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*New Race**Blessings*

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From the editor's desk...

Dear Readers,

In this issue we present four interesting articles. The first, by Ananda Reddy, examines and compares several different views within Indian philosophy regarding the aim and nature of spiritual realization. It concisely describes the views of the Buddha, Sankhya philosophy, Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, and Sri Aurobindo on the nature of spiritual liberation and transformation. In discussing Sri Aurobindo's view, which in its own way includes the liberation envisioned differently by the others, Dr. Reddy touches on the three transformations—psychic, spiritual and supramental—that are unique aims of the Integral Yoga.

The second article is by one of the learners in our Master's Programme, Menaka Deorah, on some of the important principles of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. It frames its discussion in terms of a decisive shift that must occur in the individual's consciousness from its involvement in the workings of its outer nature of mind, life and body to the deeper soul within. Within the context of this general aim, she discusses the complex structure of the being as well as the key disciplines essential to effecting this shift to our hidden soul, such as concentration, renunciation, dedication of our work and activities, and surrender to the Divine.

The third article is by Larry Seidlitz and focuses on some critical experiences and changes in the consciousness of the Mother during her later years of sadhana which were discussed with and recorded by her disciple Satprem in *Mother's Agenda*. This period of Mother's sadhana in the body begins with the descent of the Supermind in the earth consciousness in 1956 and extends through 1972, after which Satprem no longer had the opportunity to speak with her. The article attempts to suggest a cohesive thread in the development of her experiences which shed light on the nature of the supramental change.

The fourth article by Shruti Bidwaikar, a member of the SACAR faculty, discusses the contrasts between the conventional British system of education in India and the educational philosophies put forth by Indian stalwarts such as Gandhi, Tilak, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. These nationalist leaders laid emphasis on the growth of the mind, heart, body and soul, while also fostering national feelings, and appreciation of India's languages and literature and culture. They also emphasized education of women to make them self-dependent and strong advocates of social change in India.

Finally, the wonderful flower photos in this issue have come from the very fine, color photographic book set, *The Spiritual Significance of Flowers*, by the Mother, published in 2000 by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

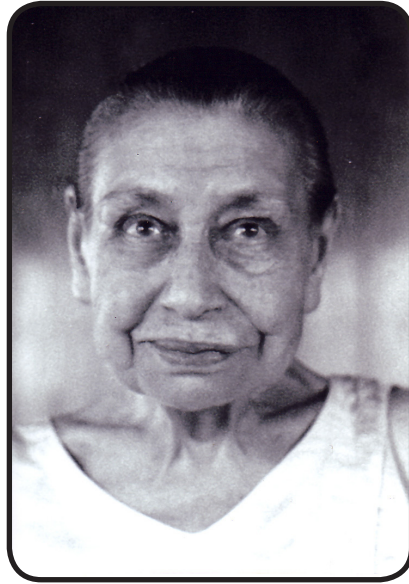
Till next time....

Larry

November 2011

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ON THE PSYCHIC BEING SOME WORDS OF ADVICE FROM THE MOTHER



How can one make one's psychic personality grow?

It is through all the experiences of life that the psychic personality forms, grows, develops and finally becomes a complete, conscious and free being.

This process of development goes on tirelessly through innumerable lives, and if one is not conscious of it, it is because one is not conscious of one's psychic being for that is the indispensable starting-point. Through interiorisation and concentration one has to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being. This psychic being always has an influence on the outer being, but that influence is almost always occult, neither seen nor perceived nor felt, save on truly exceptional occasions.

In order to strengthen the contact and aid, if possible, the development of the conscious psychic personality, one should, while concentrating, turn towards it, aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and take great care, each time that one receives an indication from it, to follow it very scrupulously and sincerely. To live in a great aspiration, to take care to become inwardly calm and remain so always as far as possible, to cultivate a perfect sincerity in all the activities of one's being these are the essential conditions for the growth of the psychic being.

10 September 1959

BONDAGE, LIBERATION AND TRANSFORMATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

Ananda Reddy

“What man dare, I dare.
 Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
 The armed rhinoceros, or th’ Hyrcan tiger;
 Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
 Shall never tremble. Or be active again,
 And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
 If trembling I inhabit, then protest me.
 The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
 Unreal mockery, hence!”

Macbeth, Shakespeare

Are these only words full of sound and fury signifying nothing? No, they are not. They are the very stuff of Macbeth’s agony. A strong and powerful character such as that of Macbeth cannot bear the mental and the psychological sufferings. As he indicates, physical sufferings and pain can be born to a great extent, but mental and emotional agonies cannot be borne. They haunt us at every second and they make us helpless victims. It is in such moments of life that one feels its bondage. It is again in these moments of our life that we feel our limitations and then we try to escape from the human bondage by whatever means we can find near the hand.

To help this poor miserable folk, many philosophers and saints have analyzed the nature and origin of bondage and then laid out very effective paths by which we can be liberated.

Buddha is believed to have said that our life is a chain of action—actions resulting from desires and desires resulting from the consequences of an actions. These desires are the cause of our pleasures and pain of our bondage. The only way to be liberated from this bondage is to retire from this action and to annihilate our desires. When one succeeds in doing so, one has the experience of Nirvana—a state of universal calmness and quietude, a consciousness static and luminous. It is true that we cannot speak of ‘one’ having the experience of Nirvana because as the word ‘nirvana’ implies, the whole packet of emotions



Spiritual significance: Transformation.

and desires and matter is blown out and nothing remains to experience nirvana. It would be more true to state that Nirvana comes down and settles at that particular level of consciousness. Whatever the inaptitude of expressions, there is the path—the eightfold path—that Buddha suggested for one's liberation.

The philosophy of Sankhya also gives us an interesting analysis of bondage and liberation. It holds that there are two ultimate realities—the Purusha and the Prakṛti. The Purusha is consciousness, static and individual whereas the Prakṛti is diametrically opposite and hence is unconscious, active and universal. These two are independent realities and yet Prakṛiti is dependent upon Purusha for the beginning of its manifestation. This is because, it is only when the Purusha glances at Prakṛiti that it begins to unravel itself and creates Mahat, the Buddhi, the Ego, the five tanmatras, etc. In this creation, the Purusha is charmed by the beauty parade of the Prakṛiti and then he forgets his own real nature that he is static, that he is consciousness and begins to consider himself as the ego that was created by Prakṛiti. So, according to Sankhya, it is this trapping of the Purusha by the Prakṛiti that is the real bondage.

And the way to liberate this Purusha from the enticement of Prakṛiti is to concentrate on the Buddhi—the subtlest creation of Prakṛiti as much as possible. In this state of the Purusha remembers his own nature and then he withdraws from the Prakṛiti and becomes his own real Self.

This explanation of Sankhya seems to solve the problem of the 'one' who is to be liberated, but, it raises many other questions which it cannot satisfy. How can Purusha who is absolutely static glance at Prakṛiti, because 'to glance' is an action which is contrary to Purusha's nature? How can absolute consciousness

and absolute knowledge forget itself when it is enveloped by Prakriti? And how can the liberation of Purusha depend upon the Buddhi which is a creation of the unconscious Prakriti? These and many other questions fail to find an answer in Sankhya. But apart from this failure of giving metaphysical answers this system seems to satisfy the practical need of liberation.

In the 8th century, the great intellectual genius, Sankaracharya comes and brings a new cyclone in the intellectual thinking of the Indian masses. He preached that there is nothing as Purusha or Prakriti but that there is only one reality, namely Brahman. By some unaccountable and inapprehensible phenomenon, Brahman, who is completely static, consciousness and transcendental comes to face the Maya and its creation. This Maya eclipses the Brahman and as in the case of the Sankhya explanation of bondage, in Sankara also, the Brahman loses himself and becomes the individual ego-self. This falling of Brahman from his transcendental state to the individual state is the great bondage of the absolute.

The only way to liberate this ego-self is to teach Buddhi the sense of discrimination—*viveka*. That is to say, the Buddhi must be taught and must be made to realise that it is not the Maya, that it is on the contrary the transcendental, the Sachchidananda. Once the Buddhi realises this, the ego-soul is liberated from Maya and it gets back its true transcendental self.

This theory of Sankara does not bring progress to the previous theories expect that it urges man to shun this life from the very beginning and to escape from it as soon as is possible. This theory also had its ambiguities such as, if the world is an illusion and that Brahman is lost in the world, where is the goal, where is the bondage to be liberated from, where is the path to follow? All these are illusionary and it makes no sense. When Sankara is asked about these problems of an illusory goal, an illusionary path etc. he replies that they cannot be answered because they are self-contradictory and hence do not have any answers and secondly they are ultimately non-existent and as they are illusory they do not need any answer. With these shrewd answers he claims that he has answered to all the questions and thereby ever smiles mawkishly at the philosopher- critics.

Another philosopher who brought revolution in the philosophical field was Ramanuja. He propounded the system of 'bhakti-marga'. He holds the view that there is only one reality whom he names as Vishnu or Brahman. Unlike the Brahman of Sankara, the Brahman of Ramanuja is dynamic. He manifests himself as the Nitya Vibuthi or the Supermind. And this dynamic Brahman also created the Lila Vibuthi or the world of play. This Lila Vibuthi is in the Sankhya terminology the Prakriti. Into this world of play wanders the jiva, the soul, the son of the Brahman. In this world, the jiva is captured and it forgets itself. It then begins to identify with the mind, "I am the Mind, I am the Ego etc." The soul entrapped in our world is the bondage according to Ramanuja.

What then is the method to escape this mayaic bondage? Ramanuja says that the only path for liberation is to turn the emotional being towards God. In this godward aspiration, the emotions must be purified and intensified. It is only when the bhakta succeeds in surrendering entirely to the Divine, that the Divine child, the soul is liberated from the earthly meshes. Unlike other philosophers who stressed on the purification of intellect, Ramanuja lays stress upon the heart of man. This bhakti-marga being easier than the other paths, it has attracted many more disciples.

