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New Race

Blessings



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NEW RACE

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From the Editor's Desk...

"Sri Aurobindo began writing the *Arya*, in 1914. It was neither a mental knowledge nor even a mental creation which he transcribed: he silenced his mind and sat at the typewriter, and from above, from the higher planes, all that had to be written came down, all ready, and he had only to move his fingers on the typewriter and it was transcribed." (The Mother, CWM 8:281) It was with this effortless ease that Sri Aurobindo "laboured" for six long years and wrote the essays in *Arya*. August 15, 2014 marks hundred years of "God's Labour".

New Race commemorates the centenary of *Arya* and *The Life Divine* in particular. It is indeed significant that Sri Aurobindo placed the first chapter of *The Life Divine* as the opening essay in the first issue of *Arya*. We may perhaps realise the importance of his magnum opus only when we read it along with his other writings. We present here a glimpse of the first issue and a few reviews related to *The Life Divine*.

Through various writings in the *Arya*, Sri Aurobindo made us understand that there is no essential antagonism between Matter and Spirit; that they are only the two ends of the same continuum. It is the limitation of our superficial consciousness that fails to see the Spirit involved in Matter. It is this inadequacy of vision that has divided human life into two – where the spiritual and material are two separate sides of life and seem to have no converging point. However, Sri Aurobindo explains that there is no essential difference here either. The connecting link between these two apparent dichotomies is – Yoga. Yoga integrates our lives, it explains us psychologically the meaning of life and spirit and helps us bridge the gap.

Dedicated to the psychology of Yoga is this issue of *New Race* in which various authors help us understand the link between life and yoga, between spirituality and everyday living in the light of modern psychology and Sri Aurobindo. The papers have wide ranges which explore the higher domains as well as the darker sides of our psychology and their working in our lives.

We hope our readers enjoy exploring their inner and completer selves...

- *Shruti*

ARYA: HUNDRED YEARS OF ITS PUBLICATION

Ananda Reddy



Today it is a special day: 14-Aug-2014. It is a hundred years since the first publication of the *Arya*, the monthly journal that was launched by Sri Aurobindo in collaboration with Mirra Richard (The Mother) and Paul Richard.

The First World War had just begun on 28th July 1914 and lasted till November 1918! More than 160 million military personnel were mobilised in the War threatening the destruction of the human race. During the same number of years, Sri Aurobindo, sitting quiet and unperturbed in a remote corner of India, in Pondicherry, was making the evolutionary blueprint for the coming of the “New Race” beyond man! He had foreseen not only the survival of the human species but its onward march towards a new species exceeding it! Like Shiva he drank the poison of the War and saved Man so that he may proceed towards Superman!!

Towards that ultimate objective, he started writing his major works in the *Arya*

“The object which it has set before itself is two fold :—

1. A systematic study of the highest problems of existence;
2. The formation of a vast Synthesis of knowledge, harmonising the diverse religious traditions of humanity occidental as well as oriental. Its method will be that of a realism, at once rational and transcendental,—a realism consisting in the unification of intellectual and scientific disciplines with those of intuitive experience.” (*Arya*: prelim pages)

And the very first book of the *Arya* was *The Life Divine* and its first pages looked as below:

The Life Divine

BOOK I

THE AFFIRMATIONS OF VEDANTA

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first- in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming,— Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead...What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.

Kutsa Angirasa. Rig Veda.

CHAPTER I

THE HUMAN ASPIRATION

Threefold are those supreme births of this divine force that is in the world, they are true, they are desirable; he moves there wide-overt within the Infinite and shines pure, luminous and fulfilling...That which is immortal in mortals and possessed of the truth, is a god and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers... Become high-uplifted, O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead.

Vamadeva-Rig Veda IV. 1. 2. & 4.

The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation,—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment,—is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this

Of all the books published in *Arya*, *The Life Divine* was the one that was most widely acclaimed. Here are some impressions of major thinkers in India:

“... not only a major enunciation of the Truth of truths but a magnum action of the Superconscient Supremo ... [It] not only unveils and unfolds the mystery of the material universe but also fulfils the secret and sacred mission of creation itself” (V. Madhusudan Reddy)

“It is an intellectual architecture like an ivory tower, solid and beautiful, having the golden coping of the Supermind” (S.K. Maitra)

Closer home, we have A.B. Purani himself who stated:

“I have looked upon *The Life Divine* as the harbinger of a new age ... It is the dawn of a new age, an age in which man will consciously go beyond the attained formula of his nature, an age in which man will establish in himself, by constant effort of individual and groups, a new faculty ... which is greater than Mind ... It is like a vast architecture in which you walk from room to room and forget the room which you left and even may lose your way. It is like the labyrinth through which you are led to a solution of the labyrinth.”

In 1947, in his commentary on *The Life Divine*, Anilbaran Roy quotes the words of a Professor of Islamic Studies—Kalifa A.Hakim of Osmania University, Hyderabad—who had this to say:

“To say the least, it [*The Life Divine*] is a marvellous book; the Heart of Reality pulsates in every line, it is Realisation trying to express itself through the imperfect medium of language and logic. I have been a student of Mysticism, Indian and Islamic, Neo-Platonic, Christian and Occidental for about a quarter of a century ... One of the soul satisfying aspects of Sri Aurobindo’s book is that he expounds Mysticism which seeks not to mystify but to clarify. The latest achievements of Physics as well as Psychology are accepted as corroborations, even atheism is accepted as a passing phase in the evolution of the Spirit... These great truths are expounded in the immortal book of Sri Aurobindo. I sincerely believe that all seekers of Truth and all lovers of universal religion will greatly benefit by it.”

Now, let us look at the comments made by one whom we all know very well—Amal Kiran. In a beautiful passage, he writes:

“*The Life Divine* expresses nothing except his [Sri Aurobindo’s] experience, his realisation. Having attained in constant waking life and not merely in a sealed samadhi the reality which he terms Gnosis, he has but laid out in intellectual exposition what the gnostic consciousness is and what yogic possibilities it holds and what the results of its full descent into our earth-existence will be ... Sri Aurobindo’s intellect is an instrument used by a spiritual realisation: not one sentence anywhere is inspired by the intellect alone.”

The central idea of *The Life Divine* given by the author in *Letters on Yoga, Vol. 22* is as follows:

There is possible a realistic as well as an illusionist Advaita. The philosophy of *The Life Divine* is such a realistic Advaita. The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. But here in the material world or at its basis he has hidden himself in what seem to be his opposites, Non-Being, Inconscience and Insentience. This is what we nowadays call the Inconscient which seems to have created the material universe by its inconscient Energy, but this is only an appearance, for we find in the end that all the dispositions of the world can only have been arranged by the working of a supreme secret Intelligence. The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a supramental Consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of Consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species. Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience, first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain, and then has to find itself in the bliss of the Spirit or as it is called in the Upanishads, the bliss of the Brahman, that is the central idea in the explanation of the universe put forward in *The Life Divine*. (44)

With such vision of the Present and the Future of humankind, in Sri Aurobindo's writings in the *Arya*, no wonder the Mother advised:

"By studying carefully what Sri Aurobindo has said on all subjects one can easily reach a complete knowledge of the things of this world."

(MCW 12:208)

and

Which of Sri Aurobindo's books should I start with?

The Life Divine

My blessings

(MCW 12: 217)

The Life Divine continues to charm all those who have attempted to read it with an open mind.

THE LIFE DIVINE

Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution and Transformation

Robert A. McDermott

Scope and Approach

An essay on Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, particularly one by a young Western academic, cannot but be regarded as work in progress. As philosophy, *The Life Divine* is as demanding as Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* or Royce's *The World and the Individual*—each of which it resembles—but unlike even these idealist metaphysical treatises, *The Life Divine* is essentially an intellectualization of a singularly advanced mystical soul. With a keen awareness of the stubborn irreducibility of this mystical-philosophical system, the present essay frequently proceeds on a level obviously below that on which the book was written and intended to be read.

So at the outset it must be emphasized that the more advanced aspects of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy are simply not available at this interpreter's level of spiritual and intellectual perception. As a result, much of this introductory essay will consist in a pointing to the spiritual experiences of which the philosophical expression is a cool distillation. In philosophical terms, this article will exhibit the peculiar difficulty attending an effort to interpret and evaluate a spiritual or mystical philosophy on the level of intellect. It will do this not by discussing the problem directly, but by attempting to present Sri Aurobindo's vision in terms intelligible to a readership which is willing to see but has not yet been shown. The author counts himself in this group.

In addition to this introductory section, which offers a broad characterization of *The Life Divine* and its dominant themes, this essay consists in six expository sections: *Matter and Spirit*; *Brahman and the Delight of Existence*; *The Stages of Evolution*; *The Triple Transformation*; *Ascent to Supermind*; and *Supermind and The Life Divine*. As these section titles clearly indicate, the two dominant strains in this interpretive exposition are the meaning and structure of evolution and the series of transformations by which the physical, vital and mental levels of existence are raised to a more manifestly divine life. As will hopefully be established in this essay, Sri Aurobindo's theories of evolution and transformation simultaneously reveal the content of his philosophical system and the spiritual experience on which it is based.

