

You asked about
Sri Aurobindo

25 ANSWERS!

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You Asked About Sri Aurobindo – 25 Answers!

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25 Answers!

Who was Sri Aurobindo?

Sri Aurobindo was a poet, a writer, a scholar, a revolutionary thinker, a seer, a philosopher, a nationalist, a creator of an age, a rishi and a yogi. He carried the world in his heart. The more you try to understand him the more you realize that it is a difficult task to describe him in words.

He was born in Calcutta, India on August 15, 1872, at 4:52 a.m. in the *Brahmamuhurta*—the hour of God. He was the third son of Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose and Swarnalata. He left his body at 1:26 a.m. on December 5, 1950 in Pondicherry. The body remained charged with Supramental Light for 111 hours without showing any signs of decomposition.

Aravind means Lotus (pronounced *Aurobindo* in Bengali). *Sri* means "Glory of the Divine" in the tradition of India.

I would like to know more about his early years.

Looking at Aurobindo's photo taken when he was very young, The Mother said that his inner being was on the surface and he knew nothing of this world. Seekers spend their lifetime to reach this stage.

When he was five years old he, along with his brothers Benoy Bhushan and Manomohan, went to study at Darjeeling where most of the students were English and the teachers were Irish

nuns. On vacations, they stayed with their parents and their grandfather Rishi Raj Narayan at Deoghar. Once, during this period when Aurobindo was lying down at his place, he saw great darkness rushing down into him and enveloping the whole world. This was *tamas*—inertia. It left him only when he returned from England after completing his studies.

Aurobindo's father who was educated in England wanted his children to have education abroad. Not only that, he wanted them to learn English customs and culture. He wanted his sons to be away from everything Indian. In 1879, when Sri Aurobindo was only seven, he and his brothers Benoy Bhushan and Manomohan were taken to England by their father and mother. For fourteen years Aurobindo and his brothers studied there. So, young Aurobindo grew up in a surrounding totally foreign to his motherland; he did not know his mother tongue Bengali.

The boys were left with an English couple, Rev. Drewett and his wife, at Manchester. The Drewetts taught Aurobindo Latin, English, and History in addition to Geography, Arithmetic and French at their home.

At the age of eleven, Aurobindo felt that there was a great upheaval about to take place in the world and he was going to play an important role in it.

Young Aurobindo read Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley and the Bible by himself. He also wrote verse. When the Drewetts moved out of Manchester, the brothers stayed with Mr. Drewett's mother. At St. Paul's School he learned Greek too. They again changed their place of stay; while Benoy and Aurobindo moved to a new residence, Manomohan shifted into lodgings.

The remittances sent by Dr. Ghose suddenly became irregular. A phase of suffering and poverty was experienced. Aurobindo had only a slice or two of bread, and butter with a cup of tea in the morning and only a penny saveloy (a kind of sausage) in the evenings. There was no dinner for two years. There was no winter coat to protect from London's winter. There was no bedroom or heating.

From September 1884 to December 1889, Aurobindo studied at St. Paul's. He distinguished himself for his mastery of the classics and proficiency in literature and history. Aurobindo had learned and mastered various languages: Italian, German, French, English, Latin and Greek. He read English poetry, literature and fiction extensively. He won several prizes and scholarships. Aurobindo read again and again Shelley's "The Revolt of Islam." It was his great favorite. He felt at a young age that he would dedicate himself and participate in the world change.

In 1890, at the age of 18, Aurobindo was admitted to Cambridge. There he studied the classics. He came out with flying colors in exams. Oscar Browning was the examiner and was wonderstruck at Aurobindo's papers. He commented that he never came across such excellent papers and essay.

At first, Aurobindo's father wanted him to apply for the Indian Civil Service (ICS). Aurobindo fared brilliantly in the exams here too. Later, however, the father who all along was anxious to keep his three sons under the influence of British culture, now began to send news-cuttings of atrocities committed by the British on Indians. Aurobindo, therefore, looked for an opportunity to disqualify himself from the ICS exams which, if passed, would make him serve the British Government.

Aurobindo now began to learn his mother tongue Bengali and joined a secret society romantically called "Lotus and Dagger."

The members of this society took an oath for the freedom of India.

