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Cover Inner Front Side

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From the editor's desk...

Darshan greetings to all!

In this issue we present three in-depth articles on three different but related topics: India's role in the world's future, Sri Aurobindo's synthesis of the various systems of yoga, and an integral approach to management. We note that according to Sri Aurobindo, India's role in the world's future must be based on her rich spiritual heritage which integrated life in the world with spiritual realization. In our first article, Prabir Kumar Bagchi examines present India society in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's recommendations. Sri Aurobindo's synthesis of yoga is precisely a system of yoga which aims at an integration of spirit and matter and a divine life on earth, and is a system based on the essence of India's spiritual traditions while also going beyond them as it looks at present conditions and future needs. Our second article by Dr. Pankaj Srivastava examines the integral dimension of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga in light of the earlier spiritual traditions. Integral management is a developing field which seeks to integrate ideas and practices of Sri Aurobindo's synthetic yoga into collective organizations and business enterprises. Such an integration would seem to be necessary to develop sound principles for the organization and harmony of collectivities of people which would in the end lead to a true human unity. Our third article by Anurag Banerjee examines how a spiritual approach can be integrated into the management of both people and materials in organizations and businesses.

Till next time....

Larry

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OUR IDEAL



A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal... Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga.

– Sri Aurobindo

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INDIA AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

Prabir Kumar Bagchi



School children in Bangalore (dot-edu.edc.org)

On reviewing developments of the last century one would observe the upheavals of the two great wars, and side by side with these, the fantastic development of science and technology, the great social and political changes, and the growth of new international organisations and associations. The new century therefore carries in it both new prospects and challenges as well as unsolved problems of the past and the turmoil of the contemporary world.

In the midst of these circumstances and present difficulties how is India to fulfil her true destiny and mission? According to Sri Aurobindo, India's mission is to show the world the way to its spiritual Truth and to human unity and teach it by her own example "true spirituality and how to make life perfect with a Divine Perfection." One may ask why should one believe that India is destined to have such a role? This destined role is strongly suggested by the history of the Asiatic and European civilisations respectively. From Vedic times onward, India as heart of the Asia has been predominantly a storehouse of spiritual knowledge and culture pouring out her riches in religions and spiritual teachings throughout Asia and into the West, while the West since Alexander the Great has spread its materialist, commercial, political and scientific cultures into the East. The Time Spirit now seems to be progressing towards a fusion and harmonisation of these two opposing cultures. It should also be observed that a new current of integral spiritual thought and practice called Integral Yoga which aims at an integration of spirit and matter has already originated in India and is spreading throughout the country and into the world at large and is preparing the psychological ground for its full emergence in the heart of mankind. But at the moment the divisions between the spiritual and materialistic tendencies remain and Time is needed to reveal how their fruitful integration will be achieved in ushering in a new age of human unity.

There are tremendous obstacles to the fulfilment of India's destiny within India herself. As Sri Aurobindo already foresaw early in the last century:

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There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power politics with a higher degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us... There are indeed other numerous and difficult problems that face this country or will very soon face it. No doubt we will win through, but we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a great inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny. (*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* (SABCL), Vol. 26, pp. 412-413).

In fact, the immensity of these potential problems which India faces overrides its achievements in development and suggests that the solutions require a greater vision. It is to be noted that almost all nations who are members of the United Nations Organisation follow some form of democracy, socialism or an amalgamation of both using parliamentary, presidential or other forms of government, including military rule in certain countries. Although nearly every nation is working towards securing their peoples' welfare and well-being and the development and progress of their respective nation, immense human suffering continues and it seems as if no amount of religious, political and economic effort is able to solve humanity's problems and miseries.

India is no exception to this and it rather seems that all the world's religious, economic and political problems and difficulties are concentrated here and need to be solved from a greater height of consciousness and not according to the formulas of Euro-American social and political thought. The world is now pervaded by western thought and western culture and despite its creative genius in many fields of science, technology and external knowledge, it has failed terribly in bringing about a life of harmony, peace and unity.

The progress of the world community seems to have become stymied and to move in circles rather than forward in the absence of a greater intuitive and psychic knowledge and vision which could uplift it beyond the material and economic existence. According to Sri Aurobindo, what the human being needs is the discovery of his psychic being, his true spiritual Person, and make it the leader of his development and progress. A total spiritual direction to the whole of life and mankind's whole nature can alone enable humanity to transcend its present status and create a new principle and order. In this great endeavour, India has a distinct role to play, a mission to fulfil which has been cast on her through her past heritage and spirituality.

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This does not mean that India should give up her pursuit of material and economic development and plunge into an inner spirituality which ignores the outer aspect of life. This has occurred previously at a certain period of her evolution, and has it not been the intention of the Cosmic Spirit. As Sri Aurobindo has explained,

The West has made the growth of intellectual, emotional, vital and material being of man its ideal, but it has left aside the greater possibilities of his spiritual existence... The West has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth. The time has come to heal the division and unite life and spirit.

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita, *yogashah kuru karmāni*. Its principle is to do all action in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the power of the spirit. And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of all his problems and difficulties. This then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming... This must be her mission and service to humanity,—as she discovered the inner spiritual life of the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order. (*SABCL*, Vol. 16, p. 330)

But do we perceive any all-out effort towards this mission on our side? The Indian intelligentsia, the political and social thinkers of the day are lacking in such an original and comprehensive view of the needs of the country in keeping with her fundamental spirit and culture. Instead of evolving appropriate systems and methods by a thoroughgoing study of her ancient storehouse of knowledge, they have found it more convenient and easy-going to import second-hand European systems and ideas which are diametrically opposite and foreign to her swadharma. In fact, they have presented before a great country which has arisen from her long slumber a common ideology of social, political and economic views and arrangements of ordinary human living lacking a spiritual aim and spiritual culture which alone would provide “a framework of life within which man can seek and grow into his real self and divinity... a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the divine nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve.” (*SABCL*, Vol. 14, p. 430)

The Indian Constitution resolved to embody the ideals and aspirations of the people of India through a sovereign socialist secular and democratic republic and to secure for all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity assuring

the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the national life. It has adopted the parliamentary system of democracy as a means to achieve its goals with a peoples' electorate body in multi-party contestants. The modern trend is increasingly the adoption of coalition governments, not only in India but in many parts of the world-polity. Whatever its shortcomings, Indian democracy has now established firm roots, the economy is buoyant, trades and industries are ever growing, agriculture and food production have increased sufficiently to cater to its huge population, and its scientific and technological developments including information technology and space research have earned an international reputation. More and more her voice is being heard in world affairs and her role in the UNO has become prominent.

But all these achievements are the outcome of commercial and economic globalisation. India, China and other Asian countries comprise the majority of the world's population and are commercially strategic markets where America and western-European nations have predominant interests. But if India is to fulfil her mission in the world then she cannot remain an Euro-American controlled economic zone. We may recall here and cite a few prophetic visions from Sri Aurobindo's writings:

If we are to live at all, we must resume India's great interrupted endeavour; we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future. (*SABCL*, Vol. 14, p. 37)

Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit; our life must be spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth and creation. A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of time and the need of humanity demands a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time Spirit... Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between the man and the God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to

birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga. (*SABCL*, Vol. 16, p. 329)

The time is now opportune to make a shift and exceed the old foreign methods with a better form of government which would eliminate the defects and ills of democracy and socialism and the Parliamentary system with their curses of multi-political conflict, money and muscle power. We must reflect modernity in our own ancient heritage and culture so that we may fix our aim on the moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection of the nation as well as of mankind. If India is to become a mighty nation and work for the unity and oneness of humanity and bring a happy, divine life upon earth then there must grow from within the true Aryan culture and Aryan spirit.

It is to be observed that democracy and socialism also have origins in Asia and particularly in India. The French revolution was the beginning of modern European democracy and its ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity were brought in as the foundation of its social structure. But according to Sri Aurobindo, the weakness of European democracy is that

it took as its motive the right of man and not the dharma of humanity. It has been said that democracy is based on the rights of man, it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man but both rights and duties are European ideas. Dharma is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action, and regain their deep and eternal unity. Dharma is the basis of democracy which Asia must recognise, for in this lies the distinction between the soul of Asia and the soul of Europe. Through dharma the Asiatic evolution fulfils itself; this is her secret. (*SABCL*, Vol. 1, p. 760)

No doubt India must learn the theories, techniques and systems of the modern western civilization and its scientific approaches, because faced with a tremendously creative civilization and culture after such a long slumber and state of comparative inactivity, she has to absorb these ideas and techniques. However, this should not be done with a motive of mechanical imitation but to enrich herself with these new forces and mould them in our own spirit and seek for strength in the spirit and not in the machinery and motives of Europe.

The leaders of the political parties may argue that dharma is a word which is contrary to the secular fabric of modern India which is multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multi-religious and any attempt to bring back ancient Hindu culture will fall flat upon the society and disturb its order. If that be the attitude of our leaders on whose sagacity the people of India bestow their future development, then we can safely conclude that the leaders are moved by their

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own selfish ends and vote politics and are not guided by any higher aims or true national feelings proper to the country they inhabit. As Sri Aurobindo has said,

India's nature, her mission, the work that she has to do, her part in the world destiny, the peculiar power for which she stands is written there in her past history and is the secret purpose behind her present sufferings and ordeal. A reshaping of the forms of our spirit will have to take place; but it is the spirit itself behind past forms that we have to disengage and preserve and to give it new and powerful thought-significances, culture values, a new instrumentation, greater figures... But these changes themselves must be cast in the spirit and mould of India and not in any other, not in the spirit of America or Europe, not in the mould of Japan or Russia. We must recognise the great gulf between what we are and what we may and ought to strive to be. But this we must do not in any spirit of discouragement or denial of ourselves and the truth of our spirit, but in order to measure the advance we have to make. For we have to find its true lines and to find in ourselves the aspiration and inspiration, the fire and the force to conceive them and execute. (*SABCL*, Vol. 14, p. 34)

We may take for example a few practical propositions which we have adopted in our Constitution but which in fact posit an enormous gulf between the Western-American conception and that of the Indian. Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are in fact the gift of French Revolution and still remain as the modern core idea of both the socialist and democratic patterns of society. But none of these ideals either separately or in totality could be realised by external methods of social and economic changes only, ignoring the psychological facts of man's inner reality. These ideals are rightly human things in us, but cherished simply as limited mental ideals they become ineffective and have resulted in a mechanical and relative freedom, liberty and equality. In order to be effective, these ideals must be cast into a spiritual realism which lays its hands on the higher reality of the Spirit if we are to fulfil our mission. Only by discovery of the soul and by casting life in the truth of the Spirit and not in the ego — either individual or national—can there be real harmony and unity.

