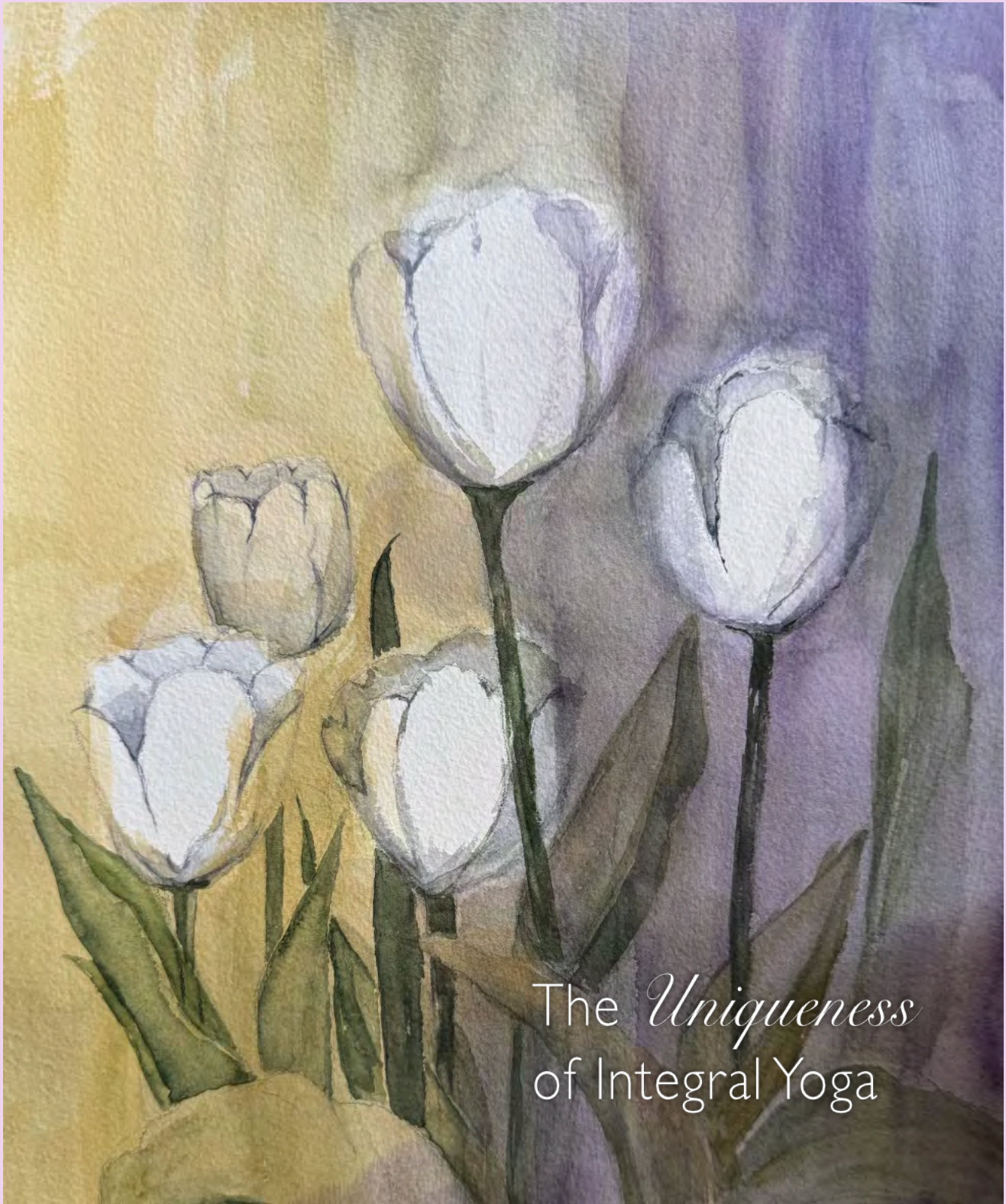


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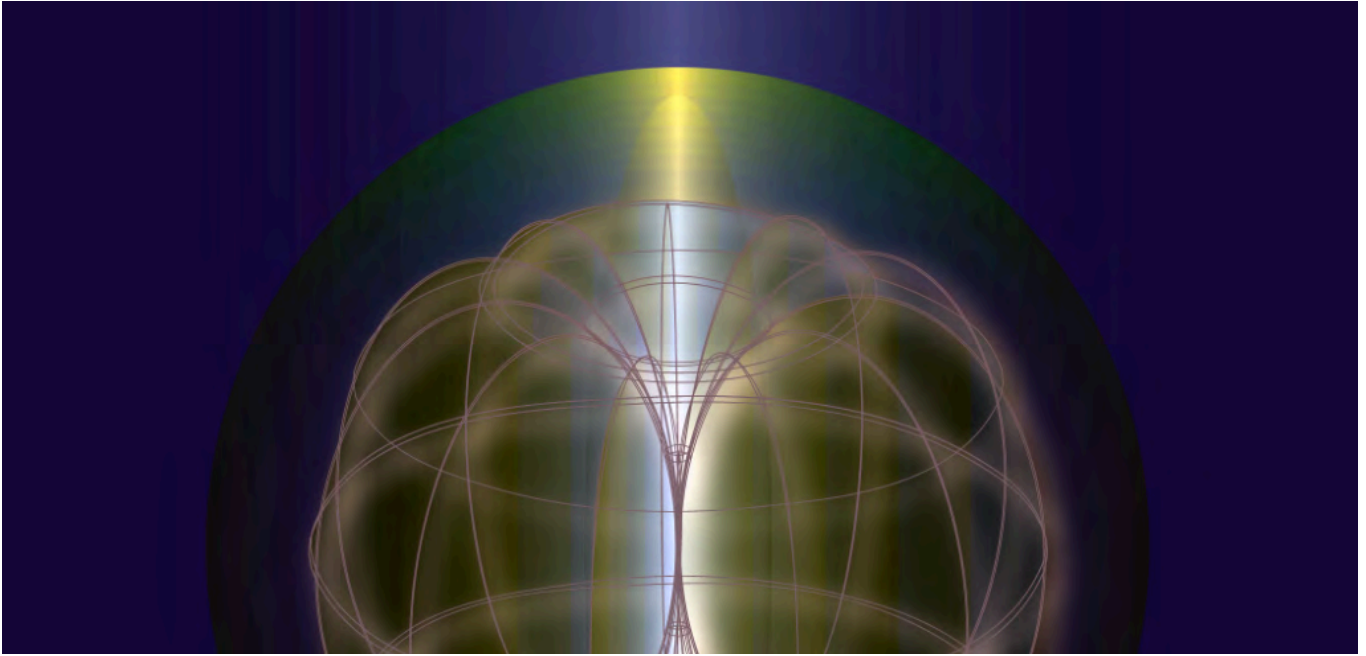
VOL. 51 NO. 1

Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER



The *Uniqueness*
of Integral Yoga



"Envision." Digital art by Margaret Astrid Phanes

The Hidden Plan

SRI AUROBINDO

However long Night's hour, I will not dream
That the small ego and the person's mask
Are all that God reveals in our life-scheme,
The last result of Nature's cosmic task.

A greater Presence in her bosom works;
Long it prepares its far epiphany:
Even in the stone and beast the godhead lurks,
A bright Persona of eternity.

It shall burst out from the limit traced by Mind
And make a witness of the prescient heart;
It shall reveal even in this inert blind
Nature, long veiled in each inconscient part,

Fulfilling the occult magnificent plan,
The world-wide and immortal spirit in man.

— *Collected Poems, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, vol. 2
(Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2009), p. 602.

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JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PUBLISHER: *Collaboration* (ISSN 0164-1522) is published by the Sri Aurobindo Association (SAA), a California nonprofit corporation, c/o Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham, 2621 W. Hwy 12, Lodi, CA 95242, USA; email: info@collaboration.org; website: <https://www.collaboration.org>. SAA distributes information about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and Auroville, and supports projects related to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville, and Integral Yoga activities in America.

