

SUMMER 2022

VOL. 47 NO. 2

Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

Sri Aurobindo
150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

In matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.

—SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*, *Collected Works of
Sri Aurobindo*, vol. 33, p. 55



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KINJAL SHAH considers herself to be simply the Mother's child. She counts herself extremely blessed to be following a path led by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. She prays every day: "Make me your instrument to do the tasks you have chosen for me to do in this lifetime. Let thy will be done and not mine."

SHRADDHAVAN was a writer, educator, translator, and editor. She studied English language and literature at Bristol University in the United Kingdom, joined Auroville in 1970, and two years later the Mother gave her the name Shraddhavan. She founded Savitri Bhavan, the center for Sri Aurobindo studies at Auroville (<https://savitribhavan.org>), which emphasizes the study of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, *Savitri*. She also served as the editor of the journal *Invocation*, published by Savitri Bhavan. Shraddhavan left her body on July 19, 2022, in Auroville and will be remembered for her enduring contribution to the study of Sri Aurobindo's literature.

DIANE THOME, the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in music from Princeton University, has produced a rich body of chamber, choral, orchestral, electronic, and solo music that has been performed around the world. Her music has been described as "high modernist ... searching, intense, and full of integrity." Much the same can be said of her life as it unfolds in her memoir, *Palaces of Memory*.

ANDREA VAN DE LOO arrived as Angela in Pondicherry in February 1972. On the 27th of that month she saw the Mother. She lived in Auroville till February 1978. With Daniel Brewer she gave birth to her daughters, Hiranya and Antara. In Santa Cruz, California, she practiced various healing modalities. She is now retired and writing her memoirs.

ISA WAGNER writes poems and songs that touch, infect, and delight in their simplicity. She is cofounder and director of the Sri Aurobindo Center Berlin and a member of the board of Auroville International Germany. She has served on the board of Auroville International since 2007.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Cover image of sunrise in the mountains of Nepal by David Mark (courtesy Pixabay).

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IMAGE: SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, DELHI



EDITORIAL

Sri Aurobindo's 150th Birth Anniversary

THIS SPECIAL EXPANDED ISSUE OF *COLLABORATION* celebrates the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo. Born on August 15, 1872, Sri Aurobindo was a significant personality of the 20th century, known as a leading political and spiritual figure in India and as one of the world's preeminent spiritual visionaries.

Sri Aurobindo's works and teachings gradually became known in India after the publication of his writings in the 1920s and 1930s. In recent decades, he has become widely recognized in India and abroad both as a leading freedom fighter in the Indian cultural renaissance and as a spiritual seer. Due to the vast and far-reaching nature of his vision and realization, one can expect his influence to continue for decades, and even for centuries to come.

In the first years of the 20th century, Sri Aurobindo's work focused on the liberation of India from the colonial rule of Great Britain (this was finally accomplished on August 15, 1947, his 75th birthday). But Sri Aurobindo's overt political work ended abruptly in 1910 due to external circumstances and important spiritual experiences that aligned him with a broader vision for transformation of human consciousness and life on earth.

After moving to Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo conducted an intense and focused spiritual practice from 1910 to 1926 that resulted in numerous yogic powers and realizations. This culminated in the experience of the supermind, a comprehensive truth-consciousness capable of transforming nature at both the individual and the collective levels. Due to the urgency of this work, which would make a decisive difference in the future fate of collective consciousness, for the rest of his life Sri Aurobindo pursued his ultimate goal of bringing down the supermind into

matter and establishing its transformational effects on earth.

Sri Aurobindo was a prolific writer. His works ranged from plays, poetry, history, and cultural and political critiques to philosophy, yoga, and spirituality. The first attempt at publishing his collected works resulted in a 30-volume set, the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL)*, published in 1972. *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA)*, a 37-volume set comprised of the contents of the original 30 volumes as well as around 4,000 pages of new texts, became available in electronic format starting in 1997.

Any attempt to select a representative sample of this large body of work is bound to be inadequate. Therefore, the selections of Sri Aurobindo's writings included in this issue are simply humble offerings to honor Sri Aurobindo and stimulate spiritual aspiration in the reader. "Supermind and the Life Divine" relates the metaphysical framework laid out in his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*, to the supermind, which is the key to the transformation of life and consciousness on earth. "The Miracle of Birth" is a short poem that celebrates the evolution of consciousness from the lowest forms to divinity. "A God's Labour" provides a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo's immense spiritual mission to bring light into darkness and ignorance, while "Invitation" is a call to join him on his quest.

Contributions by other writers include an overview of Sri Aurobindo's life and work by Karun Das, which cites elucidating quotations from several of Sri Aurobindo's works; an essay by Martha Orton titled, "The Role of the Avatar," which discusses avatarhood as described by Sri Aurobindo in *Essays on the Gita*; and an article by Shraddhavan, "Reading *The Life Divine*," which tells how

a study group in Auroville approached this process and includes salient highlights from that book. Lastly, Jan Maslow’s contribution, “Walking the Path of Beauty,” is an inspiring essay on the practice of sadhana.

The rest of the articles in this issue are solicited from

our readers and other writers for the purpose of sharing how Sri Aurobindo’s teachings have impacted their lives. We are grateful to all for these submissions and hope that our readers will enjoy them as much as we have.

—Bahman A.K. Shirazi and Martha Orton, editors



IMAGE: JAMES PAGE