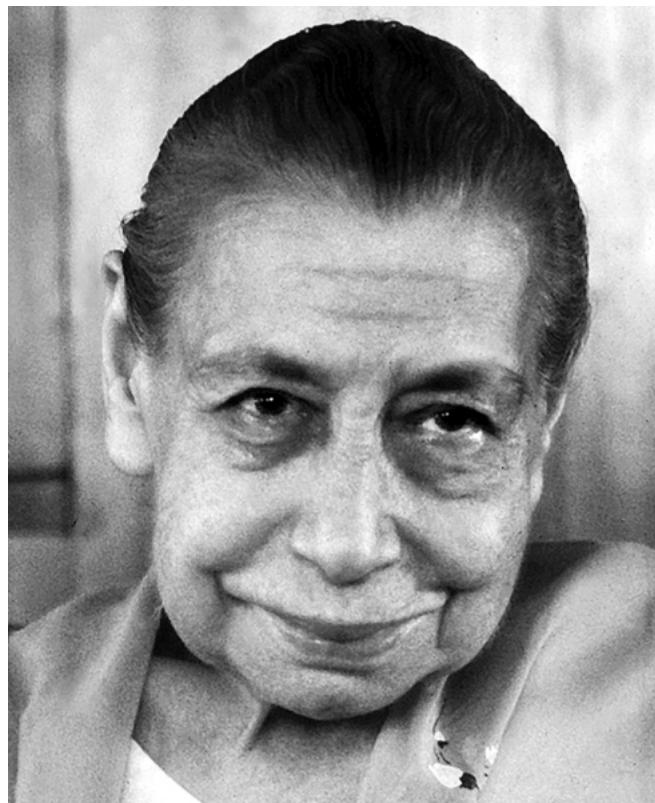
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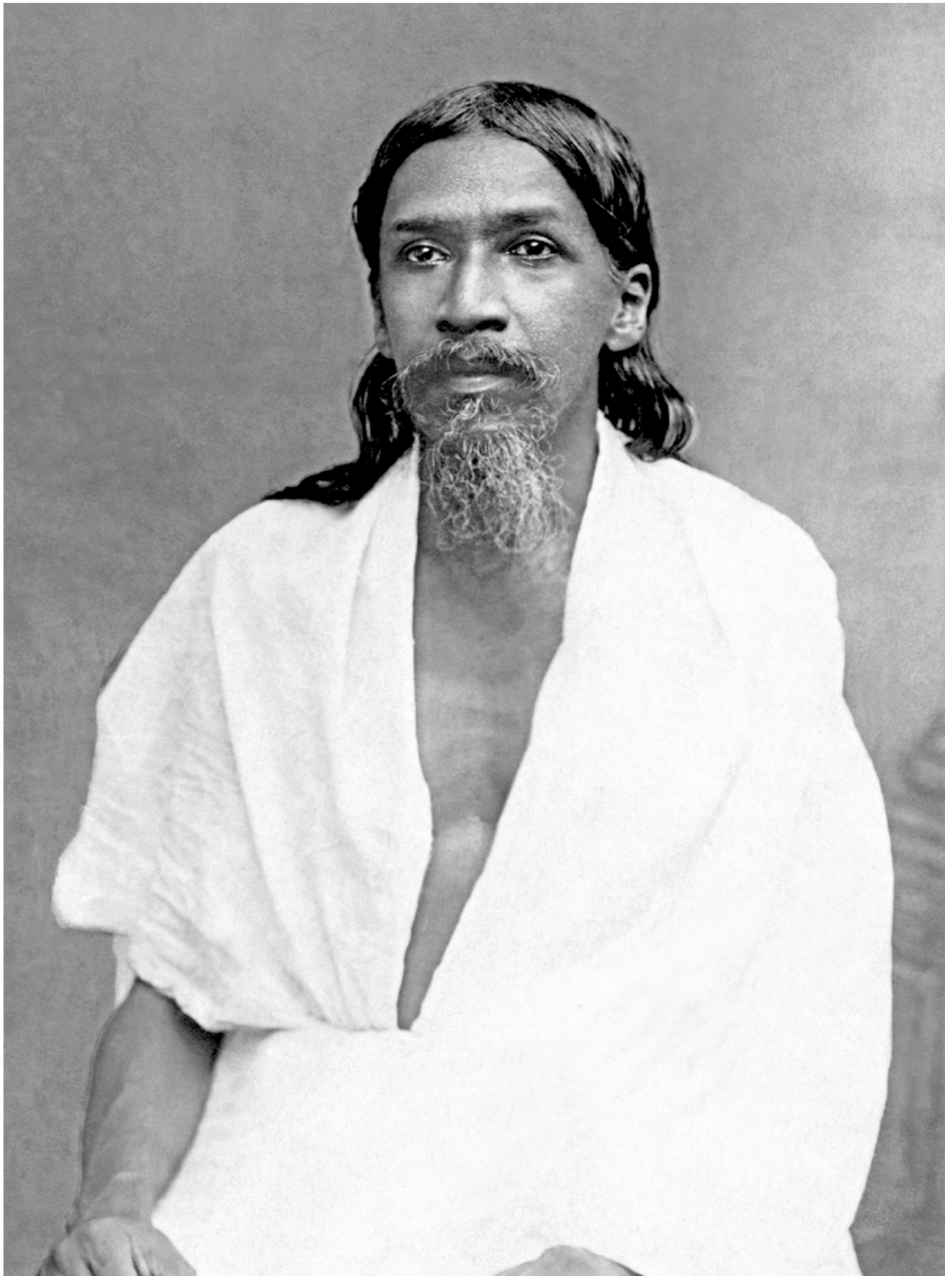


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Listening on the Brink



But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality.

On the word of Sri Aurobindo, so begins our spring issue.

Across these pages our contributors share what they've heard in their search for signs of the Times—adding, with *Collaboration*, the inner and ultimate, i.e. *Spirit*, to the conversation as we all play brinkmanship with planetary life and evolution.

What effect might combining *Spirit* with Time have on our shared intuition of strolling blindfolded to the brink of Big Time? Where might we find inklings of that effect? And how might it affect Mother Earth and us when the

Time-Spirit is ready to break through the crust of millennia?

Lynda Lester, lying on the cold floor of the Denver International Airport after a canceled flight, gives a hint of the effect she calls “Napping with the Divine.” She isn’t complaining. Matthew Andrews leads us along the trail of a hunch, a slight shift, with its starts and stops and confusions, until it begins to change our lived experience from banality into marvel. *We know how to do this*, he assures us in his reflection “On the Brink.” Beloo Mehra lays out the paradox, while remaining quite certain that this is *not* a never-ending winter, in her lyrical “A Mighty Guidance.”

What then is time? asks Karen Mitchell, touching on the ideas of thinkers—from St. Augustine to Jacob Needleman—in “About Time.” Gloria Sayavedra’s photo essay, “Art of Diversity,” brings us vibrant street art that reflects an unforgettable summer of protest in Los Angeles. This movement still echoes in us. She was there and she shares her insights in English and Spanish.

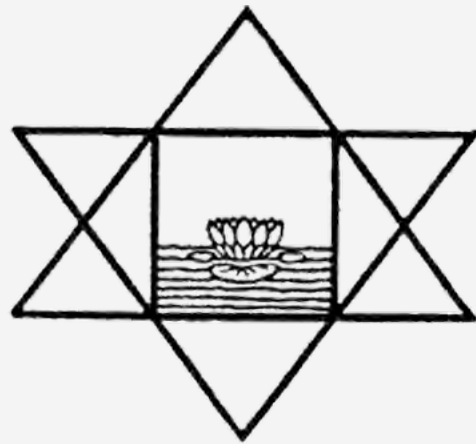
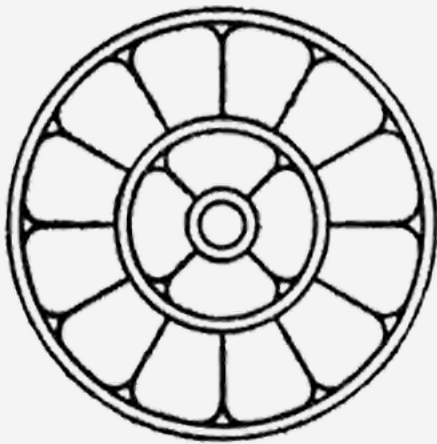
Bahman Shirazi’s conversation with *American Veda* author Philip Goldberg explores the impact of Indian spiritual teachings on American life over the past half century. In “Life’s Big Questions,” Phil argues that we’re essentially becoming a nation of yogis. Whoa!

