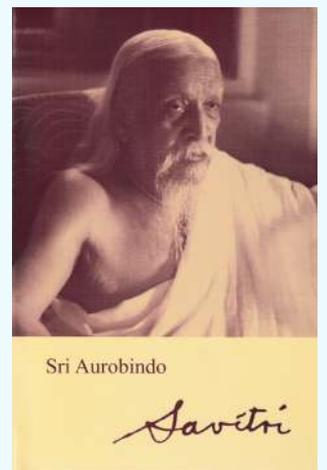
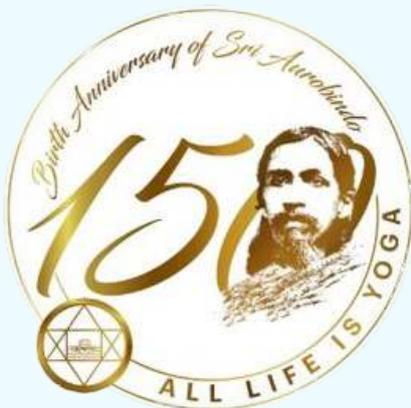




The Call Beyond





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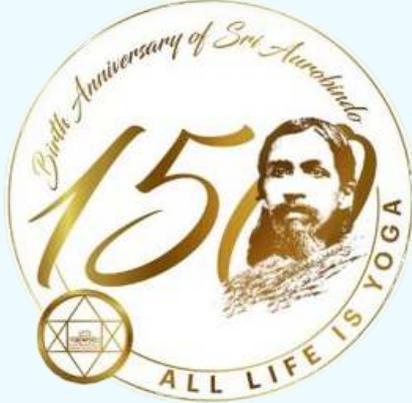
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Celebrating 150 Years of Sri Aurobindo

(1872-2022)



Who was Sri Aurobindo? A freedom fighter, who shook the British Empire within five years? A poet, who could give poetic expression to whispers from the heavens? A writer, who would have honoured the Nobel Prize for Literature, if it had been conferred on him? A linguist, who raised the level of the English

language to that of Sanskrit, and deciphered the symbolism of the Veda? A yogi, who gave the world Integral Yoga, a powerful synthesis that incorporated the major traditional systems of yoga, and went beyond all of them? A rishi (a seer) and a muni (a thinker) rolled in one? Or, a spiritual master, radical, rational and revolutionary, far ahead of his times, who is today the Guru to millions in the world?

Sri Aurobindo was all this, and more. Due to our limitations, *The Call Beyond*, however, will concentrate on Sri Aurobindo, the writer. In the category of spiritual literature rooted in the Indian tradition, the original of which was written in the English language, Sri Aurobindo's works belong to a class apart, both in quantity and quality. In his works, Sri Aurobindo has given nothing short of a prescription for sculpting humanity into a new shape that would be beyond recognition. Even through the works that have their origin in the *Arya*, which were written over a period of just six years (1914-1920), he has created enough homework for the world to stay busy with for several centuries.

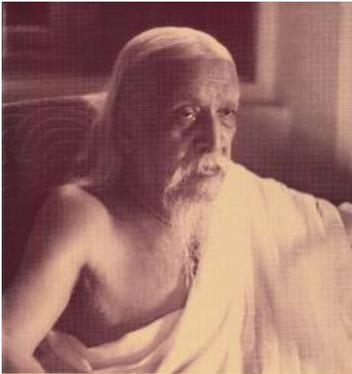
The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA) run into 36 volumes. The humble offering of *The Call Beyond*, however, would be limited to bringing you every month just the glimpses of one of the works of Sri Aurobindo.



Savitri

There is a teacher present in every line of Savitri – the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo himself.

Mangesh Nadkarni



Sri Aurobindo

Savitri

Savitri is perhaps the best known and least understood work of Sri Aurobindo. Its fascination lies partly in the insurmountable challenge it presents to those who try to understand it at the mental level. Running into about 24,000 lines, Savitri is one of the longest poems in the English language. Raymond Frank Piper, an American scholar, has described it as “perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for expanding man’s mind towards the Absolute.” Savitri is also the principal character of a legend in the Mahabharata. In that legend, there is a king, Aswapathy, who does not have a child. His intense and sincere prayers are answered with a daughter, Savitri. Savitri gets married to Satyavan, who dies one year after the marriage. Savitri follows him, and pleads with Yama, the god of death, for the return of Satyavan. Yama goes on granting her one boon after another in an attempt to persuade her to go back to earth and not insist on getting Satyavan back. Finally, he grants her also the boon of getting children. She asks him how she can have children if her husband is no more with her. Thus trapped, Yama returns Satyavan to Savitri, and they both return to earth. Sri Aurobindo has used this legend as a symbol and developed it into an epic of gigantic proportions.

In Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri, King Aswapathy does not want a child: he seeks the end of all human problems. Further, he wants the solution to human problems right here on earth, not in some distant heaven. With this mission, he embarks on an inner exploration. He finally secures from the Divine



Mother the promise that “One shall descend and break the iron Law, Change Nature’s doom by the lone Spirit’s power” (Book 3, Canto 4). Savitri is the material expression of this boon secured by Aswapathy. In Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*, the marriage of Savitri and Satyavan symbolizes the intense involvement of Savitri in the fate of mankind. Satyavan is a man subject to pain, suffering and death, and when death does visit him, Savitri seizes the opportunity to embark on her mission of establishing heaven on earth. Securing the release of Satyavan from the god of death symbolizes the accomplishment of her mission.

Savitri has much that is relatively easy to understand. Book 5, which has three cantos, describes the meeting of Savitri and Satyavan, their recognition that they are soul-mates, and their symbolic marriage. The twenty-four pages of Book 5, titled the *Book of Love*, are love poetry par excellence. Dr. Mangesh Nadkarni, a Professor of English, and a devotee of Sri Aurobindo, has said, “For the purity and tenderness of love, for an ideal of human love that exalts the spirit without denying the body, for the sheer rapturous quality of fulfilled love – these three cantos have no equal in world literature”. In Books 9, 10 and 11, there are 125 pages that narrate the debate between the god of death and Savitri. The debate is a masterly presentation of the imperfections of the world on one hand, and the vision of a perfect world on the other. The god of death uses all possible arguments to convince Savitri that she need not pursue Satyavan. He tells her how fragile love is, how the noble emotion of love has been wasted on man, how life on earth is destined to be as it is, and so on. His cynicism seems quite justified in view of the present reality of the world. But Savitri was not on earth to accept the present reality; her mission was to change life on earth. The god of death makes one final attempt: he tells her that the divine life she has imagined is not possible on earth. Therefore, he offers



that she and Satyavan could go to heaven where they can enjoy divine love for eternity. But Savitri's struggle was not for a private paradise. "Imperfect is the joy not shared by all," says she (Book 11, Canto 1). But the god of death, although much transformed by now and sympathetic to Savitri's mission, finds in her mission an internal contradiction – how can earth be earth if it rises to heavenly heights? He advises her to wait, and to let Time remove the imperfections of man. But she was not on earth to let natural evolution take its time. She wanted to hasten the process of evolution. She wanted man either to manifest his divinity, or give way to a superhuman creature capable of manifesting divinity on earth. This was beyond the powers of the god of death, and therefore he just vanishes. Thus was death conquered by Savitri. The conquest of death is symbolic of the disappearance of pain, suffering, and all the other problems of human existence. Savitri and Satyavan are now left behind. The Divine applauds Savitri for having accomplished her mission. Having secured from the Divine the promise that life on earth will become the Life Divine, Savitri and Satyavan return to earth and reunite with the earth-bound humanity. "The entire effort of Sri Aurobindo's yoga and spirituality is to bring fulfillment to mankind as a whole and that too here on earth," says Dr. Nadkarni. However, this needs a critical mass of humanity that has made spiritual growth the purpose of its life. Savitri is a call to all who care to contribute to this revolutionary transfiguration of life on earth.

Sri Aurobindo started writing Savitri at the beginning of the twentieth century, and stopped working on it only shortly before he left his body in 1950. During this period of nearly five decades, it went through several revisions. Why so many revisions were necessary was because Sri Aurobindo was trying to give a verbal expression to his level of consciousness. Thus, each successive version was written from a higher level of consciousness. That is the reason why it is difficult to understand Savitri at the



mental level. This applies particularly to Book 1 (Canto 3 onwards), Book 2 and Book 3, which describe Aswapathy's inner journey; and Book 7, which describes the inner journey of Savitri. Those who have known and studied Sri Aurobindo and the Mother closely can see clearly that the inner journeys of Aswapathy and Savitri are actually those of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother respectively. Thus, Savitri, like the Upanishads, is a rishi's attempt to express the ineffable experience of the infinite in words. However, unlike the Upanishads, it is in English instead of Sanskrit! Like the Upanishadic verses, the verses of Savitri also have a mantric quality. About Savitri, the Mother has said, "My child, everything is there; mysticism, occultism, philosophy, the history of evolution, the history of man, of the Gods, of creation, of Nature; how the universe was created, why, for what purpose, what destiny. All is there.... But this mystery is well hidden behind the lines and one must achieve the required state of true consciousness to discover it." Till one achieves the state of true consciousness, however, one may read Savitri like a scripture, not insisting on understanding it. "It does not matter if you do not understand it, but read it always. You will see that every time you read it there will be something new revealed to you," said the Mother.