Sri Aurobindo already foresaw this when he wrote in *The Ideal of Human Unity*:

Freedom, equality, brotherhood are the three godheads of the soul; they cannot be achieved through the external machinery of society or by men so long as he lives only in the individual and communal ego. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment... Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on

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anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter of either physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and recognition of the same soul, the same god-head in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. (*SABCL*, Vol. 15, pp. 546-547)

This then is the truth that we as well as our political representatives must realise. All these noble and great ideals are higher truths but translated in the human mind and intellect get diluted and impoverished in theories and practises. After long centuries of subjugation under foreign rulers we have become adapted to the western way of thinking and the western view of life and education. Not only Indians but the whole world is ignorantly following the echo of the European idea and standard of life to become an efficient and well-organised nation with 'progress' as its core motive. These ideals are almost universal, but we do not get beyond the mere holding of the ideals.

Institutions are created which are supposed, but too lightly supposed to embody that spirit and the fact that ideal is held, the fact that men live under its institutions is treated as sufficient. The holding of an ideal becomes almost an excuse for living not according to the ideal; the existence of its institutions is sufficient to abrogate the need of insisting on the spirit that made the institutions. (*SABCL*, Vol. 15, p. 247)

This is the state of affairs. We cannot blame others; we have to look into ourselves. We are not conscious of our true mission; what we are concerned with is economic growth, more comfort, more leisure and an average peaceful life with a little aesthetic and religious culture to colour our emotional and intellectual being to grant some satisfaction.

So long as politics and economics dominate the world and utilise science and technology predominantly to serve them; so long as profiteering, competition and exploitations of all kinds, social and economic inequalities are paramount; so long as education does not aim at developing our integral being but is designed only to provide a utilitarian outlook; so long as the state of human consciousness, individual and collective, remains at the present level of imperfection, no true progress is possible except moving in a circle with as much adjustment, compromise and balancing as would be feasible for the intellect with its limited capacities.

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Cerebrum IT Park in Pune (picturesindia.com)

Mankind is proud of its mind and its achievements; its reason and science which believe that progress of society and the human being can only be effected by their external methods. It is true that science with its discoveries has brought humanity closer together, widened intellectual horizons, brought immense material benefits and comforts, and is exploring new vistas of knowledge—technical, environmental, physical, biological, genetic, medicinal and more. But there are many social and psychological problems which science cannot solve and in these even reason cannot be of much help. These have come up to the surface in modern times and need to be solved by spiritual means; they demand a change of consciousness as the basis and require the disciplines of Yoga as methods.

The world is waiting to hear from India the spiritual Truth and receive the guidance that will lead the way out of its intractable difficulties. Now India is passing through various kinds of ordeals, experiments and experiences—economic and political, religious, social and psychological—so that the inefficacy of all these approaches are brought to the surface and exhausted. Thereafter, a new harmonisation based on new principles native to her soul will emerge and pervade the country and mankind as a whole. For Sri Aurobindo has said, "For this thing is written in the book of God and nothing can prevent it, that the national life of India shall meet and possess its divine and mighty destiny." (*India is One*, p. 58)

There is no reason for despondency. In the background the Time Spirit and the Soul of India are preparing us for these great events and India will emerge as liberator of the world. All the past frailties and fallibilities will be redeemed and harmonised in an integral movement proper to the present complexities of the vast world manifestation. Already the great work has started. As we have mentioned earlier, Indian spiritual thought, culture and practises are becoming more prominent and are spreading into the West with a renewed force.

The most comprehensive, all-encompassing ideals of human unity, the advent of a new age and a new race of beings with a higher spiritual

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consciousness, the Truth Consciousness, have been announced on the Indian soil by Sri Aurobindo and are spreading wings in the country and abroad and provide a foundation for a future world civilisation. These ideals are based on the tenets that man is a transitory being, that evolution is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness, and that this evolution is destined to culminate in a supramental being. Evolution cannot rest in a limited mental human being:

Mind cannot be our last conscious expression because mind is fundamentally an ignorance seeking for knowledge; it is only the supramental Truth-Consciousness that can bring us the true and whole Self-Knowledge and World-Knowledge; it is through that only that we can get to our true being and the fulfilment of our spiritual evolution. (*SABCL*, Vol. 23, p. 47)

The human being, therefore, must overpass mentality and enter into the unmodified Wisdom-Light of dynamic spirituality, bring it down and transform his mind, life and body to become a complete Universal being, a complete Individual, a Gnostic or supramental being, and emerge as the new leader of the evolution. Mind is only a passage in its evolution out of life and matter, a "chained and hampered sovereign of human living." It has to surpass itself in the light of the Supermind, the Gnosis:

Supermind is the grade of existence beyond mind, life and Matter and, as mind, life and Matter have manifested on the earth, so too must Supermind in the inevitable course of things manifest in this world of Matter... It is only by the approach and arrival of the descending Supermind that it can be liberated upon earth and reveal itself in the action of our material, vital and mental parts so that these lower powers can become portions of a total divinised activity of our whole being; it is that will bring to us a completely realised divinity or the divine life... The manifestation of a supramental truth-consciousness is therefore the capital reality that will make the divine life possible. (*SABCL*, Vol. 16, p. 43)

Sri Aurobindo visualised the advent of a new humanity, a transitional being between mankind and the supramental being, with a perfected mind, a truth-mind or mind of light, as he called it, whose principle of mentality would no longer be mind in ignorance seeking for knowledge, but "mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge." (*SABCL*, Vol. 16, p. 67) Sri Aurobindo foresaw that its emergence is inevitable and that it would mark a stage in the evolutionary ascent and a new type of human being. He explained that this Mind of Light is, in fact, a veiled or self-limited form of Supermind which retains its essential character. This Mind of Light is a transitional passage and is destined to carry humanity to superhumanity.

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In fact, what Sri Aurobindo presented as philosophy is not merely an intellectual rendering but a truth-seeing and experience made possible through the dynamic methods of his Integral Yoga. Sri Aurobindo can be regarded as the first evolutionary superman in the terrestrial nature actively possessing the liberated, perfected mind, or as he called it, the Mind of Light. The aim of his yoga was to carry out the transformation of consciousness necessary to bring down the supramental consciousness into the earth atmosphere and fix it here. This consciousness did touch the earth field even though for a very limited period at the cost of the sacrifice of his body. The Mother who collaborated with him in this endeavour declared that the Mind of Light got realised in her as soon Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body. She further declared that there was a general descent of the supramental consciousness into the earth consciousness on 29.2.1956, a red-lettered day in the history of mankind. It was indeed accomplished by their 'two-in-one consciousness.'

Sri Aurobindo explained how the descent of supramental would take place:

It is first through the individuals that it [the supramental consciousness] becomes part of the earth-consciousness and afterwards it spreads from the first centres and takes up more and more of the global consciousness till it becomes an established force there.

It [the descent of the supermind into the earth-consciousness] would not necessarily be known by everybody. Besides, even if the descent were here one would have to be ready before one could get the final change...

No individual solitary transformation unconcerned with the work of the earth (which means more than an individual transformation) would be either possible or useful. Also no individual human being can by his own power alone work out the transformation, nor is it the object of this yoga to create an individual superman here and there. The object of the yoga is to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth, to fix it there, to create a new race with the principle of supramental consciousness governing the inner and outer individual and collective life.

...It will be at first for the few, not for the whole earth — only there will be a growing influence of it on the earth. (*SABCL*, Vol. 22, pp. 14-15)

The Mother further said:

The Supermind had descended long ago—very long ago—in the mind and even in the vital; it was working in the physical also but indirectly through those intermediaries. The question was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said it could be possible only if the physical mind received the supramental light: the physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material. This physical mind receiving the Supramental light Sri Aurobindo called the Mind of Light. (*Collected Works of the Mother (CWM)*, Vol. 13, pp. 62-63)

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At a later stage, when a greater process of transformation was going on, she said: "But once it is done (Sri Aurobindo has said this), once *one* body has done it, it has the capacity to pass it on to others.... And it is the only hope, because if every one had to go again through the same experience..." (CWM, Vol. 11, p. 100) Up until 1973 she carried on the work of transformation in her body and all that she had undergone are landmarks on the way of transformation. Some of her experiences of this transformation were published under the title 'Notes on the Way' in the *Collected Works of the Mother*.

Apart from Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's own experiments and experiences in their respective beings, the collective work for the progress of humanity was advanced by the setting up of the Ashram at Pondicherry, India as a centre of the new consciousness, and the establishment of Auroville, the international township near Pondicherry, as a centre of outward expression "more exterior, which seeks to widen the base of this attempt to establish harmony between soul and body, spirit and nature, heaven and earth, in the collective life of mankind." (CWM, Vol. 13, p. 204)

All 124 member-nations of UNESCO plus 23 Indian states participated in the inauguration of Auroville on 28 February 1968 by pouring their respective country's earth-soil into the Urn at the centre of the city by youths from those countries, thus symbolising human unity as its foundation. At present, it has more than 2200 inhabitants from some 45 countries living in nearly 100 settlements of varying size, interspaced with village and temple land and surrounded by Tamil villages. Auroville is engaged in a wide range of innovative activities, such as land regeneration, afforestation, water conservation, organic agriculture, educational research, holistic health-care, village development, appropriate technology, renewable energy, information technology, small and medium scale industries, town planning and cultural activities.

