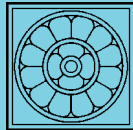


The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal.

Sri Aurobindo

Complete
Descriptive
Book List
July 2000



Sabda

SABDA, SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM,
PONDICHERRY 605 002

About this Booklist

This catalogue lists titles and prices of all the available books published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and sold by SABDA. Some books published by other publishers on the life and works of Sri Aurobindo have also been included here considering their academic value though Sri Aurobindo Ashram may not be necessarily endorse all the views expressed in these books.

The titles are arranged in four main sections: Works of Sri Aurobindo, Works of the Mother, Compilations from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and finally, Works of Other Authors. Under each main section, books are further arranged broadly according to subjects.

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SRI AUROBINDO



Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August 1872. At the age of seven he was sent to England where he attended St. Paul's School, London, and then went on a senior classical scholarship to King's College, Cambridge. An ardent reader from his school days, his favourite subjects were English and French literature, poetry and European history. He was a brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin. Intellectually gifted, he had a rare mastery over the English language. He had learned French from his childhood and had also learned enough German, Italian and Spanish to study Goethe, Dante and Calderon in their original tongues. In King's College, he stood in the first class in the Classical Tripos. In 1890 he also passed the final examination for the Indian Civil Service. Not wishing to serve the I.C.S he disqualified himself by not attending the riding test.

Returning to India in 1893, Sri Aurobindo spent thirteen years in the Baroda State Service as an administrator and a professor. These were the years of self-culture, of literary activity and of preparation for his future political work. During this period he made a deep study of the prevailing political condition of the country and steeped himself into the rich Indian cultural heritage. He mastered Sanskrit and learned also some other Indian languages: Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, and later, Tamil.

In 1906 Sri Aurobindo went to Bengal and openly joined India's freedom movement. His daily newspaper, *Bande Mataram*, quickly became the most powerful voice of the Indian Nationalist Movement. In 1908 he was arrested in the Alipur Conspiracy Case as implicated by the doings of the revolutionary group led by his brother Barindra. During his one year's undertrial detention in jail he spent most of his time in the practice of Yoga. This was the time when he had a series of decisive spiritual experiences which changed the course of his life. He carried on his revolutionary work till 1910 when in response to an inner call he retired from active politics and withdrew to Pondicherry for exclusive concentration on his spiritual practice.

In 1914, after four years of intense Yoga he launched a monthly philosophical review, *Arya*, in which most of his major works were serialised. These works embodied much of the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. Having gathered all the essential truths of past spiritual experiences, he worked for a more complete method of Yoga that would transform human nature and divinise life. To this purpose he devoted the rest of his life.

Sri Aurobindo was a prolific poet in English, his range extending over romantic lyrics, sonnets, long narrative poems, dramatic poems and two epics.

Sri Aurobindo left his body on 5 December 1950.

THE MOTHER



Sri Aurobindo's spiritual collaborator, the Mother, was born in Paris on 21 February 1878. Mirra, as the child was called, was spiritually conscious from her early childhood. She was a talented musician and an accomplished painter and participated in the stimulating artistic life of the turn-of-the-century Paris.

Concerning her early spiritual life, the Mother has written: "Between eleven and thirteen a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to me not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in a life divine."

In 1906 and 1907 the Mother voyaged to Tlemcen, Algeria, where she studied occultism for two years. Returning to Paris, she founded a group of spiritual seekers. Between 1911 and 1913 she gave many talks to various groups in Paris. The Mother sailed to Pondicherry, India, in 1914 and met Sri Aurobindo for the first time on 29 March. She recognised him as the one who for many years had inwardly guided her spiritual development. She remained in Pondicherry for eleven months helping Sri Aurobindo to publish the *Arya* and then returned to France. After a year in France, she went to Japan and stayed there for a period of nearly four years.