Here’s another clue. Philosopher Rod Hemsell recently noticed something that Martin Heidegger identified in the 1930s: a descent of spiritual consciousness through poetic inspiration in Friedrich Hölderlin’s work. “Poetizing Spirit” is Rod’s reflection on this process in two of his own poems spanning 50 years. Wonder what will come through Amanda Gorman’s voice when she looks back over 50 years.

Sri Aurobindo experienced an outpouring of poetizing spirit in the 1930s. We love his poetry in *Collaboration*. Every line is loaded with the future’s call. His sonnet “Transformation,” for example, opens on vastness and rapture traveling all the way down to nerves and cells. See our back cover.

We hope you enjoy the issue. We hope it touches and inspires. We love hearing from you. We welcome your participation and support. —the Editors

REFLECTIONS



NAPPING WITH THE DIVINE

LYNDA LESTER



This selection was first published in the Summer 2000 issue of the journal.—Editors

Author's note: My friends Mary, Tim, Fred, and I were scheduled to fly to San Francisco from Denver to hear a concert by pianist Scott Kirby, but our plane was canceled. We stood in customer-service lines for four hours and battled numerous challenges before Fred gave up and the rest of us finally booked a late flight to SFO via Orange County.

AS WE WAITED IN LINE WITH PEOPLE AROUND US SWEARING AND yelling angrily into cell phones, travelers getting sick with despair and resignation, and Fred's worry index going off the charts, I gave everything to the Divine.

I felt karma-free, free as a bird. I'd been cut loose from the moorings of mundane care and daily responsibility; I was on a cosmic pilgrimage. Therefore, anything that happened I was taking as an opportunity to advance faster in sadhana.

I'd had only three hours of sleep the night before and was in desperate need of a nap if I could get it. So after a harrowing, seemingly endless buffeting in customer service, I found a semi-deserted gate across the concourse.

I'd been to Chicago O'Hare and learned there the airport protocol for exhausted wayfarers: pull up some floor and crash. So I staked out a spot between a pillar and a plate glass window, pulled my feather pillow out of my canvas bag, lay down, and pulled my hat over my eyes.

The floor was mine; relative privacy was mine; two hours were mine to sleep. I rested and thought: how wonderful, what grace.

No cares: My cares were left at the office.

No hassles: I could nap on the floor in peace.

No problems: Our plane was rescheduled, we'd be in San Francisco tonight, we'd hear the concert tomorrow... and this was a mission devoted to God, a worry-free zone, a zone where only the Divine resided.

And as I lay there on the cold carpet in the airport, my entire body aching with the pain of sleeplessness and middle age, I looked closely to see what was the truth of this moment.

What it was, was the Divine holding me in his arms. I was cradled in the arms of the Divine Mother, like a baby being rocked to sleep.

"Mr. Mushroom, Mr. Be A. Mushroom; Ms. Mental, Ms. Arlene Mental; Mr. Bread, Mr. Short Bread, please report to a white courtesy phone." The voices I heard over the PA grew surrealistically comic as I drifted into a cozy, half-awake state.

Underneath me was the concourse, rumbling with the feet of hundreds of passersby; but what I felt most were waves of bliss beating up from the floor—like subatomic radiation, reverse gravity, convection: wave after wave of bliss carrying me like a little Wynken-Blynken-and-Nod boat on a sea galaxy of God. It was impossibly beautiful, impossibly full of peace and sweetness; it infused my aching cells.

And as I lay there crashed out on the floor like some despair-ridden homeless person, transcendence seduced and enveloped me, introduced me to infinity and immortality, brought me face-to-face with the timeless Eternal.

And that is how, cradled on the breast of the Divine, I found shanti and ananda on the floor of Denver International Airport.

This, I thought, has got to be the most wonderful experience I will have all weekend. Nothing could be sweeter than this.

I was wrong.

LYNDA LESTER is a director of the Sri Aurobindo Association of America and has given a number of presentations at the annual AUM Integral Yoga conferences. Her presentation "Our Many Selves: Moving Toward Mastery of Our Complex Being" is online at www.vimeo.com/208724699.



ON^{THE} BRINK

MATTHEW ANDREWS

LEIO MCLAREN

WE STAND TODAY IN THE MIDST OF A MILLION INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS converging upon one another. Super-storms, melting ice caps and subsequent sea level rise, global terrorism, decimation of the rainforests, toxins in the water and air, not to mention a pandemic. We live in the shadow of collective annihilation.

And simultaneously our opposition to each other grows, we take sides and sling mud and hate and sarcasm and bitterness. There is no apparent escape, no way through. The status quo has taken us to the edge of the cliff. The old ways must fall away and something entirely new must emerge.

But what is that something new? Where will it come from? Will it be a technological innovation like the cotton gin or the Internet? Or a new understanding of the universe like advances in quantum physics? Or could it be perhaps a realization? Something organic and aligned with the flow of human evolution?

Realizations often begin as ideas. A slight shift and the mind changes, opens to new possibilities. For a hundred years we have understood that matter is energy. Nothing is really solid; a seamless field unifies all, the math tells us so. But how does the idea influence our lived experience? Can we sense the energy moving within things? Or do we still experience objects and plants and people as fundamentally other? When we look around, do we sense a unifying wholeness that underlies everything, or do we sense separate entities, enclosed in their own packages, eternally distant from ourselves?

When we have an idea, it's like looking up at the top of a mountain and thinking, "If I climbed up there, I could see things from a different perspective. I could see the connections between things, how things fit together, and the whole that comprises all the parts. My vision would widen." We look up and surmise, or we use abstractions and equations to estimate what that vision would behold. The idea sparks curiosity.

So perhaps we climb up, and the idea becomes a realization. With every step, our vision widens. We see, and marvel. Our thoughts and estimates can never match the experience, as we fully take in the broader reality: the connections, the relationships, the implications. We drink in the view through our eyes, our body, our whole

being. The first photograph of the Earth from space literally transformed the consciousness of humanity.

And then we come back down. We are changed, but when we look around, somehow that widened perspective doesn't stick. Maybe we think, "Was that even real? Did that happen?" And so we climb back up again, and again, and each time the broader perspective integrates more fully, changing us from within. Sporadic realization becomes embodied. First we thought, then we knew, and now we *are* the realization. And it is us.

Yoga is an individual journey and a collective journey. Each path is unique, and is woven with all other paths into a fantastic harmony. All aspires and moves toward greater realization, deeper embodiment. As Sri Aurobindo says, "All life is Yoga"—evolving, unfurling. The outer husk thins and cracks and gives way to the root and verdant stem, seeking nourishment via relationship. Perhaps the new that arrives is something already within us, something in-volved that waits to e-volve.

The evolutionary theory of punctuated equilibrium asserts that evolution happens in bursts. The speed of change is generally very slow, almost stable for millions of years, and then there is a surge forward, and things change very quickly. Positive feedback loops between inner and outer ecosystems accelerate the process of change in gusts. The volcano sleeps for thousands of years and then erupts.

Ecological pressures assail us from all sides. Every collective problem that we face requires a collaborative solution. Our personalities have developed to cope with a world of competition, but competition is failing us now. Our minds have evolved to understand parts but not wholes. We rely on senses that detect otherness.

Today we inhabit the birth canal. We can't see what's coming, and an enormous, unbearable pressure is churning everything, outside and inside. We blame the pressure on our enemies, on our collective ignorance, on ourselves. We despair and cringe and seek solace in

fiction. And with every contraction the emergent future awaits, prepared to receive us, embrace us, and fill us with new life.