The Mother explained that "Auroville has been created for a progressive superhumanity... Auroville is for those who aspire for the supramental and make an effort to reach there... Auroville wants to be the first realisation of human unity based on the teaching of Sri Aurobindo, where men of all countries would be at home." (CWM, Vol. 13, pp. 215-218) The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity. At the very centre of Auroville one finds the 'soul of the city', the Matrimandir, situated in a large open area called 'Peace.' Matrimandir, which means 'Temple of the Mother', is a symbol of the Universal Mother, and is a place for concentration.

Sri Aurobindo has given us a complete spiritual vision of the divine life upon earth and the way to its attainment through his life of yoga and the experiences revealed in his metaphysical and literary works. The true Individual is the conscious power of the Supreme, always existing by unity, always capable of mutuality. It is that being which by self-knowledge enjoys liberation and immortality. He named it the Gnostic Being. It is through the appearance of the Gnostic beings forming Gnostic communities that the earth-life will be transformed. Ignorance will be transformed into Knowledge, human unity will



Auroville Urn and Matrimandir

be fully established, and the earth will be a place for harmony. Man's cherished dream of God, Light, Freedom, and Immortality will be accomplished. Even during the intermediary stages of this evolutionary adventure, Sri Aurobindo said that

A mind of light will replace the present confusion and trouble of this earthly ignorance; it is likely that even those parts of humanity which cannot reach it will yet be aware of its possibility and consciously tend towards it; not only so, but the life of humanity will be enlightened, uplifted, governed, harmonised by the luminous principle and even the body become something much less powerless, obscure and animal in its propensities and capable instead of a new and harmonised perfection." (SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 65)

We conclude with this Vedic hymn:

Arise, O Souls, arise! Strength has come, darkness has passed away, the Light is arriving! Create the divine race. (Rig Veda)

SRI AUROBINDO'S SYNTHESIS OF YOGA: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Author's Note: This research paper is an attempt to make intelligible Sri Aurobindo's conception of Integral Yoga and critically examine how a synthesis of different dimensions of yoga is possible. Yoga is not a homogeneous term. Rather it is the generic one for the various paths of self-realization or is a method of gradual transmutation of consciousness from the lower level to the higher level.

The central question of all philosophies is: what is reality? Since human beings have come into existence as self-conscious beings they have addressed this very pertinent question. But the answer to this question still remains an enigma if it is merely explored at the theoretical level. In India, philosophy is not merely a speculative deliberation. Rather its main concern is how transformation is possible at the level of consciousness, so that human beings realize the nature of reality. Almost in all philosophical traditions and particularly in Indian philosophy, many attempts have been made not only to understand theoretically but also to realize practically the nature of reality. That is why in every system of Indian philosophy (darśan), theory (siddhānt) and practice (vayvahār or ācharan) complement each other. Life is an activity and without taking recourse to action, it is not possible to reach understanding in its true sense. Therefore, much emphasis has been laid on practice, and the practice to realize the nature of reality is known as yoga.

Practices of yoga vary from school to school in different yogic traditions. The term 'yoga' refers to a multitude of yogic paths and orientations with contrasting theoretical frameworks, and occasionally with even divergent goals. For example, the ideal of Raja yoga is to realize one's true identity as the transcendental Self which stands eternally apart from the Nature (Prakṛti), whereas the ultimate aim of Jñāna yoga is to identify the individual self with supreme Self, and the ultimate concern of Bhakti yoga is to attain love-participation in the beloved Lord. Raja yoga operates on the basis of dualist metaphysics that distinguishes between the many transcendental selves and the Nature (Prakṛiti), but the metaphysics of Jñāna yoga is strictly non-dualistic. In Jñāna yoga, the term 'yoga' is understood as the union of the individual self (jīvā ātman) with the supreme Self (Param ātman). However, the notion of union has a great influence on the tradition of Vedānta, but it does not fit in the system of Raja yoga. In Pātañjali's Yoga sūtra, there is no mention of union with transcendental Reality, even it is contrary to Pātañjali's metaphysics which strictly separates the transcendental Self from the Nature (Prakṛiti) and its products. Raja yoga approaches self-realization primarily through transformation of mind, whereas

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Hatha yoga mainly focuses on transformation of the body and has as its primary concern to create an immortal body. While Jñāna yoga is a path of self-realization through the means of discriminative wisdom (vivek), Bhakti yoga is a way to be in communion with the Lord by directing one's emotion toward the Lord. Karma yoga is a path of salvation from doer-ship (kartā bhava—that I am doing). It is a journey of action without a sense of attachment for its fruits. The sole aim of Laya yoga is the total dissolution of the different functions of mind into the ocean of the transcendental Self through contemplation and meditation. Similarly, in the non-theistic schools like Buddhism and Jainism there are methods and techniques to attain the ultimate ground of existence.

Even though there are various types and forms of yoga within the yogic tradition, all of them share one common objective, that is, the dissolution of one's ego. This universal aim remains the same irrespective of whether it is achieved through identifying the individual self with the supreme Self (Jñāna yoga), through total self-surrender to the Lord (Bhakti yoga), or by performing action without a sense of attachment for its fruits (Karma yoga).

There are various forms of yoga, which have great influence and impact on the spiritual tradition of India. These include Jñāna yoga, Bhakti yoga, Karma yoga, Rāja yoga, Hatha yoga and Mantra yoga. Though some schools of yoga mention Laya yoga and Kūṇḍalīni yoga as independent forms of yoga, these forms of yoga are closely related to Hatha yoga and they can be treated as an integral part of the same. One may notice that in the Sanskrit scriptures many compound words that end with yoga in fact, do not represent any independent schools of yoga, rather they refer simply to a disciplined application or practice. For example buddhi-yoga means the practice of discriminative knowledge, and saṅyāsa-yoga denotes the practice of renunciation, dhyāna-yoga means (practice of meditation), samādhi-yoga refers to the practice of ecstasy, guru-yoga means a practice that has a spiritual teacher as its focus, nāda-yoga is a practice involving inner sound, and kriyā-yoga is a practice of ritual action.

In this regard, it is necessary to mention that there are yogins whose primary interest is to gain some paranormal power (siddhi) rather than enlightenment or ultimate transcendence. Their ways are more related with magical practices than with psycho-spiritual training. There is a strong element of magic that can be seen in the ancient yogic tradition, especially in Tantric practices. In India, yogins have always esteemed as a magus those who are endowed with paranormal powers to bless and curse effectively. Modern scholars of yoga often dismiss this para-psychological dimension of yoga, however, it is integral aspect of yoga and Pātañjali devoted a complete chapter (vibhūtipāth) to paranormal powers (siddhis) in his yoga sūtra. Therefore, yoga has different levels of experience including the level of paranormal powers, but if one can go beyond that level of experience, then only the real aim of yoga would be achieved.

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Holymun at Ardhkumbh Mela (picturesindia.com)

Ultimate reality can be viewed in different ways. The seers (Rishis) of the Vedic age said, "Being is one although sages call it by different names."¹ It is not an abstract principle devoid of contents. It has clear contents. Different truth seekers have envisioned the same Truth from different perspectives and attributed to it different names and forms. Bhaktas have perceived it as a personal God, while Jñānis have seen it as the impersonal truth. Some have experienced it as the totality of all that exists while others have envisaged it as the supreme value of equality and liberty. Innumerable experiments have been made in India to reveal the ultimate truth. India has been the land of yogis. Here all conceivable dimensions have been explored for unveiling the nature and purpose of Being. Each perspective highlights certain aspects of the ultimate reality and ignores other aspects. Though each perspective has some value and importance, no perspective can be said to manifest the concrete fullness of Being.

The yogi's ultimate concern is to search sincerely for the common meeting ground towards which all the ways lead. There is an urgency to synthesize all the possible paths of harmonious and creative ways of life that lead to the ultimate truth. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is a marvelous achievement in this connection. It is an attempt to synthesize the traditional systems of yoga. It assimilates into itself the truths embedded in them but drops their partial extreme tendencies. It tries to mobilize the spiritual resources of man in solving his most crucial problems—the problem of human unity, peace and progress.

Sri Aurobindo says, "the aim of this yoga is, first, to enter into the divine consciousness by merging into it the separative ego (incidentally, in doing so one finds one's true individual self which is not limited, vain and selfish human ego but a portion of the Divine) and, secondly, to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth to transform mind, life and body. All else can be only a result of these two aims, not the primary objects of yoga."² Accordingly, Integral yoga is an appeal to spiritual impulse of man for active participation in the evolution of super consciousness on the basis of self-integration.

Different Levels of Integration in Integral Yoga

Integral Yoga is a complete unification of body, mind and life to attain creative life in harmony with the ultimate ground of existence. It is a balanced and creative growth of the whole personality for employment in the cosmic evolution for the constructive development of the latent possibilities of one's nature. Integral Yoga warns against extreme tendencies, which misleads people into lopsided developments. There are people who over-emphasize the development of body; on the other hand, there are people who over-exercise mind at the expense of neglecting the body. There are people who ignore the social and humanistic values of life, and on the other hand, there are people who get enmeshed in these affairs without any idea of the eternal. Integral Yoga sets forth the concept of the full flowering of the total individual as a dynamic center of the universal spirit. It emphasizes the need for the balanced integration of the physical, emotional, intellectual, ethical, social and religious aspects of the human personality.

Integral Yoga aims at dynamic and complete self-integration. There are three essential modes of this dynamic and complete self-integration: psychic integration, cosmic integration, and existential integration.