The first thing a liberated man—liberated through any of the above four means—notices is that the sorrows of the world no more trouble him. Secondly, the liberated man notices that the ego and the desires in him have vanished, are evaporated. This is so because, as long as man is not liberated, his egos seeks to aggrandize and to grow in quantity, but, once the seeker is liberated he becomes a universal being and his ego has nothing to aggrandize—the island ego is one with its continent and it loses its entity. Thirdly, the seeker experiences that he was never in bondage, that the Purusha or the Brahman or the jiva is ever free. This seems to be quite paradoxical and quite contrary to the analysis done by the great masters of philosophy.

Examining these systems of philosophy with a metaphysical mind, we notice that when the philosophers have given us paths to liberation, all of them have invariably stressed upon the purification of our lower—Sankara, Buddha and Sankhya lay stress upon Buddhi and Ramanuja on the emotions. This shows that it is our own nature, specifically Buddhi which is trapped in the mayaic creation and that it is Buddhi which has forgotten its origin, its home. So, in a sense, it is not the Brahman or Purusha or the jiva who were in bondage and in ignorance, it its Prakriti which is limited and ignorant.

Such an explanation which gives the right relations between Purusha and Prakriti is found only in Gita and in Sri Aurobindo. They conceive of a Supreme Being, the Purushottama—the Perfect Man. He is Akshara—static, and Kshara-dynamic at the same time. In his poise of dynamism, according to Sri Aurobindo, he first created the Supermind or the nitya-vibuthi in Ramanuja's terminology. This supramental being has a consciousness which can live simultaneously in the three aspects of existence. He can exist as a universal being, as well as an objective soul and thirdly as a soul that projects itself into action and becomes the action itself. This state of the Superman is the highest stage in which the individual can exist as cosmic- individual.

This Supreme Purushottama does not stop his manifestation with the creation of the Supramental being but he undergoes an involution and goes right into the state of Nescience. After this, he begins to evolve and has at present come to the state of the mental being. This mental being feels that he is limited, that he is a petty creature crawling upon earth because this complex being of mind, life and body exclusively concentrates upon itself—its ego and desires—and ignores other parts of its being. So, the real bondage lies in this

exclusive consciousness of the individual being upon its outer being. He is bound to his own magnetic field and it is this that he feels as bondage.

In a subtler sense of the word 'bondage', our soul also is bound. The soul which is eternally free and which is ever in touch with the jivataman emanates rays of divine will. But, because of the whirlpool created by mind, body and life, the rays of the divine will are incapable of piercing through and manifesting in the actions of nature. It is this incapability of the soul to manifest its will in Prakriti that can be considered as bondage of the soul.

From this and the previously discussed analysis of bondage, it seems that Prakriti is all-powerful, that on it depends the liberation. This point would be correct if we had considered it in the light of Sankhya philosophy. That is, if there were two independent realities Purusha and Prakriti—Prakriti would be as powerful as Purusha. But this is not so. It is by the withholding of its knowledge that the Supermind has created this Prakriti. And hence, Prakriti is a part and parcel of the Supreme Purushottama and as all the limitations of the soul are self-willed, Prakriti is not all powerful.

To continue with our analysis, how is the individual to be liberated from Prakriti? The Gita and Sri Aurobindo profess that the road to liberation lies in turning the exclusive concentration of our being towards our soul, or the inactive Brahman, or the Supreme Purushottama. This type of switching on to our inner realities, many philosophers have preached and many saints have practiced. Those who have concentrated on the widening of their mind have reached the Impersonal Brahman; others who have intensified and purified their emotional being have come in contact with their psychic being and still others who have practiced severe Hatha yoga have opened channels in their beings through which the Purushottama, the Supermind, and the Soul have slowly influenced the Prakriti and liberated the individual.

But, Sri Aurobindo is not satisfied with this turning of the single parts of our being towards the Divine. He wants that all our parts must concentrate upon the Supreme Lord because it is only the liberation of all the three parts of our being that would be the true liberation. By liberation we mean that the parts of our being turn exclusively towards the Jivatman and the Supermind, the Purushottama, and allow the rays of our soul to penetrate the whirlpool of mind, life and body. This penetration of the spirit's rays through the thick veil of body, life and mind is not liberation of the soul alone, but also of our individual nature. Our nature would not be troubled by ego or desires because it would grow into cosmic consciousness.

But this liberation of the mental, vital and physical entities is not enough because this is not the total purpose of Purushottama's manifestation. We have already seen that the aim of this evolution is to return to the Divine consciousness in all its integrality. And if this is so, what happens to Inconscience, the Tamas, the Rajas and the Sattwa natures of the individual being? They can't be ignored

if the Divine is to evolve from Nescience to Supreme Consciousness! It is not that the liberated man will not have these gunas in him. He will surely have them though more transparent than in the unliberated man! Hence, we have to seek for the transformation of total Prakriti in order to fulfill the Divine scheme:

All here must learn to obey a higher law,
Our body's cells must hold the immortal flame.
Else would the spirit reach alone its source;
Leaving a half-saved world to it dubious.
Nature would ever labour unredeemed;
Our earth would ever spin unhelped in space,
And this immense creation's purpose fails,
Till at least the frustrate universe sank undone.

SABCL Vol.28, Book 1 Canto 03, p.35

Thus, Sri Aurobindo warns of the peril of an untransformed world. He not only warns, but he also paves the way to the transformation that is necessary in order to save the world. He says that the earth-nature must undergo a triple transformation—the psychic transformation, the spiritual transformation and the supramental transformation. Briefly,

Psychicisation means the change of the lower nature bringing right visions into the mind, right impulse and feeling into the vital, right movement and habit into the physical—all turned towards the Divine, all based on love, adoration, bhakti—finally, the vision and sense of the Mother everywhere in all as well as in the heart, her Force working in the being, faith, consecration, surrender. (*SABCL Vol.24, p.1093*)

“The Spiritual change is the established descent of the peace, light, knowledge, power, bliss from above, the awareness of the self and the divine and of a higher cosmic consciousness and the change of the whole consciousness to that.” (*SABCL Vol.24, p.1093*)

Maybe, again, a few have had these transformations separately. And with these two types of transformations humanity has remained satisfied. But, Sri Aurobindo insists on the supramental transformation because this supramental consciousness which is empowered with dynamic power of Purushottama can alone penetrate and transform the solid Nescience into a Divine consciousness.

Once man achieves this glorious transformation, not only will he bring down the life divine upon earth by manifesting the Divine in every cell of his

body, in every thought of his mind, in every feeling of his heart, he will also change the three gunas of Prakriti into their divine equivalents: Sattwa becomes jyoti, the authentic spiritual Light; Rajas becomes Tapas, the tranquilly intense divine force; Tamas becomes *sama*, the divine quite, rest, peace and thereby transform Nature too. This is the glorious culmination of man's journey because at this luminous end--

A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
 On nature's luminous tops, on the spirit's ground,
 The Superman shall reign as king of life,
 Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven
 And lead towards God and truth man's ignorant heart
 And lift towards godhead his mortality.

SABCL Vol.28, Book 11 Canto 01, p.707

The gnostic individual would be the consummation of the spiritual man; his whole way of being, thinking, living, acting would be governed by the power of a vast universal spirituality. All the trinities of the Spirit would be real to his self-awareness and realised in his inner life. All his existence would be fused into oneness with the transcendent and universal Self and Spirit; all his action would originate from and obey the supreme Self and Spirit's divine governance of Nature. All life would have to him the sense of the Conscious Being, the Purusha within, finding its self-expression in Nature; his life and all its thoughts, feelings, acts would be filled for him with that significance and built upon that foundation of its reality. He would feel the presence of the Divine in every centre of his consciousness, in every vibration of his life-force, in every cell of his body. In all the workings of his force of Nature he would be aware of the workings of the supreme World-Mother, the Supernature; he would see his natural being as the becoming and manifestation of the power of the World-Mother. In this consciousness he would live and act in an entire transcendent freedom, a complete joy of the Spirit, an entire identity with the cosmic Self and a spontaneous sympathy with all in the universe. (*The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. 22, (*The Life Divine*), p. 1007)

FROM PERSONALITY TO PERSON — THE IMPERATIVE SHIFT

Menaka Deorah



Spiritual significance: Integral opening to the Light.

Author's Note: This is an attempt to take a closer look at the burning need and relevance of such a shift and some of the unique dimensions that characterize its effectuation in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

Part 1. Need and relevance of the shift

What is the shift?

Much has been achieved on the material plane but on the personal front man continues to be trapped, impaired and afflicted endlessly. Distress and discontent have become the norm. His subjective life seems no less than a tragic dead end. The verdict from all sides is that man as he is, with his grossly one-sided existence, is plainly incapable of any real solution, any true perfection, any lasting happiness. Something is amiss. The West, with its modern findings, acknowledging only the apparent physical side of life, fails miserably to alleviate his pain. The east too, oblivious of its own spiritual past, fails to deal adequately with the blinding material present, and its crashing consequences. The search is at its most frantic, there has to be a connection, a nexus between what we are and what we ought to be, between reality and the hope of perfection we harbor secretly. The inner and the outer, spirit and matter, soul and nature, are the primal dualities of our life and the source of all the contradiction and discord of our daily life; the opposite poles that man seeks constantly to fathom and bridge. The pillars upon which rests all the success of life, world and god;

To arrive somehow at a working harmony of the two extremes, because it seems that thus alone can be found the way to his perfection and joy, is the challenge and the solution that man must achieve. Life is but a laboratory for the fulfillment of this purpose. All our imperfection is seated in our nature or personality and all our potential perfection is concealed in our soul or the real Person. In the current scenario the personality is all we know for we have never met the real person. The wise have told us that it is the inner Person that must be given the charge of the governance of life. The shift from personality to person is our only hope. In Sri Aurobindo's words,

The fact is not only there, it determines our whole existence, it is the one fact that is really important to us as human beings with a will and an intelligence and a subjective existence which makes all our happiness and suffering. The whole problem of life resolves itself into this one question,—What are we to do with this soul (person) and nature (personality) set face to face with each other?...The whole of human philosophy, religion, science is really nothing but an attempt to get at the right data upon which it will be possible to answer the question and solve, as satisfactorily as our knowledge will allow, the problem of our existence. (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 428-429)

In the outer appearance of things man and world are only what we call nature or Prakriti, "a force that operates as the whole law and mechanism of being, creates the world which is the object of our mind and senses." (*Essays on the Gita*, p. 573) What is not known is the fact that the mind and senses are also created by Nature "as a means of relation between the creature and the world he lives in." (*ibid.*) In this external view of things man with his soul, mind and body appears to be a product of Nature "differentiated from others by a separation of his body, life and mind and especially by his ego-sense—that subtle mechanism constructed for him that he may confirm and centralize his consciousness of all this strong separateness and difference." (*ibid.*) Man's whole being is driven by Nature's laws and he cannot function outside of it. Even the so-called freedom that he assigns to his personal will and ability to choose and decide for himself is actually nothing but the will of his ego, which is most strictly a puppet of Nature. "...as is the nature of his ego, so will be the nature of its will and according to that he must act and he can no other." (*ibid.*, pp. 573-574) This is how bound we are and this therefore the root of the whole problem.