Or we are the eggshell, and within is our deeper being, ready to emerge, ready to face whatever comes. Our deeper being was created for this moment, and has no fear or trepidation. But we have come to identify with the shell, and it's cracking. New life kicks from within, ready to emerge, and we scream and reach for the drugs. Everything is falling apart, our very being is cracking.

Something organic and aligned with the flow of human evolution is growing within us and between us. Our capacity to see wholes and understand each other is expanding. Our experience of the inter-connectivity of all life is mounting. This experience is not an idea, not a concept. The experience defies ideas, it is irrefutable.

If my daughter is in danger, I don't wait and think about what I should do. I leap in to save her. As our collective realization of interconnection increases day by day, nurtured by the pressure of outer collapse and inner emergence, we will not wait and think about which NGO to donate to, or whether we can spare a dime. We will plunge in and transform the systems of oppression that incarcerate our brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers. We will dive into the pool where our children are drowning.

In the meantime, we must bear the transformation. We must be churned by the enveloping pressure, feel the breaking of our heart's protective armor, weather the cracking of our sense of self. We will curse and flail and hide and dodge. We will disown the love that grows within us and seek to fortify the crumbling prison walls that hem us in. And we will fail.

As much as possible, our refuges during this time are hope and surrender. If we can hold onto the hope that a new dawn is approaching, and surrender our will to the greater will that holds the good of all, then we will pass this time with greater ease. Hope will nourish our hearts



and keep us at the ready, and surrender will protect us from self-destructive inclinations born of fear.

We know how to do this. Hope and surrender are encoded into our deepest hearts. We just need to look there, beneath the ideas and assumptions and predictions and strategies, into the silent vast within that holds immeasurable wisdom. A map for this traverse into the new terrain of the future will flow from deep within us. Guidance and direction will be spoken in the soul's language of love and truth. The voices will ring clear, incapable of distortion.

This new day that dawns, this emergent future that requires us to transform in order to enter, cannot be seen by our mind's eye, which is shaped by the past. It

requires a new vision, an intuitive vision of the deepest heart that we will gain as we go.

We stand today in the midst of a million insoluble problems converging upon one another. And we stand in the midst of a million miraculous solutions enarmed with one another. Blessed be this holy moment, this space between breaths. We live on the brink of collective awakening.

MATTHEW ANDREWS writes poetry, prose, and songs that nurture the organic human aspiration toward a life Divine. Co-owner of Yoga Center Amherst and president of Auroville International USA, Matthew leads spiritual and cultural pilgrimages to India that explore Auroville, the Sri Aurobindo ashrams in Pondicherry and New Delhi, and Madhuban Himalayan Retreat.

ABOUT TIME

KAREN MITCHELL

What then is Time?

If no one asks me, I know what it is.

If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know.

(St. Augustine, 354–430 CE)

I missprecedented times.

(popular meme found on T-shirts and mugs in 2020)

In December 2020, I attended the online weekend retreat Time Out of Joint. This phrase compares our common sense of time to how we take our bodies for granted until they break down or become ill. Our sense of time is so foundational, so basic to how we think and how we experience ourselves and the world, that we rarely pay attention to it.

Wolfgang Giegerich, a contemporary psychologist, explains this phenomenon by writing about how culture, like language, has two levels. Language has a syntactical level and a semantic level. The syntax is the grammatical or structural rules. Semantics is the meaning carried by words and supported by the structure. After we learn the grammatical or structural rules of a language, we rarely attend to them again. Our focus is on the meaning of speech or writing. Similarly, the sense of time belongs to the syntax of a culture or society. It is something we take for granted and rarely bring to our attention; but when we do, we have difficulty explaining it, as St. Augustine experienced.

Today, we are sensing something is happening to time—something new, challenging, and momentous. We may

think this is due to a radical shift in our culture. However, it could also be that a fundamental, cultural transformation is occurring as the time sense itself mutates. There is very likely a feedback loop between culture and our sense of time, which is becoming more appreciated. After all, we humans have not always lived with the same unchanging sense of time. In the future we will not sense time as we do now. Sri Aurobindo and the philosopher Jean Gebser placed less emphasis on culture's impact. They saw our sense of time mutating with the transformation of consciousness.

To aid and support bringing more attention and thought to the time sense, here is a list of writers who have helped me:

SRI AUROBINDO (1872–1950) wrote about time in a multifaceted way throughout many of his works, including (but not limited to) *Savitri*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (especially the ending chapter “Towards the Supramental Time Vision”), and *Letters on Yoga*. The latter contains passages about time as it pertains to the practice of Integral Yoga. In Vol. 1, Sri Aurobindo writes: “When one begins to feel the inner being and live in it (the result



of the experience of peace and silence) the ordinary time sense disappears or becomes purely external.”

JEAN GEBSER (1905–1973) was a philosopher, linguist and poet. He wrote *The Ever Present Origin*, which posits and describes the transmutation of consciousness humans have experienced from their beginnings. Each stage is marked by a different sense of time. Gebser saw our turbulent, present time as the beginnings of what he called Time-Freedom.

CARLO ROVELLI (1956–) is an Italian theoretical physicist. He wrote *The Order of Time*. In this book, he explains why the idea of time is “crumbling” within the field of physics and asks the question, “If there is no absolute time, what is there?” His answer: There is nothing in the observable universe but relation and events. Rovelli sees time as a human construct largely arising from emotion-charged memory. You can view his relevant talk, “The Nature of Time,” on YouTube.

ADAM FRANK (1962–) is a physicist and an astronomer. He wrote *About Time: Cosmology and Culture at the Twilight of the Big Bang*. Frank’s book gives an overview of how our sense of time developed, particularly in the Western world. He describes how our

various inventions have given rise to different senses of time and how that is continuing to the present.

GAIA VINCE (1950–) is an award-winning science writer. Her latest book is *Transcendence: How Humans Evolved Through Fire, Language, Beauty, and Time*. Vince includes a developmental perspective in her writing about time and discusses the findings of various experiments related to the human sense of time.

JACOB NEEDLEMAN (1934–) is a professor of philosophy. He wrote *Time and the Soul* and is featured in the YouTube video “Time and the Soul: Interview with Jacob Needleman.” During the interview, Needleman speaks about the experience of time. He talks about how time is stolen from us by emotion, by the need to maintain a particular self-image, and by desire. He talks about those moments when we are suddenly fully present, when we know ourselves to be here and how our experience of time reflects our awareness—or lack of awareness—about our inner life.

KAREN MITCHELL is a contributing writer for *Collaboration* and a member of the journal’s editorial team. Her work has been featured in previous issues, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have helped inspire her research, writing, and way of life.

A Mighty Guidance

BELOO MEHRA

Certainly, not all is well with the world today.
I don't have to give any examples to prove this fact.

Certainly, not all will get well with the world any time soon.
I don't have to give any reasons to explain why.

Certainly, not all well-wishers of the world, who are more in love with their voices and opinions than the world, have spoken their last about how to make it all well.
I don't have to say anything more on why these well-wishers will not stop any time soon.

But one thing I am, and I sincerely hope to remain, quite certain of is this—

This is *not* a never-ending winter.
The Sun has a way to melt down the hardest ice and thaw out the harshest freeze.
The Light has a way to dispel the darkest darkness from the deepest corner and cranny.
The Dawn has a way to bring a new beginning, a greater faith, a stronger hope.

And what I am also certain of is this—

This is true not only of *the* World outside.