Psychic integration means man's union with the deepest power and potentialities of the human psyche. It is a harmonization of the different aspects of the human psyche. There are conflicts between the conscious and unconscious mind in the human psyche. Indeed, instinctual drives, impulse and urges are inherent and deep-rooted in the unconscious mind. Against these there is the rational will of the conscious mind, which is shaped by the social and cultural forces of the community to which the individual belongs. The unconscious is the source of limitless energy. Besides the sexual impulses, it also includes the vital impetus to grow and develop. It is the center of repressed desires and wishes as well as of original creative urges. The unconscious is indeed the region where the sexual, sublime and holy dwell side by side. Psychic integration is an attempt to reconcile these seemingly opposite phenomena and to discover the deeper principle of one's own existence. This is the principle of the higher Self. It does not encourage the one-sided growth of intellect at the cost of emotions, or of sentiments at the sacrifice of judgment. Psychic integration channelizes the hidden energy which lies in the unconscious mind for the constructive and harmonious development of the human psyche.

The psyche cannot be fully integrated without the realization of its relationship to nature and society. According to Sri Aurobindo, the individual psyche and the cosmos are inseparable aspects of one concrete reality. The fundamental reality is neither the psyche alone nor the cosmos but the psyche-cosmos continuum. It is the neither the isolated self nor the independent universe, but the self in the universe or the universe for the self. It is atman-brahman (Thou art that or I am that). The integral yogi tries to maintain the total

relationship with the environment including society and nature. Integral Yoga emphasizes the harmony with nature which generates a feeling of kinship with the animal and plant kingdoms. Mankind is not only closely related to other beings (plants and animals) but also we are dependent on them for our existence or Being. In fact, a person kills the spirit within himself by killing animals and destroying trees. By disturbing the ecological system of Nature, we create division and discord with our own inner being. A feeling of oneness and a reverence for all are indeed vital for the holistic growth of human personality. Being compassionate to others, we can integrate ourself with all (animals, plants and other human beings). The more we are concerned and care for our fellow beings, the more we enlarge our own being.

However we rationally and emotionally may convince ourselves that there should be social and cosmic harmony, there seems to be a fundamental and irreconcilable discrepancy between self and society, between psyche and cosmos. But it could be resolved by the realization of the timeless Source of the cosmic flow of the Eternal which is dynamically in evolution in history. The ultimate unity of the psyche and the cosmos lies hidden in the timeless depth of Being. It is only through an existential integration with the timeless Being that the social and cosmological harmony would be revealed. Thus we see that the final step in the integral self-development is existential integration, i.e. integration with the ultimate ground of existence which is timeless. The process of self-adjustment to the psyche and the cosmos can be consummated only through contact with the Eternal.

According to Sri Aurobindo a person has many sides to his personality, each of which is to be expressed, but in view of their discordant movements, each comes in the way of others when they are expressed through mind. This is a big problem in the way of constructive development of the whole personality. In a letter to a disciple,³ Sri Aurobindo identified a variety of different personalities that expressed themselves in this person's life. These included a vital personality, a psycho-vital personality, a personality of a poet, musician and seeker of beauty, a mental-vital personality, a physical-mental personality, and a mental-emotional personality. His vital personality aimed at success and became engaged with it after getting it, ignoring other aspects of his personality. The vital personality sought engagement of a deeper kind and suggested that it would be well to give up the other personalities. The psycho-vital personality was that of a vaishnava that wanted the Divine (Krisna), Bhakti and Ananda. The personality of the poet and musician tried to satisfy its emotional urges through works of art. The mental-vital personality was approving of Vairāgyā and Nirvāna and insisted on a grim struggle of Tapasyā when it saw that the vital personality stood in the way. The physical-mental personality was an extrovert and skeptical. The mental-emotional personality had strong belief in the Divine, Yoga, Bhakti and Gurravada. We see from this example how each of us is composed of many different personalities with differing tendencies, often in conflict with one another.

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Integral Yoga is an attempt to harmonize these personalities and to bring about a complete development of the whole personality of a person. It does not encourage the growth of one type of personality at the cost of other types. But this harmonization cannot be done from outside, and it cannot be done by the ordinary mind and vital mind because they are sure to bungle the affair. It can be done only from within by the spirit, who is the ultimate controller. Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that each of these personalities has a truth and the truth of one can be harmonized with the truth of the others. For example, there is a truth in Nirvana. Indeed Nirvana is nothing but the peace and freedom of spirit which can exist in itself, be there world or no world, world order or world disorder. Bhakti and the love for divine also have a truth. It is the truth of the divine love and Ananda. The will for Tapasyā has a truth in it—the truth of the spirit's mastery over its members. The musicians and poets stand for a truth; it is the truth of the expression of the spirit through beauty. There is a truth behind the mental asserter and there is a truth even behind the mental skeptic. Even behind the two vital personalities there is a truth—the truth of the possession of the inner and the outer world not by the ego but by the Divine. That is the harmonization for which Integral Yoga stands. It cannot be achieved by any outward arrangement. It can only be achieved by going inside and looking, willing and acting from the psychic and the spiritual centers.

Before Integral Yoga, the Bhagavad Gītā made a magnificent synthesis of all the aspects of personality and prepared a way for harmonious growth of the holistic human personality into the fullness and perfection of the Divine. The Gītā in its effective and powerful attempt of synthesis incorporated many modes of human personality and placed them in various sorts of yogas such as Samkhya-yoga, Jñāna yoga, Karma yoga, Rājā-yoga and Bhakti-yoga.

Action, knowledge and love cured of their trenchant separative tendencies must be blended and fused into a single movement of self-offering to the Supreme. The impersonality of the Brahman and divine personality, the silence of the immutable and the ceaseless flux of the cosmic movement, the beatific state of liberation and the continued performance of mundane action—these were some of the most outstanding reconciliations effected by the Bhagavad Gītā at a crucial stage of the spiritual culture of India. It is worth noticing that this synthesis was achieved, not by any religious or philosophical deliberations, but by an embracing and unifying spiritual vision, and it stood unparalleled in comprehensiveness in the annals of ancient mystical achievement. Sri Rishabhchandra, in his evaluation of the Gītā, says:

Gita's synthesis had registered a magnificent success even in the midst of an apparent failure;—it had outlined an ideal, the shining ideal of a harmonious perfection and divine fulfillment of man, and left it as a seed, in the terrestrial atmosphere to germinate and grow and prepare its future efflorescence in the evolving life of humanity; and if it failed at all, it was because man was not

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evolved enough for such a global spiritual endeavor: his mind, life and body needed a long individual preparation and development, an intense churning and psychic conversion and correlation before they could consent to enter into the harmony of the integral orientation.⁴

Sri Krishna in the Bhāgavad Gītā says, “A yogi is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the futile worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances be a yogi.”⁵ It implies that a true yogi is a person who is dynamically united with the divine in the field of action. In fact, yoga is an act dedicated to the cosmic purpose of evolution.

The Gītā’s synthesis prepared a background for the development of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. This dynamic conception of yoga inscribed in the Gītā has been carried to its full logical development in the Integral Yoga (Pūrṇa yoga). When a yogi’s union with his Ultimate Being becomes balanced and complete, the inner transformation takes place and the yogi becomes a dynamic personality. Integral vision of the truth turns him into creator of new values. It inspires him to participate in life with a new sense of urgency and a new grasp of its meaning.

Cosmic Evolution and the Participation of the Yogi

Under the influence of divine wisdom, the earth has evolved from matter to plant life and then to animal life. The evolution from animal to mankind is not the final stage in the cosmic evolution. Indeed mankind is under the sway of dark and ignorant forces and that is the reason for human suffering. Diseases and death are signs of this imperfection. Sri Rishabhchandra very beautifully writes,

if we look with a searching and dispassionate eye into the heart of Nature’s universal working in the material world, we perceive that all life is Yoga, a slowly, spirally, precariously evolving stupendous Yoga of Nature aiming at a progressive reproduction and revelation of the divine Image in her own terms. From the incipient surge of energy which sprinkles the space with suns and stars and the emergent life-sparkle which makes the earth smile with verdure, and the mobile wonder and variety of animal creation, its developing gamut of sensibilities and range of expressive faculties and organs, to the phenomenal growth of reason and imagination and intuition in man, his fine, symmetrical body, his rich heart of feelings and emotions, his intrepid, adventurous spirit, his powers of foresight and invention, and above all, his divination of the Godhead in himself and his persistent, though vaguely felt and very imperfectly realised, aspiration for its infinity and immortality, purity and freedom and blissful harmony, is nothing but a mounting travail, a purposive endeavour, a long and labouring Yoga of nature for the unveiled manifestation of the one whom she holds secret in

herself and an overt, constant, dynamic union with Him in her terrestrial play. Nature is not inconscient and blind, nor her universal strivings a senseless gamble of caprice and chance and a purposeless expenditure of force – she is big with God.⁶

Therefore nature has its teleological function in her every act. According to Sri Aurobindo,

But what Nature aims at for the mass in a slow evolution, Yoga effects for the individual by a rapid revolution. It works by a quickening of all her energies, a sublimation of all her faculties. While she develops the spiritual life with difficulty and has constantly to fall back from it for the sake of her lower realisations, the sublimated force, the concentrated method of Yoga can attain directly and carry with it the perfection of the mind and even, if she will, the perfection of the body. Nature seeks the Divine in her own symbols: Yoga goes beyond Nature to the Lord of Nature, beyond universe to the Transcendent and can return with the transcendent light and power, with the fiat of the Omnipotent.⁷

In this sense, Integral Yoga leads not only individuals but also Nature to evolutionary transformation. The conscious cooperation of the integral yogi with the Divine will accelerates the pace of Nature’s evolution. Integral Yoga tries to re-establish the original Vedic ideal of participation in this world as an instrument of the internal divine being. The emancipation from the bonds of the cosmic drive is an incomplete ideal. It is not enough to attain self-realization. There is a much nobler goal of human effort and that is to achieve the manifestation of the Divine in life. The light and power of divine Self-awareness must be applied in the spheres of daily life and social action. It is not enough to gain liberation from the unconscious Nature; there is a much more sublime goal of human endeavor and that is to liberate Nature herself in the growing of creative urge concealed in her breast.