EDITORIAL TEAM: Susan Curtiss, Lynda Lester, Martha Orton, and Bahman A.K. Shirazi. The opinions expressed in *Collaboration* are not necessarily those of the editors or SAA.

DESIGN, LAYOUT, AND PROOFREADING: MH01 Design, Vishnu Eschner, Dana Lichtstrahl, Robert Orton, and Gloria Sayavedra.

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Prateek Mehra with Susan Curtiss, Gloria Sayavedra, Matrika Rohatgi, and Prapanna Smith; email: subscriptions@collaboration.org.

PRINTER: Kalpen Shah, Best Print Graphics, Santa Clara, CA.

SUBMISSIONS: Submit material by email to editor@collaboration.org. *Collaboration* cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of unsolicited material. See p. 50 for details on next issue's theme and submission deadline.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: A print subscription (three issues per year) is \$30 (+\$12 for airmail outside the USA). A digital subscription is \$24 per year. Print + digital is \$36 per year (+\$12 for airmail outside the USA). A discounted digital subscription for individuals with limited financial means is also available. Pay online by credit card at <https://www.collaboration.org/journal/subscribe> or make a check to Sri Aurobindo Association and mail to: Sri Aurobindo Association, c/o Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham, 2621 W. Hwy 12, Lodi, CA 95242, USA.

INDIA PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS (three issues per year, limited number of print subscriptions available): India residents, send Rs. 300 for the print edition to: Larry Seidlitz, 180/6 Sri Mirambikai Garden, Old Auroville Road, Bommiyarpalyam, Tamil Nadu 605104.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Donations for the work of SAA, Auroville, and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram can be made online at <https://www.collaboration.org/donate> or mail a check to Sri Aurobindo Association, c/o Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham, 2621 W. Hwy 12, Lodi, CA 95242, USA. Donations are tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

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ADRIKA MAJI, 14 years old, received the Sunlit Award 2024. As a sincere student, she loves consciousness-based reading and

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ANDREA VAN DE LOO was born in the Netherlands during World War II. Her childhood was marked by the devastating shadow of her father's involvement with the Nazi SS. Andrea embarked on a remarkable journey of self-discovery and awakening. Her memoir, *The Pressing Stones: the Healing Journey of a Nazi's Daughter* (www.thepressingstones.com), chronicles her experiences growing up in a war-torn nation, her travels to India, her time in Auroville, and her lifelong quest to understand and overcome the traumas of her past.



EDITORIAL

The *Uniqueness* of Integral Yoga

THE THEME OF THIS ISSUE—the uniqueness of Integral Yoga—may be approached from a variety of perspectives. As a spiritual philosophy, Integral Yoga brings together the essential spiritual teachings of India, from the Vedas to the Upanishads and yoga psychology. As a spiritual practice it reconciles various schools of Vedanta and integrates them with Tantra. It synthesizes the three main yogic paths of the Bhagavad Gita—wisdom, love, and action—emphasizing the transformation of consciousness on both personal and collective levels.

However, Integral Yoga goes beyond the traditional teachings by providing an evolutionary perspective and a comprehensive map of consciousness highlighting the key role of the evolving soul (psychic being) in the process of psychospiritual transformation. It re-establishes the primacy of the role of the Feminine Divine and promotes embodied spirituality with the ultimate aim of accelerating the evolution of consciousness and establishing Divine Life on Earth. In this yoga there is a unique path of spiritual growth and evolution for each individual. Each soul is considered to be a unique expression of divinity and has a unique trajectory of growth and development toward self-realization and self-perfection.

We begin this issue with a selection from *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Part IV, Ch.1) in which Sri Aurobindo provides a succinct overview of Integral Yoga in terms of its relationship to other traditional yogas such as hathayoga, rajayoga and tantra. He discusses how “this Integral Yoga of knowledge, love and works has to be extended into a Yoga of spiritual and gnostic self-perfection ...” through self-surrender.