If Aurobindo had completed ICS, he would have had to serve the British, which he did not wish to. So he intentionally disqualified himself from passing by not appearing for the horse-riding test. The British government, now aware of Aurobindo's political views, found it very convenient to disqualify him for ICS even though absence from the horse-riding test was only a minor lapse. Aurobindo did not appear for the riding test even though he was given a second chance.

The Gaekwad, ruler of Baroda, who happened to be in London, offered a job to Aurobindo at a salary of Rs. 200 a month. This was considered good at that time.

At the age of twenty-one, Aurobindo sailed back to India. Even though he stayed in England for fourteen years and loved its literature, he had no attachment to the country. He had fought against the British Government, but he had no rancor towards the British people.

In "Envoi" he wrote...

"Me from her lotus heaven Saraswati
Has called to regions of eternal snow
And Ganges upon whose shores
the flowers of Eden blow."

Aurobindo returned to India on February 6, 1893. The moment he landed at Apollo Bunder in Bombay and as his feet touched the Indian soil, a vast calm and peace descended upon him. Unfortunately, his father died hearing that the ship in which his favorite son Aurobindo was to have sailed had sunk; however, it was wrong information given by the shipping company since Aurobindo somehow did not sail by it.

(Until Krishna consciousness entered his body on November 24, 1926, we refer to him simply as Aurobindo, not as Sri Aurobindo).

Who was his father?

Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose. He was a selfless, kind and too generous a man. He was not a religious man, but a man of great intellect—impulsive, yet gentle at heart.

Did he ever complain about being away from home in childhood?

No, not at all! In fact, he never complained about anything at anytime.

So he never complained about his father?

No, never. In fact he loved his father very much. In his whole lifetime he never complained against anyone or anything. He never made any demands or claimed anything. The Mother has said that he was the only humble man she ever met.

Who is The Mother we talk of? When did she meet Sri Aurobindo? Why was she called The Mother?

To answer this question could take volumes; however, here is the brief answer to it:

The Mother was a collaborator of Sri Aurobindo. Her name was

Mirra Alfassa. She was French by birth. Since her childhood she had had spiritual experiences. She had spiritual and occult powers from birth which she mastered herself. Madam Theon, a great occultist, was her good friend.

The Mother used to see Sri Aurobindo in her visions even though she had never met him or even heard of him. She drew the portrait of this face whom she called 'Krishna.' She knew that she would meet him someday somewhere.

She came to India accompanying her husband Paul Richard to Pondicherry. When she met Sri Aurobindo, she at once recognized that it was he whom she used to see in her visions. At first, Sri Aurobindo used to call her M. Later, after November 24, 1926, when he withdrew from his daily meetings, he handed over the charge of the Ashram to her. From that time onwards she was known as The Mother. She looked after the spiritual progress and material needs of the Ashramites.

The Mother left Her body on November 17, 1973.

What does Ashram mean?

Literally, *ashram* means a place of refuge. Sri Aurobindo Ashram is however more than a place of retreat; it is a laboratory where seekers from around the world are staying collectively to live a life dedicated to seeking the Divine. Each individual there represents a different personality working out his nature towards transformation.

Where is Sri Aurobindo Ashram?

In Pondicherry, India—near Madras.

Which were the places where he stayed on return from England?

After studying in England from 1879 to 1893, he returned to India and stayed in Baroda from 1893 to 1906. This was his period of preparation—of teaching and serving the Gaekwad of Baroda. He worked in the Settlement and Revenue Department and in secretariat work for the Maharajah. Later, he worked as Professor of English and Vice-Principal at the Baroda College. During this period he wrote much of the poetry to be published later. He taught himself various modern Indian Languages like Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi. He also taught himself Sanskrit. During his stay in Baroda he got married to Mrinalini.

The stay at Baroda was a period of literary activity—of turning towards yoga and silent political activity. (Being in service he was barred from political activity).

The partition of Bengal led to agitation in 1905. This gave him opportunity to resign his job and plunge in the political movement. It was in 1906 that he bade *adieu* to Baroda and proceeded to take a new assignment as a Principal of Bengal National College that was just opened.