On 24 April 1920 the Mother returned to Pondicherry to resume her collaboration with Sri Aurobindo in his spiritual work. With her arrival the number of disciples around Sri Aurobindo gradually increased. This informal grouping eventually took shape as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In November 1926, Sri Aurobindo went into seclusion and entrusted the full material and spiritual charge of the Ashram to the Mother. Under her guidance, which covered a span of nearly fifty years, the Ashram grew into a large, multi-faceted community which today numbers about 1400 persons. In 1943 the Mother started a small school which gradually expanded to become the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education which presently has about 450 students and 200 teachers. Auroville, the 'City of Dawn' – an international township – was founded by her in 1968 near Pondicherry with the aim of realising Sri Aurobindo's vision of human unity.

The Mother, on her ninetieth birthday, summarised her life and work in this way:

"The reminiscences will be short.

"I came to India to meet Sri Aurobindo. I remained in India to live with Sri Aurobindo. When he left his body, I continued to live here in order to do his work which is, by serving the Truth and enlightening mankind, to hasten the rule of the Divine's Love upon earth".

The Mother left her body on 17 November 1973.

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

This Ashram has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit.

Sri Aurobindo

Both in its outward manifestation and inner seeking, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is entirely different from the popular conception of an ashram. Outwardly the Ashram is engaged in a wide variety of activities, and it is difficult to perceive the inner spirit hidden behind those works which apparently are no different from similar works undertaken elsewhere. In order to comprehend the true significance of this Ashram, it is necessary to develop an understanding of Sri Aurobindo's vision.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearance of this universe there is the "Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal". This "One Being and Consciousness", according to Sri Aurobindo, "is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself."

Evolution is possible, Sri Aurobindo argued, only because the Divine has "involved" or "hidden himself" in the material universe at the beginning of creation. The "Superconscient Spirit" has involved himself in the "inconscient Matter" which gave birth to this material world. The seemingly inconscient Matter, therefore, is nothing but the Spirit in disguise. Evolution is the gradual unfoldment of this hidden spirit. Matter, Life, Mind, are nothing but different expressions of this Spirit at the different stages of evolution: The involved Divine through his creative energy gradually emerging in ever more conscious forms. The process of evolution will complete the circle with the manifestation of this hidden spirit, the involved Divine Reality in the material world.

Without this inner significance, Sri Aurobindo pointed out, the word evolution "merely states the phenomenon without explaining it". For, something cannot emerge out of nothing. How else could life evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form if the possibility of such an emergence was not already concealed there in Matter in the form of an Omnipotent Divine Consciousness.

The process of evolution, therefore, is not merely a mechanical development without any reason or aim as outwardly it may appear to be, but a gradual unfoldment or release of the hidden Divine Consciousness from Matter. Life in plant and animal is the first step of this release. Mind in man is the second. But Mind is not the highest possible power of the Divine Consciousness for "mind is not in possession of Truth, but only its ignorant seeker." The next step of evolution therefore must be towards the development of a being with a greater consciousness than mind, a consciousness supramental and spiritual. For, "only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it become possible for life to manifest perfection."

Man, in Sri Aurobindo's view, is a key to this ultimate perfection; the highest form of life upon earth he has a vital role to play in his future evolution. A conscious being, man can choose to take part in his own evolution and also accelerate the process through a methodised effort towards self-perfection, exceed his inherent limitations as a mental being and become a supramental being.

Through an integral process of self-purification, it is this acceleration of the evolutionary process which is being attempted here at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Unlike the popular conception of an ashram, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is not a

religious body or a monastery. It has nothing to do with religion or asceticism or even spiritualism as it is commonly understood and practised elsewhere. This Ashram can be defined more appropriately as a human laboratory where, through a unique and unprecedented research work initiated by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, man is consciously attempting to transform himself into the next species on the evolutionary ladder.

The process of self-purification which is followed at this Ashram is known as the Integral Yoga, a system of self-discipline evolved by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The principle of the Integral Yoga is a constant "self-surrender" to the supreme creative and transformative force of the Divine, the force of the Supreme Mother. As a result of this self-surrender the consciousness, power, delight of the Divine shall descend in the human being, gradually perfecting his nature and eventually transforming his mind, life and body.