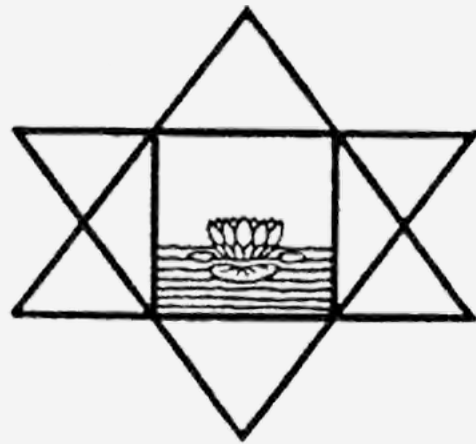
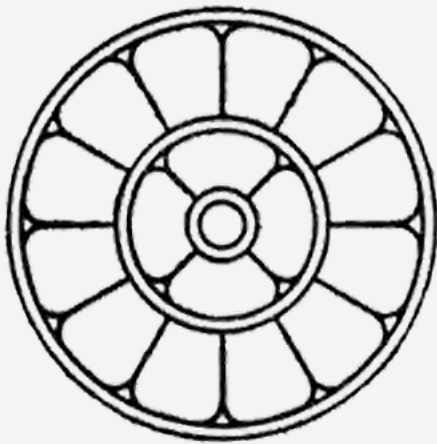
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.
(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book I, Canto IV)

This is *also* true of *the* World, within.

Whatever the appearance we must bear,
Whatever our strong ills and present fate,
When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.
(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book I, Canto IV)

BELOO MEHRA has extensive teaching, research, and curriculum development experience in higher education and research institutions in India and the U.S. Inspired by the visionary work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, particularly their educational, social, and cultural thought, she writes on related topics to make sense of various shades of life—the one within and the one without.

FEATURES

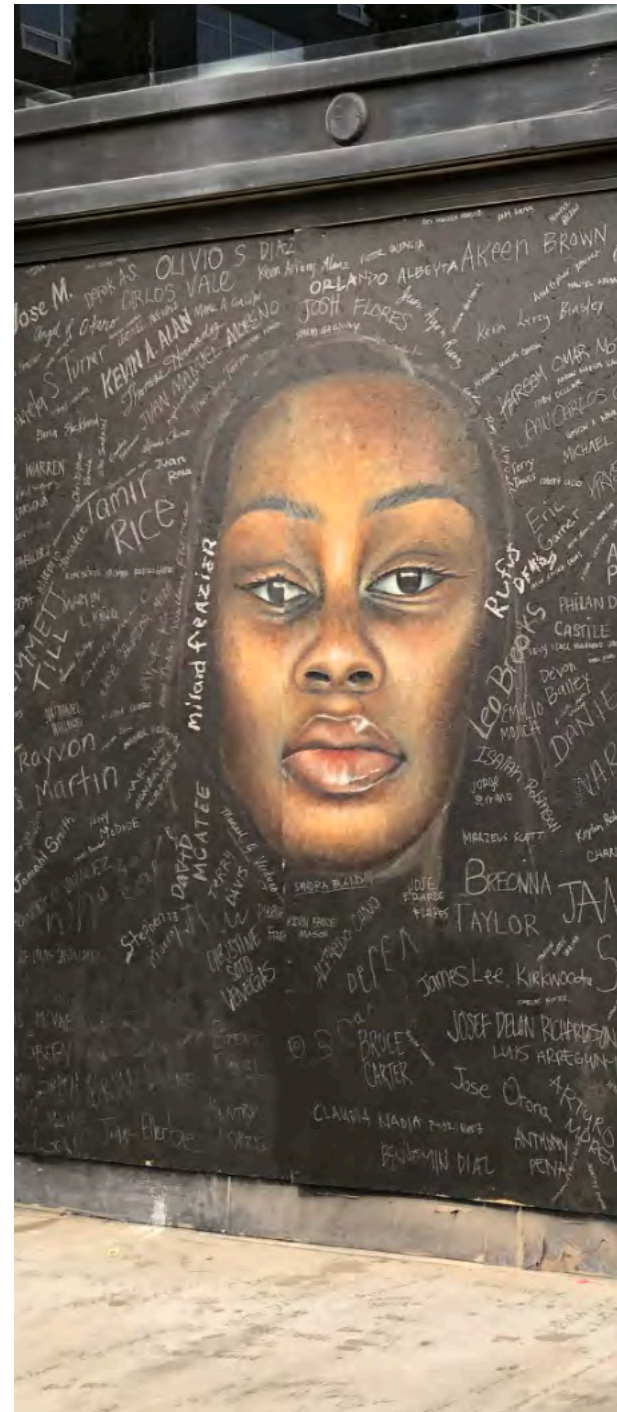


ART *of* DIVERSITY

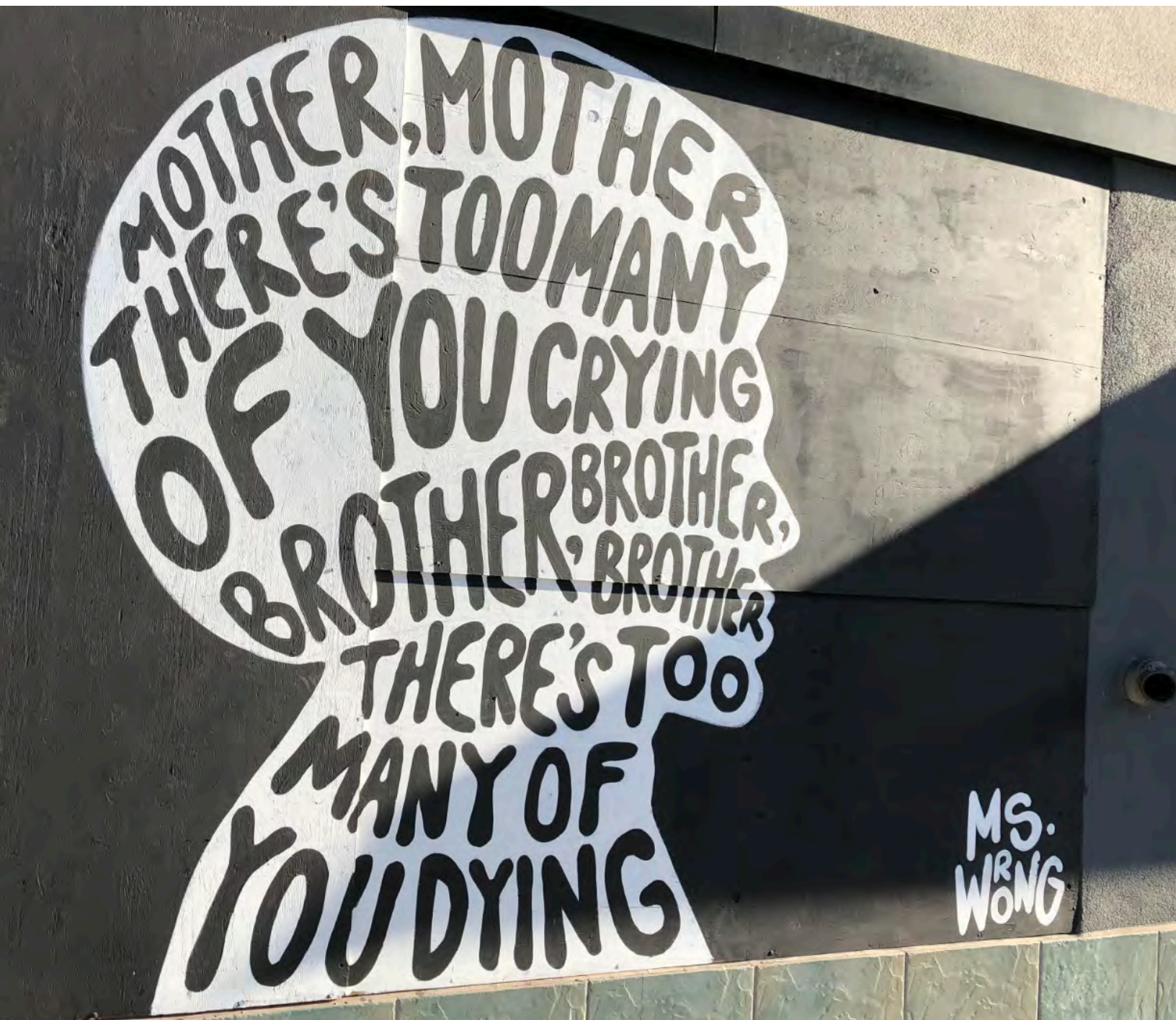
GLORIA SAYAVEDRA

Voices of color broke their silence
in pursuit of unity in diversity.

