Break the moulds of the past,
but keep safe its gains and its spirit,
or else thou hast no future.

SRI AUROBINDO, Essays Divine and Human, p. 456
Collaboration

SPRING 2022

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PATRICK M. BELDIO is a professor of comparative theology and religion at Marymount University and George Washington University in the Washington, DC, metro area. He has been a student of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo since the early 1990s. His current book project features the Mother and her contribution to the Integral Yoga. Patrick is also a professional sculptor with a studio at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, DC.

Eclectic musician SEABURY GOULD is a singer, music teacher, recording artist, and storyteller. He lives in northern California and plays guitar, bamboo flute, Irish bouzouki, piano, and vina. Seabury writes essays on music and spirituality. He studied Indian music with master musicians such as Ali Akbar Khan, G.S. Sachdev, and Dr. K. Subramaniam. Seabury lived in South India for two years, first arriving in 1974. He lived in Auroville, Pondicherry, and Andhra Pradesh. He has been a sadhak of the Integral Yoga since 1974.

PRAVIR MALIK, Ph.D., has been developing a unified theory and mathematics of organization. He has written 16 books related to this, which include a recently completed 10-book series on the Cosmology of Light to elaborate mathematics with implications in quantum computing, generation of computational strata, genetics, artificial intelligence, and transhumanism. He currently is involved with a couple of start-ups related to his interest in light.

C.V. DEVAN NAIR (1923–2005) was born on a rubber plantation in Malaya and moved to Singapore with his family when he was ten. After World War II he became a fierce revolutionary against British imperial rule and spent five years in British jails, where he discovered Sri Aurobindo. Nair was also a teacher, lawmaker, and trade union leader, shaping Singaporean workers into an economically effective force that helped the country develop one of the strongest financial positions in Asia. From 1981–85 he served as president of Singapore. Later he moved to the U.S. and was a visiting fellow of Cornell University’s Southeast Asia Program. In 2014 the Devan Nair Institute for Employment opened in Singapore to recognize his contributions to the labor movement.

MARTHA ORTON completed a Ph.D. in Sri Aurobindo studies and has written extensively on Integral Yoga. She has been a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for many years.

MARGARET ASTRID PHANES composes illuminating visual meditations. She teaches Light-Force meditation that inspires her work. Ms. Phanes taught digital graphics at the University of Hawaii Maui College and the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her Light-Force visual meditations are published in Musings on Light: A Meditative, Non-Mathematical Summary of a Cosmology of Light and have been presented at AUM conferences. http://www.margaretphanes.com

BAHMAN A.K. SHIRAZI, Ph.D., has studied and worked at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) since the early 1980s. Through the teachings of CIIS founder Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, who brought Sri Aurobindo’s teachings to the West, he discovered Integral Psychology and Integral Yoga, which have provided the inspiration and guidance for his spiritual path ever since.
ABOUT THE COVER

Sunrise emergence of new harmony where each individual is a unique expression of the inner divine.

Cover design by Saili Sawant. To learn more about her work and to view her portfolio visit https://www.sailisawant.com.
A N EXTRAORDINARY MYSTIC AND SPIRITUAL LEADER, THE
Mother was Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual collaborator. As a child she had a series of spiritual experiences lead-
ing to her realization of the Divine. During her young
adulthood in Paris around the turn of the century, she
became an accomplished artist, musician, and writer.
Many of the now world-famous French masters were her
friends and acquaintances. During this time she found
explanation for her inner experiences in the company of
two great occultists, Max and Alma Theon, in Algeria.

In 1914 her meeting with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry,
India, became the turning point of her life. Six years later
she joined him there, where she stayed for the rest of her
life to collaborate with him in their spiritual mission aimed
at complete transformation of human consciousness.

The Mother oversaw the daily activities of Sri Aurobindo
Ashram, founded the Sri Aurobindo International Centre
of Education, and in 1968 founded Auroville, an experimental
international community devoted to human unity. The
Mother’s spiritual work was concerned with activation
of the highest human spiritual potential and the transformation
of the earth and of the physical body at the cellular level.
Her complete writings are compiled in The Collected
Works of the Mother and Mother’s Agenda.