"There is, however, something in man's consciousness which does not fall in with the rigidity of this formula..." (*ibid.*, p. 574) As he develops and evolves he begins to feel the existence of an inner reality, separate from his outer nature, untouched and unaffected from the surface turbulent movements of personality and with a semblance of infinite knowledge, peace and power. In this inner view of things it is no longer Nature but Soul or Spirit that dominates. It is Purusha rather than Prakriti that governs. It is the presence of an absolute

Person rather than a relative personality. The whole truth is that Nature is creative power of the Soul. Soul is Nature's basis and upholder. Nature works out and manifests what Soul wills for its delight. Nature and soul are two aspects of the same reality, one inferior but dynamic and creative, the other superior but static and self-contained. The two were separated from and out of the One Supreme Reality for creation and manifestation of the universe. "The Purusha & Prakriti are therefore not only the Witness & the Activity Witnessed, but the Lord & his executive energy. Purusha is Ishwara, Prakriti is His Shakti." (*Essays Divine and Human*, p. 195) The universe is nothing but a play of the two with each other.

Sri Aurobindo says that "The real soul and self of us is hidden from our intelligence by its ignorance of inner things, by a false identification, by an absorption in our outward mechanism of mind, life and body." (*Essays on the Gita*, p. 574) Without knowledge of the real basis of our self we are no more than little crippled creatures circling hopelessly to achieve a very tiny inconsequential part of what seems to us the whole reality. The picture is grossly incomplete without the admittance of the soul. "If the active soul of man can once draw back from its identification with its natural instruments, if it can see and live in the entire faith of its inner reality, then all is changed to it, life and existence take on another appearance, action a different meaning and character." (*ibid.*)

A closer look

In the lower terms of existence it is the personality/nature aspect that dominates but as we realize the inadequacy of this functioning and dissatisfied, decide to move within towards something more potent, more conscious, towards soul or purusha, nature too evolves and begins to assume her true role, that of Shakti, that of which she is a lesser formulation and purusha too grows in the process, from a silent witness self to the mighty master and Lord, Ishwara. The combined working of Ishwara and Shakti in the individual forms the basis of an integral perfection by preparing the grounds, enabling, empowering and upgrading the system of mental man to usher in the next evolutionary principle, the supramental Gnostic consciousness, that which is the ultimate aim of all this terrestrial life.

But this metamorphosis can begin only when we become convinced, either in one part of our being or in all of it, of the first imperative shift, and arrive at the mind soul within, the part in us that steps back and watches uninvolved all this play of the surface. It is to this mind soul, the part of the inner purusha seated behind the surface mind with the hallmark human capacity to observe silently, that we assign the work of the triple yoga of works, knowledge and devotion. This triple movement of the initial purification and liberation of our mentality, emotion and action, is considered in the Integral Yoga, as the fastest

means and basis of the great shift, so that when the higher principle does descend into us for the final transformation, it finds in us a suitable, sufficiently wide, universalized and strong adhara. One that is firm and stable in its inner foundations.

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga psychology offers the shortest possible way to the largest human perfection ever envisaged. The key to man's problems and man's maximum potential lies in something beyond his mind and nature—it lies in his soul. From surface to depth, from relative to absolute, from temporary to permanent, from fragmented to united, from chaos to harmony, from becoming to being, from personality to person: This is the imperative shift we are to make before any significant change can take place. Nothing short of it will suffice anymore.

This requires an intense personal effort. As Sri Aurobindo says,

The development of the experience in its rapidity, its amplitude, the intensity and power of its results, depends primarily, in the beginning of the path and long after, on the aspiration and personal effort of the sadhaka. The process of Yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances and attractions of things to a higher state in which the Transcendent and Universal can pour itself into the individual mould and transform it. The first determining element of the siddhi is, therefore, the intensity of the turning, the force that directs the soul inward. The power of aspiration of the heart, the force of the will, the concentration of the mind, the perseverance and determination of the applied energy are the measure of that intensity. (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 58)

It is only then, we may say, that the shift from personality to person has been established.

The difficulty is always the in first stage of the shift, the stage of the fundamental uprooting of the old formulations and the old tendencies of the personality, one that nature herself had created to achieve the first formed human individuality out of the animal; this movement in the opposite direction, against the gravity of the ego, driven by a new unknown inner force and power, is bound to be shattering. Any orbital change needs huge velocity and huge power; and here we are talking of the greatest orbital shifts of all, that of ego to soul, that of personality to person. Sri Aurobindo tells us that all human effort is an image of the divine Tapas, that all mighty burning divine will and energy that makes anything possible and that consumes in its fold any opposition whatsoever. The question is to what extent and degree we align ourselves with the divine plan now that we know it. The good news is that times are particularly favorable for those who are ready to take on this journey, ready to synchronize their intention and purpose of life with that of Nature herself,

ready to take the first plunge towards the next future of evolution. Everything in the universe will now conspire unanimously to aid the individual in his new goal, the only goal worth having, for it incorporates and fulfills all others.

As we commit ourselves to this goal the need for personal effort reduces and the process naturally turns to autopilot mode in which the individual and divine Will merge substantially for an effective advance.

Why the shift ?

“Man is a transitional being”, says Sri Aurobindo (*SABCL*, Vol. 17, p. 7). He is not the final in the evolutionary ladder. Nature cannot rest satisfied with a creature as imperfect as man. She now labors to formulate this new being out of man but without his knowledge and consent. From the inadequate mind principle it is now time to move to the perfection of the supermind principle. Man is the only creature capable of a voluntary participation in his own evolution to the next species. Sri Aurobindo came to tell us that it is now time and the evolutionary intent for man to accelerate his evolution by a conscious and willed self-exceeding. The process of this self-exceeding is the Integral Yoga Psychology.

Man’s passage from the external ego where there is suffering and limitation to the real inner self where there is joy and mastery, is the focus of this shift and is essential not only for his individual perfection but for the perfection of the world too. How long shall we remain ignorant of our divine destiny! In Sri Aurobindo’s magnificent words,

...man’s importance in the world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible. To fulfill God in life is man’s manhood. He starts from the animal vitality, but a divine existence is his objective...(*The Life Divine*, p. 36)

The liberation of the individual soul is therefore the keynote of the definite divine action; it is the primary divine necessity and the pivot on which all else turns. It is the point of Light in which the intended complete self-manifestation in the many begins to emerge. (*ibid.*, p. 40)

If this be the divine game plan would it not be in our best interest to abandon all personal games and join it right away! To remain where we are now, in the ignorant superficiality we know as our self, to continue as part of Nature’s Evolution is not only to be content with mediocrity and imperfection, but it is a grave denial and contradiction of the will of evolution. There is growth in the old way of Nature, she leads us ahead all the time in spite of our self, through difficulty and pain, but this growth is retarded and sullied, it is thrust upon us. It can never arrive, as will confirm our personal experience, at anything

absolute and perfect. Moreover, it is Nature's secret desire that man should now break away from her and commence his own evolution by coming in contact with the his real self, which he can find within and above himself, and become the mighty master he is destined to be. There is a tremendous force at work all around us urging and goading us to make the shift. All personal and world events are pointing in the same direction. Everything seems to resonate the same message. We must be utterly impaired not to see it, grossly inert not to hear it. Every moment calls, every instant beckons.

When the Shift

All life is a preparation towards this pivotal shift. Everything that happens, all experience is a means for growth leading to this momentous turning point. This is the secret blueprint of life and the reason why things happen the way they do. To assign any other motive or cause to life's occurring is childish. We search different avenues until we are ready for the real thing. Then the call comes. It is loud and clear, unmistakable. It is impossible then to be content with the old standards, the old pulls and pushes, the old ways. Something consents within almost in spite of us. It is then time to work out in the personality what has been decided by the inner person. We are now ready to make the shift.

Nature and ego have brought us this far but can take us no further. It is time now for our soul to take charge and work out the next future. It is by a conscious and rigorous personal effort of mind and life that we must recognize, acknowledge and hand over the reins of our life to the supremacy of the soul. An honest integral consent is all that is needed; the rest shall be made to unfold in spite of us.

Part 2: The uniqueness of the shift

Aim and character

Most past yoga's and systems advocate this shift as the necessary first step for any self-development but the final aim has always been an individual liberation from nature and world and a singular, linear, inward or upward union with some abstract and silent divine. In the Integral yoga too it is essential to make the shift from nature to soul, but not for the sake of personal fulfillment alone, rather for an integral and total perfection of the whole of life and world. Union not only with the silent Brahman but a mighty bringing down of its dynamism and splendour, a radical conversion of the lower into the higher, a tangible realization of God in everything from the most material to the most abstract, from the most mundane to the most exotic. A horizontal unity with the one in all and then a vertical unity with the one above all. This is the new formula

that leaves nothing outside its scope. It is Sri Aurobindo's ruthless synthesis of the largest order and uncompromising harmony of the biggest dimension that characterizes this shift. Nothing is left out, no matter how contradictory or how irreconcilable. Every opposition promises a new order, every discord points at a new alignment.