Both evolution and transformation evidence the blending of yogic and philosophical elements. There are many points at which these elements interpenetrate, but the most perspicuous is probably the theory of psychic entity, or the inmost self which lies behind the outer, observable self. According to this theory, the surface self, consisting of physical, vital and mental aspects, is a manifestation of the psychic being (*chaitya purusha*), which uses the surface self

as an instrument of its own involvement in the evolutionary process. This theory is pivotal for transformation because the awareness of, and increasingly a direct action of, the psychic entity leads to the growth in the spiritual and supramental life; it is basic for evolution because it is the psychic entity which carries with it, from personality to personality through the entire course of evolution, all of the experiences gleaned from the physical, vital and mental aspects of the surface self. The details and rationale for this theory of the psychic entity and its implications for the theories of evolution and transformation will be discussed in the body of the paper, but are introduced here in order to show the experiential basis of the philosophical system articulated in *The Life Divine*. Sri Aurobindo's insistence on the reality of the psychic entity is certainly based on his own yoga experience, but his arguments on its behalf are those of a philosopher—or at least of a profound thinker who knows not only his own intellectual and spiritual experience, but also the intellectual theories which count for and against such experience.

Spiritual Experience and Philosophy

The first puzzle confronting the interpreter of *The Life Divine* is its author's disclaimer to philosophic training, attitude or intent. Although *The Life Divine* is one of the lengthiest and most profound of metaphysical treatises, Sri Aurobindo insists that its basic ideas were the result of spiritual experience rather than philosophical scholarship. It was his theory that "a Yogi ought to be able to turn his head to anything"; writing *The Life Divine* in monthly installments in *Arya*, a journal founded for his writings by Paul and Mirra Richard, did not involve his becoming a philosopher, or doing philosophy, but simply writing down in terms of intellect all that he had "observed and come to know in practicing Yoga".¹ In 1934, fifteen years after completing the first draft of what was to become his magnum opus of his thirty-volume corpus of writings, Sri Aurobindo repeated to his disciple, Dilip Kumar Roy, that he had never been a philosopher: "I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the Yoga and came to Pondicherry—I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher!"²

While the great philosophers have presumably experienced periods of greater or less inspiration, Sri Aurobindo would seem to be exceptional in insisting that he could not "write philosophy to order," but could only write when it came to him.³ By the time he issued the revised edition of *The Life Divine* in 1939-1940, the yogic source of his philosophical creation was all the more prominent. Indeed, all of his writings after 1926 flow from a quite different source, and consequently required a correspondingly different mode of expression.

To a remarkable degree, then, *The Life Divine* is both a systematic metaphysical treatise and a highly personal statement of Sri Aurobindo's

spiritual experience. In this respect it most closely resembles *Savitri*, the other work which he revised throughout his life. Both of these works received extensive revision and expansion as a result of his experience of the “descent of the Overmind” in 1926. Obviously, a philosopher’s personal experience is to some extent the source of every philosophical system, but in the case of *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo’s experience apparently reaches beyond the more usual and accessible range of intellectual experience to a level ordinarily regarded as mystical and non-philosophical. At the outset of an attempt to understand *The Life Divine*, one is faced with the problem of ontological and epistemological levels, the highest of which are not ordinarily acknowledged in academic philosophy.

The prominence of spiritual experience is certainly to be expected in a commentary on the Gita or in a treatise on yoga. It is perhaps less expected in works such as *The Human Cycle* and *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, but the claims in these works are not rendered exceptional or unintelligible because of a spiritual basis. But in *Savitri* and in *The Life Divine*, his two major works, the role of advanced spiritual experience is both pervasive and unavoidable.

Indeed, as the interpreter of *Savitri* must explain the peculiar nature of poetic expression in that work, so *The Life Divine* must be rendered intelligible as a quite distinctive and perhaps unique form of philosophizing. Although Aurobindo attempts to establish a theoretical framework for the transformation of human nature, and the ultimate creation of an entirely new stage of existence is characterized by philosophical argumentation, clarity and erudition, many Western interpreters will dismiss *The Life Divine* because its pre-suppositions and the scope of its concerns reach beyond the ordinarily accepted range of philosophical topics. For some, Aurobindo’s philosophical system may appear to be more an exercise in imagination than in philosophical reason. Since he writes as a realized yogi rather than as a professional philosopher, Sri Aurobindo would be neither surprised nor apologetic about this reaction; even though he spent many years working on this philosophical study, he nevertheless insisted that the conceptualization of his discipline and vision—even if it were adequate to the depth and range of his mystical experience—could not be grasped by the intellect alone. So, knowing the inherent limitations of the intellectual level at which this work would be interpreted, Aurobindo proceeded with it in the hope that it would help to create the intellectual climate wherein it would be understood. Since he believed his own experience to be exemplary of intellectual and spiritual realizations which will eventually be more widely shared, he believed that all his works, but *The Life Divine* most particularly, were more a forecast of the future than another philosophical description of the human condition in its present state of development.

Despite its emphasis on the future possibilities, and the accompanying acknowledgment that most interpreters will reject this system as fanciful,

Sri Aurobindo nevertheless made a determined effort to base this system on the most credible interpretations of the past and present. His other works bear eloquent testimony to this firm grasp of systematic and cultural studies, and *The Life Divine* evidences his extraordinary grasp of the traditional and contemporary philosophical alternatives of both India and the West. Although he would not consider such mastery to be of any particular significance either concerning his authoritativeness or the reader's task to move from the intellectual to the spiritual aspects of his system, this control of philosophical theories and method well serves his intent to bring the reader through the intellectual to the higher reaches of his vision. He also notes that the sources of such expertise in his spiritual experience are not an insignificant by-product of yoga.

Placing *The Life Divine*

In relation to Sri Aurobindo's other major works, *The Life Divine* is both more basic and more comprehensive. Whereas *Savitri* offers the most complete account of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual experience and its implications for spiritual transformation, and *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Essays on the Gita* offer systematic accounts of the discipline by which this transformation is effected, and *The Human Cycle* and *The Foundations of Indian Culture* establish the cultural and historical context for the spiritual age, the burden of *The Life Divine* is to establish the theoretical framework by which the discipline and historical vision are rendered intelligible. The root of Aurobindo's vision of gnostic or supramental being is in the human aspiration for perfection, truth, immortality and delight. Similarly, Aurobindo points to the aspiration of each level of existence— physical, vital and mental—as proof that all existence is carried forward by a power or force larger than itself. This force is the power of the spirit to carry each level of existence one level higher. According to this theory, the first three stages of evolution developed because each stage included within it the seed of its own evolution to the next stage. As matter is a form of veiled life, and life a form of veiled mind, so is mind a form of something higher than mind, supermind. Man's aspiration for freedom, truth, immortality and delight is in fact an aspiration for that next stage, the supramental or gnostic stage of evolution. It is with this fourth stage of evolution that the mature and most distinctive parts of *The Life Divine* are primarily concerned.

Within the context of Indian philosophy, Aurobindo's philosophical system is distinctive for its emphasis on cosmic and human evolution, with its clear implication that man and the world are incontestably real and valuable. In contrast to Western process philosophies such as those of Bergson, James, Dewey and Whitehead, for which evolution is the key, Aurobindo's system is perhaps unique in its insistence on the importance of involution and transformation. In relation to evolutionary and spiritual visions expounded by Teilhard de Chardin or S. Radhakrishnan—the contemporary Christian and

Indian thinkers with whom Aurobindo is frequently compared—Aurobindo's system is unique in that it is derived from his own spiritual experience and claims that this experience in itself an instrument of the next evolutionary stage. Finally, through the instrumentality of the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Aurobindo's spiritual vision and discipline have found historical expression in a spiritual community and a Utopian city in Pondicherry, both of which are intended as models for the advent of a new age envisioned in Sri Aurobindo's writings on historical and spiritual evolution.

Thus, *The Life Divine* on the one hand bears striking resemblances to major works in the Hegelian and evolutionary philosophical traditions, while on the other hand it moves to a level beyond that claimed by any modern Western philosopher. Perhaps the closest parallel to the prominence of the mystical in *The Life Divine* is the *Enneads* of Plotinus. While it is certainly possible to critique both the specific and general points in the Plotinian system, the system itself aims less at Platonic dialectic than at disclosures or exhibition of the author's own mystical experience. In the modern West, the nearest analogue to *The Life Divine* is Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, particularly since it is Heidegger's express intent to allow Being to disclose itself. The philosophical content and language of *The Life Divine* resembles the major works of the modern idealists and process philosophers—Hegel, Bradley, Royce, Bergson, James and Whitehead, but unlike these Western philosophers, Sri Aurobindo's system is an expression of his own spiritual or mystical experience. James, Royce and Bergson, the three modern Western philosophers most sympathetically concerned with mystical experience, were nevertheless writing from outside such experience; at no point do these or any other Western philosophers claim to be philosophising on the basis of their own mystical experience. That Aurobindo makes this claim and insists on the indispensability of such experience for an adequate philosophical system necessarily presents the reader with very serious problems of interpretation. This essay is largely a response to these problems, the most pressing of which are, first, the general character of a spiritual philosophy and, second, an understanding of spiritual evolution and transformation. (163-168)

Reference:

1. Dilip Kumar Roy, *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing Company, 1964); 33.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

[This is an excerpt taken from a longer article by the author with the same title]

THE LIFE DIVINE: AN IMPRESSION

Charan Singh

“The individual as spirit or being is not confined within his humanity; he has been less than human, he can become more than human”. (*The Life Divine*, CWSA 22: 1086)

The present writer feels that *The Life Divine* which is the magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo, is not just a prophecy or proclamation of the Divine Life but a direct “Path”. The book turns man’s stubborn gaze towards the real goal of life, the Path of paths. The ascent to the divine life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable Sacrifice. (48)

This remarkable philosophical work, which is more yogic and based on intuitive insight than on mere dull intellectual reasoning, reveals before us the secret of man’s earthly supremacy over all other known species- “The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations”. (51) There is no denying the Life Divine is the path to achieve that “highest good”. In one of the most beautiful and inspirational sentences of the book Sri Aurobindo writes “To fulfill God in life is man’s manhood” (41). And unless that true manhood is attained how can man “rest permanently” with average, degrading and mediocre satisfaction? He is born on earth but is not limited to earth like other species, and his final destiny is to become That by “a supreme effort of consciousness”. (15)

Almost all fundamental questions of humanity, nay of all creatures, are insightfully answered in *The Life Divine*. Nothing has escaped the all penetrating sight of Sri Aurobindo. From Maya to Matter, Mind to Supermind, Evil to Emancipation and, from Aspiration to the highest possible Attainment— everything is discussed, demarcated and decided with the wisdom and insight of the Rishi. Commenting on the necessity of unity and a creative harmonious rhythm in life and existence the Master writes “...all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony” (4) and a “...fully awakened mind” (4) cannot rest until harmony is restored.