From 1906 to 1910 he stayed at Calcutta. This was a phase of political activity. It was also at this time that he had his Nirvana experience. He was arrested, jailed and released during this period. He was the first Indian politician to have the courage to ask for complete independence for India, and this he wrote again and again in *Bande Mataram*. Sri Aurobindo wanted to push the

whole nation into an intense and organized political activity. He wanted the Congress to be an instrument of revolutionary action, not just a center of timid constitutional action which only talked and talked and passed tame resolutions!

A new spirit was created in India. The nation was aflame with cries of *Bande Mataram*. Sri Aurobindo always preferred to remain and act or lead from behind the scene. Sri Aurobindo said, "History seldom records the things that were decisive but took place behind the veil; it records the show in front of the curtain."

When the Government prosecuted him as the editor of *Bande Mataram*, the people came to know about him more and more. He was acquitted for lack of evidence but by now he had become the leader of the Nationalist party. He addressed large meetings all over the country. He was busy writing fiery articles and editorials every day and awakening the whole country to cry for freedom. Yet something in him was leading him more and more into spiritual life. He began to take a serious interest in Yoga. He needed the power to free his motherland that he loved so dearly. He states in a lighter vein, "mine was a side door entry into the spiritual life" and about his life he often said "it has not been on the surface for men to see."

After a brief stay at Chandernagore, he proceeded to Pondicherry. The 40 years at Pondicherry were wholly devoted to Yoga. He cut off all connections with political activities but took a keen interest in world events.

Each of these periods could fill more than a volume with a fund of information, but we have restricted ourselves to some of the major events only, and that too in a few lines.

After all the spiritual experiences from childhood, why did he take interest in politics?

According to Sri Aurobindo the spiritual Guru of the world is India. Hence, freedom to India was the first step. For this his involvement, guidance, and action were imperative.

To Sri Aurobindo India was not a piece of earth but a Divine Mother. Who would like to see his mother in chains? He worked ceaselessly for the freedom of India by participating in political activities. This continued until he got an *Adesh*—a command from above—that freedom for India was only a matter of time. He heard this *Adesh* of Lord Sri Krishna clearly stating that Lord Krishna had taken over the work of freeing India and that India would surely be free. Sri Aurobindo, from that moment, devoted all his time to Yoga, completely disassociating himself from politics.

Did his wife Mrinalini participate in his political activities?

No. She was very devoted to him but it was not in her fate to be by the side of her husband Sri Aurobindo. Circumstances and distance always kept her away. She was much younger than him. She waited for his permission to come to Pondicherry. There were restrictions for travelling also. When Sri Aurobindo agreed that she could come to Pondicherry, she began her journey. But before she could reach Pondicherry to meet her husband she fell ill during the journey and died of influenza.

Earlier, she had taken *diksha* (spiritual initiation) from the Holy Mother—the wife of Sri Ramakrishna—and had studied the complete works of Swami Vivekananda. She hardly stayed with

her husband Sri Aurobindo. She spent her time staying at her father's house.

Sri Aurobindo had written to her that he had three madresses. First, all his knowledge, genius and material possessions were God's. These had to be returned to God after providing for the family. Second, he wanted to see God. He had realized that what the Hindu religion had said was true. Third, he looked upon his country as the Mother. He worshipped Her as the Mother. He asked what a son would do if a demon sat on his mother's breast and started sucking her blood:

"Would he quietly sit down to his dinner, amuse himself with his wife and children, or would he rush out to deliver his mother? I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength...but the strength of knowledge...this feeling is not new in me, it is not of today. I was born with it, it is in my very marrow. God sent me to Earth to accomplish this great mission."

One can't help but quote Sri Aurobindo himself.

How about letting us know about Sri Aurobindo's spiritual experiences. Weren't they many and interesting?

We would be surprised if such questions were not asked! Well, as long as one takes inspiration from spiritual experiences of *Avatars*, Yogis, and Saints, it is all right; otherwise, the real purpose of getting knowledge is overlooked.

We know of his experience when he was five years old and also of his experiencing great calm when his foot touched the Indian soil on return from England (described earlier in the second

question). Of the experiences he must have had, we know of only some. It was not in his nature to talk much or publicize. He communicated by silence and by writing letters to disciples and articles in journals of which he was editor. Despite the limitations of our understanding and of the descriptive power of words, we will outline some of his experiences as follows.