The main process that goes on silently behind the appearance of all the outer activities in the Ashram is this "self-surrender" to the force of the Supreme Mother. The primary purpose of the various activities is not to satisfy any practical or economic need but to provide a field for spiritual growth to the members of the Ashram through such works. The actual nature of the work ceases to be important when all the works are carried out in the spirit of self-giving, as an offering to the Divine Mother. And it is this inner attitude rather than the outer accomplishment which is the essence of all the works done in this Ashram.

Significantly in this Ashram the conception of work changes radically as it no longer denotes just the vocation of a person in which he is engaged only for a limited period of time. All he thinks, all he feels, all he does at every moment of his life is to be offered to the Divine Mother for purification, for an integral transformation.

The aim of perfecting one's nature and finally transforming one's mind, life and body is too formidable a task for any human capacity or endeavour. For, in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, perfection does not mean some superficial changes or a refinement of nature attained through a rigorous self-discipline based on certain moral, ethical or religious ideas. Not a pretension of perfection but a genuine transmutation of the present base human nature into the higher principle of a divine nature; a conversion, a transformation which is something permanent and real, is the aim here.

This can be achieved only as a result of the direct working of the supreme transformative force of the Divine Mother, which alone has the power to effect in man this integral transformation. But this supreme Force will act directly only in response to an aspiration for this ultimate perfection. A constant self-surrender to this Force with an unwavering aspiration, therefore, is the key to this perfection, this integral transformation.

Since its founding in 1926 the Sri Aurobindo Ashram has grown from an informal grouping of two dozen inmates into a diversified spiritual community with about 1400 members, both male and female. Ashramites live and work in more than 400 buildings spread throughout the town of Pondicherry. The central focus of the community is one group of houses including those in which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother dwelt for most of their lives in Pondicherry. This interconnected block of houses – called "the Ashram main building" or more commonly just "the Ashram" – surrounds a tree-shaded courtyard, at the centre of which lies the flower-be-decked "Samadhi". This white marble shrine holds the physical bodies of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram provides its members with everything they need for a decent and healthy life. Various departments have been organised to look after the essential services. There is a community kitchen where food for the inmates is



The Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother

prepared three times a day. The Ashram runs a modern printing press. Several small industries have grown up around the Ashram where the Ashramites work for a fixed time. Facilities are also available for physical culture and various artistic activities in which most of the Ashramites participate as a part of their spiritual practice.

The Ashram runs a unique educational institution, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, which has about 450 students and 200 teachers. Instruction at the Centre of Education is given according to the "free progress system", which is, in the words of the Mother, "progress guided by the soul and not subject to habits, conventions or preconceived ideas".

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is administered by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, managed by a board of trustees. Understandably, there is no spiritual head or hierarchy in this Ashram to guide the inmates in their search for self-perfection. Each person here is following in his own way the path shown by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, according to his own inner guidance. All the necessary help for proceeding on the path is available in the various books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The presence and the help of a higher Guidance are also felt by many which makes the practice of yoga in this Ashram often a very joyous and fulfilling experience.

* * * * *

How to visit the Ashram

Pondicherry is situated on the Coromandel coast, about 160 kms south of Chennai city in South India and can be reached by train but more conveniently by bus or car. there are frequent buses for Pondicherry which leave Madras from T.T.C bus stand at the Parry's corner. It takes about four hours by bus and 3 hours by car to reach Pondicherry from Madras. The Ashram is about 2 kms from the Pondicherry bus stand and can be easily reached by the common local transport, auto or cycle-rickshaw. There are several guest houses run by the Ashram where visitors can stay even for long periods against payment of reasonable charges. For information regarding accomodation please write to: The Bureau Central, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605 002. Phone: 0413-339648. email: bureaucentral@auroville.org.in

Sri Aurobindo's Writings

Sri Aurobindo's earliest writings were poems that he penned as a student in England. This literary interest continued during his thirteen-year stay at Baroda, where he wrote a number of poems and plays, and afterwards in Calcutta and Pondicherry. His dramas and short stories are presently published in two volumes entitled *Collected Plays* and his poetic works in the volume *Collected Poems*; there is, in addition, Sri Aurobindo's major poetic work, *Savitri*, an epic in blank verse of about 24,000 lines.

