

*"All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life"*

-Savitri, Book III, Canto II

**DARSHAN GREETINGS
&
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY**

April 2008 Seminar

**Snapshots from the Sessions on
Social and Political Thought of
Sri Aurobindo**

We continue with our coverage of the academic sessions from the April seminar at SACAR. We focus this time on the various sessions organized under the theme of Social and Political Thought on April 25 and 26, 2008.

Foundations of Indian Culture:

Prof. Kittu Reddy from Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (SAICE) shared some thoughts on this important topic and highlighted some key points made by Sri Aurobindo in his seminal work on Indian culture. He focused on the definition of culture, the spiritual essence of Indian culture and the significance of this awareness for the present generation Indians. The presentation was made highly relevant by incorporating some contemporary examples.



India-Pakistan Unity: Potential and Possibilities

Prof. Kittu Reddy was also the perfect speaker to take up this critical and highly sensitive topic as viewed in the light of Sri Aurobindo's political thought. He drew upon his extensive readings on this topic which have resulted in his recently published articles. While discussing the ideal of unity both within India and in South Asia, he urged everyone to introspect and come face-to-face with their own unacknowledged prejudices and biases about different communities before looking for political solutions and miracles.



The Human Cycle: Stages of Society

Sivakumar from SACAR summarized the different stages through which human civilization progresses. He spoke briefly about the Symbolic, Typal, Conventional, Individualist and Subjective stages, and pointed out that towards the end of his analysis Sri Aurobindo refers to the possible indications in a society that can be thought of as transitional from contemporary stage to another stage in the evolution. He emphasized that according to Sri Aurobindo a sign here or there in a society is not a reason to assume that the Subjective Age has arrived. It is only when we accept that humans have to be recast in a spiritual mould and actually make the requisite effort to this end can we be assured that the Subjective Age is here and that our progress will be ongoing.



Methods India should adopt to fulfill her Mission in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother:

In this lively presentation Jamshed M. Mavalwalla from Sri Aurobindo Society raised several key questions based on insights from the thought of Sri Aurobindo. He urged everyone to reflect upon: what is India, what is the true map of India, what is India's authentic temperament, and what is the Mission of India. While commenting upon the value of original thinking in rebuilding of India, he also argued that the task of building a new India is a spiritual work, and before we plunge into this work we must clearly understand what we mean by spirituality.



"Each idea (or system of ideas) is true in its own time and place. But if it tries to be exclusive or to persist even when its time is over, then it ceases to be true."

The Mother

Available at SACAR:

Beyond Religion
Talk by Ananda Reddy

Beyond Religion



Ananda Reddy

Available in MP3 format
For information and
purchase, email:
sacarmiresh@gmail.com



Social Organization in Auroville :

In this session, Alan Herbert from Auroville briefly commented upon the seemingly anarchic perception of Auroville and reasons for such a perception. However he soon led the audience to recognize three different types and levels of organization at Auroville: a) basic physical organization, b) social organization and c) spiritual organization. Alan argued that each of these forms of organization has its own dynamic and perspective, yet, ideally, each should be supportive of the others. While speaking of the spiritual level, he commented that ideally, this level completes, permeates and informs the other two levels. He emphasized that what may be perceived as a weakness at one level of organization may be a necessity for spiritual growth. He concluded that while the Mother provided guidance regarding all three levels of organization in Auroville, She has also made it clear that Auroville's growth, at all levels, is dependent upon a growth in individual and collective consciousness.

Coverage of the Sessions on the Social-Political Thought Continued on Page 3....

NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

SACAR has recently entered into a partnership with IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) to offer several post-graduate programmes on the thought of Sri Aurobindo *via* Online and Correspondence mode.



INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY (IGNOU)

Solicit your presence on the occasion of signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IGNOU and Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR),

Puducherry, for launching of the programmes in

"Sri Aurobindo Studies"

at 12.30 p.m. on August 15, 2008 at EMPC, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068

Chief Guest: Dr. Karan Singh, MP, Rajya Sabha

Presidential Remarks : Prof. V. N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice-Chancellor, IGNOU

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to unavoidable reasons, the second international study camp scheduled for October 2008 at Nainital has been cancelled. We regret the inconvenience caused to anyone planning to attend this camp.

'Fly Together' - The flock of Siberian migratory birds on the banks of Yamuna river in Delhi, appearing on the first page is captured on camera by Eeshaan Mahesh, a Delhi based amateur photographer. He is currently working on a collection of his Gangotri photographs.



Carving an Indian View of Integral Feminism: Insights from the Vision of Sri Aurobindo:

This session led by Beloo Mehra of SACAR was guided by the rationale that any aspiration to work towards social harmony in India must not ignore the divisions existing along the lines of gender. She emphasized that the gradual development of society depends on a living union of both man and woman through a greater and more intimate interchange not only of hearts but also of minds. While arguing that Indian views of feminism must look at the Indian thought, traditions, and philosophies that have grown and taken root from within the Indian conception of life, human experience, world and cosmos, she also emphasized that there is neither any need for nor any value in being a staunch Indic purist because that too is only the reverse side of the same coin. The need of the hour is to look for points of view that may take the best that the rest of the world has to offer and still be grounded in our eternal yet evolving view of what is meant by the Indian experience, social values, and lived cultural realities. She concluded with a few thoughts on Indian view of Integral Feminism which is primarily concerned with: the evolution of consciousness in the individual woman as an integral part of the evolution of societal consciousness, and the integral development and transformation of inner and outer nature of all individuals - women AND men. The values of equality and liberty for all individuals, and complete freedom to the individual soul to grow and evolve in a multi-faceted and harmonious way were also emphasized.

“After I knew that God was a woman, I learned something from far-off about love; but it was only when I became a woman and served my Master and Paramour that I knew love utterly.”

Sri Aurobindo



Contemporary Issues in Indian Society, as Seen in the Light of Sri Aurobindo’s Thought:

For the concluding panel discussion in this section on Social-Political Thought, we zoomed in on three highly important and timely topics: Jamshed Mavalwalla took up the sensitive issue of Hindu-Muslim unity, while Beloo Mehra focused on the rampant commercialism and consumerist culture as a modern Indian phenomenon. Sivakumar threw some light on the problem of caste and class divisions. The common thread in the three short presentations made by the panelists was that all these issues were examined in the framework of Sri Aurobindo’s thought and vision, which not only provide valuable insights into the deeper nature of these problems but also gives important hints at some possible and sustainable solutions to these issues marking the Indian social and cultural fabric.

These sessions on contemporary issues and integral feminism created much spark and led to spirited discussions among the participants and speakers. By incorporating such topics the seminar organizers at SACAR were hoping to deepen everyone’s appreciation and understanding of the contemporary and timeless significance of Sri Aurobindo’s thought for India and the world.

Coming up in the next issue: A brief review of the section on ‘Literature of Sri Aurobindo’ from the April 2008 seminar. Also, profiles of a few more learners at SACAR.

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We invoke the Grace and Blessings of our beloved Mother and Sri Aurobindo through our reference to MĀ and SA. MĀSA is also a Sanskrit word which means month – appropriate for this monthly publication.