Once, while travelling in a carriage in Baroda, he noticed that there was a possibility of an accident. He willed and a Divine being of light emerged from within him to prevent the accident. This was his first experience of the Divinity within himself.

On a visit to Kashmir, when walking on the ridge of *Takht-i-Suleman*—the hill of Shankaracharya—he had a unique experience. He found himself lost in a Vastitude of Nature and felt taken up by the Infinite.

On another occasion, Sri Aurobindo visited a temple of Kali on the bank of the river Narmada. With his Europeanized-mind, he had no faith in image-worship and hardly believed in the presence of God. However, when he looked at the image of Kali he saw the living presence there. For the first time he believed in the presence of God.

He never had a guru but a Maratha Yogi by the name Lele once asked him to "see" thoughts entering from outside. He asked Sri Aurobindo to fling the thoughts out. Sri Aurobindo achieved this in just three days. This experience of Eternal Silence is the Nirvana stage which remained with him forever. Nirvana became for him a settled fact but he went beyond it.

While in jail he heard (for a fortnight) the spirit of Swami Vivekananda who gave him a clue on a very important spiritual matter. He also heard the voice of Lord Sri Krishna and he even saw Sri Krishna in the worst criminals around him—in the warden, in the judge and in everything around him. This was the

experience of seeing the Divine in everyone and everything.

Once, while he was working in the office of the periodical that he edited (*Karmayogin*) he heard a clear command from above—an *Adesh*—to go to Chandernagore. Later at Chandernagore, he heard another command to go to Pondicherry, where he stayed for 40 years.

We would like to narrate a couple of The Mothers' experiences as well:

Once at Pondicherry The Mother saw an object in the sky. She was told that it was a flying saucer. She said that other beings can exist besides us and they can be very intelligent. However, our depiction of the alien beings' appearance is not correct. They may not look like what we imagine them to be.

Another experience was in October 1965 at Pondicherry, when she saw a golden white being associated with the comet Jupiter. (Jupiter was visible from earth at that time.) The young being was dancing with joy while spreading a dense jelly like substance in the Earth's atmosphere to help the transformation of the Earth.

What is his concept of the world?

According to Sri Aurobindo the world is created for Divine manifestation of Perfection in all aspects and forms—that is, Divine Knowledge, Divine Power, Divine Love, Divine Light, and Divine Beauty. It was meant to be a Divine creation, but at present, it is a perverted and obscure expression of the way the Divine wanted it to be. His concept of the world was distinct from the Buddhist, Shankara, and Vedantic views.

The Buddhist and the Shankara view is that the only way is to escape from the world into Non-Existence, Nothingness or Non-Manifestation and to dissolve into it as the world is full of suffering and illusion. Ignorance is the cause of all suffering so why not get out of the world.

The Vedantic view is that the world is essentially Divine. The Divine is everywhere but the expression of the world in its exterior form is perverted, distorted, obscure, and ignorant. The only way is to escape into the Divine within and remain fixed there leaving the world as it is. The world will not change. It will always remain ignorant and unconscious.

Any prophecies about India?

Prophecies!!! Long before he left his body Sri Aurobindo had several powers, but he worked around the clock for the Supramental. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo saw the play of forces behind the world events and leaders.

Sri Aurobindo saw what was behind Hitler. It was a force of darkness (*Asura*). Therefore, he backed the allies during World War inspite of his opposition to the British rule of India. He and The Mother used their Yogic powers for the fall of Hitler. Had Hitler succeeded, the entire human race would have been subjected to slavery in a concentration camp. The creation would then have had to be dissolved again by the Divine. That would have meant a repetition.

He saw the possibility of China overrunning Tibet and posing a threat to India. The Korean crisis about which he had written in 1950 was shown in print to President Kennedy. The President wondered how someone meditating so far away could know 10 years ahead what was to happen. He thought there was a typing

mistake. (This is inspite of the fact that all the details were published years before the Korean crisis and Sri Aurobindo had left his body 10 years *before* the North Korean crisis.)

When India was partitioned Sri Aurobindo said without hesitation that India would be one again. How the Divine works out details is not for the human mind to even imagine.

Sri Aurobindo saw, more than 50 years ago, the collapse of Communism.

According to Sri Aurobindo, India is the Guru of the world, but it has to rise to the occasion. India still exists because of her spiritual strength from the ages. We quote Sri Aurobindo:

"India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma."