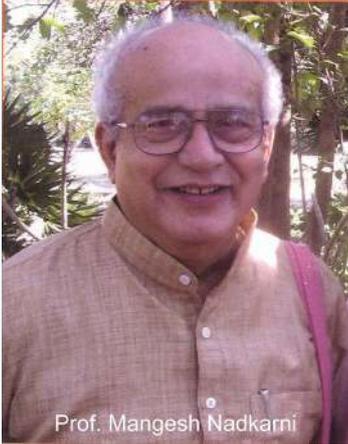
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In remembrance



Prof. Mangesh Nadkarni

Professor Mangesh V. Nadkarni, an erudite scholar, loved teacher, original thinker, eloquent speaker and prolific speaker, had received unique gifts from the Divine, and he used them to serve the Divine through everything he did. He was an ardent devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and they had revealed to him the inner meaning of their works as well as given him remarkable ability to put it across. As their untiring ambassador, he travelled extensively, disseminating their philosophy and vision in his inimitably clear style and resonant voice laced with wit and humour. He served the Mother till the last breath, and left for everlasting peace in Her lap in Pondicherry on 23 September 2007.

Posted earlier as a blog on Speaking Tree on 18 September 2015.

Link: <https://www.speakingtree.in/blog/sri-aurobindos-savitri>

This article on 'Savitri' is also one of the essays in 'Spiritual Wisdom in Small Doses'. The PDF of the book is available for free download on <https://yesspirituality.wordpress.com/books/>

For a set of nine videos on 'Savitri', you may go to https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKYy7iXI_Z_3GSdgTwJdPiO_1JICG5AeL



*Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls;
Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,
The forge where the Arch-mason shapes his works.
Thy servitudes on earth are greater, king,
Than all the glorious liberties of heaven.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 11, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 686)



Selections from Savitri*

CONTENT WITH PEBBLES ON THE SHORE

*He sees as a blank stretch, a giant waste
 The crowding riches of infinity.
 The finite he has made his central field,
 Its plan dissects, masters its processes,
 That which moves all is hidden from his gaze,
 His poring eyes miss the unseen behind.
 He has the blind man's subtle unerring touch
 Or the slow traveller's sight of distant scenes;
 The soul's revealing contacts are not his.
 Yet is he visited by intuitive light
 And inspiration comes from the Unknown;
 But only reason and sense he feels as sure,
 They only are his trusted witnesses.
 Thus is he baulked, his splendid effort vain;
 His knowledge scans bright pebbles on the shore
 Of the huge ocean of his ignorance.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 7, Canto 4, CWSA Vols. 33-34, lines 518-533)

HUMAN I AM, HUMAN LET ME REMAIN

*Even if a greater consciousness I could reach,
 What profit is it then for Thought to win
 A Real which is for ever ineffable
 Or hunt to its lair the bodiless Self or make
 The Unknowable the target of the soul?
 Nay, let me work within my mortal bounds,
 Not live beyond life nor think beyond the mind;
 Our smallness saves us from the Infinite.
 In a frozen grandeur lone and desolate*



*Call me not to die the great eternal death,
 Left naked of my own humanity
 In the chill vast of the spirit's boundlessness.
 Each creature by its nature's limits lives,
 And how can one evade his native fate?
 Human I am, human let me remain
 Till in the Inconscient I fall dumb and sleep.
 A high insanity, a chimaera is this,
 To think that God lives hidden in the clay
 And that eternal Truth can dwell in Time,
 And call to her to save our self and world.
 How can man grow immortal and divine
 Transmuting the very stuff of which he is made?
 This wizard gods may dream, not thinking men.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 7, Canto 4, CWSA Vols. 33-34, lines 602-624)

THE PROCESS DEFINES NOT THE PURPOSE

*I have mapped the heavens and analysed the stars,
 Described their orbits through the grooves of Space,
 Measured the miles that separate the suns,
 Computed their longevity in Time.
 I have delved into earth's bowels and torn out
 The riches guarded by her dull brown soil.
 I have classed the changes of her stony crust
 And of her biography discovered the dates,
 Rescued the pages of all Nature's plan.
 The tree of evolution I have sketched,
 Each branch and twig and leaf in its own place,
 In the embryo tracked the history of forms,
 And the genealogy framed of all that lives.
 I have detected plasm and cell and gene,*