Like *Savitri*, *The Life Divine* also seems a “record of seeing” and a witness account by the yogi of the cosmic play of creation. During my study of *The Life Divine* I realized that Sri Aurobindo is not just a passive witness but an “active participant” of the whole process of creation. He is well aware of the God’s working, His methods and modifications of transformation. In chapter XXII, the Mahayogi defines Life—

Life is, we have seen, the putting forth, under certain cosmic circumstances, of a Conscious-Force which is in its own nature infinite, absolute,

untrammelled, inalienably possessed of its own unity and bliss, the Conscious-Force of Sachchidananda. (220)

Man is, till the present period of cosmic evolution, the most suitable bearer and worker of this Conscious-Force. In fact the whole life of man is but "...the impulsion of the Force" for the ultimate satisfaction of "the Deity seated within him" (222). And there is no escape from this Calvary for man, the chosen race of a chosen place—

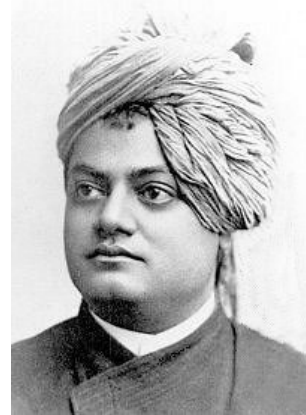
Either man must fulfil himself by satisfying the Divine within him or he must produce out of himself a new and greater being [*New Race*] who will be more capable of satisfying it. He must either himself become a divine humanity or give place to Superman. (222)

After learning of this great responsibility on the shoulder of man, it becomes easier to understand the beginning lines of *The Life Divine*. "The earliest preoccupation of man" is "divination of Godhead" because he is on earth plane not only "...to affirm himself in the universe...but to evolve and finally to exceed himself" (711). It is not difficult now to understand why the most fundamental preoccupation of man is God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. He is destined to perish if he does not proceed on the divine path. He cannot confine his search for knowing; his mission goes far ahead to the summit of "becoming". "To be and to be fully is Nature's aim in us..." says *The Life Divine* (1060).

This is *The Life Divine* or the Divine's Life for me. It begins from the conceptualization of the Divine but ends with the most conscious realization of the same. The last chapter should be read first of all and, this will ensure the absolute assimilation of the "revealing rapture" of the book in the being of reader and *rasika*. *The Life Divine* is Divine's wine! Sip it up!

*As different streams having
different sources all mingle their
waters in the sea, so different
tendencies, various though they
appear, crooked or straight, all
lead to God.*

Swami Vivekananda



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF YOGA

Sri Aurobindo

Yoga is not a modern invention of the human mind, but our ancient and prehistoric possession. The *Veda* is our oldest extant human document and the *Veda*, from one point of view, is a great compilation of practical hints about Yoga. All religion is a power of which Yoga is the root; all philosophy, poetry & the works of genius use it, consciously or unconsciously, as an instrument.

We believe that God created the world by Yoga and by Yoga He will draw it into Himself again. *Yogah prabhavapyayau*, Yoga is the birth and passing away of things. When Sri Krishna reveals to Arjuna the greatness of His creation and the manner in which He has built it out of His being by a reconciliation of logical opposites, he says "*Pasya me yogam aishwaram*", Behold my divine Yoga. We usually attach a more limited sense to the word; when we use or hear it, we think of the details of Patanjali's system, of rhythmic breathing, of peculiar ways of sitting, of concentration of mind, of the trance of the adept. But these are merely details of particular systems. The systems are not the thing itself, any more than the water of an irrigation canal is the river Ganges. Yoga may be done without the least thought for the breathing, in any posture or no posture, without any insistence on concentration, in the full waking condition, while walking, working, eating, drinking, talking with others, in any occupation, in sleep, in dream, in states of unconsciousness, semiconsciousness, double-consciousness. It is no nostrum or system or fixed practice, but an eternal fact of process based on the very nature of the Universe.

Nevertheless in practice the name may be limited to certain applications of this general process for specific and definite ends. Yoga stands essentially on the fact that in this world we are everywhere one, yet divided; one yet divided in our being, one with yet divided from our fellow creatures of all kinds, one with yet divided from the infinite existence which we call God, Nature or Brahman. Yoga, generally, is the power which the soul in one body has of entering into effective relation with other souls, with parts of itself which are behind the waking consciousness, with forces of Nature and objects in Nature, with the Supreme Intelligence, Power & Bliss which governs the world either for the sake of that union in itself or for the purpose of increasing or modifying our manifest being, knowledge, faculty, force or delight. Any system which organises our inner being our outer frame for these ends may be called a system of Yoga.

INTEGRAL YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

V. Madhusudan Reddy



[i]

Man by his very nature is spiritual. He is a dynamic psyche ever evolving, always integrating with the universe around him. He is a self-conscious mode of the infinite and the eternal though at present limited because of the compulsions of Nature's evolutionary process. He is a dual expression of both Being and Becoming, and manifests simultaneously the static and dynamic aspects of Reality. The static truth of his inmost existence — the impersonal eternal dimension — sanctions and supports, as it were, his creative nature, the historical dimension. The two dimensions, though distinguishable, are in fact inseparable. Integral Yoga Psychology aims at integrating the two dimensions with a view to intensify and advance the present evolutionary process. It attempts to bridge the gap between the distant ideal and the present human reality, — between the Superconscious wholeness and the existing limited self-awareness. According to Sri Aurobindo, this needs the intervention and supporting action of a cosmic and supra-cosmic consciousness-force, the Supermind. It is the Truth-Consciousness above that can unify this uniqueness of the individual with the relatedness of the universe in an ever glowing splendour of the transcendent. The three dimensions of the Divine — the individual, the universal and the transcendent, are harmoniously and integrally effectuated in the action of the supramental. It is the goal of Nature's evolutionary endeavour to promote this triple effectuation, and Sri Aurobindo sees clearly that only the supramental has the integrative power to bring about this radical transformation.

The ever-growing hunger in man for the whole is indicative of the intimacy that the universal needs to forge with the individual, for man is essentially the microcosm struggling to realise his own nativity. In addition, man is also a self-transcending phenomenon, always reaching out to a greater truth, more expressive and more real. This urge for self-exceeding seeks expression in various ways — social, cultural and spiritual. An integral self-

transcendence demands an integral self-surrender, a total self-offering to the Supreme within. Integral Yoga Psychology envisages and seeks such a consummation by helping the seeker to become more and more receptive to the action of the consciousness-force of the omnipotent supramental. The Integral Yoga Psychology of Sri Aurobindo is the outcome of his profound ontological experience of the Omniscient Reality, of the integral truth of life and existence. Reality for him is multi-dimensional and integral, both Being and Becoming, Omniscience and Omnipotence, Shiva and Shakti. The supreme Being, Purushottama, is perceived as at once infinite and eternal on the one hand and an endless creative flow of time on the other. He is simultaneously the individual, universal and transcendental, One and Many, One in Many and Many in One. Such is the core experience presented in his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*.

Integral Yoga Psychology connotes in a specific way the psychological states and processes implicit in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. It is the integral fulfilment of the long Yoga-tradition of Indian psychology. It is the most intimate and intuitive study of the nature of the total human personality and not merely of the surface mentality and external behaviour. It takes into cognisance the entire range of consciousness including the inconscient, the subconscious, the circumconscient and the Superconscient; it embraces the whole emotional history of the human phenomenon. Its processes are the manifold mechanisms of Nature itself, and its goals the harmony of the superconscient supernature of the Infinite and the Eternal. Yogic seekings and meditative methods of inner discoveries mark its steps on the upward journey to the realisation of a totally observant and infinitely participatory creative consciousness. Observation of the surface mind and the concomitant behavioural phenomena is absolutely inadequate for its purposes; observation of the human phenomenon from inside as well as an indepth yogic introspection of the subconscious with a view to enter the Superconscient is its way. Integral Yoga Psychology, following the ancient Indian Yogic tradition, attempts to give us an integral perspective of the human personality.