Will the present civilization come to an end as predicted by some?

We quote from a letter Sri Aurobindo wrote in September, 1945:

"About the present human civilization. It is not this which has to be saved; it is the world that has to be

saved and that surely will be done, though it may not be so easily or so soon as some wish or imagine, or in the way that they imagine. The present must surely change, but whether by destruction or a new construction on the basis of a greater Truth, is the issue. The MOTHER has left the question hanging and I can only do the same."

What is his Yoga called?

Integral Yoga or *Poorna* Yoga.

Why Integral?

Because His Yoga is a *synthesis* of all the old Yogas taken as a base. His Yoga starts where the others end.

What is so different about Integral Yoga?

If one has to use the word different, it is different in that it does not reject life.

All old Yogas and old systems insist on rejecting the life as it is and escape from life into nothingness or to merge in the Divine. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga has a different purpose. To rise out of the ordinary consciousness into the Divine Consciousness. To bring the Supramental power into the mind, life, and body. Not to reject mind, life, and body, but to transform them. To manifest Divine in matter.

The first stage is of Psychicisation. The external life is not neglected or rejected but one acts on it to bring about the

psychicisation i.e. to bring the psychic—the divine essence in each being—to the front and to make the being ready for transformation and also for union with the Divine Knowledge, Will, and Love.

The second stage is of Spiritualisation. To universalize the being on all planes. To be aware of the cosmic being and cosmic forces in union with the Divine on all planes, up to the Overmind.

The third stage is of Supramentalisation. To come into contact with the transcendent Divine beyond Overmind through Supermind. To realize the Dynamic Divine truth and its descent for the transformation of the earth nature. To Supramentalise the consciousness and the nature are the aim and objects of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

Patanjali speaks of suppression of the movements of the mind in Yogasutras (*Chitta Vritti Nirodha*). The Vedanta speaks of killing of the mind (Manonnasha). The Buddhists speak of killing of the mind. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga shows the way of uplifting of the mind, not killing of the mind i.e. uplifting reason to super reason. Transcending from mind to higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, Overmind and Supermind. Even in *Katha Upanishad* they speak of cutting the knot of the heart, but Sri Aurobindo suggests loosening of the knot. Therein lies the difference between the traditional Yogas and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

Did he achieve transformation?

His body remained luminous for 111 hours after he left it of his own free will in 1950. The Supramental force which he wanted to bring down on earth descended on February 29, 1956. His work continues to pave the way for the first Supramental body in

which he will take birth. The total transformation of the physical body is yet to be achieved. Lack of receptivity of the earth consciousness and humanity has delayed the work which is now progressing rapidly. All that he has promised will be realized.

He was given the option to have his body transformed, leaving the rest of humanity as it is, or to sacrifice his body for the sake of humanity. He decided to leave his body for humanity.

Why do you say he left his body?

Avatars and Yogis are not limited by the laws of the physical sciences. Besides, Sri Aurobindo had a galaxy of powers and *siddhis*. Had he so desired he could have easily achieved his individual transformation for a Supramental body. He opted to withdraw for the sake of humanity. Sri Aurobindo is a permanent Avatar of the Supreme. A portion of the Supreme who with The Mother has been active since the birth of this creation to assist in the manifestation of the Divine. At present, he is active in the subtle physical world.

What is the subtle physical world?

There are many worlds invisible and unknown to us of which the subtle physical world is nearest to our physical world. Sri Aurobindo is very much active there taking great interest in world events and helping humanity in evolution. One can see him if one has deep peace and ardent aspiration. Sri Aurobindo and his force are helping seekers of all faiths and even those who have not known him.

I note that his body became luminous and golden after he left it, but what about his miracles?

Miracles! We all like miracles a lot! Now, what is a miracle? Something that defies the physical and other sciences. What cannot be proved or justified by science and reason is called a miracle. Even at human level there are miracles every moment but we only do not recognize them. Sri Aurobindo never gave importance or publicity to miracles. To him all that is miraculous is a natural phenomenon. There was a time when the Overmind power had descended and miracles took place all around him. The Mother went to him observing this happening. He observed that this was the power of the Gods—the Overmind. If they retained it, the world would rush to them and a new religion would be started. That was not Sri Aurobindo's goal. What mattered was the Supramental and that was beyond the Overmind. The Mother then immediately dispersed this power.