*The protozoa traced, man's ancestors,
The humble originals from whom he rose;
I know how he was born and how he dies:
Only what end he serves I know not yet
Or if there is aim at all or any end
Or push of rich creative purposeful joy
In the wide works of the terrestrial power.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 7, Canto 4, CWSA Vols. 33-34, lines 544-564)

**Titles added by the editor*



*There is a being beyond the being of mind,
An Immeasurable cast into many forms,
A miracle of the multitudinous One.
There is a consciousness mind cannot touch,
Its speech cannot utter nor its thought reveal.
It has no home on earth, no centre in man,
Yet is the source of all things thought and done,
The fount of the creation and its works.
It is the originer of all truth here,
The sun-orb of mind's fragmentary rays,
Infinity's heaven that spills the rain of God,
The Immense that calls to man to expand the Spirit,
The wide Aim that justifies his narrow attempts,
A channel for the little he tastes of bliss.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 11, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 705)



Outer Discipline & True Humility

But doesn't some outer discipline help?

If you impose a discipline upon yourself and if it isn't too stupid, it may help you. A discipline, I tell you – disciplines, tapasyas, all ascetic disciplines are, as ordinarily practiced, the best means of making you proud, of building up in you such a terrific pride that never, never will you be converted. It will have to be broken down with hammer-strokes.

The first condition is a healthy humility which makes you realize that unless you are sustained, nourished, helped, enlightened, guided by the Divine, you are nothing at all. There now. When you have felt that, not only understood it with your mind, but felt it down to your very body, then you will begin to be wise, but not before.

What is the right and the wrong way of being humble?

It is very simple, when people are told “be humble”, they think immediately of “being humble before other men” and that humility is wrong. True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of receptivity – a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', pp. 53-54)

All the pages of The Mother's work, 'The Great Adventure', in Tara Didi's voice, have been uploaded on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The link to the channel is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcmF6JzAOsBMdqJjZbnmyng>



The Problem of Indian Unity

Prof. M.V. Nadkarni

There is first the unity given to India by nature. That is the geographical unity defined by the mighty Himalayan ranges on the north and by the oceans on all the other three sides. Such physical unity should presage other kinds of unity—cultural, spiritual, economic and political unity. India's cultural and spiritual unity is a gift of the ancient Vedic Rishis. It is political unity that has always proved elusive and in whatever degree we have it today we owe it primarily to the compulsion and violence of the British rule. Not that the attempt towards political unity was not made by Indians. The names of Bharata, Yudhisthira, Ashoka, Chandragupta, Akbar and Shivaji are dear to us primarily because they tried to weld India into a political unity, but their attempts did not bring any long-term success, and India remained politically divided. The consequence of this has been that the country has allowed itself to be a hapless victim of barbaric invasions for nearly a thousand years and for almost another thousand years it was in servitude to successive foreign masters.

Some people have put forward the defence that India is practically a continent almost as large as Europe containing a great number of peoples and the difficulties of the problem of unification have been as great. But we do not blame Europeans for their political incapacity to unite. At present, Europe, of course, is moving fast in this direction. Why should India be blamed then? Sri Aurobindo finds this defence not particularly convincing because the analogy drawn between India and Europe is far from perfect. He points out that the peoples of Europe are nations which are very sharply divided from each other and their spiritual unity in the Christian religion and their cultural unity in a common European culture was never



so real and complete as the ancient spiritual and cultural unity of India. **In India, at a very early time in its history, the spiritual and cultural unity was made complete and became the very stuff of the people living physically separated from other countries by the Himalaya and the two seas.** The creation of a political unity ought therefore to have been more easy here than in Europe. But this did not happen, and the cause of this failure must be sought deeper down.

Sri Aurobindo, points out in *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, that the whole basis of the Indian mind is its spiritual and inward turn and its tendency to seek the things of the spirit and the inner being first and then to try to give them an outer shape. Given this tendency to create from within outwards, it was inevitable that the unity India first created for herself should be spiritual and cultural. **India just could not begin with a political unification effected by external means as was done by Rome or ancient Persia. This cannot be called a mistake because if such an outward unity had been founded it would not have endured.** Human history has shown again and again that without an inner unity the outer unity cannot endure. After all, spiritual and cultural unity is the only enduring unity, and the great Rishis and the founders of Indian culture followed a sound instinct in this matter. It is due to this indelible spiritual stamp and to this underlying oneness amidst all diversities that India still survives and is still India. In Sri Aurobindo's words:

But India still lives and keeps the continuity of her inner mind and soul and spirit with the India of the ages. Invasion and foreign rule, the Greek, the Parthian, and the Hun, the robust vigour of Islam, the leveling steam-roller heaviness of the British occupation and system, the enormous pressure of the Occident have not been able to drive or crush the ancient soul out of the body her Vedic Rishis made for her. At every step, under every calamity and attack and domination, she has been able to resist and survive either with an active or passive resistance.