The Path of Ascent and Descent

Integral Yoga emphasizes the need for supplementing ascent by descent, negation by a deeper and fuller affirmation. Firstly, an integral yogi climbs the path of ascent. It means that he rises to the height of inward illumination. Having reached the height of his vision, an integral yogi attempts to express the glories of the eternal Divine Being in the flux of time. An integral yogi, having glimpsed the creative light of Eternal Being in the higher state of consciousness, descends to the physical and social sphere with an aim to reconstruct human existence in accordance with that light.

Ascent and descent are two aspects of Integral Yoga. Sri Aurobindo says,

Our yoga is a double movement of ascent and descent; one rises to higher and higher levels of consciousness but at the same time one brings down their power not only into mind and life but in the end even into the body. And the highest of these levels, the one at which it aims is the supermind. Only when that can be brought down is the divine transformation possible in the earth consciousness.⁸

The systems of yoga such as Jñāna yoga, Rāja yoga and Bhakti yoga make a sort of ladder by which one can climb up to a higher level of consciousness and achieve spiritual enlightenment, liberation from this world of bondage. They take body, life and mind as rungs of the ladder and by over-stepping these phases of life one can attain spiritual enlightenment. But the uniqueness of Integral Yoga lies in the fact that it does not take body, mind and life merely as a means to rise up to the highest peak, but also as a means of bringing down and expressing the glory of spirit in life. In Integral Yoga, body, mind and life must be prepared as channels of expression of higher divine values in the world.

Dynamic Union with Being

In Integral Yoga the union with the divine is dynamic in nature. An integral yogi is not a passive spectator of Samkhya philosophy. He is an active and creative participant in this world. He actively works for the spiritual upliftment of the whole society. Indeed, he accelerates the cosmic evolution with the light of the Divine.

The main emphasis of Patanjali's yoga sutra is on the functioning of mind, and from the very second sutra it defines yoga as "a complete cessation of thought waves in mind." It recommends the methods of bodily posture (āsana) and breathing control (prāṇāyāma), but all these exercises are for its central purpose of mental calmness and equilibrium. Even prior to bodily posture, it prescribes ethico-religious training which includes two steps: 'yama' and 'niyama.' These are preliminary steps for the fifth important step, which is self-withdrawal of the senses from their external objects. It is the methodological device of temporary setting aside the external world with a view to inquire the sustained energy of spirit. It is the method of putting the whole external world into brackets without paying attention to the question whether the world is real or unreal and without using any judgment that concern spatio-temporal existence. It is a shifting of consciousness from this world to the supra-mundane world. It is to be noticed that these five steps aim at transcending the world of false identification and illusory projection in a deep search for the unconditional reality. Here Patanjali's main stress is on shifting of one's consciousness from this spatio-temporal world by going within in search of deeper realization. Now in order to achieve the ultimate goal of self-realization, prātyāhara has to be supplemented by three inner processes, namely concentration (dhāraṇā), meditation (dhyāna) and self-integration (samādhi).

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga fully appreciates the perfection of the technique of Patanjali's Rāja yoga, but it points out that the methods of Rāja yoga are tailored for the static self-realization of the Self in its pure transcendence. They are not apt for its purpose of dynamic self-identification with the divine. Rāja yoga emphasizes the methods of mental tranquillization as a means of attaining static self-realization. But Integral Yoga emphasizes active participation in life simultaneously with the processes of self-purification and mental serenity. Social, cultural and humanitarian activities pursued in a self-offering to the divine are an indispensable adjunct to the inward process of concentration and meditation.

The integral yogi has two forms of being, an inward being and an outward being. Inwardly he is integrated with the ultimate ground of existence, while outwardly he is engaged in all sorts of activities for the welfare of humanity and the spiritual upliftment of people. It is to be noticed that traditional yogis in India have always given much importance to the notion of direct union with the Eternal. Hinduism calls it the state of Sāmādhi. Buddhism calls it Nirvana. But the Integral Yoga maintains that this union with the Ultimate Being is only a part of the realization and not the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey. In Integral Yoga, after attaining what may be called "waking union with Divine," the integral yogi brings down the super-consciousness into the heart of the physical consciousness. As a result, the barrier between the natural and the supra-natural disappears.

Collective Liberation

In Indian philosophical systems (theistic or non-theistic), the notions of personal liberation and collective liberation find their place. Many truth seekers begin their spiritual journey with the aim to attain personal salvation. Once they attain liberation for themselves, they live in complete isolation from this world. They do not concern themselves with the social, historical or evolutionary life of humanity. In Buddhism this is known as the ideal of the 'Pratyekabuddha.'¹⁰ This is the ultimate aim of the Hinayana Buddhism. In Patanjali's¹¹ Yoga the spiritual ideal is conceived as transcendental loneliness. It is the condition of self-alienation from the world of action and reaction, pain and pleasure. The Vedanta has conceived the ultimate goal as absorption in the eternal 'Brahman-laya.'¹² It assumes that the world of plurality and multiplicity is illusion (Māyā). H.D. Bhattacharya writes "Buddhists have conceived the absolute as an indescribable state that is beyond both existence and non-existence."¹³ Thus we see that the dominant schools of yoga in medieval India ignored the value of active participation in this world. They indeed over-emphasized the notion of renunciation and ascetic life. Unlike these ideals, in ancient India, the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas glorified the active participation in this world. The Upanishads declared that the world came into existence out of the fullness of joy

in the heart of Being. The Puranas proclaimed that the highest goal of life was to act in this world, true to kindred of time and eternity. Integral Yoga tries to reestablish the original Indian ideal of participation in this world as an instrument of the Eternal.

The higher ideal of the spiritual journey involves the collective liberation of humanity. In Vedanta it has been known as 'Sarva-mukti.' In Buddhism this is the ideal of the Bodhisattva. This is the supreme ideal of Mahayana-Buddhism. According to Buddhist stories (Jātak Kathās), after attaining salvation, the Buddha firmly dedicated himself to the service of humanity and the spiritual upliftment of the society. This happened with Shankaracharya also. After attaining salvation (mukti), he established four pithas at Kanche, Dwarikā, Badrināth and Puri for the upliftment of Hindu society. In Christianity also there is a notion of the kingdom of heaven on earth that probably corresponds to what we call the collective liberation of humanity. It is believed in Christianity that the natural order of existence is full of evil, sin and consequent suffering. It is dominated and ruled by Satan. But Christ had living faith in the supreme God—the heavenly Father, who would eventually subdue the evil influence of Satan. Those who follow the teaching of Christ and surrender themselves to God would be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven means the blissful state of consciousness. It implies that Christianity believes in the principle of self-sacrifice for the sake of cosmic welfare. Christ is the ideal of self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering. The concept of collective liberation acquires new height in the teaching of Bhagavad Gītā. We have already noticed that for Christianity and Buddhism the cosmic process is valuable only in so far as it eventually leads to the transcendent. It has no intrinsic value of its own.

Christianity declares that the Kingdom of God is radically different from this world, which is sinful. But the Bhagavad Gītā clearly asserts that the cosmic process has an intrinsic value and significance. Indeed, there is no inherent contradiction between the cosmic process and the transcendence. This natural world is a meaningful sphere through which the Divine manifests itself. Collective liberation does not mean destruction of natural and social values of this world but it only means transformation of these values into spiritually illuminated force. Following the spirit of the Gītā, the Integral Yoga tries to transform nature and human consciousness into divine consciousness, which is hidden in the heart of Nature and human beings. The roots of Integral Yoga could be traced from the ancient teachings of the Vedas and the Puranas. The seers of the Vedas made sacrifices (yajna) to the gods for the manifestation of the divine glory in their collective social existence. According to Sri Aurobindo "It is a continuous self-offering of the human to the divine and continuous descent of divine into the human."¹⁴ That was the motivating factor in the Vedic sacrifice.

In conclusion, we may say that Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga claims to unfold the higher levels of consciousness and to manifest the hidden divinity lying within us. In the journey from the lower level of consciousness to the higher

level of consciousness, a yogi is always dynamically united with Nature as a creative being. The integral yogi is an active participant in this world who accelerates the functioning of the cosmic evolution. Through being an administrator, leader, freedom-fighter, editor, poet, philosopher and ultimately yogi, Sri Aurobindo has shown by his example the nature of a multidimensional integrated personality, and has demonstrated the validity and possibility of Integral Yoga in his practical life.

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Anurag Banerjee



Integral management for a new world (visageventures.com)

What is integral management? We understand by the term 'integral' something which is total, complete, absolute. Integral management may be defined as a system of management based on the principles of the Integral Yoga as formulated by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as well as on their personal management styles. It includes the advantages of modern and emerging concepts of management, but goes beyond them. It is not only a management by consciousness, but it is a spiritualized system of management. Through a conscious approach, the individual directs a divine Force to act upon him so that it can become the architect of his destiny. Just as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are the harbingers of the New Race—the race of supermen—similarly this unique form of management based on their teachings is meant for those who belong to the new world.

Management of individuals

In today's world, people are evaluated by their productivity. As long as employees are sufficiently creative or innovative and abundantly productive as per the requirements of the company, they are much in demand. But the day the higher authorities notice a slight dip in their productivity or observe that they are unable to meet with the standards set by the enterprise, within no time they are asked to leave. This is the culture of the corporate sector. But what about the ultimate value of a people? In this context Sri Aurobindo has written: "The ultimate value of a man is not to be measured by what he says or by what he does but by what he becomes." So, in integral management, the value of people is not judged by a short-term or mid-term dip in productivity or in temporary actions but by what they become at the end of the day.