While the different schools of psychology make characteristic assumptions in regard to the mechanics of our mental life (based exclusively on one or more aspects of human nature), Integral Yoga Psychology is founded upon the integral view of human personality. Unlike others, it accepts all the various states of consciousness as aspects of an integral self-awareness. Viewed and pursued exclusively, these states can only lead to partial, erroneous and misleading concepts of life. For example, as an American integral psychologist once very succinctly put it, "behaviourism gives particular attention to the visible phenomena of behaviour and the learning processes which govern such manifestations, psychoanalysis, on the other hand, stresses the instinctual components of personality, the impressibility of the human organism during

early years, and the influence of social conventions and institutions. Existential psychology places high value upon freedom, individuality, consciousness of both life and death, and the person's acceptance of the need to make responsible choices. Hence existential psychology pays close attention to observing states of everyday waking consciousness. Humanistic psychology esteems individual creativity and self-development; so it chooses to deal more with the person's potentials than with pathology. Transpersonal psychology focuses upon para-psychological and psychedelic experiences and spiritual paths; accordingly it provides, in several ways, a broader base for understanding human life than do many other schools of psychology."

[ii]

Man is essentially a psychological phenomenon. If psychology has to study man, it should reach and comprehend all the levels of his being, both inner and outer, and not limit itself to the mind. It is the Yogic approach to the phenomenon of man that gives an adequate account of human personality and carries with it a clarity and a certitude of its own. Man is not limited to his physical existence alone, he is beyond body, life and even mind. Psychology should therefore not restrict itself to the observation of his superficial nature. A whole world of supra-physical and spiritual phenomena have to be discovered and brought under control before psychology can hope to be a perfect and dynamic science. Our surface existence is only a part of our being, there are many other planes below and above that support and succour our external personality. For below our conscious nature is the massive Inconscient out of which life emerges. The Inconscient is much vaster, larger and deeper; it is the womb of our surface existence and its workings. Also, behind our frontal ego-nature is the kingdom of the subliminal with its manifold powers and provinces that determine and dictate our doings.

Integral Yoga Psychology is founded upon the experience of the integral self as the harmonious and indivisible unity of uniqueness, relatedness and transcendence. The basic insights of Integral Yoga Psychology as set forth in the writings of Sri Aurobindo include:

The integral fullness or wholeness of the human-personality.

The widest spectrum of experience ranging from the Inconscient to the Superconscient.

The synthesis and fulfilment of all yogic methods in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

The crowning vision of Integral Reality, and the realisation of the supreme potential of man.

The experience of the many planes or levels of consciousness reflecting the different dimensions of Reality.

The dynamic and creative union with the Supreme being resulting in the mounting self-manifestation of the Spirit.

The substitution of the negative urge of renunciation and withdrawal from the world by a positive freedom and joy to express the Integral Will of the Divine. The urge for world negation is thus successfully substituted by the process of world-transformation.

[iii]

Integral Yoga Psychology neither believes in the dichotomy of Nature and Spirit, nor of body and mind. Unlike Indian psychology which believes body and mind to be the two forms of the manifestation of the same creative energy of Prakriti, Western psychology treats them as two absolutely heterogeneous substances interacting with each other. It is only in the Yoga psychology of Patanjali that Purusha and Prakriti, Spirit and Nature are thought of as, essentially, different from each other. Integral Yoga Psychology transcends this traditional dichotomy, and treats Prakriti as the Prakriti of Purusha. For Sri Aurobindo, man is a body-mind-spirit continuum, for Spirit and Nature are essentially one.

Ancient Indian Vedanta recognises four phases of human experience: waking, dream, deep sleep and transcendental experience — jagrit, swapna, susupti and turiya. However, ontological primacy is bestowed upon the experience of transcendental self-realisation as against the other three, as these are supposed to belong to the realm of reality and ignorance. But for Integral Yoga Psychology all the four phases are equally real aspects of man's personality. Body, life and mind are equally real constituents of human nature as, the Spirit or Self.

Yoga essentially aims at the individual's union with the truth of himself, with his own true self. This implies the dissolution of his ego, the liquidation of Ignorance, avidya. It also implies the integration of all the different aspects of his personality, the different planes and parts of his being — the mental, vital, physical, and the psychic. It is the integration of the spiritual self with the empirical self, the transcendental self with the instrumental nature. Unlike the traditional Yoga systems which deem the empirical self to be the offspring of an ignorant Prakriti, Integral Yoga Psychology thinks of mind, life and matter as the inferior terms of the supreme trilogy — Sat-Chit-Ananda. Union with the transcendental self gives the seeker the necessary omnipotence and omniscience to participate in the process of transformation of the instrumental nature. The yogi, who is integrally united with the Divine, alone can bring the love, light, power and peace from above and finally change the earth-nature.

Integral self-realisation is therefore the goal of Integral Yoga Psychology; it is the realisation of the universal and the transcendental self. It is the emergence

of a new centre of consciousness capable of manifesting progressively the truth and splendour of the Divine upon earth. Traditional Vedanta overemphasizes the transcendental aspect of the Self, whereas the materialist existentialist ignores it. The individual is a creative mode of the Divine capable of realising his oneness with the universe. He is an integral part of the cosmos as well as the cosmic whole. He is an evolving mode of transcendental freedom and universal love.

Integral Yoga Psychology is an endless adventure of consciousness. It involves the transcendence of reason as much as its use as an effective instrument of super-reason for the transformation of the phenomenal nature. It is a journey from ignorance to knowledge and from knowledge to greater and higher knowledge. It is the quest as well as the method of widening and deepening and heightening of one's awareness. It is the conquest of the many planes of consciousness — mind, higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind and Overmind. It is the heroic culmination of the spiritual ascent to the domain of Truth-Consciousness — the Supermind — the ultimate ground of all existence. The Supermind is the omnipotent and omniscient dimension of the Divine; it is the egoless awareness of the fundamental unity of the all and the universe with the Supreme as well as his Will of effectuation. It is the all-comprehensive and all-powerful consciousness-force of Being. It is beyond all forms, and yet constitutive and supportive of all forms. It is the infinitely free and dynamic oneness with the creativity of Sachchidananda.

Integral Yoga Psychology carries the seeker beyond the level of ego-needs to the world of meta-needs — the love and enjoyment of beauty, truth, goodness and then beyond them to the luminous experience of the universal and the transcendental. This in itself is a revolutionary change of consciousness, it is a totally different dimension of self-awareness — an emergence into the freedom of the Eternal and the Infinite. But this is not its ultimate goal. The seeker of Integral Yoga further realises the identity of Being and Becoming. Reality is perceived as inseparable from its own creativity, Being as both the Eros and the Logos — Shiva-Shakti. The sadhaka then becomes a collaborator of the Divine, and creatively participates in the supreme fellowship. Liberated from limitation, separation and division he is reborn and recast into the consciousness and nature of the Divine, he becomes integrally united with the superconscient dynamism of the Supreme in which the Superconscient and the Supernature are eternally and inseparably one.

Whereas traditional Vedantic psychology is based upon the trenchant distinction between Nature and Spirit and the final liberation from the bondage of the body by the practice of renunciation. Integral Yoga Psychology avoids both puritanism and asceticism, for it envisions the Supreme Self as the integral unity of the Noumenal and the Phenomenal, Spirit

and Matter, Consciousness and Creativity. Reality, for it, is a body-mind-spirit continuum. Starvation and suppression, puritanism and asceticism lead to a distortion of the total truth and to a sort of spiritual blindness to the secret purpose of creation itself.

Ego, mind and instincts of the vital nature have their own place in Integral Yoga. They have a minor and yet a distinctive function in the evolution of the individual. In the initial stages they support his growth-process, and protect him from sinking back into the anonymity of Nature. Mind and ego, even as they help, can also be a bar in respect of higher growth. Self-development consists in the conscious transition from the lower to the higher, 'from the ego-centric to the cosmo-centric outlook'. So, in any assured self-development, ego and mind should neither be destroyed nor deified, they have to be transcended and transformed.

Integral Yoga Psychology sets before itself the ideal of triple transformation: psychic, spiritual and supramental. The awakening to the psychic within and its increasing influence on the mental, vital, physical floods the being with love, light, purity and happiness. It initiates the seeker into the secret joys of the Infinite through perfect self-consecration and self-surrender. The next stage, that of spiritual transformation, brings in peace and freedom. It entails complete freedom from the sense of individual existence, and uplifts the sadhaka into the universal awareness of Being. This is followed by the final phase wherein the total being of the sadhaka is transformed by the omnipotent action of the supramental into the consciousness and nature of the Divine. The sadhaka then becomes simultaneously and comprehensively aware of all the dimensions of the Divine in the context of creation. He is then made ready to consciously and integrally participate in the creative adventure of life and be a collaborator of the creator in working out His Will upon the earth.

It is by following the inner guidance of one's own self that the seeker can accomplish personal integration, the integration of the mental, vital, physical with the psychic. An immediate awareness of one's own psychic is then the sine qua non of Integral Yoga Psychology. It is the psychic awakening that eventually brings about the threefold transformation that is the goal of Integral Yoga Psychology.

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RESEARCHING THE PRACTICE OF INTEGRAL YOGA IN LIFE AND WORKS

Larry Seidlitz

In collaboration with the Indian Psychology Institute, I have begun an exploratory study to examine long-term spiritual growth through Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and its influence on four fields of professional endeavour—management, education, health care, and arts. Because the principles relating to the practice of Integral Yoga as described in the literature take different forms in the actual lived experiences of the individuals who pursue it, the focus of this study is on the lived experience of long-term practitioners of the discipline, and to see how their practice has influenced their professional work.