Thus India owes this surpassing vitality of her civilization to the wisdom of those who built its foundation not on things external but on the spirit and made spiritual and cultural oneness the root and stock of her existence.

Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1997, p. 11



*Only were safe who kept God in their hearts:
 Courage their armour, faith their sword, they must walk,
 The hand ready to smite, the eye to scout,
 Casting a javelin regard in front,
 Heroes and soldiers of the army of Light.
 Hardly even so, the grisly danger past,
 Released into a calmer purer air,
 They dared at length to breathe and smile once more.
 Once more they moved beneath a real sun.
 Though Hell claimed rule, the spirit still had power.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 2, Canto 7, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 211)

*This is the sailor on the flow of Time,
 This is World-Matter's slow discoverer,
 Who, launched into this small corporeal birth,
 Has learnt his craft in tiny bays of self,
 But dares at last unplumbed infinitudes,
 A voyager upon eternity's seas.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 1, Canto 4, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 69)



Whether it is the disciple who chooses the Guru, or it is the Guru who chooses the disciple may be debatable, but fascinating and often incredible are the stories behind their being brought together. This column brings you the circumstances under which some of the foremost disciples of Sri Aurobindo felt his unmistakable magnetic pull.

Yes, Mother

Millie-di embodied a whole era in the Ashram when the details of one's outer life were kept to the simplest minimum so that all one's energy could be offered in the quiet service of the Mother.

- Sunayana Panda



Millie-di (1917-2001)

Innumerable are the triggers that make a person give a new direction to life. It was the Second World War that turned out to be that trigger for many women and children. Many men who were then serving in the armed forces in India decided to leave their families in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, because they knew that nothing could be better than the protection of the Mother. One such woman who took refuge in the Mother was Bratati, who came to be

known as Millie-di in the Ashram. She arrived with a daughter, Jhumur.

Millie-di was a born "barrier-breaker". As a young girl, she insisted on marrying a boy in the neighbourhood, with whom she had fallen in love. Their parents objected, but finally they gave in to their children's persistence. Her husband's family already had some links with the Pondicherry Ashram. But soon these outer links were converted into an inner personal bond with the Mother. Millie-di's first child had a congenital defect,



because of which it was certain that if the child survived, it could not have a normal life. Millie-di prayed that the child be taken back by the Mother. Her prayer was answered. On a Darshan day, when she was calling the Mother silently, the child's soul was released from its body. Soon after her second child, Jhumur, was born, the Second World War brought her to the Ashram.

Millie-di's inner bond with the Mother and the spirit of surrender to Her was already there. The result was that she took to the Ashram as a fish takes to water. Like all the other women who came to the Ashram, she handed over her jewellery and silk sarees to the Mother. She also developed an enlightened detachment from her daughter, who, Millie-di knew, would now be taken care of by the Mother. **Millie-di was happy to place herself entirely at the disposal of the Mother, and focused on just two things: the outer work that the Mother assigned to her, and the inner work which every seeker needs.** Her major assignment was to work in the Mother's apartment. What could have been better than that for a person like Millie-di? She did everything needed to keep the apartment clean and tidy, and a lot more, such as painting the accessories that the Mother used. She never questioned, or even analysed, why the Mother asked her to do anything. She just said, "Yes, Mother," and did it. Therefore, the Mother counted on her to do anything new or unusual that She wanted to happen in the Ashram. Two events stand out in this respect. The **first** was, when the Mother observed that many girls in the Ashram fell while participating in sports because their feet were caught in the *salwars* or trousers that they were wearing. The Mother asked Millie-di if she would come to the playground in shorts. This was something very unusual in the India of 1948. Millie-di became the first one to wear the new 'uniform', with the help of shorts and a shirt pinched from the wardrobes of her male relatives. The **second** event was a year



later, in 1949. The Mother had written a play in French, *Vers L'avenir* (Towards the Future) on a theme that was revolutionary in those times. The plot was that a mature man had developed an irresistible attraction for a younger woman, which his wife naturally found objectionable. But eventually, the wife decided to become a spiritual seeker, and left her husband and the young woman wishing that both of them be happy. The play had just three characters – the husband, wife, and the young woman. The Mother wanted Millie-di to play the role of the wife. Once again, the response was, “Yes, Mother,” although Millie-di had never earlier acted in a play in front of a large audience, and she did not speak French too well. The Mother herself directed the play, which was enacted on the annual day of the Ashram School. This became a memorable experience for Millie-di, as she recounted years later.