Sri Aurobindo first rose to national prominence as a writer for his editorials and articles in *Bande Mataram*, a Calcutta daily he edited between 1906 and 1908. A large number of other political and cultural pieces appeared in two Calcutta weeklies in 1909 and 1910, the year in which Sri Aurobindo retired from active politics in order to devote himself exclusively to the practice of Yoga.

In 1914, after four years of concentrated yoga at Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo launched a 64-page monthly philosophical review, *Arya*, in which most of his important works were serialised during the next six and a half years: *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, *The Future Poetry*, *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

Though he retired from public life in 1926, Sri Aurobindo maintained a large correspondence with his disciples, especially in the 1930s. Several thousand letters on his teaching, his system of spiritual self-discipline and other subjects have been published in three volumes entitled *Letters on Yoga*. *The Mother* contains his shorter work of that name and his letters on the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Notes and letters on his own life appear in *Sri Aurobindo On Himself*. Other important works are: *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* (translations of Vedic hymns to Agni), *The Supramental Manifestation and other Writings*, *Essays Divine and Human* (both the volumes contain short prose works on philosophy, psychology and yoga).

While studying Sri Aurobindo's works one important fact should be remembered by the reader. Sri Aurobindo's consciousness was in a constant state of development and there was a radical change in his views particularly after 1910. The careful student of Sri Aurobindo always takes this development into consideration when studying his writings of different periods.

The *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo* was published as the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL) in the year 1972, the Birth Centenary year of Sri Aurobindo. This set of thirty volumes is no more available. However, as all the subsequent editions of Sri Aurobindo's major works correspond to the Centenary edition, this facilitates uniform referencing for the study of his work.

Currently *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* in thirty five volumes is under publication.

HOW TO READ SRI AUROBINDO

“. . . the best thing would be to obtain perfect silence — and achieve a state of immobility of the brain, I might say, so that the attention becomes as still and immobile as a mirror, like the surface of absolutely still water. Then what one has read passes through the surface and penetrates deep into the being where it is received with a minimum of distortion. Afterwards — sometimes long afterwards — it wells up again from the depths and manifests in the brain with its full power of comprehension, not as knowledge acquired from outside, but as a light one carried within.”

The Mother

MAJOR WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

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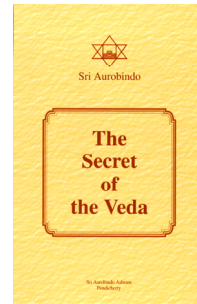
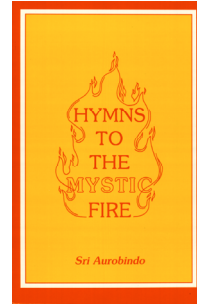
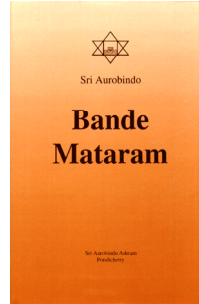
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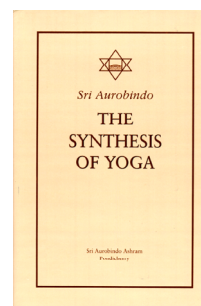
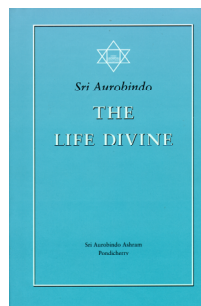
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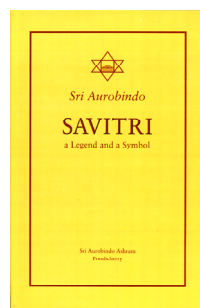
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Sri Aurobindo

The whole nature of man is to become more than himself. He has become more than the animal man. He is the thinker, the craftsman, the seeker after beauty. He shall be more than the thinker, he shall be the seer of knowledge; he shall be more than the craftsman, he shall be the creator and master of his creation; he shall be more than the seeker of beauty, for he shall enjoy all beauty and all delight. Physical he seeks for this immortal substance; vital he seeks after immortal life and the infinite power of his being; mental and partial in knowledge he seeks after the whole light and the utter vision. To possess these is to become the superman . . .