Next, we have two short essays. In “Beyond a Mythical Watershed: The First Evolutionary Yoga,” Wolfgang Aurose begins with describing a personal experience at Matrimandir in Auroville where he experienced an “astonishing” sensation of the unity between matter and spirit as an indicator of the global evolutionary process taking place at present. In his words: “With Integral Yoga, the evolution

of human consciousness has passed a kind of mythical watershed” and “new realizations and perspectives are coming from the future.”

The next essay is by Sri Joydip titled: “Is Integral Yoga Unique? —Rethinking the Question,” in which the author addresses the main theme of this issue. “If uniqueness means a proprietary method or exclusive technique, then Integral Yoga is not unique,” but if we look deeper, we encounter a paradox indicating that Integral Yoga is not unique “because it rejects exclusivity—and yet it is absolutely unique because nothing else is as universally inclusive.”

The next two articles focus on the topic of karma. First, Philip Goldberg in his article: “Karma: From Ancient Traditions to Contemporary American Culture,” provides the background to this topic in the context of current American culture, in which there are many misconceptions about karma, vs. the original spiritual teachings from India. He clarifies that karma is not about retribution and is not a system of rewards and punishments; nor is karma about fatalism or determinism. Goldberg encourages the reader to understand karma in the context of rebirth and evolution of consciousness along the lines of the views of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo on karma “as a purposeful educational system as opposed to a judicial one.”

In “Sri Aurobindo’s Perspective on Karma,” Martha Orton discusses the unique features of Sri Aurobindo’s view on karma and rebirth in detail. She starts with contextualizing the law of karma in what is “reality” in Sri Aurobindo’s system, which takes us beyond the physical world and into subtle and complex metaphysical dimensions such as soul, spirit, and consciousness. She discusses what Sri Aurobindo calls the higher lines of karma and the real purpose of karma which is the development of the soul in the course of the evolution of consciousness.

We continue with two unique personal accounts of engagement in Integral Yoga. In “Rosie’s Sunlit Meditations,” Adrika Maji, a 14-year-old yogi, gives an account of how



Photo by
StockCake

she was able to successfully ward off adverse influences such as jealousy, boredom, and depression by taking refuge in the Sweet Mother's protecting light.

"I Offer My Life to Thee" by Andrea van de Loo is an inspiring account of self-discovery, healing, and transformation of the author who went through traumatic childhood experiences during WWII in Europe. Her journey eventually led her to Auroville and meeting the Mother. This was followed by decades of overcoming life challenges which eventually resulted in inner peace and happiness. She "learned that the essence of the Integral Yoga is to offer oneself, body, mind, and soul in an unflagging aspiration, to establish the Divine Consciousness on Earth."

The last three articles are comprised of a short piece by Jocelyn Janaka about the importance of the psychic being as our inner guru and the uniqueness of each individual spiritual journey; a short essay by KarunDas Moss titled "Who Was Sri Aurobindo: And Why Is He Key to the Future of Humanity," highlighting the unique integration of Eastern and Western concepts of evolution

up to the present time and into the future possibilities of evolution of consciousness. "What is Sri Aurobindo's Uniqueness in His Description of Ananda?" is an excerpt from an article by Soumitra Basu focusing on a unique feature of Integral Yoga with its aim at bringing the experience of joy/delight (*Ananda*) from the transcendental realm into day-to-day life.

In addition, we have chosen several sonnets by Sri Aurobindo for this issue: "The Hidden Plan" (inside front cover), "Krishna" (back cover), "The Greater Plan," and "The Stone Goddess." We hope that this small sample of topics can inspire the reader to consider other ways in which Integral Yoga can be considered a unique spiritual practice and contemplate the uniqueness of one's own spiritual practice.

—*Bahman A. K. Shirazi,*

For the *Collaboration* editorial team