Experiential accounts of the practice of Integral Yoga

While the focus of the research is on the application of Integral Yoga in the several types of professional work, several of the questions give us insights into the nature of the practice of the yoga more generally for these relatively advanced practitioners. We find in several of the interviews a developed interiority, a certain poise of calm, reflection, and equanimity, which is a basic foundation for the practice of this yoga as described by Sri Aurobindo. We find not only evidence of this poise in their demeanor, but that the development and extension of this poise is a conscious pursuit in their life and work. For example, Thomas (names of all the participants have been changed) indicated that the most prominent aspects or processes of the sadhana at this point were for him, "Being flexible. Widening as much as possible. Trying to stabilize the peace which sometimes goes very deep and very intense. I don't have it continuously, but it's settling. Widening is the most important thing and not losing the balance." Widening, he explained, "means when certain things come in, and you think in a different way, you take it in, not leave it outside... That doesn't mean that I have to agree, but slowly to understand, you have to first take it in, see it and study it, and once you are part of it by taking it in, you might potentially see certain things which might be positive, and other things not." Nilima explained what was most important in her sadhana at this point in this way, "Well, I do what I can to see myself sincerely, without prejudice, and try to find the places in me that stop me from attending to my life in the spirit." For Karuna, it was "to be completely free from within of prejudices, free of attachments, free of desires. And I think to channelize one's energies for something that is more meaningful." One of the most important aspects of sadhana for James was to have "Less of the small person [in himself] jumping up and down, making a fuss."

We also find that several of these individuals perceived an inner contact with the Divine, which though sometimes may have felt strong and sometimes weak, was persistent and well-established. For example, James, when asked what aspects or processes of the yoga were most prominent, noted that one of them was "Remembering the Mother more constantly." Thomas said, "Sadhana means that you live as conscious as possible, from the time you get up until you go to sleep, and even beyond that" [i.e. during sleep]. Nilima said, "I know that the Mother is with me and I can call on Mother to be with me in the class and I am sure She is."

While the participants did not usually speak directly about their more rare or exceptional spiritual experiences (we did not directly ask about them and often it is said that it is better not to speak of them), sometimes they alluded to such experiences in a relatively general way. For example, Nilima said, "when I came in 1974, [I thought] it's all very well. I was very respectful about people's beliefs, but [I thought] this is not for me. I just got out of that [i.e. religion] (laughs). I just left that and so you know it was not for me. But then I had experiences that I could not deny..."

James had an experience which led him to come to India: "One morning while I was on my bed I had this vision. I don't like to describe too much about the vision, but it meant 'go to India.' So I gave notice at work, and phoned up my mother that morning, and said, 'I have to go to India...' When I reached India, partly I felt that I had reached home. I traveled a lot in north India before coming to south India. When I came to Pondicherry it seemed quite by chance, because I hadn't realized that Pondicherry was my objective, I only realized after arriving here. But then I felt truly at home after arriving in Pondy."

James later added, "I had this marvelous experience which brought me to India, and the experiences that I've had here have left that one far behind. So the life here, if we can follow the yoga, participate in the yoga, is a great thing. We've had so many sadhaks before us who very quietly lived their life and made so little noise about it. This would be a model to follow."

Integral Yoga completely changes the outlook on life

We asked for some of the important ways in which yoga has changed their life. Three of these participants indicated that it had completely changed their lives. James said, "It's too far-reaching to say a number of ways. It just wakes you up from inside. It is the fundamental thing which just changed everything." Thomas indicated, "Basically, I changed totally, everything changed." When asked whether Integral Yoga changed her outlook on the world, Nilima said, "Absolutely. Entirely." Elaborating on how and why it has changed, Nilima said, "Well, that there is a purpose to all this. I mean, before I thought [you] do what you can, have a happy life and a kind life, that sort of thing. But [to understand] that there is actually a purpose to this whole adventure with the

evolution, the descent of light into matter, the descent of divine into matter, to transform matter and make a supramental world, that this process is happening, changes your outlook on everything. There is nothing that does not change in that light. So your work, your friendships, your everything just changes. It's not just to have a nice time."

Karuna also perceived a great difference in the outlook that she acquired when learning about the yoga compared to her associates. She said that "when I truly read a lot of Mother and Sri Aurobindo, I realized that they really have a different perspective to life—the depth of their vision, the broadness of the thoughts. When I looked at how other students around me who might be coming from a general education background, how differently they thought. It is a very different way of looking, a different attitude to life. The broadness of vision in Mother's yoga—everything is done for the Divine."

Work, sadhana and the general course of life tend to merge

Some of the participants seemed to make little or no distinction between work and sadhana, or between work and life, or between sadhana and life. As James simply said, "There is no difference between my sadhana and my work." Elaborating on this point, James said, "I came to India in search of the Truth. I wanted to know what is the Truth. Circumstances seemed to draw me into music. Music gave me the most wonderful experiences in my early days, and even now. So there was no question for me whether I should follow the musical path. And my music, path, and life just began to merge into one. It's hard to say. Everything has helped everything else."

James further elaborated on this identity between his sadhana and music. "Before coming to India, I had never heard that music could bring me to a state of realization. But in India I hear of music saints, like Swami Haridas or Saint Tyagaraja, music saints who are there in Indian history for hundreds of years. These musicians have realized the Divine through their music." When asked whether music itself has become a way for him to move towards or to enter into unity with the Divine, James replied, "Yeah. With the example of the musician saints of India, it is like a big 'yes' for me in my life that I can follow this path."

Thomas described the merging of life and yoga succinctly, "Everything is yoga and everything is coming in, and everything is running contemporarily." He then elaborated, "Work is basically the checkpoint to see how far you can put in practice what you are trying to attain in the sadhana. It is a reference point. It is nice to read and be quiet, but as soon as you come into contact with others, then things start to change." He added, "In the work field, your sadhana is easily tested. It is concrete, like the material world. That is why I think that Sri Aurobindo finds it very important that you work. It is something that makes you see where you are with your sadhana, in the sense of what changes you

made and how you are doing your sadhana and where to improve. [It is] something very concrete.”

Karuna, when explaining what was important in her sadhana, mentioned “to channelize one’s energies for something that is more meaningful.” And then she added, “And in that direction, in that something more meaningful, I would like, through art, to see how I can realize that, to make work for art as my sadhana.” Karuna also showed how art is closely intertwined with her sadhana from another angle. When asked whether she discovers something about herself through her art, she replied, “In fact, you come to know yourself more and more. And also we realize that we don’t know ourself. And then you are searching to understand your true self. I think art is the best vehicle for doing that, because art is where there is nothing else in between, it is you and you confront yourself. That is exactly what happens in meditation and yoga. I would say that the only difference is that here you express it through something that has a material manifestation, which is the artwork. While when you meditate or do your yoga it is completely inside.” Further in this direction, she indicated, “more and more, I am trying to call for a completely blank mind, so that you are not disturbed by your own mundane thoughts, and then you can just allow whatever wants to come. In fact, that is, I think, not an easy exercise. That is what I would like to achieve, to feel just like a mirror, or just an empty space.”

Karuna also mentioned the transformational function of art. She said, “Sri Aurobindo said that there are three roles of art—the first role of art is decorative, the second is educational, and the third is spiritual... where it has to transform us, it has to change our consciousness. This understanding of art becomes another means of self-transformation. It is something very deep.” Further along this line she said, “I think [art] is the best reflection of the personality of anyone. At the end, if you want to create something beautiful, you have to first yourself be beautiful, you have to yourself first think beautifully. You cannot be thinking that I will make something and I will be something else. That is the main thing: that changing one’s self first, working on oneself. Actually, doing painting is actually insignificant; that also is not the aim. The true purpose of painting, you actually get to converse with yourself. It is like a soliloquy with yourself that you have. And that is the best thing that I find about my work.”

Feeling connected with the Divine leads to perfect harmony and efficiency in the work

At times, several of the participants would feel that they were in contact with the Divine and that at such times the work they were doing flowed naturally, harmoniously, and perfectly. James put it this way: “Sometimes, on special occasions, it seems like Mother is just present, and then it seems

that nothing can go wrong. I feel supported in everything, so everything can change.”

Concerning his teaching, James said, “My work is a lot about interacting with children and students... While I am using my musical knowledge, I am interacting with others, I am giving what I have learned. But I feel very much Mother’s help while doing that. It seems that when I demonstrate things ... it seems to come out better when I am demonstrating to a student than when I am playing for myself or in a concert even. So I feel good in interacting with others that way”.

In her teaching, Nilima said, “It does help and the more I remember... sometimes I don’t. If I am caught up in my day then this is just one other class, I can completely forget to do it. But if I do call, the class changes its tone because Mother said as soon as you.... and I can feel [it]. If I say, ‘please be with me in this,’ it’s there and the class changes... The quality.”

Thomas explains that through his concentration on the work, solutions come automatically: “For instance, I don’t know a lot of software, I just click here and there and it comes. Just don’t ask me to do it again. Of course, when you do an operation again and again, it becomes part of your critical knowledge. Otherwise it’s kind of “purely intuitive.” The vibration comes from above and it gets realized. You’re not the one doing it. That is a beautiful sensation. You make the moves: you take the scissors when you need it, you need a number of cards and you take exactly the right number of cards. Those are nice moments. The more you are concentrated and penetrating into the things you have to do ... the more this comes. Those are again what I call Ananda moments.”