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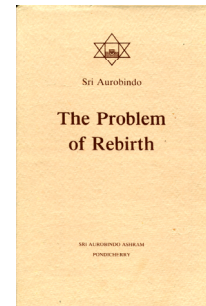
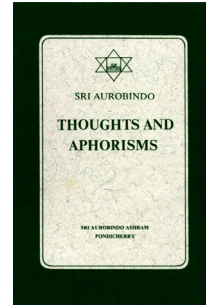
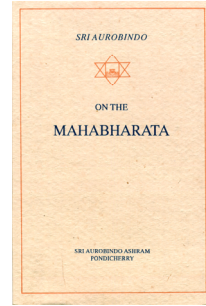
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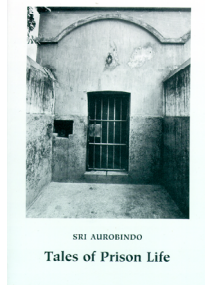
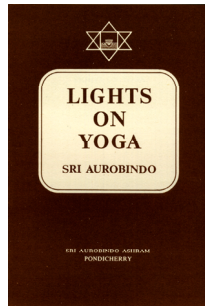
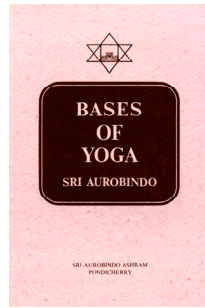
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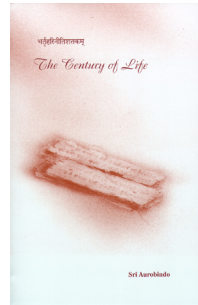
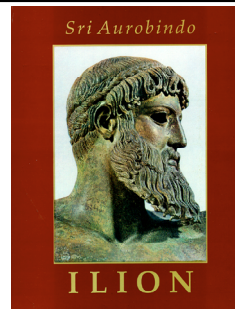
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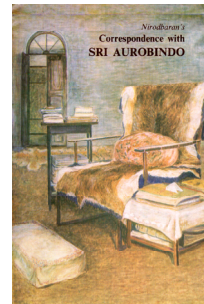
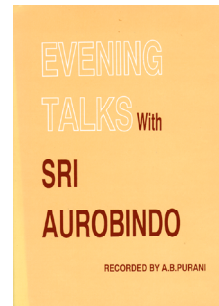
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Sri Aurobindo