Starting with helping improvise costumes for plays in the Ashram, Millie-di became the key person for designing costumes and organising exhibitions. “The beautiful thing about Millie-di was that she did not draw a line to separate her home and her work, her personal time and the time given to the collective,” writes Sunayana Panda. Millie-di embodied one of the Mother’s memorable utterances, “Work is the body’s best prayer to the Divine.”

Reference

Seven Dedicated Lives, by Sunayana Panda. London: First Feature Ltd., 2009, pp. 23-36.





At the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo

Amal Kiran

*Majestic master of the immutable Light,
Love like a universe thronged within your heart:
Brooding in silence across lonely years
On secret heavens a-dream in infinite hell,
You found the hammer to break the Dragon's sleep
And free from burying black the fallen stars.
But from each throb of God kindled in earth
You flung a human heart-beat out of Time:
You shortened your sovereign life to greaten the dust.
Your body, dropped from your spirit's hold on high,
Lays the foundation of a clay-built sky!*

*Always the Light came down from the limitless blue,
Gold gushing through the head to a heart God-drunk.
Now from the soul's sleep rose one dazzling wave,
Uttering a secret of eternity locked
In caves dumbfounded with a vast black bliss.
It says how sheer divinity grew dust,
The miracled love which left the heart of the sun
And crouched with folded fire below Time's feet
To give huge wings to the atom's reverie.
The surge of light lifted our bodies up
As though in laughing answer to heaven's leap down
Into the poisoning space of bone and flesh,
Earth now was ready to enter infinitude.
A blind snake that had swallowed all the stars
Unrolled a boundless mystery flecked with flame
And undulated shining centuries.
But none riding the rapture of the glow*



*Saw the still King of the new life's luminous realm
Tamer and charmer of mortality's night —
One Heart whose deep on gold-dense deep of love
Measured the abyss whose cry is the whole world's death!*

Source: <http://overmanfoundation.org/amal-kirans-poems-on-sri-aurobindo-and-the-mother/>



*Attendants on his destiny's measured walk
Leading to joys he has won and pains he has called,
Even in his casual steps they intervene.
Nothing we think or do is void or vain;
Each is an energy loosed and holds its course.
The shadowy keepers of our deathless past
Have made our fate the child of our own acts,
And from the furrows laboured by our will
We reap the fruit of our forgotten deeds.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 4, Canto 4, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 378)

*It peers at the Real through the apparent form;
It labours in our mortal mind and sense;
Amid the figures of the Ignorance,
In the symbol pictures drawn by word and thought,
It seeks the truth to which all figures point;
It looks for the source of Light with vision's lamp;
It works to find the doer of all works,
The unfelt Self within who is the guide,
The unknown Self above who is the goal.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 2, Canto 5, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 168)



Fabio, a Teacher Who Didn't Have to Speak



Seeing a middle-aged man, apparently from a far-off land, in a wheel chair aroused our curiosity. When asked, he divulged that he had come with the objectives of learning a little more about Ayurveda, and getting Ayurvedic treatment for his physical limitations. Inspired by him, we decided to interview him. Here are edited excerpts from the interview, which he gave to The Call Beyond (represented by Dr. Aditya Pradhan, a resident volunteer at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch for a few months).

The Call Beyond: What is your name?

Answer: Fabio Dreux

The Call Beyond: Which country are you from?

Fabio Dreux: From Brazil.

CB: So, you know Portuguese. Can you speak English?

FD: A little bit.

CB: I know a little bit of Spanish. Spanish and Portuguese are similar, isn't it? So, we can manage in a mixture of Portuguese, Spanish and English! Of course, along with the universal language of love! How are you feeling in the ashram?

FD: I'm feeling good, love the warmth, and how welcoming the people are here.

CB: How do you like the ashram?

FD: **It is a very nice place, with all types of trees and flowers. People are good here, having high consciousness and good vibrations.** There is a feeling of oneness, no ego as in a family. You can find the essence of Divine Grace here.



CB: How did you turn to The Mother and Sri Aurobindo?

FD: Long time ago, I first took a book of Sri Aurobindo to read. The content was very hard at first. Everything was going above my head, but for a year I continued reading more carefully, and as I read, I felt more connected to the Divine, which helped me to stay more at ease with myself.