Did he transfer his powers to The Mother or anyone next in line like Sri Ramakrishna did to Swami Vivekananda?

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother valued each aspect of the great Indian Tradition in Yoga, but they looked beyond the horizons of traditions. They have said that they both will come in Supramental bodies. There is nothing like next in line or higher and lower in the sadhakas who have achieved great heights. Their work continues as before in their physical absence. Their force is ever active. One needs to be sincere and have great patience to be worthy of being his disciple. As far back as the 1920s, several sadhaks had gone beyond Nirvana and yet they lived as sadhaks—Sri Aurobindo's humble disciples.

Why is Sri Aurobindo's Yoga only for the patient and the sincere? What is so difficult about his Yoga? What are the guidelines for those who want to pursue this path of Integral Yoga? What should one be equipped with? Does one have to go to the Ashram to become a disciple? Does one have to have to be initiated, read, pray, or do Japa of a particular Mantra? Does one have to learn any Kriya or technique? Can one do his yoga though He and The Mother are not present in their bodies?

Good question. It could not have been longer!

First, here is a powerful mantra: "Mother guide me in my sadhana, and protect me always."

And why is patience needed? Because the path is long and the road is bumpy; yet, the progress is endless. A sincere seeker is never discouraged. Sincerity is a great virtue. Armed with sincerity and faith one makes a steady progress.

When one is simple at heart, and has faith, patience, and will, everything becomes a joyful play of consciousness. If one surrenders to the Shakti, She will take over the charge of the Sadhana, and pour Her Grace.

The method of Aspiration, Rejection, and Surrender in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga has to be pursued with joy and love.

One may go to the Ashram or one may not. It is not compulsory. One can do yoga anywhere, anytime. There is no ceremony or traditional initiation—*diksha*. One benefits by reading and praying. Also one can chant the name of Sri Aurobindo or The Mother as a mantra. There is nothing like any special *Kriya* or ceremony in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. As regards to Sri Aurobindo

and The Mother not being present in their bodies, their absence is never felt. Their force is ever active.

Never to be a theoretician, logician, academician, ceremonialist or make Sri Aurobindo's Yoga or teaching a religion but to set an example simply by putting in practice his guidance, and using common sense in practical situations. That makes one worthy of being called a disciple of Sri Aurobindo.

Did The Mother communicate with Sri Aurobindo after he left his body?

We can quote one inner communication from Sri Aurobindo to Mother on June 6, 1967; seventeen years after Sri Aurobindo left his body:

"All the countries live in falsehood. If only one country stood courageously for truth, the world might be saved."

The Eternal Birth (15th August 1872)*

Physically, it means that the consequences of this birth will last as long as the Earth. The consequences of Sri Aurobindo's birth will be felt through the entire existences of the Earth....

Mentally, it is a birth the memory of which will last eternally. Through the ages Sri Aurobindo's birth will be remembered, with all the consequences it has had....

Psychically, it is a birth which will recur eternally, from age to age, in the history of the universe. This birth is a manifestation which takes place periodically, from age to age, in the history of the Earth....

And finally, from the purely spiritual point of view, it will be said that it is the birth of the Eternal on Earth, for each time the Avatar takes a physical form it is the birth of the Eternal himself on Earth.

– The Mother

* © Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

A Garland Of Tributes To Sri Aurobindo

At the very first sight I could realize that he [Sri Aurobindo] has been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through his long process of realization had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration....I said to him, "You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice, Harken to me."

— *Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Laureate*

Of all modern Indian writers Aurobindo – successively poet, critic, scholar, thinker, nationalist, humanist – is the most significant and perhaps the most interesting.... He is a new type of thinker, one who combines in his vision the alacrity of the West with the illumination of the East. To study his writings is to enlarge the boundaries of one's knowledge.... He has achieved a reconciliation between matter and spirit.... His final word is that we are, whether we like it or not, "members one of another." Unless we realize this truth, and act upon it, we shall never have peace and goodwill on earth.