Karuna mentioned that in painting, “there are times when you are surprised, “Oh, you did this!” You’re taken aback, you’re pleasantly surprised. And you realize that something has happened... It is important to break that mundane habitual ritual, and get into a rhythm where you are moved really from inside to do a thing, and then you do it.”

Difficulties are not prominent and are seen as part of the sadhana

Some of the participants could not readily identify difficulties in their work; it seemed that they had been reconceptualized in such a way that they were not seen as difficulties, but rather as opportunities for growth and making progress, and as an inevitable part of the sadhana that they had undertaken.

For example, James said that he had few difficulties in his teaching, but later said that his students provided him with many challenges, for example, coming late, coming unprepared, not paying attention, but that these things were quite natural as they were children. For James, the Ashram school setting also obviated what might otherwise be difficulties, and he imagined that if he was working in an ordinary school he might have difficulties disciplining

students, but that in the Ashram school he has “students who come because they like the music, they want to learn.”

In his growth as a musician, James said that he didn’t have difficulties, “because it seems like it is her path, not mine. I am simply cooperating, participating, or it is like I am putting up the sail to catch a little bit of that divine breeze. But it’s her path.”

After being unable to identify any difficulties, Thomas expressed it this way, “Nothing. I can’t think about difficulties. What I notice now by your question is that I really don’t see difficulties. I don’t make them beforehand. What I notice is that I start living more and more now, in the moment. If difficulties will come up, then I will solve them. And if I don’t solve them then the solution might come later. For me, I just try to do things as good as I can at that moment. If I will meet difficulties, then I will solve them. And if I can’t solve them, I keep on trying to do my best without making too much a problem of it. I pray to the Mother. And then usually after sometime the solution comes.”

Karuna discussed her relation with difficulties this way: “one thing that I am trying to do more and more is live in the present, and the attitude that whatever is happening is Thy Will, ... not to be upset with anything that happens, because that is what is the Divine Will, and to accept it as it is. Because I realize that we spend so much time sometimes in thinking about our past, which is over and we cannot change. And half the sorrow of the people is about the future, and they imagine things which may never happen. As an effect, we forget to live in the present and enjoy the present. And to be 100% in the present, give ourselves 100%. I think that is the best way to live life: to do your best at every moment, and anything that happens that is beyond your command, is like Her Will, and accept it as Her Will.”

Participants ask for help from the Divine and feel they receive it

Thomas said, “Every time I ask for help in what I call in a very sincere way, and you are open, then it comes, straight away. Instantaneous, you don’t even have to wait. It’s there, boom! At maximum, the day after. But usually it comes, proof.” Discussing his call for help in obtaining new clients, Thomas said, “Sometimes it happens to be that I cannot keep that well my peace and when I start to be really desperate, I say, ‘Mother, help me.’ And then, it is like she opens the shower. Because, it is not just one, but two or three [clients] come, and I say, ‘Now it’s enough.’ This kind of contact I have. It’s nice.”

James said, “If I happen to have a moment when I can be silent and quiet and call the Divine, it is like a complete cessation of all interfering waves and the pouring down of a harmonizing force. So it seems like the more I would call it the better off I would be, in everything.” Later he stated, “More and more,

hopefully, I learn to call the Divine all the time, because, as I have said, music and life have kind of merged."

Money is often absent or negligible as a motivating factor

Thomas, who is self-employed in his native country part of the year when not doing volunteer work for the Ashram, explained that the motivation in his work for making money "is less and less. Before I thought I should gather certain sums, which I always did, by the way. I put a goal, and usually I went even beyond it. But now, as I told you before, I think that what you need will come. That gives me a lot of peace. It won't make me a rich man. You do your best, the results you leave to God." James, who works in the Ashram, explained his relationship with money this way, "I am very fortunate that money is not a concern. I realize that it is something that I need, to have at least some level, and even to feed myself as I had when I was growing up. I have to do that much to look after myself. But I don't like dealing much with money, and I'm lucky that I don't have to deal much with money. In the world situation there is a lot of wrong that goes on with many people's money. This has to change." Similarly, Nilima who works in the Ashram explained, "I am in a lucky position that I have, I have enough money to live on that my father left me, nothing to do with my own. I am fortunate in that way that I don't have to worry as long as I keep my head above me."

Karuna needs to earn money through her art work to support herself. She said, "Money is an important power because it helps you to do something. But you should never be ridden by money to the extent that you forget what it is for. In that context, I have realized that money—it is quite interesting—it is something that comes when it is needed. If you really need it, it comes... For me it's a miracle, because there would be a day when I wouldn't know how I would buy the milk tomorrow, and the next day I would have to write a check for one lakh rupees I have had these kinds of days. And you cannot imagine, it has just come—sometimes sent by someone in the family, a friend would give a loan, sometimes someone donated some money.

"I think money is a power which has to be very judiciously handled. And we should also not taboo it. It is good that money be in the right hands, then good work happens. That is the ancient thing: renunciation, there should be no material possessions. We don't need to think like that. It should be an inner renunciation, and you have to do everything as perfectly as possible."

In education, children are viewed first as souls

Nilima explained what she values most in her work as a teacher: "The thing I would value most is to be able to help the children see the Divine within them, feel the Divine or at least feel their own beauty, their own worth. That's the thing that I would value and whatever else they want to do or not do is fine.

Subjects they like, they don't like, it's ok. If they know who they are and what they love, then that's the most important thing, for me." Nilima also explained that she exemplifies these values into her teaching, "I perceive them that they are as part of the Divine. This is clear. Whatever other elements they have they are a spark of the Divine and this is what I want to talk to whenever I am talking and that happens more or less. And I want them to know that I respect them".

Nilima elaborated on these points when discussing her central motivation in teaching, "It seems to me that if people value themselves they become positive forces in the world. If they don't value themselves they become negative forces in the world. If they know that they are beautiful, and everybody is in his or her own right, they are valuable, they are loved then they can go out and give those things to other people. It increases the harmony and the beauty in the world. But if they think they aren't, they shrink from what they could be, they shrink from the love they could give, the love they could receive, they shrink from things."

James explained his approach to teaching music like this, "I can't tell these children what to do; they are too independent. They are too mature, most of them. I myself, when I was young, I didn't really want to learn from anybody, a completely independent type. Our children are the same. I can only teach (when) they want. This is the only interaction I have, I don't have any authority. It is their love for music which brings a response from my love for music, it brings an interaction there. It is that which is driving everything, there is no authority.... I suppose the art is in getting to know the students, getting to know what they want, what they like. Then I can offer them something."

Karuna discussed her approach to teaching art this way, "How does one teach art? Because what happens is that we follow a very set schooling, in a way which is the academic schooling of doing some studies and all that. But if you go back to the way Indian art was practiced, they never did a model drawing, they never did a still life, it was more a Far Eastern attitude through identification of subject... let's say [you want to paint] the compassion of the Buddha, you first have to experience compassion, only then you can paint compassion, and these kinds of things. It is a combination, a little bit we start like the Western people would do, about sketching from life, and all that, but at the end the whole thing is identifying with the subject. So if you want to paint a cow, you have to really visualize the cow within your mind. It should be that only when you see with your eyes that you can paint, it should be inside. That comes when you do a lot of it. I would like to influence them with these kinds of habits. I am constantly telling my students, first draw from life... Nature is something which never finishes its [store] of knowledge and inspiration, you can endlessly keep creating from nature. But the problem is, nowadays, with the whole digital age and digital culture, the whole reference is through

photos, visuals, internet knowledge, and I think all this is very limited. I don't encourage that."

Conclusions

As shown in the examples above, the interview questions appear to be eliciting interesting insights into the actual lived practice of the Integral Yoga by long-term practitioners, and particularly into the way it applies to their professional work. It is encouraging that our initial interviewees have expressed such a depth of experience and wisdom with us which they have developed over several decades of practice of the yoga and applying it in their life and professional work. At a basic level, these initial results show us that the Integral Yoga works, that it can and does yield significant results and all-embracing positive changes in the lives of experienced practitioners. We are also particularly encouraged by the finding that the experience of inner communion or connection with the Divine (however we wish to name it) leads not only to inner peace and happiness, but to greater perceived effectiveness in work.

The themes we have identified here for this report are just some of the most obvious that leapt out from a reading of the four transcripts; a closer analysis of the transcripts would certainly yield additional common themes as well as significant unique experiences that will be important for appreciating the possibilities and implications of yoga for life and work. A more comprehensive report based on a larger number of interviews would yield not only a richer database of experiences, but would embed these experiences in the theoretical and social context of the Integral Yoga and its practice, and draw out more fully their implications for these fields of endeavour and for life more generally. Some of the themes we identified, such as the merging of spiritual practice, life and work, the reconceptualization of difficulties, of working diligently and happily without monetary reward, of perceiving to be in frequent or regular contact with an inner source of wisdom and ability which gets expressed in work, all seem to have important ramifications for professional life, but these need to be further considered and developed.