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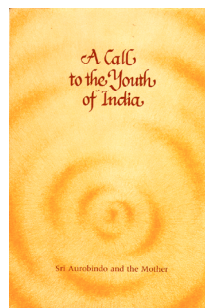
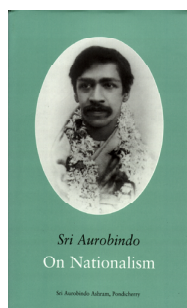
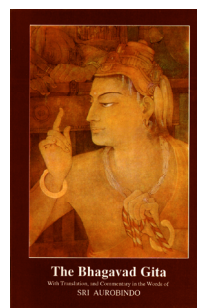
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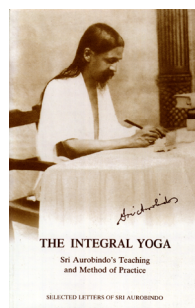
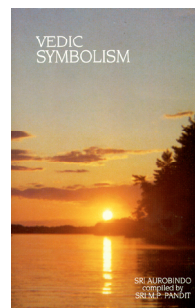
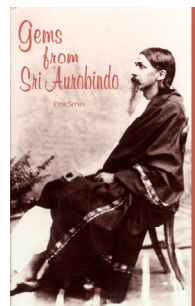
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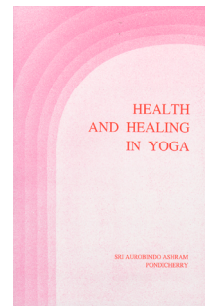
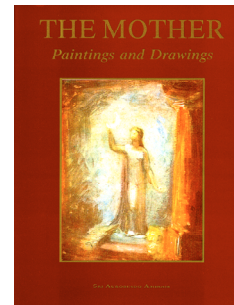
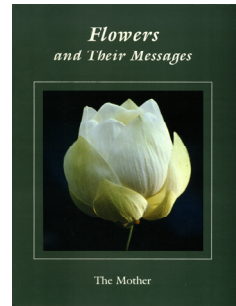
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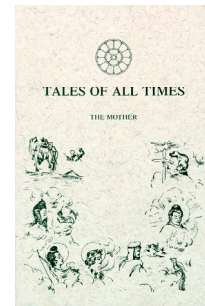
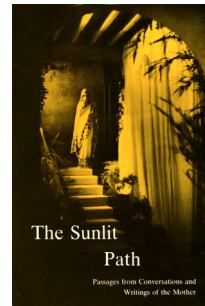
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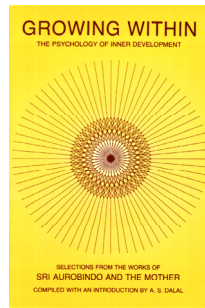
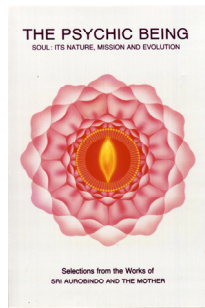
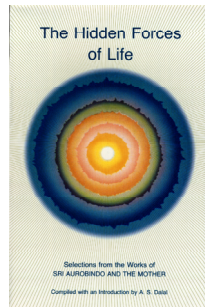
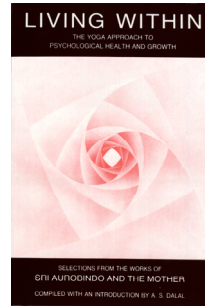
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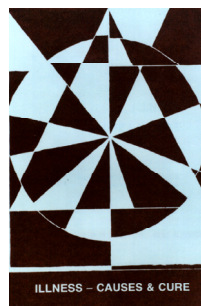
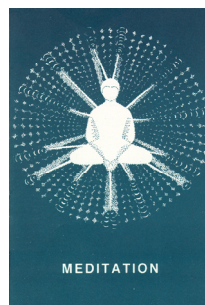
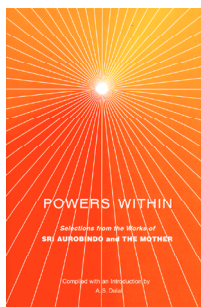
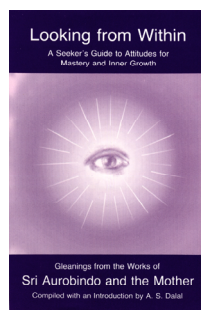
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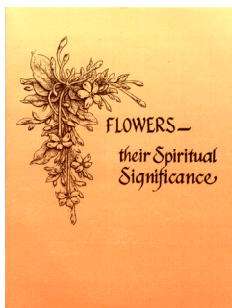
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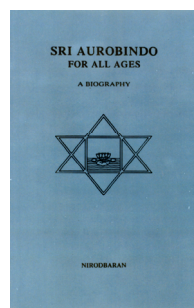
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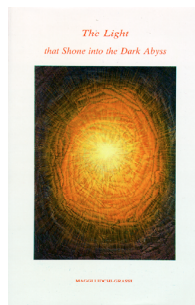
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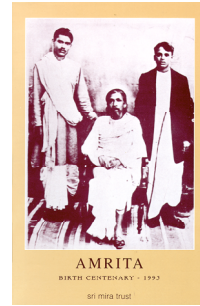
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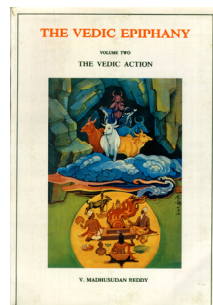
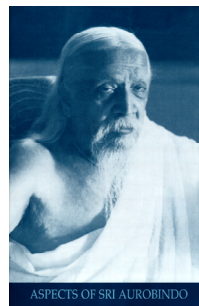
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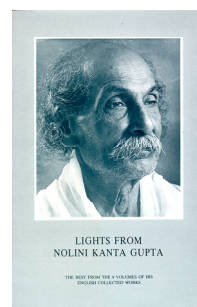
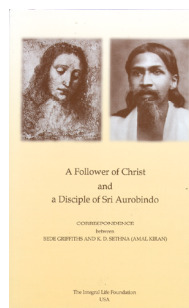
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The one thing that man sees above the intellect is the spirit, and therefore the developed intellect of the race, if it is at all to go forward, must open now to an understanding and seeing spirituality, other than the rather obscure religionism of the past which belonged to the lower levels of the life and the emotion and which has had its bounds broken and its narrowness condemned by the free light of intellectual thought: this will be rather an illuminated self-knowledge too which transmuted in that greater light will spiritualise the whole view and motive of our existence. That is the one development to which an accomplished intellectualism can open and by exceeding itself find its own right consummation.