Long Beach, California, June 2020







IT WAS ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO, IN WHAT NOW SEEMS LIKE A different age, that we witnessed one of the largest mass protests in the history of this country. The Los Angeles area was no exception. Millions saw their streets flooded with crowds, marching to the chant of “Black Lives Matter.”

These men and women left behind their marks as fleeting art forms on the once inert wood panels erected to protect windows from the crowds. Those voices—voices of color—broke their silence. They did so in the name of pain and the uncountable accumulated losses in their history, a history of powerlessness.

HACE APENAS UNOS MESES, QUE YA PARECEN AÑOS, FUIMOS testigos de una de las más grandes movilizaciones que haya habido en el país, y el área de Los Ángeles no fue la excepción. Millones vimos las calles inundadas de gente, marchando al unísono de “Black Lives Matter.”

Esos hombres y mujeres dejaron su huella, su arte fugaz, en paneles de madera otrora inertes que estaban ahí para proteger las ventanas de la posible violencia de la multitud. Esas voces de colores rompieron el silencio, en nombre del dolor y las pérdidas acumuladas en sus historias de impotencia.

The depth of their wounds was expressed through art that refuses to fade. These works continue to vibrate and are a manifestation of an indomitable spirit. The murals are also a reminder of the invisible crowd; they are active witnesses that continue to chant after other voices have gone quiet.

Some protests are silent, while others resound and acquire the multiple shades of a ray of light traversing the sky. Art offers the possibility to leave behind reason and, instead, acknowledge and celebrate each individual's singularity.

Sus heridas profundas quedaron plasmadas ahí, en un arte que se niega a desvanecerse produciendo una continua vibración, una manifestación de un espíritu indomable. Esos murales siguen ahí recordándonos a esa multitud invisible, cual testigos activos, gritando en nombre de esas voces que ahora callan.

Hay manifestaciones silenciosas, otras estrepitosas, multitonales como el trazo de un rayo en el cielo. El arte nos da la posibilidad, más allá de la razón, de reconocer y celebrar la singularidad de cada individuo.





In my understanding, each manifestation of the Divine is full of opposites: Knowledge-Ignorance, Light-Darkness. They remind us that creation in essence means diversity, multiplicity, and duality.

“...[F]or one who knows Thee, thou art everywhere, in all things, and none of them seems more suitable than another for manifesting Thee...”

(THE MOTHER, *Prayers and Meditations*, March 14, 1914).

En mi entendimiento, toda manifestación de lo Divino está colmada de opuestos: Conocimiento-Ignorancia, Luz-Oscuridad. Nos recuerda que la creación en esencia significa diversidad, multiplicidad y dualidad.

“Para quien Te reconoce, Tú estás en todas partes, en todas las cosas, y ninguna de ellas es mejor que otra para manifestarte a Ti.”

(MADRE, *Plegarias y Meditaciones*, 14 de marzo de 1914).

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Poetizing *Spirit*

ROD HEMSELL

A reflection on two poems spanning 50 years—a Journey



It is well known that the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, which I have studied for several decades, took a mystical turn in the 1930s. This was followed by lecture courses on ancient Greek philosophy and on Friedrich Hölderlin's poetry, in which he formulated a possible transformation of consciousness and a different destiny for humanity. In the poetry of Hölderlin, in particular, Heidegger discovered what he termed a "poetizing of spirit"—a descent of spiritual consciousness through poetic inspiration, similar to the process expressed in Sri Aurobindo's poetry and philosophy.

I was recently rereading an old poem from 1967, which I didn't remember at all except that it had been printed in a California journal called *Black Mountain Press*, edited and published by Claire Worden (aka Dietra, founder of the Auroville Association). A copy had been sent to me out of the blue by a friend who found it on eBay. When my poem turned up, I happened to be studying "The Ister"¹—a 1942 lecture course given by Heidegger on Hölderlin's poetry—so I decided to apply Heidegger's method of interpretation to the poem.

A SONG OF THE MYSTERY OF BIRTH

Grass harps play a rhythm of myriad forms from hillside to sea
As the sun gently sips away morning dew
To pour it magically into our hearts and fill our waking eyes with love.

Today we shall walk along the shore Mother and Child
And the waters will rejoice in our smile.
The wind will blow sand in our hair
And the wheel will spin
Until the cleaving of spirit and seed is complete.

But how long alone can we withstand
On the vast and windy shore and to where repair?
Do not be bothered by such thoughts Mother
For the plight of man will be rejoiced
In the infinity of our smile.

My Heideggerian interpretation goes like this: The cleaving of the spirit and seed is the liberation of the self from the attachments of normal life and mind, and the winds that carry us along and threaten to pull us down as we walk on that vast shore, between land and sea, between body and soul. The Mother here is the lower hemisphere with its fears and anxieties about life and death, the child is the young spirit of freedom and adventure, the smile is the smile of victory and liberation. The dew that is poured into our hearts is the inspiration from the higher planes, from the

When I wrote these things, I was feeling them, and the poem represented my state of mind. But I don't remember seeing clearly the symbolism; it seems that the poetizing of consciousness isn't necessarily aware of its meaning at the time of writing.

sun, a kind of essence obtained from experience, awakening our vision of liberation.

After making my way to Santa Cruz during this turbulent but inspired period in my life, I visited Haridas Chaudhuri in San Francisco, and while the Mother's call was upon me, I was just beginning to be conscious of it. I recognize now that "A song of the Mystery of Birth" is about the aspiration to be free from the lower *prakriti*, being influenced by the idea of Yoga, and having some intuition of the possibility. Although I had not read Sri Aurobindo's poetry at that time, I was definitely influenced by the poems of Rabindranath Tagore. With Chaudhuri's help I was soon on my way to Pondicherry.

Now, reading Heidegger and his commentary on Hölderlin's poetry, I am looking at my poems in the context of "the poetizing of spirit." He pursues two strong theoretical lines of development in his study: the historical and the spiritual. He is reflecting on a time of inspired thought in Germany, represented especially by the writings of the three famous friends: Hegel, F. W. J. Schelling, and Hölderlin. Without going into the details of his argument, I would encapsulate it by saying that one must leave one's natural social and cultural milieu in order to find oneself in the context of what is foreign,

thereby becoming able to realize the true value of one's own spirit. In Heidegger's words:

For the Greeks, what is their own is "the fire from the heavens"—the light and the glow of that which determines the arrival and proximity of the gods. Yet in order to appropriate this as their own, the Greeks had to pass through something foreign, namely through the "clarity of presentation ...What the Germans lack, what therefore must first come to be encountered by them is that which is foreign: the "fire from the heavens." It is this that the Germans must learn to experience so as to be struck by the fire and thereby to be impelled toward the correct appropriation of their own gift for presentation. Otherwise the Germans will remain exposed to the danger and the weakness of suppressing every fire on account of the rashness of their capabilities. (Section 21)

Heidegger summed this problem up with the phrase "becoming unhomely in order to become homely," a play on the German word *Unheimliche*.

In keeping with his theory of poetic interpretation, let us read an excerpt from a Hölderlin poem on the rivers, a central theme in his poetry, followed by an excerpt from Heidegger's commentary.

Namely, they are
 To be to language. A sign is needed,
 Nothing else, plain and simple, so that it carries sun
 And moon in the mind, inseparable,
 And passes on, day and night too, and
 The heavenly feel themselves warm by one another.²

Heidegger makes a point to clarify his extensive and elaborate interpretation: The rivers are meant to serve as an “expression of something”—indeed as “signs of” something else, namely the poet’s word. The sign that is needed must be such as to journey through the day, yet through the “night too.” For the night is the mother of the day, in her the dawning and rising of the holy is prepared” (Section 24–25).