CB: What else have you been studying other than works of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo?

FD: I am a full-time student of Ayurvedic medicine under Dr. Gaurav David (chikitsak). It's already been six years now.

CB: **What brought you to India?** You were studying Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, and Ayurveda, even in Brazil.

FD: **Two things. First, the spirituality of India. Secondly, Ayurveda, not just as a system of medicine but as a way of living, as a way to heal a physical condition.**

CB: Have your expectations been fulfilled?

CB: When I came to India, I had nothing, no expectations. I left everything to the Divine. As of now, so far, I am being blessed and helped.

I already knew that the treatment for my condition will be long, and I need additional help from spirituality. It's already showing an effect, as my condition is getting better. I am physically better, my anxiety has dropped, and my weight has gone up by 2 kg. I have left everything in the hands of the Divine.

Also, I want to tell and help other people to come to India for healing if they have difficult conditions, which cannot be cured. I really think the Grace and the path, which The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have shown, will really help a lot of people to be healed – physically, mentally and spiritually.



CB: Would you like to share some details of your illness?

FD: I have an auto immune condition called cervical myelopathy, which is a severe form of cervical spondylosis causing narrowing of the spinal canal and compression of the spinal cord. As the spinal cord is compressed, it interferes with the signal between the brain and rest of the body.

The symptoms started when I was 17 years of age. I got persistent pain in the neck, fingers, hands, feet, and the back. I went to Allopathic doctors for treatment. They told me that the condition will be life-long. They gave me drugs for pain inflammation (NSAID). They also wanted to start me on immunosuppressant therapy, to which I didn't agree.

Also, my daily lifestyle was revolving around short-term pleasures. I had the habit of alcohol, cigarettes, infatuation for girls, just to ease out my condition. By the time I was 27 years of age, I had enough of all that, and wanted correct guidance for my life, which I got from The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, whose books I started reading in Portuguese. Now, it's more than 10-15 years. I don't have any addiction for alcohol, cigarette, weeds, and I am living a life of Brahmcharya in solitude under the Divine Grace.

CB: So, it means you are about fifty now.

FD: Yes, I am fifty.

CB: How has spirituality helped you?

FD: Yes, reading the books of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo has helped me grow spiritually. My consciousness has 'writing error' with all my day-to-day activity. Finding the correct path under their Grace, I have been able to lead my life with more peace, happiness and calmness. **Despite my physical condition, spirituality has strengthened me to live my life without any fear or pain.** After coming to India, I have more



discipline in life, for which I am grateful.

CB: You were already learning Ayurveda in Brazil, and spirituality can be practised anywhere. What made you decide to come to India?

FD: Ayurveda in Brazil is not as advanced as in India. Medicines are not of good quality, and are expensive.

Spirituality is very high in India. **People here are mostly inclined towards the Divine. The culture in Brazil is very materialistic.** The people there think only about career, money, marriage, children, etc.; they are not at all inclined towards spirituality. Plus, the hospitality I get from Indian people is very warm and affectionate. Also, there is always someone who is asking about you, offering to help you, which is very good and commendable.

As I get better here, I can carry this knowledge and show the healing power of India. **I am not here just for myself but to take this knowledge and tell other people that there are other ways of healing as well.**

CB: Is this your first visit to India? How did you discover Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Delhi?

FD: I already got to know about The Mother and Sri Aurobindo through their books and videos online. I came to India for the first time in 2019 for one month and stayed in Sevadan, a small ashram. Then I found a friend Maria in Brazil, who used to stay in Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Delhi. She stayed here for four months in 2019, and did a course on teaching yoga. She gave me the contact information and helped me come here.

CB: How long would you like to stay in the Ashram?

FD: I want to stay long, but only if the visa will allow (with a sweet smile!). I am already feeling better here, with the food,



the Ayurvedic treatment and the hospitality. I want to stay as long as I can, but even when I go back to Brazil, I will take all the knowledge with me. I have not just come here just for myself. I will take all the blessings and knowledge with me to Brazil, as people there (specially youngsters) don't know the correct path in life, with which I can help them; with divine Grace, I can lead them to a better path.

CB: Would you like to give a finishing message?

FD: I'm feeling better physically, mentally and spirituality, but I still have a long way to go. However, I have been connected to the path under the guidance of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Pratyush Raj, whose stay as a resident volunteer at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch, coincided with Fabio's stay, adds:

Gratitude... a word that never made any sense to me till a few days ago. In fact, when I was going through a difficult phase of life, numerous well-wishers advised me to practise gratitude. It's not that I never tried, I did, several times. I wrote five points, why I should be grateful. I have water to drink, air to breathe, food to eat, ...blah! blah! but to be honest, it never changed me. In fact, most of the changes, if any, were only superficial. But, a few days ago, I realised and felt very strongly the power of gratitude.