It is this widest worldview that gives the process of this shift a radically different hue. It brings in a never before enthusiasm, optimism, energy, love and delight of life, of world, of god, something that correlates magnificently with newness, modernity, globalization, power and all that belongs and characterizes this new world that is surging today. Contradictions vanish, boundaries and divisions disappear, extremes have no room anymore, everything finds its natural place in this largest scheme of things; all theories and practices, all ways and all views are accepted into a universal embrace; narrowness removed and broadened, all is prepared to be transformed until a new unimaginably luminous and powerful order consumes everything in its ultimate perfection.

God is no more ethereal but real, no more far and silent but near and intimate, no more unreachable but waiting to reach out in every nook and corner, in every gaze and smile, in every word and phrase. It is not we who seek God anymore; it is the Hour when god seeks us. The tables have turned. It is time to prepare ourselves for the carnival of God. Sri Aurobindo confirms most grandiosely what our ancient Vedic seers affirmed.

In other words, if Brahman has entered into form and represented Its being in material substance, it can only be to enjoy self-manifestation in the figures of relative and phenomenal consciousness. Brahman is in this world to represent Itself in the values of Life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in Itself... (*The Life Divine*, p. 36)

This is the true role and unique privilege of our human existence... Shall we not be stuck if we spend ourselves doing and knowing everything other than the thing that really matters, that for which life is actually meant.

The uniqueness of this shift lies in the comprehensiveness of this view. It is an integral perfection we seek of life and world through an individual illumination and liberation from nature to an individual illumination and arrival in soul. Sri Aurobindo came to tell that this is not only possible but most awaited and the only way to advance. All we need is a conviction and consent in all our being that this is the thing we want and nothing else.

No heavenly promises, no afterlife rewards, no solemn oaths, God is either here and now in the thick of life or never again. Every single thing that we experience whether internal or external is God concealed. There exists nothing else. To be able to see, know, love and become this secret Divinity is the trick. It comes from a certain discipline and conviction. Then we are on the roll,

unstoppable, we meet God in every moment and in every movement. Life becomes what it is meant to be, a constant ecstatic discovery of the One in the field of the Many. Even pain becomes the touch of God and is met with love and thankfulness until in every single thing we feel only joy and see only His smiling face.

Based on the profoundest universal Truths and interpreted in the widest possible manner Sri Aurobindo's yoga seems very consistent with today's trends. Top of the line and extremely user friendly! All-inclusive and super adaptive! The fastest, most comprehensive and foolproof operating system ever!

Dynamic, fast, powerful, radical, total, integral, whole, entire, all, universal, life, earth, here, and now, are the keywords of this yoga. As Sri Aurobindo puts it:

...a complete fulfillment of our being and consciousness, a complete transformation of our nature—and this implies a complete perfection of life here and not only a return to an eternal perfection elsewhere. This is the object but in the method also there is the same integrality, for the entirety in the object cannot be accomplished without an entirety in the method, a complete turning, opening, self giving of our being and nature in all its parts, ways, movements to that which we realize...

This is the character of the integral Yoga. (*Essays Divine and Human*, p. 150)

The inspiration

The Mother in her simple style has given us the formula for this integral change:

We don't want life as it is any longer,...we don't want falsehood and ignorance any longer,...we don't want suffering and unconsciousness any longer,... we do not want disorder and bad will any longer, because Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us: It is not necessary to leave the earth to find the Truth, it is not necessary to leave life to find one's soul, it is not necessary to give up the world to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in everything and if he is hidden, it is because we do not take the trouble to discover him.

We can simply by a sincere aspiration open a sealed door in us and find... that Something which will change the whole significance of life, reply to all our questions, solve all our problems and lead us to the perfection we aspire for without knowing it, to that Reality alone which can satisfy us and give us lasting joy, equilibrium, strength, life...

The starting point : to want it, truly want it, to need it. The next step : to think, above all, of that...

That is the one thing which counts. And then...Something will happen. Surely something will happen. For each one it will take a different form. (*Questions and Answers 1957-58*, pp. 374-375)

Mother's formula is quite simple. Conviction in the mind, a burning need in the heart and a constant remembering and thinking. The rest will happen by a greater Power. Her assurance, Her sanction is as certain as the rising of the sun.

Composition and structure of our Being

It is important to the efficiency of the shift that we know our being well, its parts, its functions and the laws that govern it. We should know exactly what is happening, how to deal with it and the right attitudes towards every movement that demands our attention.

Our being is a complex amalgam of many different parts. Very broadly there are two divisions in the human being. The outer being, which constitutes the personality (from the Latin *persona*, "mask"), and the inner being, the true Being or the Person who uses the outer mask of the personality. The outer being, made up of the outer mind, vital and physical, is only an instrument and a means of expression for the inner being to use. It is not our real self. However, ordinarily we are identified with the outer being and regard it as our real self. Therefore all our life is an expression of our outer being and not that of the inner being as is meant to be. Herein lies the whole problem. How can life be anything close to perfect when it is driven by the part that was designed to serve, not command?

Here is a brief description of the three parts of the outer being, the mind, the vital and the physical from the writings of A.S. Dalal (*Looking from Within*, pp. vi-vii)

The physical (being): It is the consciousness in the body which regulates the complex workings of the different bodily organs and physiological systems. Though the mind exhibits a higher form of consciousness and intelligence than that of the body, it cannot but marvel at the wisdom of the body expressed in the various processes which maintain the body in health and heal it in illness or accident. However, physical consciousness, as compared to mental consciousness, is seen to be relatively inert, obscure, narrow or limited, and automatic or mechanical in its functionings. Thus attitudes which are characterised by rigidity, narrowness, conservatism or slowness to, change, indifference or boredom, and habitual or routine modes of action and reaction are related to the physical part of our being.

The vital (being): Intermediate between the physical and the mental is the vital, made up of life-energies, sensations (pleasure, pain, etc.), instincts and impulses (anger, fear, lust, etc.), desires, feelings and emotions... The vital consciousness is characterised by likes and dislikes, the search for pleasure and enjoyment, and the avoidance of pain and discomfort, desire to possess and to accumulate... Besides the quest for pleasure these attitudes are characterised by a need for perpetual variety and change, ambitiousness, attachment and repulsion, aggression, fear and impulsiveness.

The mental (being): This is the part of our make-up which has to do with thoughts and ideas, facts and, knowledge. Reason and intellect are the most developed expressions of the mental consciousness. In contrast to the vital which is governed by the pleasure principle, the mental is guided by what accords with reason and is deemed to be true and good. Therefore when the mental consciousness is predominant in an individual, the attitudes of the individual are characterised by a rational outlook and are based on moral and intellectual principles.

In the Sankhya school of Indian philosophy, the outer and the inner divisions of the being are called Prakriti (Nature) and Purusha (Person) respectively. Prakriti functions through the ego and the three gunas, satwa, rajas, tamas in the outer personality. Her secret intention is to go beyond these, arrive at the Purusha and become a conscious and perfect instrument of the Purusha. This she hopes to accomplish with our conscious collaboration and not any more through the old law of obscure causality in which the individual is only a puppet with no actual power.

A clear awareness of this division of the outer and the inner is the first prerequisite. Only then can we hope to reconcile the two and consciously start making the shift.

The part that was made to govern, the all powerful and luminous inner being, lies dormant, inactive, closed, unknown to our active consciousness. It is not difficult to identify the inner being for it seeks to be uncovered all the time, sending intimations and suggestions at every possible opening in the outer being. It is a strange and ill-founded notion from the past that the inner being is difficult to attain to and meant only for the realized one or a few chosen ones. We are all without an exception, chosen and destined to realize the inner being. It is not about some ultimate far reaching moment of illumination that is the aim but rather the first conviction, the first moment of wow, the first thrills of a first contact, it is what we can do now that matters; it is the now that will open up the next and so forth... no future realization is the object of this shift, we seek what we can achieve now even if it is only a mental affirmation or the tiny unshaking faith in the heart. The one that can happen now is what we seek.

The inner being consists of an inner personality, the swadharna and swabhava of our scriptures, comprising of our inner mental, inner vital and our inner physical. This inner personality reflects the unique divine possibilities of our true individuality. It is the higher aspects of our external personality. At the centre of our inner being is the inner Person, the Psychic being, the Purusha, the real master and governor of our life and being, under whose luminous action we are ordained to work out the dreams of god here upon Earth, making this aching material life the joyous field of divine perfection. Again, this shift from the outer being to the inner being is not some imaginary human utopia we are talking about, it is as real and practical as anything else, the very purpose of life and the reason why the world still moves ahead in spite of all the disasters, falsehood, ugliness and sorrow that exists. It is the saddest fact of all that this reality of life is not common knowledge, is not the thing we think about all the time, and is not our main preoccupation. How shall we make the shift if we don't even know that life the aim of life of life and not all the other useless things that we live for.

To be liberated from the outer and the lower self, to live in the inner and the higher self, in order to transform the lower into the higher, is the larger aim of this shift. Here we shall not abandon the outer after having reached the inner; here we shall reach the inner for the love of the outer, for the love of a total union and a total perfection.

Mind, the preferred starting point

When we first pause and step back to relook at our self, when we first withdraw from the surface activities of the nature to go within, we come to the soul behind the mind, the manomaya purusha, the inner mental being, the part in us that watches silently without being involved or affected. This is the witness self, the sakshi of the scriptures. The shift begins from here. This is the part that can take us within or rather, that will lead itself to the supreme mastery and perfection of the innermost being. This witness self is the first critical interface between nature and soul. Sri Aurobindo points out that we are essentially mental creatures and it is through the ability of the mind to detach itself from the sensory inputs and its ability observe dispassionately that we shall arrive most naturally and most easily to that which is beyond it. For we want the fastest and broadest perfection possible.