— *Times Literary Supplement, London, July 8, 1944*

Aurobindo Ghose, the foremost of Indian thinkers...has realized the most complete synthesis achieved upto the present between the genius of the West and of the East.... The last of the great Rishis holds in his outstretched hands the bow of Creation Impulse.

— *Romain Rolland, Nobel Laureate*

Aurobindo's treatises are among the most important works of our time in philosophy, ethics and humanities. Sri Aurobindo himself is one of the greatest sages of our time.

— *Pitirim A. Sorokin, Harvard University*

I've never read an author who can compact so much truth into one sentence as this master.... Sri Aurobindo is one of the greatest thinkers, indeed he has attained incomparable triune greatness as poet, philosopher and saint.

— *Raymond F. Piper, Syracuse University*

I am very grateful that I came into contact with Sri Aurobindo so late in life, for after having wrestled with the ultimate problems of existence for years, I am now in a position to appreciate his solutions to them.... I have never known a philosopher so all-embracing in his metaphysical structure as Sri Aurobindo, none before him had the same vision.

— *Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg, California Institute of Asian Studies*

In addition to rivaling aesthetic creativity of the poet Tagore, the social and more achievement of Gandhi, and philosophical accomplishment of Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo stands out as the single most accomplished yogi of modern India. Unlike traditional Indian yogis, and most modern yogis as well, Sri Aurobindo's yoga is influenced by and enhances his vision for a transformed world.

— *Robert Mcdermott, Baruch College*

SRI AUROBINDO'S ROOM

You know, one has to be very pure to be able to stand there (in Sri Aurobindo's room). The atmosphere in His room is charged with an intense consciousness.

There, there is the manifestation of the Truth. To stand before His room is to perceive the Absolute Consciousness. One who knows how to open oneself – truly open oneself wide and spontaneously – will find the invariable Help for everything. It is unbelievable! It is Invincible and All-powerful!

In front of Him one has to be straightforward, scrupulously frank and sincere and one has simply to open oneself to be able to feel His Beatitude. It is extraordinary, the Power of His Reality. No one could stand it, no one could bear it if He revealed Himself in His Entirety.

Sri Aurobindo's room vibrates with His Presence. Be happy and consecrate your life to accomplishing His work here. It is an exceptional opportunity. Be worthy of it and do not waste time.

(Mother goes into trance)

What a marvel! What a Power! What a Grandeur, the One who was with us!

His room still vibrates with His Power and His Force. It is a place for meditation and for receiving the Vibration of the Truth it emits. It is charged. The Presence of Sri Aurobindo is palpably felt by one who is sincere.

(From the Mother's conversation
with Mona Sarkar, as reported by him.)

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 15 August, 1872 Birth of Sri Aurobindo in Calcutta
- 1877-1879 At English boarding school in Darjeeling
- 1879 Manchester, England
- 1884 St. Paul's school
- 1890 King's College, Cambridge
- 1893 Return to India (Baroda)
- 1901 Marriage to Mrinalini Devi
- 1902 Revolutionary work in Bengal
- 1904 Beginning of Yoga
- 1906 Leaves Baroda for Calcutta
- December, 1907 First meeting with yogi Lele
- 4 May, 1908 Arrested by the British government
- 1908-1909 The Alipore Case
- February, 1910 Arrival in Pondicherry
- 24 April, 1920 The Mother settles in Pondicherry
- January, 1921 Discontinuation of the Arya
- 1926 Sri Aurobindo goes into retirement
- 15 August, 1947 Independence of India on Sri Aurobindo's 75th birthday
- 5 December, 1950 The passing of Sri Aurobindo
- 1952 Inauguration of the Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE ASHRAM

February 21	The Mother's Birthday
February 28	Foundation of Auroville
February 29	The Supramental Manifestation
March 29	The Mother's arrival in Pondicherry
April 4	Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry
April 24	The Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry
August 15	Sri Aurobindo's Birthday
November 17	The Mother's Mahasamadhi
November 20	The Mother's Body laid to rest
November 24	Siddhi Day
December 5	Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi
December 9	Sri Aurobindo's Body laid to rest

SELECTED WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

The Mother
The Synthesis of Yoga
Essays on The Gita
The Life Divine
Savitri (The Longest Epic in English – 24,000 lines)
The Secret of the Veda
The Upanishads
The Ideal of Human Unity
The Human Cycle