SRI AUROBINDO WAS INDIA’S FOREMOST PHILOSOPHER, POET
and spiritual figure of the 20th century. At age seven
he was sent to England, where he mastered Western
classical literature and languages. He returned to India
at age 21 and soon mastered classical Indian literature
and languages as well. He was active in the Indian inde-
pendence movement until 1910, when he moved to
Pondicherry to pursue his spiritual work.

From 1910 to 1950 his spiritual practice focused on
the reconciliation of spiritual and material realities, with
the ultimate goal of utilizing the most powerful spiritual
force (the supermind) to accelerate and transform human
evolution. He recognized that the current human state
of consciousness is merely a transitional state with endless
potential for spiritual development and called for the
integration of Eastern and Western cultural and knowledge
traditions.

He rejected world-negating approaches to spiritual
development as escapism and embraced embodied
spirituality and the reintegration of the feminine Divine.

His most notable works in prose are: The Life Divine,
The Synthesis of Yoga, Essays on the Gita, and The Human
Cycle. His poetic magnum opus is titled Savitri.
EDITORIAL:
CRISIS & EMERGENCE

How foundational is light! In our world of duality, light comes arm in arm with the dark times and forces—but thankfully, it comes. In the northern hemisphere the green planet is emerging from the dark and cold of winter to the eruption of life and renewal. Our theme in this issue, Crisis and Emergence, bundles the dark crises of life and society in essay, image, and poetry together with startling eruptions of light in many dimensions.

Poetry from Sri Aurobindo such as “The Pilgrim of the Night” excavates and vibrates with deep and difficult sides of our existence, while “The Vedantin’s Prayer” bears the personal anguish and obstacles of the poet but ends in a cry for the joy of release. In “Harmony and Crises,” Seabury Gould reflects on the interplay between the musician’s constant search for harmony and a yogic response to the larger physical and social crises of our times. Martha Orton’s compact poem “Propelled” discovers the point of light in the chaos that brings guidance and deeper knowledge. In Sri Aurobindo’s stunning sonnets “Light” and “The Golden Light,” the miraculous particle/wave mystery rides like lightning from transcendent to visceral and cosmic to personal in epiphanies of joy.

“Towards the Great Turning Point,” by C.V. Devan Nair, is the latest in our “Gems from the Collaboration Archive” series. In this talk, Devan lays before us the supreme personal turning point—at the feet of the Mother—of a lifetime of revolution, action, and accomplishment on the world stage. “The Mother on Crisis and Emergence” brings a vast and universal vision to the material world and widespread destruction of the Great War, which had just begun.

This issue of Collaboration also features three powerful essays. The title of our first feature, “The Time Has Come,” by professor and sculptor Patrick M. Beldio, implies a question—the time for what?—and an answer: It is time for the promised leap beyond the dual reality of our times: dissolution and progress, annihilation and new creation. The recipe is before us now, Patrick argues, if we understand Mother’s acknowledgment of the value of hostile forces and employ her flower-based method of evoking the life-changing power of aspiration.

The other feature articles investigate Dr. Pravir Malik’s paradigm-challenging cosmology of light, which proposes that light is the foundation of the cosmos itself. In “A Journey to Mathematize the Power of Light,” Pravir tells us stories and highlights of his unexpected 20-year personal journey to the cosmology of light, from San Francisco to Pondicherry to Cape Town. The title of the second article, “The Cosmology of Light: Bridging Science and Spirituality,” coauthored with Dr. Bahman A.K. Shirazi, suggests the scope of this work. In the first part of the essay, Bahman reviews the centrality of light in religious and spiritual traditions for thousands of years, with special emphasis on the role of light in Integral Yoga. In the second part, Pravir summarizes how he connects the story of light with the latest discoveries in science. Hold your hats! Pravir and Bahman write: “We propose that the mystical quest for unity in consciousness and the current scientific search for a unified theory of reality have a common origin in the mysteries of light.” Both articles are beautifully illustrated with art from Margaret Astrid Phanes.

The issue concludes with a surprise discovery on “the last tremendous brow” of a long climb in Sri Aurobindo’s poem “One Day,” displayed on the back cover.—John Robert Cornell and Bahman A.K. Shirazi, editors
DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

Sri Aurobindo Association

Collaboration: A Journal of Integral Yoga

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