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In integral management, people are not looked upon as mere mortals; on the contrary, they are viewed as instruments of the Divine. Since integral management is a management by consciousness, therefore, we also must become conscious of our soul, of the spark of divinity which lies latent in us. The powers that are present in the universe are present in us as well, but we are unaware of what we possess. Why are we unaware? Because we are imperfect beings who are in love with our ignorance. But why is this so? Sri Aurobindo has written that ignorance is the "non-perceiving principle" which exists in our consciousness and it opposes the "truth-perceiving conscious vision and knowledge."² He has further explained that ignorance also is a knowledge, but a knowledge with a difference. And what is that difference? It is a limited knowledge which is based on the "division of undivided being" and established on the "fragmentary, the little, opposed to the opulent, vast and luminous completeness of things."³ Therefore, to overpower and conquer this ignorance, we have to awaken the divinity within us and the process of doing so can begin if we attempt to become conscious. By overcoming the shortcomings of our heart and spirit, we can take the first steps towards progress. To quote the words of Sri Aurobindo:

For man intellectually developed, mighty in scientific knowledge and mastery of gross and subtle nature, using the elements as his servants and the world as his footstool, but undeveloped in heart and spirit, becomes only an inferior kind of *asura* using the powers of a demigod to satisfy the nature of an animal.⁴

In this context, Sri Aurobindo has written: "A cultivated eye without a cultivated spirit makes by no means the highest type of man."⁵

So, the first thing for us to do is to become conscious of the Divine Force working within us and around us for our own betterment, that is, to become conscious of our true Self. Here comes the need of yoga, for it is through yoga that a change or transformation occurs in the consciousness and the mind becomes an instrument of the Truth. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three ways by which mind can become a channel or instrument of the Truth: (1) It may become silent in the Self and make way for a vaster consciousness. (2) It may transform itself passive to an internal Light, thus, allowing the Light to use mind as a means of expression. (3) It may transform itself into an intuitive intelligence from the 'questioning intellectual superficial mind,' and when it has successfully done so, it will have the precise perception of the divine Truth. This is the way we can grow in consciousness and reside in its higher levels.

However, a few things should be remembered. First of all, before becoming conscious, we have to become aware—aware of the things occurring in the consciousness—and witness them in their true form. Sri Aurobindo has said that awareness by itself is not enough, however, and that a Will and a Force are needed to make the consciousness effective. We may be conscious of what needs

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to be done, how it is to be done and when it is to be done, but at the time of actual implementation we may become helpless to do it. This happens because we may not possess the Will and the Force which are required for the successful implementation. Alternatively, we may possess the Will and the Force, but may not have the awareness of how to implement the thing in the right way and at the right time. To quote the immortal words of Sri Aurobindo with reference to this issue:

Man, the individual, has to become and to live as a universal being; his limited mental consciousness has to widen to the superconscious unity in which each embraces all; his narrow heart has to learn the infinite embrace and replace its lusts and discords by universal love and his restricted vital being to become equal to the whole shock of the universe upon it and capable of universal delight; his very physical being was to know itself as no separate entity but as one with and sustaining in itself the whole flow of the indivisible Force that is all things; his whole nature has to reproduce in the individual the unity, the harmony, the oneness-in-all of the supreme Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.⁶

Because of our undeveloped heart and spirit, we tend to get disturbed and distracted from the true mission of life. If success is followed by a failure, then we may be unable to accept it in the right attitude. We are willing to taste the nectar of success but not the poison of failure. And if we commit a mistake, then we become even more depressed by thinking of the consequences that we would have to face. In such circumstances, we find Sri Aurobindo to be an excellent motivator and a remarkable personnel manager. In his letters to his disciples he has given invaluable advice about how to overcome our shortcomings and conquer brief spells of depression. It is interesting to note that these advices given more than 70 years ago are still as relevant as ever:

- Do not allow yourself to be worried or upset by small things. Look at things from an inner point of view and try to get the benefit of all that happens. If you make a mistake, don't get distressed because you made a mistake—rather profit by it to see the reason so as to get the right movement in future. This you can do only if you look at it quietly from the inner being without sorrow or disturbance.⁷
- Why get excited over these small things? or let them disturb you? If you remain quiet, things will go much better and, if there is any difficulty, you are more likely to find out a way in a quiet mind open to the Peace and Power. That is the secret of going on, not to allow things and happenings, not even real mistakes, to upset you, but to remain very quiet, confiding in the Power to lead you and set things more and more right. If one does that, then things do get actually more and more right for learning and steps towards progress.⁸

- When some weakness comes up you should take it as an opportunity to know what is still to be done and call down the strength into that part. Dependancy is not the right way to meet it.⁹
- Whatever you see, don't get disturbed or depressed. If one sees a defect one must look at it with the utmost quietude and call down more force and light to get rid of it.¹⁰
- ... One ought not to indulge ideas of incapacity, inability to respond, dwelling too much on defects and failures and allowing the mind to be in pain and shame on their account: for these ideas and feelings become in the end weakening things. If there are difficulties, stumblings or failures, one has to look at them quietly and call in tranquilly and persistently the Divine help for their removal, but not to allow oneself to be upset or pained or discouraged.¹¹

So far we've discussed about the management of people as individuals. But in an enterprise it is the collective effort which is the focus. Human beings are social animals and no matter how competent or self-sufficient we are, we cannot live and work all alone. Even Robinson Crusoe needed Friday. Therefore we need companions or colleagues. So now from the individual person we come to the collective person.

Management of people in groups

When we work at an enterprise, we do not work all alone. We must work with our colleagues. Just as five utensils, if kept together, would bang against each other, similarly we may not always enjoy a very harmonious relationship with our colleagues. While every community and enterprise aims at the attainment of harmony, few achieve this goal. Sri Aurobindo has pointed out categorically in his *The Life Divine* that "all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony." According to him, these problems emerge from the "perception of unsolved discord" as well as "the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity." He explains the reason in the following words:

To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unilluminated compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the

condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or subconscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.¹²



Manage conflicts by raising the consciousness (blog, cesphtions.com)

Therefore, it is because of disharmony among individuals and groups that conflicts arise in an organization. Employees may become so engrossed in these self-created conflicts that they tend to deviate from their goal of achieving the organizational objectives. Disharmony can emerge due to several reasons. Let's take remuneration as an example. Individuals working in the same department might get different pay-packages. The remuneration of young employees with a fresh professional degree could be more than that of other employees who are more experienced. If the latter compare their pay-package with that of the former, they might feel dissatisfied and disturbed due to ego-related problems and this could give rise to disharmony. Again, if individuals compare their remuneration with those who are in the same position in some other department and find it to be comparatively less, their mind could become disturbed and as a result disharmony would be created. The same mental frustration may emerge if they compare their salary with those who have a similar type of position in a

different industry and find their own to be less. It is the mind which is the epicentre of all these ego-related problems. After all, the mind is imperfect; Sri Aurobindo has defined this desire-prone aspect of the mind in his epic poem *Savitri* in the following words:

A thinking puppet is the mind of life:
Its choice is the work of elemental strengths
That know not their own birth and end and cause
And glimpse not the immense intent they serve.¹³

People are insatiable: when we are given less, we feel that we have not got what we deserve. When others get more, we feel that these undeserving individuals have used manipulation to get more than us. Gradually we may develop an inferiority complex which compels us to ponder whether perhaps we are mediocre with no special talents or qualities, and as a result we get depressed. Here we find Sri Aurobindo is an excellent coordinator who advises us how to cope up in such situations and how to deal with our colleagues. He writes:

...in your relations with others, — which seem always to have been full of disharmony, — when incidents occur, it would be much better for you not to take the standpoint that you are all in the right and they are all in the wrong. It would be wiser to be fair and just in reflection, seeing where you have gone astray, and even laying stress on your own fault and not on theirs. This would probably lead to more harmony in your relations with others; at any rate, it would be more conducive to your inner progress, which is more important than to be the top-dog in a quarrel. Neither is it well to cherish a spirit of self-justification and self-righteousness and a wish to conceal either from yourself or from the Mother your faults and your errors.¹⁴

And elsewhere he writes:

As for comparison with others, one ought not to do that. Each one has his own lesson to learn, his own work to do and he must concern himself with that, not with the superior or inferior progress of others in comparison with himself. If he is behind today, he can be in full capacity hereafter and it is for that future perfection of his powers that he must labour... But learn to welcome criticism and the pointing out of imperfections — the more you do, the more rapidly you will advance.¹⁵

If we should become sunk in the darkness of depression or despondency, we can avail ourselves of the following advice of Sri Aurobindo:

Cast away from you these movements of doubt, depression and the rest

which are no part of your true and higher nature. Reject these suggestions of inability, unfitness and all these irrational movements of an alien force. Remain faithful to the Light of your soul even when it is hidden by clouds... The one need for you and for all is to be, even in the darkness of the powers of obscurity of the physical consciousness, stubbornly faithful to your soul and to the remembrance of the Divine Call.¹⁶

Qualities of Leadership

We do not always work as an employee or subordinate, we may also function as an employer or manager or leader. No matter how competent a person is, at some point of time he or she requires the guidance and help of superiors. That is when the need of the leader emerges. In Integral Management, how should a leader lead? To illustrate the answer, I would like to quote a passage from Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga* where he has written about the teacher of Integral Yoga. While discussing the role of the teacher, he has actually pointed out the attributes of an ideal leader, and where he refers to the disciple, we can substitute it with 'a subordinate.'