One fine day, in the Ashram, I saw a man in a wheel chair. To be honest, at that time I didn't feel anything at all – no pity or sympathy or any other emotion. Next day, in the morning, I was going for a walk, and heard a sound: "Hello, water!". It was the same guy in the wheel chair. Happy to help, I filled his jug with water, and then we had a little conversation. I am very much interested in knowing other cultures. So, I stated asking about his country, his language, etc. **It didn't take me long to feel a sense of peace and joy emanating strongly from him.**



This peace and joy were something beyond the general emotions of happiness and sadness.

All traces of sympathy evaporated from my head. **You can't sympathize with a man who doesn't need any! The sympathy was replaced by respect and bewilderment.** What makes him so happy? Is he trying to hide his sadness? To a mind, habituated to living in dualities, the chronic pain of cervical myelopathy and mental peace can't coexist. We instantly felt connected, and within a day become very good friends. We talked on lots of issues, but this question kept haunting me as to that how a person who is in this condition can be so much at peace and happy, travelling all alone from Sao Paulo to New Delhi in a wheel chair, hardly knowing any English!

When we became very comfortable in each other's company, I asked him directly: **"Hey man! Don't you feel sad about your condition? How do you manage to be so happy and full of joy?"**

He replied, with a glitter in his eyes, "My friend, things could have been much worse!"

These words left me shocked. I stayed there still, still trying to grasp what he had just said. Does he really mean what he had said? A man, who is barely able to walk, all alone, hardly able to sit or eat, is saying, "Things could be much worse, and that's why he is grateful to God." And here I am, a perfectly abled bodied person, who is full of nothing but grudges. I continued, "How do you manage to stay like this?" He replied, "By looking inside!" On listening to this, I said to him, "O man! don't tell me that crap! Go inside! Can you tell me how? **How to go inside?"** He replied, **"Here is my secret, my friend! For every step I walk, for every bite of food I swallow, I remember the Divine and thank Him for the same. When you start doing this, regularly, with a real heart, you start living in your centre."**



He suggested me a few books to read, and sent me few links. But I had already got my answer. That night, while writing in my journal for the first time in the last three years, I cried. These tears were not due to his condition, or feeling bad for him. **These tears were a mix of joy, gratitude and embarrassment – joy and gratitude because I have a healthy body, and embarrassment because how demanding I have been all my life till now, as if I have the right to have all what I desire.**

When we are open, life finds its own way to give us lessons. I believe one divinely planned reason why this gentleman, Fabio, had come all the way from Brazil to India was to teach me the lesson of gratitude.

[The editor, on behalf of 'The Call Beyond', would like to thank Aditya Pradhan and Pratyush Raj for contributing independently to this inspiring real-life story]



*In a body obscuring the immortal Spirit
A nameless Resident vesting unseen powers,
With Matter's shapes and motives beyond thought
And the hazard of an unguessed consequence,
An omnipotent indiscernible Influence,
He sits, unfelt by the form in which he lives
And veils his knowledge by the groping mind.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 1, Canto 4, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 68)

*Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.*

Sri Aurobindo (Savitri, Book 11, CWSA Vols. 33-34, p. 710)



Forthcoming Events

EXPLORING PURE SUBSTANCE, HARMONY & FLOW

A 2-day Residential Retreat with Arul Dev

(16 Dec 2022, 12:00 noon - 18 Dec 2022, 2:00 pm)

An experience for those who are interested to work deeper with body & access its depth and goodness.

Venue: Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch

For enquiries and details, please contact Richa Garg:
rg.richa1905@gmail.com | WhatsApp : 99902 23290



‘YOGArt’ – WIRE-ART WORKSHOP for children, age 7 and above

Inclusions:

30-40 mins - yoga: preparation, cooling the body & mind, bringing awareness so we are careful when using new tools.

1hr 30 min - wire art

10 min - reflection

17 Dec 2022, 3 pm - 6 pm

Venue: Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch

For enquiries and details, please contact Monica Chand:
9810522624 (WhatsApp)



Contact us

Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, '**Sri Aravind Karmadhara**', is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriaurobindoashram.net.

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Note

In view of the Hundred and Fiftieth Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 2022, the Ashram is expanding its mailing list to reach out to more and more who may benefit from the teachings of the Master and the Mother. To get included in the Mailing List, please go to <http://erp.saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm> to fill in a form, which will take you only a few minutes.



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