The predominant character and dynamics of this surface mode is the famous "raag dwesh," fear-desire or pleasant-unpleasant reactive mechanism. We are so compulsively and helplessly tied to this habit that we can never get past it and arrive at the part where there is no reaction, only a creative silence, from where real progress is possible. This is where most of us either lose interest because of repeated failure and frustration or succumb to the pressure. As the witness consciousness gradually becomes more stable and constant in

us our positive and negative reactions become milder, less frequent and less insistent. Slowly this act of witnessing begins to assume the power to consent or withdraw its sanction from the instinctive movements and reactions of the outer ego-driven personality. This is the first real victory, the beginnings of the orbital change. This is when the sakshi turns to anumanta, the giver of sanction.

Once the sanction is withdrawn from this outward tendency to react to everything, once there is even an initial check on the outward flow of the life energies, the prana, then there is a real hope, a real possibility of making the inner shift and all our being and its old habitual energies are automatically drawn inwards.

As the power to withdraw sanction increases, so the conviction, joy and sense of freedom. This is the beginning of purification, the first stage of the yoga. This will lead to liberation and eventually to transformation, the unique dimension given to us by Sri Aurobindo in his Integral yoga. The past yogas stopped at liberation. It is the aspect of transformation that gives this shift its vastness and wholeness. Although here we attempt to look more closely at the first and second stages, it is in the light of the third that we shall do so.

The use of concentration

There is by now a strong conviction, a resolute faith and a sure glimpse of the inner reality but the difficulty is the inability to remain within, the inability to hold the realization and live constantly in it. Our inward concentration gets distracted, dissipated, dissolved much too easily by the slightest push and pull and we are thrown back almost with vengeance into the surface nature mode with all its old habits and tendencies. And this is the area of our special interest, the first attempts at holding and dwelling in the truths that we have only seen flashes of. Making our inner knowledge a living reality, becoming in all our nature what we know and believe, loosening the knots that tie us down to our old ways, are the biggest difficulties in making the first stable shift. In Sri Aurobindo's words:

It is by thought that we dissipate ourselves in the phenomenal; it is by gathering back of the thought into it must draw ourselves back into the real. Concentration has three powers by which this aim can be affected. By concentration on anything whatsoever we are able to know that thing, to make it deliver up its concealed secrets; we must use this power to know not things, but the one Thing-in-itself. By concentration again the whole will can be gathered up for the acquisition of that which is still ungrasped, still beyond us; this power if it is sufficiently trained, sufficiently single-minded, sincere, sure of itself, faithful to itself alone, absolute in faith, we can use for the acquisition of any object whatsoever; but we ought to use it

not for the acquisition of the many objects which the world offers to us, but to grasp spiritually the one object worthy of pursuit which is also the one subject worthy of knowledge. (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 304)

A third process is neither at first to concentrate in a strenuous meditation on the one subject nor in a strenuous concentration of the one object of thought-vision, but first to still the mind altogether. This may be done by various ways; one is to stand back from the mental action altogether not participating in but simply watching it until, tired of its unsanctioned leaping and running, it falls into an increasing and finally an absolute quiet. Another way is to reject the thought-suggestions, to cast them away from the mind whenever they come and firmly hold to the peace of the being, which really and always exists behind the trouble and riot of the mind. When this secret peace is unveiled, a great calm settles on the being and there comes usually with it the perception and experience of the all-pervading silent Brahman, everything else at first seeming to be mere form and eidolon. On the basis of this calm everything else may be built up in the knowledge and experience no longer of the external phenomena of things but of the deeper truth of the divine manifestation. (*ibid.*, pp. 309-310)

A deep understanding of this concentration will make sure that even as we swing from nature to soul, from the external personality mode to the inner person mode, we shall not be flustered and disturbed by it. We shall persist in a quiet faith and turn every dissipation and every distraction into a growing perfection of the inner concentration. Sri Aurobindo assures us that once the mind has glimpsed this concentration it can never be the same again, it would have changed forever and nothing can stop it from a rapid advance.

The power of renunciation

“Renunciation is an indispensable instrument of our perfection,” says Sri Aurobindo (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 311). Renunciation not of life and the objects of life as we is traditionally told but of the great knots of ignorance that tie us down to these objects and make our divine living an impossibility. Desire, attachment and ego are the three massive burdens of our existence that we shall cast out vehemently and forever from our nature and forbid them to resist, retard and come in the way of our inward shift. As Sri Aurobindo says,

...Our renunciation must obviously be an inward renunciation... there is nothing in the world to which we must be attached, not wealth nor poverty, nor joy nor suffering, nor life nor death, nor greatness, nor littleness, nor vice nor virtue, nor friend, nor wife, nor children, nor country, nor our work and mission, nor heaven nor earth, nor all that is within them or beyond them. And this does not mean that there is nothing at all that we shall love, nothing

in which we shall take delight; for attachment is egoism is egoism in love and not love itself, desire is limitation and insecurity in a hunger for pleasure and satisfaction and not the seeking after the divine delight in things. A universal love we must have, calm and yet intense beyond the brief vehemence of the most violent passion; a delight in things rooted in a delight in God that does not adhere to their forms but to that which they conceal in themselves and that embraces the universe without being caught in its meshes. (*ibid.*, pp. 314-315)

In this freedom lies infinite ecstasy and limitless enjoyment; in this liberation lies our true self, our true life. In this freedom of the spirit we make the shift from personality to person.

Work, action and living

The personal element recedes, and the divine presence becomes the focal point. All work and act is made an offering to the divine. All sense of benefit and gain is offered up to the Divine. Action becomes a swift means to realize the divine perfection in life. First we do this through a remembrance of the Divine at the beginning and at the end of all our activity, then it becomes more constant, like a quiet backdrop of divine memory, and finally there comes a point when the consecration to the divine becomes the natural fabric and substance of our being, making it impossible to live without an active communion with the divine in our thoughts, senses and feelings. There remains then no sense of responsibility and ownership of any kind, no expectation of any kind, no initiation or preference of any kind. A tranquil, alert and happy emptiness replaces all personal movements until the Divine will stir again and leads to the next action. As this is glimpsed and stabilized in the individual his passage from personality to person becomes more complete and effective.

The search for harmony—our one supreme duty

“For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony,” (*The Life Divine*, p. 2) is the supreme revelation Sri Aurobindo makes that sums up in one mighty stroke the essence and solution of the whole problem of pain and existence. Everything that we experience as individuals or as a collectivity is essentially a possibility of future perfection in the guise of an event or happening. Everything without exception comes with the clear intention of achieving a particular harmony of differences, a particular reconciliation of opposites, a certain possibility of oneness amidst the variety of multiples. It is our supreme duty, *kartavya*, to put aside the externality of things, rend ourselves of our superficial personality and seek doggedly this harmony in everything we meet whether positive or negative or even apparently trivial or mundane. This is our noblest and worthiest preoccupation and our fastest way to the glory of a divine life. In the beginning it might be arduous to silence

the discord of the ego and find out the harmony in everything but in the end it's a question of conviction and habit. First we may struggle to see only mentally what the situation is here to reconcile but gradually this potential harmony factor in things reveals itself almost before the thing has happened and we gladly surrender to its power and work out actively what it is here to accomplish. We stop looking at things in the mirror of our personal matrix, we detach ourselves from all personal conditioning and all personal preferences, and we do this not out of some heroic stoic personal effort but rather with the simple faith in the power of that universal harmony. Our unceasing eagerness to discover this underlying oneness in things is all that matters, its fruition and completeness is not in our solo capacity. We shall fulfill our duty by an unwavering gaze on the secret harmony in everything. This much at least we owe to our Masters if not anything else.

Relations with the Divine

As we cast away the shackles of personality and move towards the real person, as we get ensnared by the call of the divine flute, we find that our relation with the Divine takes different forms and assumes various bhavas. We also realize in the process that personality is only a hindrance in its crude initial ego-driven stages and our liberation from it only a means to remold it into a divine personality bearing the qualities of the divine nature and governed by our true swabhava and swadharma. We find ourselves turning and responding to the divine or to that imperative need within to become like the divine in various ways according to our readiness and need. The divine we seek everywhere and in all things is the one who seeks us too, who adores us and who lures us all the time through myriad ways into his vast embrace. It is we who fail to see him often. But when we do begin to find him concealed in all things, when we can't be otherwise, he becomes obvious to our senses, he becomes apparent to our understanding and he becomes a constant to our being and living. Sometimes he presents himself as our master and commander whose will we work out as would a warrior with honor and pride. Sometimes he is the friend and confidant who plays with our humanness and leads us by the hand to greater heights of perfection. Sometimes he becomes the mother who soothes an aching heart, who strokes our weary limbs and whose compassionate embrace is as comforting as nothing else in the world. At times he is the guru, the wise advisor, the intuitive sage who by his very existence dissolves all our knots and ignorance, smites asunder all our incapacity and works out in us the impossible. He leans sometimes with outstretched hands to deliver us out of the quagmire that entraps us, as a hero or a magician from heaven; we find it hard to lift our hand to place it in his for we cherish the feel of the mud and refuse to look up to him until the mire is neck deep and all we can do is gasp in despair. He pretends to be the enemy too, fierce and ruthless, goading and lashing if that be the need, so his light pierces the darkness we harbor and his opposition enfeebles the pride of our ego. Then

at last, when we want nothing but him, he smiles like the lover of our being and we lose ourselves forever in the passionate ecstasy of his love, one with his will, one with his need, one with his breath and one with his creation. The shift becomes most easy and most blissful when we fall in love with the divine.

Surrender—the master key

“Remember and offer,” (*Questions and Answers 1929*, p. 23) said the Divine Mother to her children. It is She, the divine Shakti, who works through us, who works out the worlds and who works in spite of us. All power is Her power and all intelligence is her intelligence. To open to her, to call her, to surrender to her is the one solution to all our difficulty. She alone knows what is best for us and she alone can help. She fashions our lives and She lives in us. It is to Her we must offer all our self and all our being. Every step within is a step towards Her. Every victory is Her victory. When we give our difficulty to Her She takes charge of it and turns it into our biggest advantage. A growing surrender to the Shakti is our surest way to the perfection we seek.