Having only four interviews at our disposal, we could not delve much into either the processes associated with applying yoga to the individual professions, nor to their impact or outcomes in the different professions. As three of our first interviewees were teachers, here we have only briefly described as an example some of the findings associated with applying the Integral Yoga in the field of education. This is a field in which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have provided relatively clear and unconventional guidelines, and it is interesting to see how these guidelines are being applied by these teachers. We are sufficiently encouraged by these initial findings that a greater

number of interviews in each of the specific fields will yield significant insights for work in the various professions.

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The Conscient therefore and not the Inconcient was the Truth at which the ancient psychology arrived; and it distinguished these strata of the concient self, the waking, the dream and the sleep selves of Man... And what better proof can be these of the depth and truth of the ancient (Indian) psychology than the fact that when modern thought in all its pride of exact and careful knowledge begins to cast its fathom into these depths, it is obliged to repeat in other language what had already been written nearly three thousand years ago?

(SABCL 16: 262)

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Kundan Singh

The Foundational Principles for Indian Psychology

The West has its own history and it will or will not have its own trajectory with regards to its movement towards a mystical exploration of nature. For centuries together in India, the exploration of the deeper truths of our existence has been engaged by the mystics—Rishis, Munis and Sufis. Under the destruction brought about by colonization and the dominance of western heuristics in academia since then, a legitimate field of enquiry into the nature of human existence was systematically decimated and discredited. In the modern times the pursuit of knowledge has come a full circle, and the time has come to pursue the ancient science once again. Within the Indian context, the time has come for us to bestow legitimacy to the age-old tradition of ours, and inspire the younger generation of psychologists to become mystics who can determine the psychological laws and the psychology of individuals based on knowledge by identity, and we need to make a quantum jump by exploring the mystical and the invisible realm of Nature who carries in herself all the secrets that govern the human behaviour.

Ancient India always honored the word of the Rishis—the mystic had the final word in all matters dealing with the most mundane to the most esoteric. Though not with the educated elites, this tendency or proclivity is still seen among the common masses where they go and seek answers from known and renowned Rishis.

As we intensify our efforts to carve out a new and specific discipline of Indian psychology, it will incredibly benefit us to look into what one of the foremost mystics of the last century, Sri Aurobindo, had to say in this matter. It is almost received knowledge that in the Indian universities, it is primarily Western Psychology which is being taught, and that it does not explain most of the psychological processes of the Indians. According to Sri Aurobindo, the key factor that distinguishes Indian living from the rest in the world is that spirituality is the master-key of Indian living. The discipline of Indian Psychology would want to recognize this fundamental truth and start constructing its knowledge base from this foundation. It is important to recognize that there is an invisible reality that surrounds the visible and that the consciousness is the primary reality out of which has emerged everything manifest and unmanifest. For the renaissance of Indian thought, Sri Aurobindo (1998) gives us the following three lines of action or pursuit:

The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and

critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of the Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.

Thus, for the introduction of Indian Psychology in the Indian Universities, it is of capital importance to formulate a curriculum that gives an intellectual foundation of the various spiritual traditions of India—a curriculum that encapsulates and embraces Upanishads, Bhagavatgita, Yogasutras of Patanjali, Yogavaasista, Advaita Vedanta of Shankara, Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, and texts on Buddhism, Jainism and Sufism. We have to come back to this assertion time and again that consciousness is the primal reality and that it is the cause of everything. We may want to take the help of all the current research in different disciplines that point to the existence of a spiritual world. For example, we can incorporate into the curriculum the most recent research of Quantum Physics which is identifying that an objective pursuit of truth in the conventional dichotomy of subject and object comes to a collapse when we begin to investigate the atomic universe, and that the modern Science has come a full circle and it is validating some of the insights that the ancient seers and mystics in India have had for centuries together.

Secondly, we need to understand that though political colonization may have been over but in a real sense it is not. Our minds have become colonized; by and large the English-educated intellectuals of this country, who incidentally form most of the academics, do not think through and in the categories that are Indian or that they are dictated by categories and worldview that our ancestors have practiced for centuries together. We still judge and visualize our culture and the way of living through the lens of how the British saw us—we have internalized all the judgments that were heaped on us, and we still look to the West for the validation of our existence and wisdom. We lack the necessary courage and confidence, and largely this process is unconscious. To give you an example, we in India began to talk about Yoga after it was accepted in the West and a certain section of the population began to practice it articulating its effects. Similar is the case with the Ayurveda and other traditional medicines; only when the people in the West began to express dissatisfaction with the mainstream medicine that we began to see value of things in our own backyard. This tendency will have to change; otherwise we will be lagging behind the West by at least fifty years without showing any sense of originality and creativity. Consequently, it will jeopardize the future of Indian Psychology.

Decolonizing the mind may not be a very easy process. Just like peeling off an onion, there may be layers and layers of training that we will have to deconstruct in order to intellectually understand the Indian existence and cosmology from within. The first step towards doing it effectively is to become conscious that a colonized mind in us exists, and it exists way more than we

are actually aware of it existing. It is important to understand that within the language there is a worldview which gets transmitted to the learner. With an intense process of introspection and self-inquiry we will be successful in breaking the shackles that have made us our own enemies while understanding that all that comes of the West is not a gospel of Truth and not all that has been in existence in India for centuries is a heap of superstition, falsity and ignorance. We need to understand the colonial process in which the orientalist language created these binary divisions of Civilized West and Savage East, the knowledgeable West and the naive East, the rational West and the irrational East, and how we have internalized these fictive creations which almost unconsciously forces us to seek the validation from the West, almost like a child seeking validation from his or her father. For the creation and furtherance of the field of Indian Psychology, this tendency needs to change. We need to have much confidence in the wisdom and deftness of our ancestors. It does not mean that we accept hook, line and sinker whatever that comes from our past but that we should be open, inquisitive and adventurous in exploring our ancient knowledge; and that we should give these knowledge-systems a fair chance of dispassionate inquiry and exploration before our experience and investigation can suggest that they are false and worth rejecting. What certainly we must be wary of is an apriori denial or rejection, which in my understanding is grossly counterproductive to the pursuit of Knowledge and Truth.

However, situating Indian Psychology on its own terms without it being in interaction with Western Psychology is neither possible nor desirable. If we look into the history of India, it has been an assimilative culture. Travelers, invaders, and persecuted among many others have come to India bringing with themselves different ways and thoughts. Every time that it has happened, Indian spirit has stood up, and while embracing all these novel ideas it has assimilated them into its own fold giving them a unique spin in accordance with the spiritual values. A similar approach needs to be applied to western psychologies—it value and truth needs to be weighed against the Indian spirit, and whatever is assimilable in accordance with its core needs to be absorbed and the rest rejected. However, I am very clear that this assimilation needs to be creative, and that we guard ourselves against any kind of jingoism, parochialism and cultural nationalism.

Ultimately, we need to understand that the Indian spiritual systems are not speculative and metaphysical, and that they have come about from the experiences of the proponents. These experiences are verifiable and that Indian Psychology will not become a totally thriving discipline till its practitioners and teachers become yogis, mystics and seers of the spiritual reality. The last, of course, is difficult thing to accomplish—definitely extremely difficult till the spiritual paradigm does not get more acceptance in the mainstream education. At least till then we can start with a discussion which allows students to intellectually study spirituality within the context of Indian Psychology.

(This is an excerpt from a larger paper with the same title.)

THE SUBCONSCIOUS IN “MACBETH”

Kalpana Bidwaikar

Human behaviour is the most intriguing and interesting subject ever dealt with by the psychologists, philosophers, thinkers, novelists and dramatists world over. The ever puzzling questions of why a person behaved in a particular manner in a given circumstance, the chances of predicting his/her behaviour, the nature of person and the events occurring in his life make it difficult to predict with any surety the behavioural pattern of a person. Modern psychology attributes these behavioural patterns and irregularities to the subconscious part in an individual. Subconscious is usually defined as the store house of suppressed desires. However, Sri Aurobindo the yogi and seer gives a wider definition of this plane of consciousness and calls it “Subconscient”. It is different from subconscious in the sense that subconscious is only an unexpressed, sleeping state of the conscious consciousness, whereas subconscient is a large plane of consciousness:

...we mean by the subconscient that quite submerged part of our being in which there is no wakeningly conscious and coherent thought, will or feeling or organised reaction, but stores them up in itself and from it too all sorts of stimuli, of persistent habitual movements, crudely repeated or disguised in strange forms can surge up into dream or into the waking nature. For if these impressions rise up most in dream in an incoherent and disorganized manner, they can also and do rise up into our waking consciousness as a mechanical repetition of old thoughts, old mental, vital and physical habits or an obscure stimulus to sensations, actions, emotions which do not originate in or from our conscious thought or will and are even often opposed to its perceptions, choice or dictates. (Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga 1*: 353)

With the above explanation it may be understood that human actions and behaviour are not easy and predictable. For the submerged part of our being is much too complex to facilitate an easy solution and formula for a generalized understanding.

Shakespeare, the well known dramatist has emerged as a master psychologist explored the working of the submerged consciousness in his plays, especially in Macbeth. We call it the submerged consciousness because it cannot be said with surety if Shakespeare wrote his plays with a view to exploring the subconscient, but he certainly seems to have been aware of something in an individual which is devious that may lead to tragedy. In the play Macbeth, the dramatist fashion the tragedy of Macbeth

and Lady Macbeth based on something that is hidden in them. Something that was not on the surface, but suddenly takes charge of their lives and eventually ruins them. If we see the play in the light of the definition of the subconscious explained by Sri Aurobindo, we may understand how the characters are led into their own tragedy as if by an unknown force. Their conscious mind denies it but the subconscious as if overpowers them and they remain mere puppets of this large submerged consciousness only to repent later – "What has been done, cannot be undone".