In this poetic and philosophical depiction of the poet as the word, the intermediary and channel between the gods and the beings of earth, and as the journey of awakening, we may not surprisingly find a connection between the Vedic idea of the poet, *kavi*, whose cry literally brings to birth the gods in mortals, this work of Heidegger, and Sri Aurobindo’s extensive commentaries on the Vedic hymns. This can be understood in a brief quotation from Heidegger, based on lines from “The Rhine”:

Yet of their own Immortality
 The gods have enough, and if one thing
 The heavenly require,
 Then it is heroes and humans
 And mortals otherwise. For since
 The most blessed feel nothing themselves,
 There must possibly, if to say such
 Is allowed, in the names of the gods
 Another be who feels with empathy,
 Him they need, yet their ordinance
 Is that he must his own house
 Shatter and his most beloved
 Chide like the enemy and father and child

Bury beneath the ruins,
 He who wants to be like them and,
 Like a dreamer, not tolerate the unequal.
 (Section 25)

Heidegger gave his commentary on Hölderlin’s poetry as a lecture course in 1942. That same year, Sri Aurobindo wrote the essay “On Quantitative Metre”—a study of the principles of classical Greek poetics applied to English, composed in the midst of writing *Savitri*. I believe he applied the principles successfully and the result is an actual *mantra*, an expression of the goddess of illumined speech, whose mission is to point the way for earth and men. She, and the poetry of Sri Aurobindo in general, are characterized by these words of the Lord of Love:

O Savitri, thou art my spirit’s Power,
 The revealing voice of my immortal Word,
 The face of Truth upon the roads of Time
 Pointing to the souls of men the routes to God.
 (*Savitri*, p. 703)

HISTORY OF THE JOURNEY ITSELF

Looking back now at my early poem, it is clear that the “plight” of man means the unfortunate situation of our life, which yet reveals “the mystery of birth.” Love requires separation, the child grows up, the spirit rises above the body—in seeking liberation from all forms of attachment it must become “unhomely” in order to find the absolute love, freedom, joy. From attachment (unfreedom) comes freedom, from a sometimes violent separation comes peace and unity. The waters of life rejoice in our liberation from the pull of their tides; from the constantly turning wheel of time comes the infinite, eternal smile.

I wonder, however, if poetizing the spirit is different for different times and places, different histories and destinies. Here there is joy in the feeling of resolution, joy in facing the challenge of separation, joy in the sense

of freedom, almost exultation. At the same time, in the background, there is anxiety and the fear of separation.

Uncanny³ for sure, but looking back on all that followed from this moment, and all that came before it, time seems to have been transcended and the future already settled for this fellow. There doesn't seem to be a "history" to reconstitute and validate, other than the journey itself.

The idea that from separation comes union, the cleavage of spirit and seed, and liberation from life into spirit, seems to be essentially, historically, an Indian idea. Perhaps this constitutes a fundamental difference with respect to Heidegger's interpretation of what he terms poetizing the Western, and specifically German, spirit in Hölderlin's poetry. Much could be said about this regarding the poet's role in facilitating the descent of the gods, as the rivers bring sustenance and energy to the earth. Both Heidegger and Sri Aurobindo were strong exponents of the idea that their respective cultures were endowed by the gods with divine destinies, and that their poets have played a significant role in the grounding of their respective cultural values and identities.

There are prominent differences to be distinguished between the qualities expressed by the gods and goddesses of the Greek pantheon, and those of the Indian pantheon. And there are prominent differences that distinguish imperial German culture from colonial Indian culture. But there are also many similarities that can be easily discovered through a comparison of the works of Heidegger and Sri Aurobindo.

Looking now at my poems, I can make certain observations that would not have occurred to me at the time of writing in any case, but which stand out in this larger philosophical context. My earlier poem, "The Song of the Mystery of Birth," appears to me now to be particularly naive, almost frivolous, considering the spiritual implications that it seems to have. A critic might say that it is simply "romantic"—or considering the period of culture, that this boy must have been drinking the Kool-Aid.

But from a deeper perspective, such as Yoga and other spiritual disciplines provide, it might be considered an inspired response to the psychological crises of the time, or even prophetic of the evolutionary urge poetized so eloquently by Sri Aurobindo. In *Savitri*, for example, we hear the words "fear not to be nothing that thou mayst be all" (p. 536). The meaning of negation in Indian spirituality suggests the possible return back from separation to union. Both of these movements "of spirit" might seem utterly unrealistic to the critical contemporary mind, but they were articulated in the philosophy of Hegel in the 19th century and were popularly expressed by the phenomenological philosophers and psychologists of the 40s and 50s.

However frivolous the idea of a joyful liberation might seem to a skeptical materialist today, I am reminded of Sri Aurobindo's argument in "The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth," his final writing in 1950: "The evolution we see around us at present ... shows few signs of such a possibility, so few that the reason, at present our only sure guide, has no right to hazard belief in it" (*Essays in Philosophy and Yoga*, p. 579). Of course skepticism is natural to the mind, as Heidegger explained in a commentary on "Hegel's Concept of Experience," also produced in 1942, because consciousness realizes that it is other than the objects it perceives and knows, and it wants to be certain of the truth of things and of itself.

After admitting the doubtfulness of his spiritual speculations, even after expounding them in thousands of pages of philosophy over a period of 30 years, Sri Aurobindo offered two possible proofs:

1. If the Supramental consciousness is not the truth, then there can be no truth and no consciousness.
2. It can be verified by direct experience.

In my own "poetizing of spirit" over the past 50 years, I can say that I have had many insights and experiences that tend to validate both of these proofs.

Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision seems to incorporate both the Greek and the Indian notions of sacrifice, and one might also say the Christian and Hindu notions of spirit: liberation and resurrection, rejection and affirmation, nirvana and pleroma, differences united on a higher plane of "transformation."

For the tragic Greek spirit, commented on extensively by Heidegger in his course on Hölderlin, and frequently elsewhere, knowledge of the finality of death makes transcendence possible. The poet's reaching upward to the gods and facilitating their descent requires a heroic sacrifice, which in turn gives everything "homely" its value.

The traditional Indian idea of sacrifice also brings down the fire of heaven, but it is more often expressed through ecstatic devotional poetry and song rather than through suffering.

The poet of the Overmind gods and philosopher of the Supramental manifestation brings into view the possibility (or reality) of a descent of the divine consciousness, and not only its inspired "word," into this mortal life and world.

Our boy on the beach was, perhaps, just beginning a rather different journey than the one conceived by the German river poet. Here's what he saw 50 years later, on another beach, in another time, after many journeys,



possibly reaching beyond even the unhomeliness of the poetizing spirit:

BETWEEN TWO OCEANS

Between two oceans of light a golden river flows,
But where have you hidden your face?
Is your radiance veiled by the ocean and sky?

This little human figure standing on the shore
Is blinded by the blaze of your reflection,
But your brilliance is beyond the power of his gaze.

Even the golden orb of sun
Is a shadow of your luminous presence,
and your light that flows between the stars

Fills the boundless darkness with its glow—
The sparkle of heaven is dimmed by its radiance.
But where have you hidden your face?

Are you there in the spray of glistening waves,
Is it you who have dressed in their whiteness?
Is it you that we hear when they break upon the
shore?

Like Rumi on the shores of infinity,
I must wait with the patience of a seer,
For your rising like a moon within my soul!

My head is suddenly bowed by your appearance,
My vision blinded by the force of your transcendence!
I am drowned in the depths of your motionless peace!