The Teacher of the integral Yoga will follow as far as he may the method of the Teacher within us. He will lead the disciple through the nature of the disciple. Teaching, example, influence, — these are the three instruments of the Guru. But the wise Teacher will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind; he will throw in only what is productive and sure as a seed which will grow under the divine fostering within. He will seek to awaken much more than to instruct; he will aim at the growth of the faculties and the experiences by a natural process and free expansion. He will give a method as an aid, as a utilisable device, not as an imperative formula or a fixed routine. And he will be on his guard against any turning of the means into a limitation, against the mechanising of process. His whole business is to awaken the divine light and set working the divine force of which he himself is only a means and an aid, a body or a channel.¹⁷

Sri Aurobindo has explained how ideal leaders should work. As mentioned in the preceding quotation, the Guru or the leader should use 'teaching', 'example' and 'influence' as his instruments. Sri Aurobindo has specifically pointed out the importance of each of these three instruments. According to him, example is much more powerful than instruction. Here, we must note that by 'example' he didn't refer merely to the external acts or the 'personal character,' but to the very life of the Teacher in its entirety and all the actions associated with it. However, 'influence' is much more important than example. Influence is not the external authority which an ordinary leader imposes upon subordinates; on the contrary,

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it is, as been defined by Sri Aurobindo as "the power of his contact, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another." The leader channels this influence into the subordinates for their development. The leader should be a channel, a representative of the trust from above who acts as a helper and guide. A leader should be, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "a child leading children, a Light kindling other lights, an awakened Soul awakening souls, at highest a Power or Presence of the Divine calling to him other powers of the Divine."¹⁸

The tasks of a leader are to lead subordinates towards the successful accomplishment of the organizational goals, motivate them to work better by improving their morale, imposing discipline whenever and wherever required in the organization and ensuring the establishment of a perfect harmony among them. While imposing discipline, a leader should keep in mind that whatever needs to be done should be done in the right spirit. The subordinates should also



The leader sets the trail for others to follow (blog.mkg.org)

realize that they are being guided by a leader who may be strict but at the same time is upright, insightful and sympathetic towards them. In his letters, Sri Aurobindo has written that efficiency and discipline — though they are indispensable for work — are dependent on the "personality of the superior, his influence on the subordinates, his firmness, tact, kindness in dealing with them."¹⁹

Often a leader might have to face certain circumstances which are beyond his or her control. What should be done then? What should be the code of conduct if something untoward happens? Sri Aurobindo has advised that in such cases the person should keep the right inner attitude and remain open to the Force and its power so that ego-resistance and ego-centric troubles do not emerge and destroy what is being done. With the help of this Force, all the difficulties of the untoward circumstances can be conquered and turned towards the right direction. But no matter how grave the situation becomes, one must have a sense of perfect equanimity, what in Sanskrit is called *samta*. Sri Aurobindo has said that the

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leader must be an instrument of this invisible Force coming from above so that it could be used for the necessary purposes. Through the power of equanimity, the Force is capable of transforming not only the attitude of a person but also the course of events and actions

A leader who follows the philosophy of integral management and practices it in day-to-day activities must not think and act like the leader of an ordinary enterprise. For an integral leader, work is not an avenue of earning money by maximizing the returns on an investment. On the contrary, the leader assumes the role of a servitor and consecrates all possessions for the success of the enterprise. Such a leader looks upon the business as a medium of sadhana and works for the growth and development of the enterprise as a service to the Divine. This type of leader has to be selfless and rely entirely on the true Self and Spirit for inner guidance; this becomes the architect of his or her destiny. Care should be taken so that no superiority complex arises due to his or her high position in the organizational hierarchy, for this may result in the expansion of ego. It is essential to look at colleagues and subordinates as brothers and sisters and to treat no work or workers as lowly, because in integral management, all work is looked upon as work for the Divine. Work is actually worship and the worshippers, that is, the workers, should not be viewed in a discriminatory manner.

It reminds me of an incident. Once, someone complained to the Mother that people were not working satisfactorily in a particular department. The Mother said: "People work according to their nature and capacity. If you are not getting satisfaction, do it yourself."

The leader must have empathy, and while dealing with inter-department or inter-personal problems, must see both sides of the issue. No anger or reproach should arise, for these elements tend to raise the same in the people involved on the other side. Above all, the leader has to be an epitome of humility. No great work can be done if the leader is not a humble person.

Let me narrate an incident to illustrate this particular point. Once the Mother asked B who was in charge of the Electric Department of the Ashram: "Will you please give me a piece of wire?" B said: "Mother, why don't you order me? All this belongs to you." The Mother replied: "I must be an example of how to ask."

Another feature that must exist in a leader is right judgment. This includes knowing what is good and bad for the organization but also not being judgmental towards people on the advice of others. No one except the Divine can truly judge and the leader, as an instrument for the Divine's work, should only rely on the inner command or intuition for the proper course of action.

Coming to the point of judgment, let me narrate another incident to illustrate how the Mother refrained from following such judgmental advice. In the Ashram there was an old inmate whom everyone found to be absolutely useless, quarrelsome and crazy. One of the inmates asked the Mother: "Why do you keep him?" She replied: "But he makes such nice envelopes! No one makes envelopes as well as he does."

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In an organization, there exists a variety of employees. Some are industrious, some are comparatively lazy, some are highly efficient, while some may be slow at work. Every employee comes from different social backgrounds but they work together as per the organizational culture to fulfill the goals of the organization. It is the duty and responsibility of the leader to see to it that they work for the achievement of the organizational goals.

In the Ashram too, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother chose disciples who represented symbolically the difficulties which existed in the outer world for the purpose of conquering them for the work of transformation. The Mother has said that each inmate represented an impossibility to be resolved for the accomplishment of their work. Some of these disciples had difficult characters; some were excessively sensitive; some were hot-tempered, some were extremely impatient and so on. And Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had to work, as leaders of the organization, for their inner transformation.

While the disciples could meet the Mother and talk to her directly about their problems, they couldn't do the same with Sri Aurobindo. With Sri Aurobindo the only medium of communication was the correspondence they had with him. As we know, both verbal and written communication plays a very pivotal role in any enterprise. Communication facilitates the development of plans for the accomplishment of organizational targets, utilizes manpower and other resources in the best possible way, enables employee appraisal and performance evaluation, generates motivation among the subordinates and above all, facilitates control over the organization. So, as the leader of the organization, Sri Aurobindo had to perform all the aforesaid functions through the medium of correspondence.

Endurance is said to be the most important quality a leader should possess and both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were epitomes of endurance. If one reads the letters Sri Aurobindo had to write to his disturbed disciples to calm them down, one can sense the pain he had to undertake to maintain harmony in the Ashram. He was not a leader who kept himself aloof from the problems and difficulties faced by his disciples. He acted as a motivator, a coach and a mentor who spent sleepless nights answering hundreds of letters addressed to him. It was like a correspondence workshop of motivation. One of his dearest disciples, Dilip Kumar Roy, has written about him:

He never minded if any of us wanted to experiment with an escalator "going in the wrong direction." For he had never believed in hard and fast taboos... His tolerance and charity would have been incredible had it not been a fact of almost everyday experience. In the Ashram he tolerated quite a battalion of fire-eaters even when they were found out to be disloyal and treacherous. He gave a long rope even to some insolent rebels who, from calling him names and misrepresenting his catholic views, told deliberate lies — just to do him down. Even such calumniators and traitors he not only declined to expel from the Ashram but actually forgave again and again till I

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had to ask him which he loved more: to encourage the faithless or discourage the faithful?²⁰

One might ponder: what was the source of this unlimited patience of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother? The answer is simple. Their patience was based on unbounded divine love. Human love may sometimes fail but divine love neither fails nor falters. So a leader willing to follow the principles of integral management should have profound love and sympathy for subordinates. It is only love and sympathy that can mould and transform the nature, character and personality of human beings, and that is the mantra of integral management.

However, one must always remember that love and sympathy cannot always be the best medicine for labour trouble. At times it is essential to be strict for the benefit of the organization. The practice of integral management does recognize the merits of strict disciplinary action. Unlike Sri Aurobindo, the Mother could be very strict at times and she successfully managed all the labour problems that had taken place in the Ashram during and after Sri Aurobindo's lifetime. While Sri Aurobindo's approach was more persuasive in nature, the Mother's approach often was direct action. An ashramite related to me an incident, in which the workers of the Ashram Press had pasted a handwritten notice on the wall of the workers' washroom in which they demanded three months' bonus and a sum of Rs. 15 as Dearness Allowance. When the Mother was approached for guidance, she replied: "The best is to take no notice of such demands. These people will never be satisfied: the more we give, the more they ask." She just ignored the matter and the demands died down soon. I was also told that on another occasion, a worker of the Ashram Press was sacked. The Workers' Union demanded his reinstatement and challenged the manager of the Press and the Mother. They had begun to shout slogans and were causing the other workers to stay away from work. They also threatened that they would continue with their strike for ten days or till the sacked worker was reinstated. When the matter was reported to the Mother, she was reported to have said: "Let them do—we shall see who gets tired of it first." And like the previous incident, this strike too met with a premature death. So there are two ways of managing subordinates shown by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The first way is through love and patience and the second way is through strict disciplinary measures. The leader, following the doctrines of integral management, should be prepared to adopt both the measures whenever and wherever required.

No matter how good and successful, a leader should expect to be subjected to harsh criticism. In the corporate sector, we find the Chairman or Managing Director of the company being heckled at the Annual General Meetings for not giving adequate dividends to the shareholders or for some other reasons. They forget what the leader has done or is doing for the organization. The same thing happens with spiritual leaders as well. Even Jesus Christ was betrayed by his follower, Judas. Such things happen because a time comes when no matter how intelligent or loyal, followers may become a prey to some hostile power

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compelling them to deviate from the path. Therefore, integral management teaches us to identify the roots of all difficulties and work for their elimination with help from the Divine in spite of the criticism of others.