The shift—a basic summary and definition

This shift, then, is the conscious and growing recognition of a reality of our being that is the real person, infinitely superior and more capable the body-mind-life-ego existence that we now call our self, a conscious attempt at connecting with it, and gradual station in it and finally the beginnings of a full mastery and perfection of our life under its control and action. The shift is the imperative prerequisite for the next step in evolution, the thing towards which all life is moving secretly and the only way out from suffering and bondage. This superior reality that we term soul is for all practical purposes within us and is a portion of the almighty above but is dormant and inactive except rarely in most of us. Its aim is to become active through our consent and in life use our nature (body, life, mind) for its action in the world. It presents to us constantly, innumerable ways and means of surfacing and overtly manifesting its potential in our life, through our nature, its secret executrix, that uses pain to achieve this end. But the moment we become willing participants in this plan and acknowledge the existence of soul, we begin to acquire oneness with it and its infinite freedom, knowledge and power, reducing the causal play of nature and thereby the necessity of pain. It is up to us to begin looking at ourselves as a soul using body, mind and emotion for its fulfillment and perfection in the world. It is up to us how much we recognize, want and align ourselves with the intent of the soul.

To be motivated every instant by the need and conviction of this shift, to decentralize the being from the ego centre and annihilate the present formations in order to reconstruct our self in the new way is the need of the hour and the way to the great shift.

GLIMPSES OF THE MOTHER'S SUPRAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

Larry Seidlitz



Spiritual significance: Beginning of the supramental realisation.

This essay is about the latter part of the Mother's life, and in particular about the latter stages of her sadhana as recorded in the 13 volume work, *Mother's Agenda*. The *Agenda* primarily consists of a series transcribed conversations of the Mother with a disciple, Satprem, that span the years 1956 to 1973, the year of the Mother's passing. It also includes some correspondence between the two as well as some statements by the Mother dating back to 1951.

The experiences recorded in the *Agenda* pertain to a great extent to the supramental transformation of the body, or we could say, a divinization of the body. Whereas in principle the body is already divine, because the Divine is all that is, physical matter as it is presently is not consciously divine, and because it is not fully conscious, it is open to all kinds of limitation and falsehood. In particular, the body is subject to pain, illness, and death. According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in order to be truly divinized it must be transformed by the supramental consciousness, which is a particularly high level of divine consciousness that carries the full, divine power. For this transformation to occur, one must first inwardly ascend in the consciousness to this supramental level, and then it must be brought down first into the mind and life energies and then into the physical body itself. By the time these conversations were recorded, the Mother's mind and vital had been largely supramentalized, though a complete supramentalization of these also requires a supramentalization of the body. The conversations in the *Agenda* that I will highlight pertain to the action of the supramental consciousness in the body.

It should be emphasized that the processes to be discussed were primarily the result of a working of a divine consciousness and force on the body, and not so much the result of physical or vital activities or movement of energies. It is true that the Mother placed great importance on physical culture in order to train and enlighten the body consciousness. The physical education department in the Ashram was given a central position in the sadhana and most of the sadhaks were involved in a variety of daily physical exercises from hatha yoga to martial arts to sports like tennis, basketball, and swimming, to gymnastics and track and field. The Mother herself played tennis regularly until she was 80 years old. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother believed that such physical activities develop the consciousness of the body and make it more receptive to the higher spiritual consciousness and force, and this is why they gave it such importance in the Ashram. But the conscious ascent into the higher levels of the spiritual consciousness and their descent into the mind and life and body were accomplished primarily by inner psychological and spiritual methods and processes.

As a result of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's yoga, a new consciousness and force, which they called the supramental consciousness, manifested in the earth consciousness on February 29, 1956. Supermind and supramental have a specific meaning and significance in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and yoga, and I may as well begin by clarifying the meaning of these terms. There are many levels of consciousness between the ordinary human consciousness and the supermind – Sri Aurobindo described these as the higher mind, the illumined mind, the intuitive consciousness, and the overmind. Even the lowest of these – the higher mind, is far superior to the ordinary rational mind in its ability to reflect the higher truth. For example, Sri Aurobindo said that in the higher mind one is constantly aware of the Self, the One everywhere, and lives in a vast peace and calm enlightenment (*The Future Poetry*, p. 342; *The Life Divine*, p. 944). Each of these higher gradations is able to envision and express the Absolute Reality in a more luminous and comprehensive way. The Supermind is above all these, and represents a fundamentally new principle. Unlike the levels below it, it no longer simply reflects the truth of things, however purely or brightly or broadly, but is itself the very substance of the Truth.

In *The Synthesis of Yoga* there is a chapter called "the Nature of the Supermind," in which Sri Aurobindo described the Supermind. He said, "The fundamental nature of the supermind is that all its knowledge is originally a knowledge by identity and oneness... The spirit is one everywhere and it knows all things as itself and in itself, so sees them always and therefore knows them intimately, completely, in their reality as well as their appearance, in their truth, their law, the entire spirit and sense and figure of their nature and their workings." (p. 757).

He also said that the supermind is "not only a direct truth consciousness, but an illumined, direct and spontaneous truth-will. There is not and cannot be

in the will of the self-knowing spirit any contradiction, division or difference between its will and its knowledge. The spiritual will is the Tapas or enlightened force of the conscious being of the spirit effecting infallibly what is there within it..." (p. 761) The supramental will and action are therefore a will of action of the spontaneous self-fulfilling truth of the spirit, the right and at the highest the infallible movement of a direct and total knowledge." (p. 763)

On 29 February, 1956 the Mother experienced the first manifestation of the supramental consciousness in the overall earth consciousness. It happened during the collective meditation in the ashram. She said about it: "This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that "the time has come," and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow." (*Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 1, p. 69)

When the Mother said that this consciousness manifested in the earth consciousness on February 29th 1956, she meant that this Truth-consciousness and Force began to act here on a terrestrial scale, seeking and preparing instruments for its manifestation in the evolutionary formula. It began its work to prepare the field and to prepare the new species that would manifest this consciousness and replace humanity as the leader of the earth evolution. Moreover, human beings could cooperate with this new Light and Force in the manifestation of its higher possibilities in the human formula, and thereby create a transitional being between ordinary mental humanity and the full supramental species.

Just 20 days after the supramental manifestation, on March 19th, 1956, the Mother wrote a brief statement about a personal experience she had (a straightening of her bent vertebrae) which she attributed to the influence of this descent of the supramental consciousness into her body. At the top of that written statement, she put the heading, "Agenda of the Supramental Action on Earth," thus giving the name that eventually became the 13 volume *Mother's Agenda*. Although Satprem used the title *Mother's Agenda* on the cover, on the first page inside the cover the full title is given.

In October of 1957, she commented more at length on these effects in her body. She said, "one of the very first results of the supramental manifestation was to give the body a freedom and an autonomy it has never before known.... For the first time, the cells themselves have felt that they are free, that they have the power to decide. When the new vibrations came and combined

with the old ones, I felt it at once and it showed me that a new world was really taking birth....” She said that this new vibration in the body allowed her to understand the mechanism of the transformation: “It is not something that comes from a higher Will, not a higher consciousness that imposes itself upon the body: it is the body itself awakening in its cells, a freedom of the cells themselves, an absolutely new vibration that sets disorders right.... This is a gradual process, but ...little by little this new consciousness will grow, gain ground and victoriously resist the old forces of destruction and annihilation, and this Fatality we believed to be so inexorable.”

On February 3rd 1958, she had a remarkable experience that further confirmed this birth of a new world taking place. She said, “before, I had an individual, subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on February 3, I went strolling there in a concrete way—as concretely as I used to go strolling in Paris in times past—in a world that exists in itself, beyond all subjectivity. It is like a bridge being built between the two worlds.” She said, “The supramental world exists in a permanent way, and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had proof of this today when my earthly consciousness went there and consciously remained there between two and three o’clock in the afternoon. I now know that for the two worlds to join in a constant and conscious relationship what is missing is an intermediate zone between the existing physical world and the supramental world as it exists. This zone has yet to be built, both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world, and it is being built. When I formerly used to speak of the new world that is being created, I was speaking of this intermediate zone. And similarly, when I am on ‘this’ side, in the realm of the physical consciousness—and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly permeating matter, I am seeing and participating in the construction of this zone.” She then goes on to relate the experience in detail, which involved an immense ship that had just arrived at the shore of the supramental world. On this ship were people whom she knew, whose forms were in various stages of transformation. Those whose substance had been sufficiently supramentalized were disembarking, and there were other supramental beings on shore waiting to receive them. The Mother herself, who had a supramental substance, and a bright sun for a head, was directing the whole operation.

Probably in February or March of 1959, the Mother began repeating a mantra. On May 19th, she said that she had “come to realize that for this sadhana of the body, the mantra is essential.” She said that the purely psychological method is inadequate and that japa, the repetition of a mantra, is necessary, because only it has a direct action on the body. She said that now with her mantra, she had done ten years of work in a few months. She said she repeated her mantra constantly—when she was awake and even when she slept. She said it was always there in the background.

On October 6, 1959, she said, "For the West, with all its outward development, a few centuries may be needed before the junction between the two worlds can be made. And yet these two worlds—the physical world and the world of Truth—are not distant from one another. They are as if superimposed. The world of Truth is there, close by, like a lining of the other." She indicated that shortly before August 15th, she had had an experience that exemplified this.

First she had felt the supramental light entering directly into her body without passing through the inner beings. It entered through the feet and rose towards the head, and as it rose a fever also rose because the body was unaccustomed to the intensity. As it neared the head she thought she would burst and that the experience would have to be stopped, but she called down calm and peace and widened the body consciousness so it could contain the supramental light. Suddenly there was a second of fainting, and then, she said, "I found myself in another world, but not far away (I was not in a total trance). This world was almost as substantial as the physical world. There were rooms—Sri Aurobindo's room with the bed he rests on—and he was living there, he was there all the time; it was his abode. Even my room was there, with a large mirror like the one I have here, combs, all kinds of things. And the substance of these objects was almost as dense as in the physical world, but they shone with their own light. It was not translucent, not transparent, not radiant, but self-luminous. The various objects and the material of the rooms did not have this same opacity as the physical objects here, they were not dry and hard as in the physical world we know."

