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Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER



Language, Intuition, and Consciousness



The moulds or at least the spirit and manner of poetic expression have to be recast ... but this time it has to be done in many languages by the minds of many nation entities at once and to make shape and room for the multitudinous vastitudes, the finer and finer subtleties, the absolute transparencies of the seeing, feeling, and thinking of the inmost self and spirit in man in intimate touch with the opening truths of all the levels of his existence and all his surroundings in Nature and in supernature.

—Sri Aurobindo, *The Future Poetry, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, vol. 26 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1997), pp. 300–301

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JOHN ROBERT CORNELL was introduced to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in 1980 by a teacher in Sacramento, California. He has been a member of the Sri Aurobindo Association since 2009 and currently serves on the Editorial Advisory Board and the Steering Committee for *Collaboration*. He has a special interest in *Savitri* and the yoga in America.

ROD HEMSELL: After retiring as an educator in the U.S., Rod returned to live in Auroville in 2005 and taught at the University of Human Unity from 2007 to 2017. Based on his courses, several books were published on the connections between Sri Aurobindo, early Greek thought, German Idealism, Heidegger, religion, and evolution. His article in this issue is part of an ongoing study titled "Human Consciousness and Truth: A Comparative Study of Heidegger and Sri Aurobindo." <https://rodhemsell.substack.com/p/human-consciousness-and-truth-1>

ERIC HUGHES went to Pondicherry and had profound spiritual experiences from his contact with the Mother

that changed his life. He cofounded Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center with Sam Spanier on 48 acres outside of Woodstock, New York, and read deeply in Sri Aurobindo and Mother's published works. He also translated the 13 volumes of *Mother's Agenda* from the original French, contributing to the official translation, and compiled a set of quotes from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the book *On Collective Yoga*.

DAVE HUTCHINSON is a lifelong sadhak of Integral Yoga who lives in Sacramento, California. He has participated in All USA Meeting (AUM) Integral Yoga conferences, *Collaboration*, multiple online forums, and study groups. From time to time he has given talks and written articles. Dave returns regularly to *Savitri*, *The Life Divine*, and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Recently he has been working on becoming fluent in French.

MADAS (1925–2018), was a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who introduced many people to Integral Yoga. Born in Mexico, he grew up in Los Angeles and played maracas with the Xavier Cugat Orchestra in eight Hollywood movies. He made several extended visits to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, where he met with the Mother a number of times. She gave him the name "Madas," which means "Servant of the Mother."

NADYA ROSE: From a young age, Nadya was deeply moved by beauty and how visual imagery could give voice to inexpressible feeling. She decided to become an artist and studied fine art and English at the University of California Berkeley, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree and did some graduate work. Over the years she has worked in many different styles and mediums. Poetry came in 1991 when, unable to paint due to a hand injury, she sought language to convey her inner experience of the luminous Presence streaming into life.

JAMES D. RYAN taught Sanskrit and Indian philosophy for 35 years at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. He retired as professor emeritus in 2016. He has particular interest in Hindu Tantrism and the philosophies and views of Haridas Chaudhuri, Sri Aurobindo, and the Mother. He has also had a longstanding interest in Indian heterodoxies, particularly Jainism. With Constance A. Jones, he produced the *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (New York: Facts on File, 2007).



EDITORIAL

Language, Intuition, & Consciousness

WE ARE DELIGHTED to share with you a wonderful collection of source materials, feature articles, and other essays, as well as poems and artwork from a wide array of contributors in this special expanded issue of *Collaboration* on the theme of “Language, Intuition, and Consciousness.”

This theme is concerned with the relationship between language and consciousness—in particular, the role that language could potentially play in the transformation of consciousness. Much writing today originates from the mind, but writing may also originate from other levels of consciousness such as the body, the heart, or even from transpersonal sources such as the soul or the spirit. As speaking or writing from the mind evokes mental reactions, writing from other levels of consciousness could induce resonance with those levels. This explains the transformative power of the mantra or a poem such as *Savitri*. Naturally, this conversation presupposes an understanding of the role of preverbal consciousness as well. Thus, intuition becomes another key topic in the context of spiritual transformation.