Awake at last in the ocean of your light,
My eyes are astonished by the gaze of your delight!
I am uplifted by your tides, upborne on your lightning
wings of love!⁴

It is possible that this is where the Western and Eastern notions of spirit meet and another history begins. Here, on this stretch of beach, the golden river of poetic vision flows, between the oceans of mind and Supermind. Here the goddess suddenly appears, not as something seen or thought, but as a seeing, a gaze of divine delight, an infinite ocean of absolute love, a presence and a consciousness that has the potential of transforming life and abolishing death. It seems to me, in this light, that the poetry of the river and the hearth, and the journey that transcends time and space, might become more than an opening of the human to the gods. As the poet and philosopher of the Supramental transformation put it:

Authors of earth's high change, to you it is given
To cross the dangerous spaces of the soul
And touch the mighty Mother stark awake
And meet the Omnipotent in this house of flesh
And make of life the million-bodied One.
(*Savitri*, p. 370)

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* Indiana University Press, 1996.
2. Translation by Edith Stadig from Hölderlin's original German poem "Der Ister."
3. 'Uncanny' is a term used by Hölderlin and elaborated on by Heidegger, qualifying this aspect of human destiny.
4. Rod Hemsell, *Wings of the Sea*, auroebooks.com, 2018.

ROD HEMSELL lived in Auroville from 1968 to 1983 and again from 2005 to 2017. During this time he was mostly involved in education. As part of Auroville's University of Human Unity project, he published several books of lectures on philosophy and three books of poetry, which are available for download at auroebooks.com.

Life's BIG Questions

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP GOLDBERG

The author of *American Veda* reflects on the impact Indian spiritual teachings have made on American life, including his own.

For Sri Aurobindo, the Time-Spirit is at work to bring about a mighty movement of which the world at the present juncture has grave need. Although his understanding of yoga includes practices that accelerate the evolution of personal consciousness, he refers to yoga in a much wider sense, affirming that “All life is Yoga”—and the collective processes of evolution of consciousness are part of a greater yoga of the Earth. He saw the integration of East and West as a key step in this planetary evolution.

This demand of the Time-Spirit gives special significance to the following interview with Philip Goldberg. While Sri Aurobindo provides us with an overarching vision for integration of East and West, Goldberg’s decades of research and practice gives us a perspective, from the ground up, on how Indian spirituality and yoga traditions have influenced, in particular, contemporary American culture. The following exchange with *Collaboration* editor Bahman Shirazi, which took place toward the end of 2020, summarizes some of Goldberg’s experiences and views on spirituality in the United States in recent decades.—Editors



MARION MICHELE

COLLABORATION: May we start our conversation about your background in yoga and spiritual practice? When and how did you take interest in spirituality, meditation, and yoga? Were there any early childhood experiences that preceded your formal encounter with spirituality?

PHILIP GOLDBERG: I was raised by secular Jewish atheists who thought religion was the opium of the people. I adopted that perspective and had no use for anything “spiritual” until my later years of college, which coincided with the upheavals of the 1960s. Confusion, discontent, and a kind of youthful existential despair led to a conscious search for answers to the Big Questions of life: Who am I? What am I doing here? What’s it all about? Some combination of drug experiences and reading about Eastern spirituality—mainly what are commonly known as Hinduism and Buddhism—turned my life around. I read obsessively in a widening arc that eventually encompassed all the world’s mystical traditions and centered primarily on the Vedanta and Yoga. Everything pointed to the need for *sadhana* [spiritual practice]. I sampled various methods and was drawn especially to transcendental meditation [TM] in 1968. Two years later, I trained as a TM teacher.

C: How has your worldview evolved over time? Did you move from one tradition to another in search of the “right” practice for you? Have there been common spiritual themes throughout your life?

GOLDBERG: I was always fairly eclectic, learning whatever I could from any credible source. But I've become even more eclectic over time. That said, my original focus—Vedanta philosophy and the yogic inventory of methods—has remained primary. The centerpiece of my regular practice remains the basic TM technique, but I've added to it over time and supplement it with what meets my needs on any given day. There have certainly been common themes: I learned early on that the spiritual is practical. I call myself a pragmatic mystic, meaning I've always favored precepts that hold up to scrutiny and practices that calm and heal and expand the mind and reveal even a glimpse of pure consciousness.

C: How do you see spirituality evolving in the U.S. over the past five to six decades?

GOLDBERG: In *American Veda*, I describe the findings of surveys about religion and spirituality. In brief, the following trends can be identified; they have accelerated over the past 10 years:

- Spiritual independence—Freedom to choose one's personal path rather than adhering to the tradition one is born into.
- Direct experience—Placing a high value on one's inner relationship with the Divine.
- Pluralism—Exclusivism is down, inclusiveness is up—along with respect for traditions other than one's own as valid means of advancing spiritually.
- Fluidity—Valuing experimentation and eclectic searching over so-called "dwelling" spirituality.
- Nonliteralism—Viewing sacred texts, the Bible in particular, symbolically and metaphorically as opposed to literal and historical truth.
- Redefining "God"—The great majority of Americans say they believe in God. But they increasingly see God as an abstract force or intelligence as opposed to an anthropomorphic deity; God as "everywhere and in everything" as opposed to "someone somewhere."

C: How would you describe spirituality in the U.S. before Asian and Indian traditions were introduced here?

GOLDBERG: A small but significant number of Americans have always been independent seekers, oriented toward direct experience. I think of Ralph Waldo Emerson as the founding father of "spiritual but not religious." Check out his famous Harvard Divinity School address in 1838. Emerson was in a tiny minority who were influenced by the existing literature on Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. The variations of Protestantism that dominated the culture were soon joined by Catholic and Jewish immigrants, but religion overall was mainly belief-centered, dogmatic, congregational, legalistic, authoritarian, and competitive. Over time, as Eastern wisdom became more accessible, the trends described above grew.

C: How would you describe the impact of Indian traditions on the evolution of spirituality in the U.S.?

GOLDBERG: They represent a shift from outer-directed to inner-directed, from religious conformity to spiritual seeking, from faith to experimentation, from belief to experience, from loyal belonging to independence, from hostility toward other traditions to acceptance. Mainly, the essential elements of personal transformation and transcendent experience were largely missing—either lost over time or intentionally buried—from mainstream spiritual traditions, but they were valued and protected in the East and were precisely what a large segment of Americans were hungry for, whether consciously or not.

C: What are the different streams and tributaries through which yogic teachings entered the American culture? Science, psychology, arts, etcetera?

GOLDBERG: One of my favorite topics, about which there is much to be said. I'll have to be super brief. The principal stream through which yogic teachings filtered into American soil was the gurus, swamis, and yoga masters who came here from India; also the books. By

now, many thousands of Americans have been trained to teach by reputable authorities and to represent authentic lineages. In a less visible manner, the dissemination was powerfully fostered and magnified by Westerners who were influenced by the teachings, assimilated them into their lives and their work, adapted them to their areas of expertise, and transmitted them to others, both explicitly and implicitly, sometimes to the point where the original source was lost. Some of these transmitters were prominent figures who were able to reach millions of people. They include famous intellectuals, physicists, psychologists, novelists, poets, musicians, and even representatives of Western religions. The impact of subtle streams and tributaries should not be underestimated.

C: How are these teachings adapted to American culture, values, and language? What is gained and what is lost in the process?

Vivekananda in the 1890s, Yogananda in the 20s and 30s, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the 60s, or Iyengar et al. in the 70s. You can see it in how the teachings of Sri Aurobindo or Ramana Maharshi have been assimilated and adapted as well. The question of where skillful adaptation ends and inappropriate appropriation begins is complicated and has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. To me, the crucial element is: Are the teachings being adapted in a way that reaches people in a positive way without distortion, dilution, or corruption? When meditation or mindfulness becomes secularized as a therapeutic or a stress-reduction technique it may or may not be problematic, depending on the details. But when “yoga” becomes synonymous with a physical fitness exercise we have a problem, and with commercial gimmicks like wine-tasting “yoga” retreats, we have an even bigger problem.

I think we’re essentially becoming a nation of yogis.

By which I mean that certain yogic principles—
individual paths, emphasis on practice and experience,
orientation toward unity amidst diversity—are
increasingly accepted...

GOLDBERG: The adaptation to American language, norms, and values was inevitable, of course, just as ideas, art forms, technologies, foods, and fashions have always been adapted when cultures interact. It’s no more surprising than America making pizza a national dish or India turning American motion picture technology into Bollywood. The gurus who succeeded in America were skillful adapters. You can see it in how their language and emphasis evolved, whether it was Swami

C: Let’s talk about some of the current trends. How would you characterize spirituality in the U.S. today?