She said, "you see, it's not as if this world of Truth had to be created from nothing: it is fully ready, it is there, like a lining of our own present world. Everything is there, everything is there. Sri Aurobindo gave me two days of this—total bliss. But all the same, by the end of the second day I realized that I could not continue to remain there, for the work was not advancing. The work must be done in the body; the realization must be attained here in this physical world, for otherwise it is not complete. So I withdrew from that world and set to work here again. And yet, it would take little, very little, to pass from this world to the other, or for the other to become the real world. A little click would be enough, or rather a little reversal in the inner attitude."

On June 15th, 1968, she had an interesting discussion about the transformation of the body. She first indicated that it was becoming increasingly established that health or illness is the result of a choice of the cells of the body, and groups of cells. Many of her cells had become conscious, and they could choose between the true consciousness, or disorder and disequilibrium. And she suggested that there was a natural variation in cells or groups of cells in their ability to follow the movement of progressive harmony. She said most of the time it is just laziness, something unwilling to make the effort or to resolve. She called it the remnant, the residue of the inconscient. She said, "it's a sort of spinelessness ... which accepts a general, impersonal law. On the

other side, there is the sense of the true attitude, which in the cells is expressed with great simplicity: 'There is the Lord, who is the all-powerful Master. It depends entirely on Him.' For the cells it's not sentences, but expresses itself by repeating the mantra: 'May Your Will be done,' and a tranquillity—a luminous tranquillity." And she wondered, "What I don't know yet, what's not very clear, is... what will be the fate of this residue? To people's ordinary thought, it's what they call 'death,' that is to say, the rejection of the cells that weren't able to enter this plastic state of consciousness. But the way the work is being done, there is no categorical division [into groups of conscious or unconscious cells in Mother's body]: there are imperceptible (almost) states of variations between the different parts of the being." She seems to mean that some cells lag behind, have difficulty taking the proper attitude, so it takes longer.

The next year she received from within an answer to her dilemma. She reframed the question this way: "All this work of the transformation of the cells, of consciousness in the cells, with the ordinary way [of dying], won't it be wasted since the body is going to disintegrate?" And then she said, "then there came in a very precise, almost concrete manner: 'there is a way, which is, before dying, to prepare within oneself a body with all the transformed, illumined, conscious cells, to collect them together and form a body with the maximum number of conscious cells; then, when the work is over, the full consciousness enters it and the other body can dissolve, it no longer matters.'"

Then on May 9th, 1970, Mother had an experience of her supramentalized body in the subtle physical. She said, "I was walking around naked, but deliberately naked from here to there (gesture from the top of the chest to the thighs); here (above), there may have been clothes. I was deliberately showing myself to certain people.... Ah, and that part I was showing was sexless, that is to say, neither man nor woman: there was nothing; and its color was ... a little like Auroville's color [orange], like that, but vibrant, that is, as if ... not luminous, but with a sort of luminosity." In the experience, someone was with her whom she called "the physical Mother," and in another place she called "Nature." Nature was wearing a dress of the same orange color, and said, "See, I've put on your dress, I've put it on to tell you that it's accepted—I've put on your dress." Mother explained, "it means that material Nature has adopted the new creation."

On July 1, 1970 Mother had another experience in which she discovered another important aspect of the transformation, that "it is the psychic being that is to become the supramental being." She had this experience when a disciple had come to her and was kneeling in front of her. And she saw this disciple's psychic being towering above her, about eight inches taller. And it was a sexless being: neither man nor woman, that had features of both combined. It exceeded her on every side by about eight inches. And its color was, if it became very material, would be Auroville's color. "It was softer, as if behind a veil, it wasn't absolutely precise, but it was this color." And she said, "I found it

very interesting, because that being seemed to tell me, 'You're wondering what the supramental being will be—here it is! Here it is, this is it.'"

Then on March 24, 1972, Mother again sees her own supramental body. She said, "I don't know whether it's the supramental body or (what shall I say?) a transitional body, but I had a completely new body, in the sense that it was sexless: it was neither woman nor man. It was very white. But that could be because I have white skin, I don't know. It was very slender. Really lovely, a truly harmonious form." And two days later she said, "Yes, I was like that. It was me; I didn't look at myself in a mirror, I saw myself like this (Mother bends her head to look at her body), I was .. I just was like that." Satprem asked her, "But this form is in the subtle physical, isn't it?" She answered, "It must be already like that in the subtle physical."

As 1972 wore on, and up until the end, it appears Mother began to have more difficulty. Perhaps as more and more of her body consciousness was supramentalized, more and more she encountered the resistance, the remnant of the inconscient. She alternated between two states, one of absolute surrender and openness to the Divine, living in a divine peace and bliss, and living in a painful hell, the very contradiction of that peace. For example, on November 4th, she said, "The whole subconscious is .. (gesture of something rising up en masse). And then ... it's a certitude—a certitude in the perception—that Bliss is there ... right there, waiting for us, but a whole world of contradictions that have been repressed in the subconscious keeps rising up from the subconscious to prevent us from feeling it. So ... you could say it's a battlefield, but in a perfect calm. It's impossible to describe. When I remain still and enter that Consciousness, time flies with fantastic speed, in a kind of ... luminous calm. But the slightest thing that pulls me out of it seems to pull me into hell. Exactly. The discomfort is so great one feels one couldn't last a minute or a few minutes like that. So one ... one calls the Divine ... You feel like curling up in the Divine. And then it goes well."

There are several themes in this account that should be emphasized. From the very beginning, Mother seemed primarily concerned with the influence of the supramental on the consciousness of the body. There is little mention of its effect on the mental or vital levels. In one place she seems to suggest that these were instruments to knead matter, to awaken it to consciousness, and that once this was done they would be replaced by something else. In her, especially after the crisis in 1962, the mental and vital beings were sent away, and she was left with her body consciousness, so that it would itself open to the supramental light and power. She seemed often to be identified with her physical body, and preoccupied with its opening and transformation.

Another important recurring theme was that the supramental world, the supramental truth was here, already established, and the work was really in establishing a more and more complete link with it. This was for her personally and also for the earth as a whole. That world was quite real and concrete, in many ways more than this one. She seemed to sometimes find herself in that

world, and sometimes in this one. She seemed to go back and forth between the two as a result of a subtle shift in consciousness, in the inner attitude. She said it was like a lining beneath this physical world. It was very close, not far away in some rare ether of consciousness. Sometimes she would walk out into that world, do things, meet people, and the effects of her actions would be there in this physical world. It seemed as she forged this link between the two, this closeness and interpenetration increased.

A third theme that perhaps did not come out so much in the excerpts I read, but really was implied in all of them, is that Mother was like a lightning rod for the supramental action on the earth. Sometimes when she would be silent and open to the Divine and supramental forces, she would see them flowing through her to points all around her, all over the world and perhaps beyond. For she was universalized in her consciousness, parts of her consciousness, even her physical consciousness, were identified with the whole world, the whole universe. Her physical presence, her physical opening to the supramental light and power enabled these to penetrate into the physical world around us, and also to act on people and events in very specific ways.

And finally, the whole tenor of her sadhana, was in a sense unchanged, fundamentally it was the same as it is for the beginner. It was very simply a surrender into the hands of the Divine. Whoever does this sadhana must surrender to the Divine. And the more we do, the more we become conscious, we begin to see the more within us which withholds its surrender. Then this too must open up to the Divine. This progressive surrender of more and more of the being seems to be the character of the sadhana up until the very end. For Mother, this progressive opening and surrender was occurring in her body consciousness. She said one of the first results of the supramental descent was that the body began to realize its autonomy, its ability to choose between the divine and the old way of being. And her progress in the sadhana seemed to involve precisely more and more of these cells, this body consciousness, surrendering and uniting with the Divine. And as more of this body consciousness opened up, it became a part of her supramental body that would survive the death of the remnant which she laid down on November 17, 1973.

The Mother's primary mission was to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth, to establish it as a new principle in the evolving terrestrial consciousness. This she did, with Sri Aurobindo's help, in 1956. For the next 17 years, she worked to establish it into her very cells, into matter. It is fair to assume that she took this work as far as was possible in the present circumstances. It also appears, from what she has said in the Agenda, that the supramental consciousness is actively at work here, is assured of its eventual manifestation in a new race of supramental beings, and is working to manifest its light and power in human beings who are open to it. Finally, we can assume that the Mother herself is directing this work, and exists in a supramental form in a world close to ours, a world that is like a lining of our own.

EVALUATING THE IDEA OF EDUCATION IN COLONIAL INDIA: BRITISH AND INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

Shruti Bidwaikar



Spiritual significance: Response of the physical mind to the supramental light.

Education always bears a positive connotation. It is imparted for the betterment of an individual and the society. A well educated person is said to be cultured and civilized and useful for humanity. 'Cultured' and 'civilized' are the terms over which the intelligentsia has been discussing and debating for ages. It is a tricky question. However, it is on the basis of this that the British tried to educate the Indians. They found the Indians uncultured and uncivilized and thought of uplifting them. The means to educate was through English Language and Literature. This change came after lot of debate and discussion among the British themselves as they had different opinions regarding the education of Indians. The controversy began with Charter act 1813 which had asked the East India Company to spend some amount on the education of Indians. The major issues which were raised regarding the usage of money for this education were – the class to which the education would be imparted; the language(s) that should be imparted; and the body which would be responsible to carry out this task.