Can language play an important role in the process of integral transformation? If so, what qualities and attributions should language have to be effective in this process? Is there a need for a new kind of language that transcends the mind?

In this issue, we have selected two pieces by Sri Aurobindo and one by the Mother. In “The Supreme Word,” Sri Aurobindo relates that in the Upanishad, the description of Brahman begins with “the very striking phrase, Speech of our speech,” implying that ordinary human language is a shadow of a much deeper origin, and that “human speech at its highest merely attempts to recover by revelation and inspiration an absolute expression of Truth which already exists in the Infinite

above our mental comprehension.” When we go deeper below the surface, we are able to remotely connect with the original creative word. Speech has creative powers at all levels, physical, emotional, and mental as indicated by the use of the mantra using this secret power of the word. “Hymn to the Divine Dawn” is a translation by Sri Aurobindo from the Rig Veda expressed in intuitive language pertaining to the dawn of truth, indicating the beginning of the illumination of higher or divine consciousness.

“We Need a New Language” is a selection of the Mother’s statements about the need for a new language capable of expressing the new consciousness. “There is a considerable difference between the truth of experience and the way of expressing it,” she says, and ordinary language is unfit for expressing what is beyond our current level of consciousness. For a higher consciousness, we need a new language and new organs of expression.

The feature articles in this issue pick up on some of the key points in the source materials. Through storytelling and creative language in “Languaging Trails of Sound and Light,” John Robert Cornell guides us on a journey of inquiry about language and its relationship with intuition and meaning. After discussing some unique cases revealing insights into the nature of language, he discusses how Indigenous languages rooted in embodied experiences of the land, rather than relying on mental abstractions, can teach us about the dynamic flow of reality. In “Sanskrit Language and Consciousness,” James Ryan explores the nature of Sanskrit and offers some comparative insights between Sanskrit and Indigenous languages that emphasize verbs rather than nouns—dynamic reality vs. static objects, similar to Sanskrit where the majority of words can be shown as being derived from specific verbal roots. The

article then delves into some specific examples of Sanskrit and its relationship to consciousness.

In “A Reflection on the Creative Word,” Rod Hemsell finds some interesting parallels between the current research in neuroscience and Sri Aurobindo’s discussion of poetic style in *The Future Poetry*. Observing that “the highest forms of poetic expression are produced by the intuitive mind, while philosophical expression is the product of the ... rational mind,” Hemsell draws on early Greek teachings about the various levels of Logos, as well as tantric teachings about the four levels of Vak, the Goddess of creative speech. Through the power of mantra, we may be able to “hear” the original creative vibration (Word).

“Letters on Poetry and Art” by Patrick Beldio is a reprint of Chapter 28 of the recently published book, *Reading Sri Aurobindo*. Poetry can originate from various levels of consciousness: planes above the mind, vital planes, and the body. Beldio discusses poetry in service to spiritual growth through examination of the sources and the nature of poetry, poetic techniques, and the forces of creative beauty in Sri Aurobindo’s writings. Lastly, in “*Savitri: A New Veda*,” Eric Hughes describes his powerful personal experience of the mantric power of Sri Aurobindo’s writing—especially “the extraordinary experience” of reading *Savitri*, which he likens to a vivid “three-dimensional reality that seemed to take more and more complete shape with the uttering of each line of the poem.”

In the poetry section, we feature two poems by Sri Aurobindo, two poems by Nadya Rose, as well as pieces from Sam Cherubin, Rich Catalano, and a humorous set of lyrics by Madas.

In the reflection section we have two insightful compilations about language and its relationship with thought, perception, memory, intuition, and consciousness. In addition, there are two inspiring short pieces by David Hutchinson and John Robert Cornell.

We understand that this theme can become much more complex and multifaceted and it would be impossible to do justice to it in the space limitations of our journal. We hope this might be the beginning of a new inquiry that may be continued in different ways in the future.—Bahman A.K. Shirazi for the *Collaboration* editorial team



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