

## I. Can we ever reconcile War ?

*“War making nought the sweet smiling calm of life,  
Battle and rapine, ruin and massacre  
Are still the fierce pastimes of man’s warring tribes;  
An idiot hour destroys what centuries made...”<sup>1</sup>*

*Our impressions of war, its causes and consequences and the moral judgment we reserve on either of the warring nations or groups, are guided by many factors. Media coverage, commentary from 'experts', public opinion - heck, even facebook - all these shape our thoughts. Pacifism and Indian-ness seem to almost go hand-in-hand, yet India has been roped into four full-blown wars in the past half-century, and is no stranger to armed conflict.*

*We recoil from the images and sounds of war, and turn our minds away from the difficulty of the problem - at least until it hits home. And now, even that option escapes us, wherever 'home' may be. Every few months, if hundreds of civilians are not blown apart, we should be surprised; these are the times we have been chosen to live in<sup>2</sup>. War thus confuses us, befuddles us, and leaves us dismayed, and broken.*

*But we do aspire to see a world without wars. What could get us there? As a first step, we look at efforts aimed at getting countries to disarm. This endeavour for global disarmament is documented extensively on the web. I will not rehash any of it, though I would try and not encourage a dreamer or idealist to look in this direction.*

*So which direction should we look? If we keep our eyes even half-open on South Asia, we would see a Sri Lanka torn to shreds by its decades-long war with the LTTE. China, far from letting Tibet go autonomous, is considering a strategic 'Partial-war' with India to resolve what it claims as Southern-Tibet (Arunachal). Last year, we learned of 800 women being trained in PoK, Rawalpindi and Peshawar for attacks on India. More recently, a Taliban group claims it has readied 3,000 holy warriors for its conquest of India. Bangladesh has been ramping up efforts to nurture and encourage blood-letting against India, following Pakistan's exemplary half-century. Maoist violence over the last few years has claimed more lives than 9/11 and the Iraq war combined.*

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, "Savitri - A Legend and a Symbol", pp 441

<sup>2</sup> There are other kinds of conflict – religious conflict in particular, that are especially painful and hard to come to terms with. This subject deserves a tremendous study, and I will not be diving into these waters at present

*Of course we must return to the war of Israel vs Hamas or Hezbollah – this promises to be a fight to the finish, and there seems no end in sight to the hostilities. There are full-blown wars concurrently in most regions of the forgotten, dark continent - Africa.*

*War seems to be everywhere, in the fresh past or not too distant future, with all possibilities on the table. As a civilian, I understand precious little of what it could mean to be actively involved 'on the ground'. But beyond the specifics of circumstances, I wanted to study the subject of war on as broad a canvas as I could. I needed to find some insightful commentary that was independent of ideology and founded on something concrete. I wanted to flush out all euphemisms and make an effort to observe.*

*The following pages are an effort in that direction.*

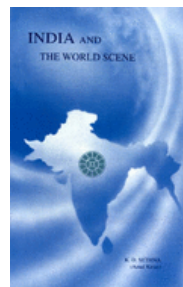
*A quick note on the presentation of topics and content - I have very few original thoughts to share on this difficult topic. For the most part, the canvas draws from the work of giants, whom I'll cite generously, should you like to pursue these thoughts further.*

*In fact, where I have written anything, the content is italicized.*

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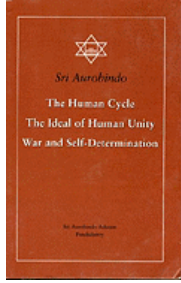
II - The elimination and passing of war

## References



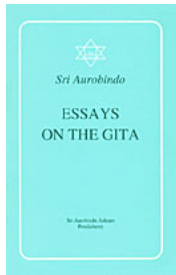
**[Book\_1]** K.D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) "India and the World Scene" The book is a compilation of articles written between 1949-50. 1st Edition 15 August 1997. ISBN 81-7060-118-5. Not online anywhere.

*I find Sethna to be a first-rate mind, and his political and social commentaries from almost a half-century ago find much relevance even today. He has written over forty books on a wide variety of subjects.*



**[Book\_2]** Sri Aurobindo, “The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination”. Three works on social and political philosophy. In *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo traces the evolution of human society and suggests where it is headed. In *The Ideal of Human Unity*, he examines the possibility of the unification of the human race. In *War and Self-*

*Determination*, he discusses the sovereignty of nations in the aftermath of the First World War. These works were first serialised in the monthly review *Arya* between 1915 and 1920; later Sri Aurobindo revised them for publication. ISBN 81-7058-014-5. Entire book in pdf [at this location](#).



**[Book\_3]** Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*. 1st published 1922. These essays were also written for the monthly *Arya*, between 1916-1918. ISBN 81-7058-612-7. Entire book in pdf [at this location](#).



**[Book\_4]** K.D.Sethna (Amal Kiran), “The Indian spirit and the World’s Future”, ISBN 81-7060-227-0 [A companion volume to Book\_1, also not online anywhere to the best of my knowledge]