The difference in ideologies regarding the language to be taught created two groups, namely the Orientalist and the Anglicists. The Orientalists advocated the study of indigenous literature through vernacular languages. They gave importance to Sanskrit and Arabic languages and thought that Indian culture can only be preserved in these. "According to the views of Munro, Indian

culture was of a higher order and as such England was to learn much from it" (Pani and Pattanaik: 12). However, the Anglicists emphasized that English was a better language and literature to be taught. Amidst this controversy, Lord Macaulay gave his historical 'Minute' in 1825. Macaulay related the education system with the benefit of trade and easy communication with the natives. According to him the minds could be only colonized with the Indian roots shaken. So he tried to uproot the Indian culture through English education. Despite being ignorant of the Indian languages he boldly made a statement in his 'Minute' — "single shelf of a good European literature was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (Pani and Pattanaik: 13). He found English to be a language superior even to the other European languages. He advocated education for a selected class and wanted to create eminent clerks to serve the lower cadres in British administration. This 'Minute' passed by William Bentinck swept off the Indian system of education. It only aimed at producing "Brown Englishmen" with English thought and opinions.

Later, all the measures taken by Charles Wood in his Despatch (1854) and Hunter's commission only aimed at building or expanding Colleges or Universities all over India. They then moved to the school education as well. However, the basic tenets of education were taken from the Minute itself. It was for the benefit of the British governance that the clerks learnt English language and English literature. The education system of the British which started as movement of learning with Munro became a means of dominance, a means of colonization. Essentially, the British education almost killed the nationalist feeling, it wiped off the faith of Indians in their own culture; it even did away with the belief in the Indian classical and vernacular languages and changed the basic philosophy of life of the Indian people against the Indian temperament.

With this commotion and these changes in the Indian education system, there came up a class of elites who studied the Indian and the British literature and knew Indian classical, vernacular, English and other European languages. They were well-versed with the Indian and European cultures. They realized the motives of British education and brought out in their own respective ways solutions or ways to take Indians back to their roots. Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Brahma Samaj to spread education among masses in India. He advocated the study of sciences brought in by British, for they were scientific and could rid India of the superstitions and rigid traditions. However, he encouraged the study of Indian scriptures, Sanskrit and vernacular languages, and emphasized the aim of education to self-reliance and scientific enquiry. Later Keshab Chandra Sen, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati took the flame of education forward. This was further carried forth by Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and others. All these stalwarts understood the importance of education and framed their own ideologies of education which was implemented differently in different parts of India under their

respective suitable conditions. Essentially they talked about the importance of the nationalist education; an education which is indigenous in essence; which advocates the growth of mind, body and soul; which fetches livelihood to the individual.

There was some resistance among Indians regarding the British rule in India. When these stalwarts came to the forefront, India was already struggling with the foreign rule. Education thus became a means to awaken the national spirit. Freedom of India was the primary motive of these leaders then. To bring about this, there had to be a nationalist will and fervor which was lacking. National education was the major agenda, however, it had different connotations for different people. For Swami Vivekananda it was the self-mastery through concentration, dedication and efforts and to become a human being which can help other citizens to support themselves. To quote Pani and Pattnaik, "Vivekananda wanted this type of all-round education which in no way can be considered poor, because it is replete with national feeling and sentiments, aims to development of heart and mind, strengthen character and national consciousness, help in the cultivation of strength and energy, nurture the brain and intellect and finally stir feelings of kindness and sympathy" (59). Swami Vivekananda emphatically said—"The ideal of all education, all training should be man-making... what we want are western science coupled with Vedanta... education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. I look upon religion as the innermost core of education. [And this education] must be on the national lines..." (quoted in Pani and Pattnaik : 69)

The idea of education given by the stalwarts is intimately related to their philosophies. Gandhi's emphasis on 'truth' and 'non-violence' helped him formulate the education system which essentially advocates character building. He also emphasized an education which provides livelihood and self-sufficiency. While he defined Swaraj, he said "Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen... I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke whatsoever" (Pani and Pattnaik: 171). He stressed the capacity of an individual to rule himself. Tilak, on the other hand, brought in the idea of National pride with national education. Through mass festivals he sent a message about the cultural heritage of India and the importance of sacrifices done by the ancestors especially Shivaji. He was an extremist who fought for India's struggle with pride in his national heritage. They all wanted a home rule and struggled in their own ways for the same. However, it is in Sri Aurobindo's thought that the widest definition of Nationalism and national education may be found. "Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live." (Sri Aurobindo, Vol 7: 818). National education in Sri Aurobindo's view is intimately related to Home Rule. He said, "We want not only a free India, but a great India, India taking worthily the place among the Nations and giving to the life of humanity what she alone can give."

(Sri Aurobindo, Vol 1: 412) He added further, "Individual interest and National interest are the same and call in the same direction." (412). Sri Aurobindo believed that Nation is not a mere piece of land. It is a living soul, a living entity and India's freedom is a work of God for a larger humanity which may be brought about by National Education.

Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Tilak and Gandhi all made efforts to bring back the lost faith of Indians in its culture and scriptures. For this they advocated the study of Indian languages and literature.

We must grow according to our nature. Vain is to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us; it is impossible. Glory unto God that is impossible, that we cannot be twisted and tortured into the shape of other nations. I do not condemn the institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their present system. We, with our traditions with thousands of years of karma behind us, naturally can only follow our bent; run in our grooves, and that we shall have to do. (*Pani and Pattanik*: 54)

Tagore, Tilak and Gandhi also advocated the amalgamation of Indian and European language and Literature. However, more emphasis was given to the former. Inculcating faith in Indian scriptures and languages was a major line of action to bring in National Education and resist the ways of British domination. This is the way Sri Aurobindo highlighted the importance of India in his journal *Bande Mataram*:

So with India rests the future of the world. Whenever she is aroused from her sleep, she gives forth some wonderful shining ray of light to the world which is enough to illuminate the nations. Others live for centuries on what is to her the thought of a moment. God gave her the book of Ancient Wisdom and bade her keep it sealed in her heart, until the time should come for it is to be opened. Sometimes a page or a chapter is revealed, sometimes only a single sentence. Such sentences have been the inspiration of ages and fed humanity for many hundreds of years. So too when India sleeps, materialism grows apace and the light is covered up in darkness. But when materialism thinks herself about to triumph, lo and behold! A light rushes out from the East and where is materialism? Returned to her native night. (890)

Women were seen as major instruments of change in the society. She is seen as being capable of moulding her children and encouraging men folk with her strength. Indeed down the centuries her position has deteriorated but the revival in India has brought hope for her. All the educationists and leaders mentioned above have laid emphasis on educating women. Subramaniam Bharti started this with educating his wife and daughters and made them self dependent. All the reform movements strived to liberate women from the shackles of

ignorance and convention. Sri Aurobindo went a step further and brought back the ancient Indian view of woman as Shakti, as the dynamic force. He believed that education of an individual starts in the womb itself. The Puranic story of the birth of Prahlad and in Mahabharata, Abhimanyu's knowledge of the Chakravayuh which he learnt while in the womb are examples of this fact. Therefore, the awareness of women about her potentials and capabilities was given great importance.

All have talked about the education for mind, body and soul. It is important to note that the European system of education made learning a mechanical process. Stuffing data in the mind and memorizing formulae by heart was all they could teach. There was no creativity on the part of teachers, neither was it encouraged in the students. A larger and more comprehensive system was encouraged by the Indian elites which had the best of both East and West; the rigour of the West and the depth of the East. Swami Vivekananda advocated the training of the mind through concentration and Hatha Yogic kinds of practices. He remarked—"Getting by heart the thought of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? (Pani and Pattnaik: 59). Rabindranath Tagore emphasized on aesthetic education. Shantiniketan was an example where he made arrangements for such an education. He believed in developing an individual's sensibility through his contact with nature. He thus, gave freedom to the students to express themselves through arts, poetry and varied ways of expression. All gave ways to train the mind and body. Sri Aurobindo gave importance to the overall growth of human personality. For this he used the terms physical, vital, mental and spiritual education. In his writings on "National Education" and the "Brain of India" he elaborately dealt with all these. He gave equal importance to the education of all the levels of being mentioned above. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondicherry is an example where these ideals are practiced. Essentially, he emphasized training the different parts of being to be able to become the perfect instruments for the Divine Work. It is important that body, the vital and mind are ready when "the hour of God" comes. Like Swami Vivekananda he also believed that nothing can be taught; that knowledge is inherent in every human being. It is through proper education and training that the veils of ignorance have to be lifted. While keeping in view spiritual education, Sri Aurobindo did not ignore the importance of training the senses, building character and working on morals. All these form the part of mental and vital training. The motive of education is to merge one's will with the God's will and to understand God's will one has to undergo rigorous training. This training is given by teachers and facilitators who facilitate the seeker to look within and bring out the hidden potentials.

There has been a marked difference in the approach of the British and Indian ways of looking at education. The British did not take into consideration the innate swabhav of the individual. Whereas in India since ancient times,

swabhav has been an essential factor which determined the mode and the subject of education. Education was always given according to the temperament and bent of the individuals. Critical thinking, logical reasoning, character building, love for one's nation and humanity and service to God all formed an integral part of education. Although it was lost, it was Sri Aurobindo who revived it in its fullness and gave his system the name—integral education; education for the entire personality and the education which integrates the personality. Indians advocated learning the best of the East and the West, whereas, in order to dominate and prove their cultural superiority, the British degraded Indian culture before Indians and established the supremacy of their culture through education.

This is how the idea of education as an uplifting force itself took different shapes in the hands of British and Indian educationists. There is no denial of the fact that education is for the betterment of life and it is supposed to bring about a positive change in the lives of educated as well uneducated men. The difference lies in the swabhava of the people to which it is given. It also depends upon the philosophical heritage that a nation has nurtured since past ages. The Indian philosophical heritage had always been on the spiritual grounds. For ages India has been practicing the education system which caters to the mind, body and soul of the individual. Indeed it got deformed and deteriorated under the burden of customs, conventions and traditions, so there was a need to revive the roots of ancient education and amalgamate it with the new advancements in education taken from the developments from all over the world.

Looking at the present scenario, it cannot be said that the present education system has inculcated this discovery and amalgamation, however attempts are being made. Experiments and researches in the field of education are conducted and the educationists, teachers and parents are trying to find an education system which incorporates the old and the new, the real and the ideal.

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