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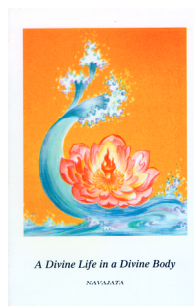
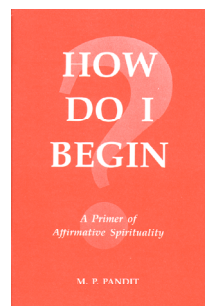
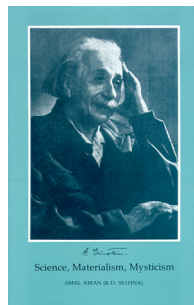
The delight of victory is sometimes less than the attraction of struggle and suffering; nevertheless the laurel and not the cross should be the aim of the conquering human soul.

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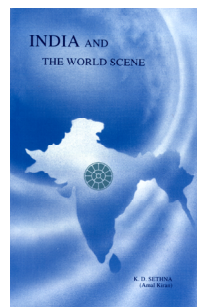
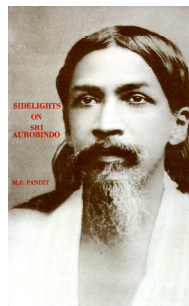
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Do not dream that when thou hast got rid of material poverty, men will even so be happy or satisfied or society freed from ills, troubles and problems. This is only the first and lowest necessity. While the soul within remains defectively organised, there will always be outward unrest, disorder and revolution.

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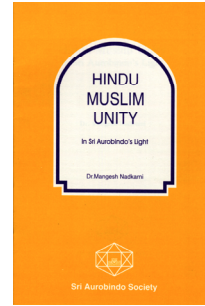


I should love my neighbour not because he is neighbourhood – for what is there in neighbourhood and distance? nor because the religions tell me he is my brother – for where is the root of that brotherhood? but because he is myself. Neighbourhood and distance affect the body, the heart goes beyond them. Brotherhood is of blood or country or religion or humanity, but when self-interest clamours what becomes of this brotherhood? It is only by living in God and turning mind and heart and body into the image of his universal unity that that deep, disinterested and unassailable love becomes possible.

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The Brahmin first ruled by the book and the ritual, the Kshatriya next by the sword and the buckler; now the Vaishya governs us by machinery and the dollar, and the Sudra, the liberated serf, presses in with his doctrine of the kingdom of associated labour. But neither priest, king, merchant nor labourer is true governor of humanity, the despotism of the tool and the mattock will fail like all the preceding despotisms. Only when egoism dies and god in man governs his own human universality, can this earth support a happy and contented race of beings.

Sri Aurobindo

If communism ever reestablishes itself successfully upon earth, it must be on a foundation of soul's brotherhood and the death of egoism. A forced association and a mechanical comradeship would end in a worldwide fiasco.