GOLDBERG: If the research is accurate, the trends I mentioned above are growing. I think we’re essentially becoming a nation of yogis. By which I mean that certain yogic principles—individual paths, emphasis on practice and experience, orientation toward unity amidst



When meditation or mindfulness becomes secularized as a therapeutic or a stress-reduction technique it may or may not be problematic, depending on the details. But when “yoga” becomes synonymous with a physical fitness exercise we have a problem, and with commercial gimmicks like wine-tasting “yoga” retreats, we have an even bigger problem.

diversity—are increasingly accepted and are driving a growing number of individual paths.

C: How do the younger generations approach spirituality today? There seem to be implicit influences such as vegetarianism, new age trends in healing and health, as well as explicit influences such as yoga studios.

GOLDBERG: Yes, and more. The percentage of people who identify as “spiritual but not religious,” who are unaffiliated with any specific tradition or institution, who take ownership of their paths and explore widely, has been highest among the young with every iteration of the research. And now they have access to the wisdom of the ages at their fingertips.

C: How are specific traditions such as Buddhism doing today? Are they as vibrant as they were a few decades ago?

GOLDBERG: Probably more so, only now they’re not as newsworthy; they’re part of the culture. Most of the venerable Hindu-oriented institutions—the ones founded by visiting gurus—are alive and well alongside the yoga studios and secularized adaptations that get most of the attention. In addition, a deeply important moment in the historical sweep of things was the 1965 immigration

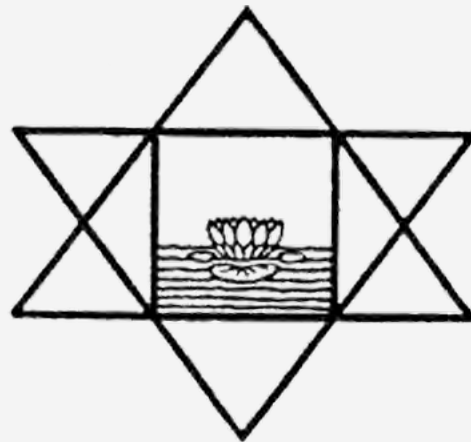
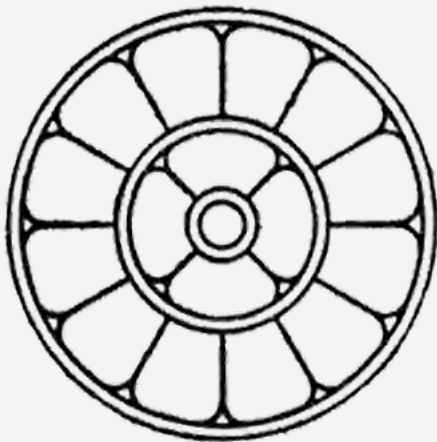
law that allowed Asians to become American citizens. As a result, there are now third- and fourth-generation Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Sikh Americans, along with what we call “houses of worship,” advocacy groups, and civic organizations. Their presence in American culture has given many more people more accurate knowledge of the traditions, with the predictable growth in respect and acceptance.

C: What are you learning from your contacts and interviews and responses to your books, lectures, and podcasts about current trends of American spirituality?

GOLDBERG: Every time I think I know a lot, I interview someone on my podcast or read an article someone posts on Facebook and I realize how much I still have to learn. The untapped wisdom seems as limitless as the path itself.

PHILIP GOLDBERG is the author of numerous books, including *American Veda*, the biography *The Life of Yogananda*, and *Spiritual Practice for Crazy Times*, published in 2020. A popular public speaker, he blogs on Spirituality & Health, cohosts the Spirit Matters podcast, and leads American Veda Tours to India. His website is www.philipgoldberg.com.

POETRY





MILOŠ TONČEVSKI

THE IRON DICTATORS

I looked for Thee alone, but met my glance
The iron dreadful Four who rule our breath,
Masters of falsehood, Kings of ignorance,
High sovereign Lords of suffering and death.

Whence came these formidable autarchies,
From what inconscient blind Infinity,—
Cold propagandists of a million lies,
Dictators of a world of agony?

Or was it Thou who bor'st the fourfold mask?
Enveloping Thy timeless heart in Time,
Thou hast bound the spirit to its cosmic task,
To find Thee veiled in this tremendous mime.

Thou, only Thou, canst raise the invincible siege,
O Light, O deathless Joy, O rapturous Peace!

SRI AUROBINDO, *Collected Poems*, p. 624

In Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's cosmology, the "Iron Dictators" is an epithet for the four Asuras, or demon Titans, that manifest through the creation of the universe—with Truth becoming Falsehood, Knowledge becoming Ignorance, Bliss becoming Suffering, and Life becoming Death due to their earthly separation from the origin Soul (*Purusha*).—Editors

As a star, uncompanioned, moves in heaven
Unastonished by the immensities of Space,
Travelling infinity by its own light,
The great are strongest when they stand alone.
A God-given might of being is their force,
A ray from self's solitude of light the guide;
The soul that can live alone with itself meets God;
Its lonely universe is their rendezvous.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*, p. 460–461



Ecstasy of St. Theresa Street Art. Photo by GLORIA SAYAVEDRA

Collaboration Journal

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

WINTER 2021 | VOL. 46 NO. 3

American Ecology

*What is your integral response
to the ecological crisis?*



2020 has seen the Australian continent and the American West torched by fire. It has witnessed protests bubble up en masse across the country, spilling out into a global movement. Within weeks, a pandemic ensnared the entire planet, further straining the interconnected nature of people, animals, and our shared ecological home. We are nature ourselves, after all, and part of this landscape, seething. Whether we choose to challenge “the old ways” inherently designed to exploit and oppress remains to be seen. Earth, as it goes, has gone through many transformations. How do we understand the current transformations taking place, and navigate them from an integral perspective?

In the Winter 2021 issue of *Collaboration* we will continue to focus on Time-Spirit and how it is moving in nature. What is progressing deeply behind the headlines and distractions on the surface? Can you speak to these issues from intuitive mind and surprise us with new understandings of Earth and ourselves? In what ways might Integral Yoga help us process the loss of our home ecosystems as they smolder away? What is touching you to live more consciously and lovingly, to help heal both traumatized bodies and weaponized lands? Is there earth-based wisdom from our indigenous communities we can raise to help reconcile our separation from each other and our collective environment? We invite you to integrally engage with questions that tap the roots of our American ecology.

MISSION: *Collaboration* is the journal of Integral Yoga published in the United States. Our mission is to share articles, conversations, poetry, and art that deeply engage our transitional times with the beauty, joy, and hope of the vast wisdom and practice of this evolutionary tradition and its founders, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We explore and celebrate particularly the individual practice of yoga in this country as well as currents and expressions of the collective yoga of the American soul in our times.

AUDIENCE: *Collaboration* is a means of reflection, encouragement, and critical thinking for the Integral Yoga community here at home. We also want to highlight friends and allies in related areas of personal and social transformation. Including these fellow travelers requires sensitivity from our contributors, whom we ask to refrain from using references and terms of Integral Yoga and the

works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother without explaining or clarifying them.

CONTENT: We welcome many kinds of contributions, including community updates, interviews, reflective and educational and experiential essays, poetry, artwork, stories, humor, and reviews. The theme for Summer 2021 invites your works on the contemporary social and environmental currents of the Time-Spirit from a yogic perspective.

DEADLINE: AUGUST 1, 2021

Please contact our editorial team for the word count suitable for your contribution prior to submission at editor@collaboration.org. This will allow us to provide you with writer's guidelines that reflect our editorial criteria.



MARKUS SPISKE

TRANSFORMATION

My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;
It fills my members with a might divine:
I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.
Time is my drama or my pageant dream.
Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme
And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine
Channels of rapture opal and hyaline
For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Collected Poems*, p. 561