Management of Human Potential

Let's now discuss the importance of integral management as far as human potential is concerned. Firstly, it enables us to develop ourselves by overcoming our shortcomings. It enables us to broaden our horizons—our vistas of thinking and analyzing. It enables us to evaluate ourselves so that we may undergo the SWOT analysis.²¹ Integral management provides profound motivation which rejuvenates us when we are down. It gives that realization that nothing is over or lost; even if a battle is lost, we can still fight again and become victorious. It transforms us from individuals with limited capacities to hero warriors so that we can fight valiantly the great battle of the future. It teaches us perseverance and endurance so that we may tackle even the gravest of situations and emerge as successful leaders. It enables us to strike an equilibrium between profit-maximization and welfare-maximization. This is something which is hardly present in any of the existing or emerging concepts of management. It is a conscious way of solving problems. In other words, it teaches us to focus our concentration from being successful to becoming perfect, for when we are perfect, success automatically comes to us. A perfect person is always successful but a successful person may not be perfect. And finally we come to the most important function that integral management plays: it makes us conscious beings—conscious not only of ourselves but of the guiding force which would never leave us or let us down when we are in the greatest of perils. It enables us to identify all work as the work of the Divine and accept the Divine as a friend who would always be at our side. It teaches us to become *Karmayogis*—who work not for our own sake but for the sake of the Divine.

Management of Matter

Management means managing people tactfully, but it also denotes the management of matter as well, that is, of materials. No enterprise or business can survive until and unless a meticulous care is taken to ensure that the materials it possesses are properly and *optimally* utilized. A deliberate stress is given on the word 'optimal' because if materials are under-utilized then the productivity of the enterprise will be hampered. And again, if the materials are over-utilized then a situation might come when the enterprise could face severe shortages. Therefore the ideal philosophy should be: the precise quantity of materials should be present at the appropriate time. For this reason, the system of 'Just-in-Time' is often adopted in theories of management.

But how does integral management look upon matter and what role it plays in matter-management? Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother taught that there is

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The Mother in Japan (Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

consciousness even in matter. In his *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo writes: "Matter is the form of substance of being which the existence of Sachchidananda assumes when it subjects itself to this phenomenal action of its own consciousness and force."²²

Now a question might arise: How can one understand whether there is consciousness in matter or not? Sri Aurobindo has beautifully explained it in the following words: "As we progress and awaken to the soul in us and things, we shall realise that there is a consciousness also in the plant, in the metal, in the atom, in electricity, in everything that belongs to physical nature; we shall find even that it is not really in all respects a lower or more limited mode than the mental, on the contrary it is in many 'inanimate' forms more intense, rapid, poignant, though less evolved towards the surface."²³

The Mother has told how the so-called non-living things had called her to them. Once, the Mother had gone to visit the Building Service Department. The managers and concerned staff of the department had spruced up the department for her visit and dumped certain objects in the store. When the Mother arrived, she went directly to the store and saw how the things were dumped there. When she was asked why did she visit the store, the Mother replied: "I heard the call! They were saying, 'Come and first see us. How they have kept us.'"²⁴ On another occasion, the Mother had gone to the Ashram School. As was the custom, everything was neatly arranged for her visit and certain things which remained unfinished were dumped inside a cupboard. When the Mother came, she went straight to the cupboard, opened it and saw the mess inside. These incidents are important, for they teach us that it is not only essential for us to respect matter but also respect the divine consciousness present in matter.

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Sri Aurobindo circa 1915-1918 (Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

One might wonder: what is the secret of this knowledge? Actually there is a consciousness in each and every physical thing with which, according to Sri Aurobindo, one can communicate. Even houses or cars or furniture have an individuality of a certain kind. In the words of *The Life Divine*:

... we arrive at this truth of Matter that there is a conceptive self-extension of being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness and which cosmic Mind and Life in their creative action represent through atomic division and aggregation as the thing we call Matter. But this Matter, like Mind and Life, is still Being or Brahman in its self-creative action. It is a form of the force of conscious Being, a form given by Mind and realised by Life. It holds within it as its own reality consciousness concealed from itself, involved and absorbed in the result of its own self-formation and therefore self-oblivious. And, however brute and void of sense it seems to us, it is yet, to the secret experience of the consciousness hidden within it, delight of being offering itself to this secret consciousness as object of sensation in order to tempt that hidden godhead out of its secrecy. Being manifest as substance, force of Being cast into form, into a figured self-representation of the secret self-consciousness, delight offering itself to its own consciousness as an object, — what is this but Sachchidananda? Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence.²⁵

It is precisely due to the existence of consciousness in matter that Sri Aurobindo has repeatedly advised against wastage. Time and again he has preached that the 'rough handling' or 'careless breaking' or 'misuse' or 'waste' of

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physical objects is a "denial of the yogic consciousness and a great hindrance to the bringing down of the Divine Truth to the material plane."²⁶ He stressed on the orderly harmony in physical things which is required to make the instrument fit for whatever work is given to it. It is essential to fix a programme to deal with the physical things or else one would come across an ocean of confusion and jeopardy. As long as people are not adequately fit enough to deal with them, fixed rules should be imposed for the management of material things. Wastage and spoilage of materials are incongruent to prosperity and drive away the manifestation of the power of wealth. Therefore, this system of wastage has to be remedied and the meticulous utilization of materials and self-control in their usage is advisable.

To illustrate the point on how the Mother prevented wastage and controlled the supply of materials, let me narrate two incidents. In the 1930s, there was an excellent organization in the Ashram to prevent wastage. Bits of soaps and candles, empty match-boxes, burnt match-sticks, pieces of paper, old envelopes, pieces of cloth, etc. were collected and put to use in some form or the other. Bits of soap were melted and converted to bars of soaps. Similarly the small pieces of candles were melted and converted to candles. Unused envelopes were turned inside out and re-used. Handmade paper was made from the pieces of paper and the pieces of cloth were joined together and transformed into serviceable lengths. Thus, the Mother saw to it that even the minimum of wastage should be avoided.

The second incident took place when the Ashram had become bigger than it was in the 1930s. There was once a severe shortage of cement and the responsibility of procuring it rested on U, the in-charge of the Purchasing Department. U asked the Mother to do something about the crisis since all the work associated with construction had come to a standstill due to this crisis. The Mother assured him that she would look into the matter. Very soon, the supply of cement commenced and it took the shape of a flood. All the warehouses in the Ashram were full and the concerned departments were unable to utilize the cement fast enough to meet the inflow. So the managers of the departments asked U to stop the supply which he did without consulting the Mother. Eventually the supply stopped but it stopped completely for such a long time that there was again a shortage and this time the shortage was much more severe. U went to the Mother for help and narrated to her the entire story. The Mother was displeased at U's action in stopping the supply. She told him that when one goes to the Divine for help he should be prepared to receive it in whatever measure it comes. If the supplies were large then the capacity of the warehouses should have been enlarged enough. The Mother remarked that the order for the cessation of the supply showed a deep lack of understanding of the Divine's way of working.

We all know that any sort of wastage, which may include materials and manpower, leads to crisis. Hence, it should be our essential duty to minimize wastage as much as possible. What is available today might become scarce tomorrow. Resources are always scarce and that is why they demand a price.

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So one must always work to establish a perfect equilibrium between demand and supply and preserve materials in the best possible way.

Conclusion

In his epic *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo has prophesized the advent of a new future, a glorious future, for mankind. That same glorious future can be brought about in organizations as well if one sincerely practices integral management for this style of management has a great transforming power. And what would this transformation lead to? In the words of *Savitri*:

... knowledge shall pour down in radiant streams
 And even darkened mind quiver with new life
 And kindle and burn with the Ideal's fire
 And turn to escape from mortal ignorance.
 The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,
 More and more souls shall enter into light,
 Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear
 And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame
 And hearts grow enamoured of divine delight
 And human wills tune to the divine will,
 These separate selves the Spirit's oneness feel,
 These senses of heavenly sense grow capable,
 The flesh and nerves of a strange ethereal joy
 And mortal bodies of immortality.
 A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
 And take the charge of breath and speech and act
 And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
 And every feeling a celestial thrill.
 Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come
 Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;
 A sudden bliss shall run through every limb
 And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.
 Thus shall the earth open to divinity
 And common natures feel the wide uplift,
 Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
 And meet the deity in common things.
 Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
 The Spirit shall take up the human play,
 This earthly life become the life divine.²⁷

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References and Endnotes

- ¹Dilip Kumar Roy, *Among the Great*, 1984 edition, p. 302.
- ²*The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA), Vols. 21-22 (*The Life Divine*), p. 506.
- ³*Ibid.*, p. 489.
- ⁴CWSA, Vol. 1 (*Early Cultural Writings*), p. 439.
- ⁵*Ibid.*, p. 438.
- ⁶*Ibid.*, p. 119.
- ⁷*Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* (SABCL), Vols. 22-24 (*Letters on Yoga*), p. 1682.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 102.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 1681.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*
- ¹¹SABCL, Vol. 25, (*The Mother with Letters on the Mother*), p. 329.
- ¹²*The Life Divine*, pp. 4-5.
- ¹³CWSA, Vols. 33-34 (*Savitri*), p. 162.
- ¹⁴*The Mother with Letters on the Mother*, p. 240.
- ¹⁵*Letters on Yoga*, p. 707.
- ¹⁶*Sri Aurobindo to Dilip*, Vol. I, p. 40.
- ¹⁷CWSA, Vols. 23-24 (*The Synthesis of Yoga*), pp. 66-67.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 68.
- ¹⁹*Letters on Yoga*, p. 710.
- ²⁰Dilip Kumar Roy, *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me*, pp. 56-57.
- ²¹SWOT analysis is an evaluation of Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat. The first letters of every word has been taken. In the corporate sector this SWOT analysis plays a pivotal role in strategic planning for the organization as the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization are compared with those of other enterprises. Similarly, the opportunities and threats present in the sector in which the organization operates are also evaluated.
- ²²*The Life Divine*, p. 277.
- ²³Chitra Sen, "The Eternal Flame," in *Remembering The Mother With Gratitude*.
- ²⁴*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 371.
- ²⁵*The Life Divine*, p. 253.
- ²⁶*Letters on Yoga*, p. 717.
- ²⁷Saviri, p. 710.



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