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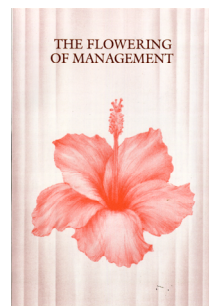
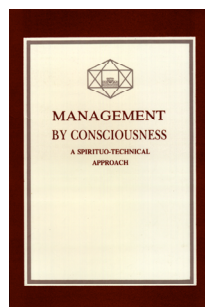
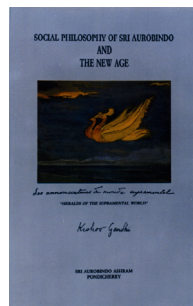
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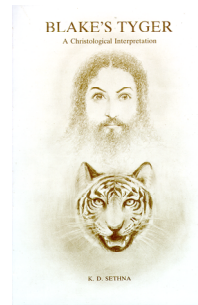
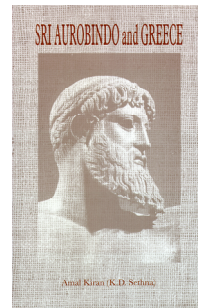


Those who are poor, ignorant, ill-born or ill-bred are not the common herd; the common herd are all who are satisfied with pettiness and an average humanity.

Sri Aurobindo

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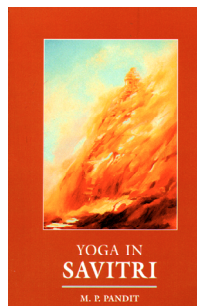
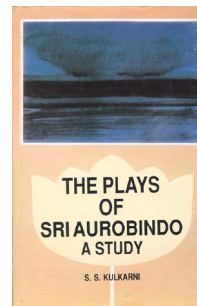
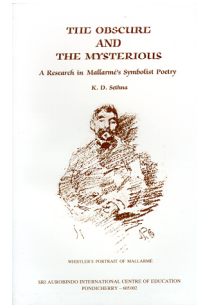
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*All would change if man
could once consent to be
spiritualised; but his nature,
mental and vital and physi-
cal, is rebellious to the higher
law. He loves his imperfec-
tion.*

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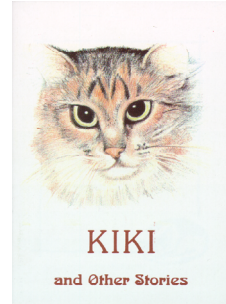
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Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer; Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God; Hinduism has opened to him the largest and profoundest possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way.

Sri Aurobindo

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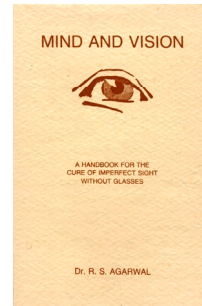
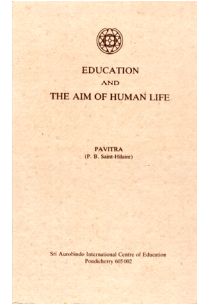
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past, but keep safe its gains
and its spirit, or else thou
hast no future.*

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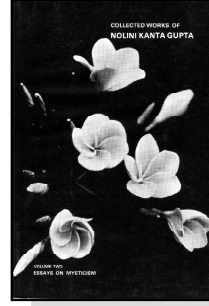
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Invitation

With wind and the weather beating round me
Up to the hill and the moorland I go.
Who will come with Me? Who will climb with me?
Wade through the brook and tramp through the snow?

Not in the petty circle of cities
Cramped by your doors and your walls I dwell;
Over me God is blue in the welkin,
Against me the wind and the storm rebel.

I sport with solitude here in my regions,
Of misadventure have made me a friend.
Who would live largely? Who would live freely?
Here to the wind-swept uplands ascend.

I am the lord of tempest and mountain,
I am the Spirit of freedom and pride.
Stark must he be and a kinsman to danger
Who shares my kingdom and walks at my side.

Sri Aurobindo