In Macbeth this subconscious expresses itself in the form of "vaulting ambition" as Shakespeare calls it in the play. This alone was enough to drive the two characters after power and commit a series of murders. In the play Macbeth appears as a worthy warrior and his king is full of praise for him. But in Act I, Scene 1 itself, Shakespeare creates a gloomy atmosphere by the appearance of the three witches who ignite ambition in Macbeth. A question may be asked if the witches did instigate Macbeth into a heinous idea, why did Macbeth yield to it? Two reasons may be given to this – first, Macbeth got the proof of what they said as he hears of the reward of becoming the Thane of Cawdor. Second, Macbeth would not have yielded to the idea thrown by the witches if he himself did not have this hidden ambition to possess the throne. Witches only acted as a mouthpiece of his hidden ambitions.

We hear the declaration made by the witches - "fair is foul and foul is fair", it is full of suspense and malaise. If Macbeth did not initially possess the ambition to become a king he would have chosen the fair and not the foul. The fairer part, the conscious part in Macbeth still hesitates to believe the witches, but is too weak to resist the temptation of the subconscious, the witches and his friend Banquo. Mounting on this ambition Macbeth writes a letter to his wife and asks her to prepare for the coming event.

While the subconscious throws up ambition on the surface, Macbeth is taken over by fear. When the time to execute the crime of killing his king comes closer his good sense and morality tempers him down of his ambition and he tells Lady Macbeth "We will proceed no further in this business" (Act II, Sc.6).

But lady Macbeth had as if literally unsexed herself of the tender feelings of a woman. She almost thrashes Macbeth of his cowardice and rebuilds in him the will to murder the noble king. She is full of ambition for her husband and cannot allow him to be a coward. But Macbeth is again overtaken by fear. We see the play of ambition and fear all surging from the subconscious. He has the fear "If we should fail?" Lady Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" comes for his rescue and she says "I would, while it [babe] was smiling in my face, Have pluck my nipple from his boneless

gums, And dasht the brain out," (Act I Sc.6). Macbeth thus is led into committing the murder of King Duncan. However, this act is the end of all ambition and peace in Macbeth. While Lady Macbeth is busy covering up the deed, Macbeth is fear stricken – he sees the dagger with which he killed the king – "is this a dagger which I see before my eyes?" Macbeth starts hallucinating the dagger though Lady Macbeth is still unaffected by the murder! "My hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white". (Act II, Sc. 2)

Initially Lady Macbeth shows up to be strong, unaffected by any moral or ethical sense or a sense of guilt. Macbeth's conscience starts pricking him and he is unable to sleep, for "Macbeth does murder sleep" (Act II, Sc.2). The sense of guilt in Macbeth is so deep that he cries – "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather/ The multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red". (Act 2, Sc.2)

Macbeth's ambition was contagious and it made Lady Macbeth equally cruel; his fears and guilt conscience and the realisation of the magnitude of the crime are a play of the subconscious and the conscious moral man in Macbeth. His subconscious had reminded him that Duncan was a noble king and he promoted Macbeth as a reward for his loyalty and bravery, but his ambition to become a king almost blinded him. He lost the sense of right and wrong. When this sense arose in him, Lady Macbeth was taken over by ambition and he obeyed her as he had almost obeyed the witches.

When the subconscious takes over, the conscious mind falls silent. It is in a trap and is almost hypnotised as if. It is not a black devil alone, it plays with the emotions, with the conscience and tears apart for if it were only hankering after ambition, then having killed the king, Macbeth should have been at peace, but he loses peace because of guilt which is again a subconscious suggestion.

In fact in Macbeth fear takes different forms. He gets the hallucination of dagger. Then he fears to be exposed by his friend Banquo who knows of his meeting with the witches. So along with the guilt of having committed the crime which creates horrors in him, he is fearful of getting exposed. And therefore, to kill one fear he kills Banquo. However, that generates more hallucinations of the dagger as well as Banquo's ghost which worsens his fearful state. Though he pretends to be normal and takes over the throne, his fears and guilt constantly prick him.

Macbeth manages to hide his guilt with difficulty whereas Lady Macbeth's health gives in. She, who looked impressive and strong and looked after Macbeth with all her strength, falls prey to her own subconscious. The ambition in her which had marked her femininity and

tender feelings had left her. She too like Macbeth is overtaken by guilt and fear. Macbeth had killed sleep, but Lady Macbeth is unable to wake up from her sleep. Instead she is taking a somnambulist walk and in her sleep walk washes her hands again and again. "Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." (Act 5, Sc. 1). Lady Macbeth dies in her guilt. Her conscious mind could not pull her out of the fear of having instigated the crime and it weighed too heavy for the conscience of a woman to have materialised it and thereby hiding the murder.

In her somnambulism, when her subconscious alone is wide awake she almost confesses the crimes that she and her husband had committed. Her doctor declares – "Infected minds to their deaf pillow will discharge their secrets: More needs she the divine than the physician." (Act V, Sc. 1)

Lady Macbeth could never recover from the maladies of her subconscious suggestions and dies. Macbeth could never sleep under its pressure. He too dies declaring life to be "a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets.... It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing." (Act V. Sc. 5)

Life certainly is a shadow and would be full of sound and fury if it is constantly governed by the subconscious. The analysis of Macbeth brings to light the horrifying realisation of what the subconscious, if allowed to play in our lives, can do.

Sri Aurobindo says that this is not true psychology, he says that modern psychology has no knowledge. True psychology would be a psychology which has knowledge.

Psychology means... What is the precise meaning of logos? It is knowing, science; and psyche means soul. So it means the science of the soul or the science of the psychic, you see. This is the original sense. Now one has made of that the knowledge of all the inner movements, of all feelings, all the inner movements which are not purely physical movements, you see, all that concerns the feelings, thoughts, even the sensations in their subtlety. But true psychology is the knowledge of the soul, that is, the knowledge of the psychic being. And if one has the knowledge of the psychic being, one has at the same time the knowledge of all the true movements of the being, the inner laws of the being.

This is true psychology but it is the etymological meaning of the word, not as it is used nowadays.

(CWM 7: 111)

FAITH, ANXIETY AND OFFERING

Martha Orton

Faith and spiritual practice have great power in solving the problems of human life, including the various psychological miseries to which we succumb. Among these, anxiety is a common source of distress. Most people carry around with them on a daily basis specific worries about a number of details and aspects of their lives. Many actually suffer from generalized anxiety, finding that their worries are multiple and unceasing and that one anxiety is repeatedly replaced by another. For those who have a faith in a higher power and a religious or spiritual direction in their lives, offering these worries and anxieties to the Divine is a source of comfort which goes beyond any received from human sources.

In the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, offering to the Divine is an essential part of the practice. Sri Aurobindo explains that it is through offering to the Divine that we become closer to Him and that it is also through offering that the dynamic action of the processes of our spiritual progress become integral, affecting every part of our being. In writing of the Triune Path in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo describes how offering our works brings us closer to the Divine and leads to devotion for the Divine, how offering our devotion leads to offering our life and the works which are part of it, and how offering our knowledge, which increasingly becomes spiritual knowledge, leads to offering works and devotion. Offering any of these leads us to true spiritual knowledge, the knowledge of the Divine, and ultimately union with the Divine. This is a fully integrated and dynamic action, a single path with three elements intertwined, which engages all of our life and being and has the potential to transform all that we are and do. This offering is central to the yoga. The Mother has written simply and powerfully: "Remember and Offer" (CWM 3 : 26). We can come to the understanding that, if we do this, we will progress spiritually in every way and become more of what we aspire to be.

Naturally we would expect that in the process of offering, and with the faith involved in being motivated to do this in the first place, we would be offering our anxieties about our lives, along with our attempt to offer progressively all that we are and do. In effect, we would be handing all our worries over to the Divine. If we do this fully and sincerely, then all our problems should be solved. In full faith, we would see the outcome of any situation as the Divine's will in our lives. While not suspending our own efforts to achieve the ends we hope or aspire for, we would nevertheless accept the results with equanimity.

But how well do we do this? Even trying hard we can fail. We need to recognize that the process of offering all to the Divine and surrendering our lives to Him is a progressive movement. In short, the more one attempts to do this, the more the entire movement develops within the being. We can accept the principles involved

at the mental level and still not be able to be as effective at this as we believe we should be. Believing and knowing needs to become complete and fully integral for us to face life with real equanimity.

As we aspire to offer fully and have complete faith and trust in the Divine and still find ourselves sinking into anxiety, this unhappiness may be compounded by the guilt we feel in not trusting fully in the Divine. We may worry that this is a flaw or weakness in our character. Sri Aurobindo explains to us that human beings cannot be blamed for being imperfect, that we have been created as expressions of all kinds of personalities and possibilities of being. In effect, we are problems to be solved—this is our job assignment, the task of each of our lives. Moreover, we are subject to the forces of Nature, which comprise the various aspects of the human being. Each of us has his or her own version of this which we need to confront and work through. Also we are subject to much that is embedded in us at the subconscious level: the results of past experience, including traumas, also atavism from the cultural environment, and inherited traits, among other elements. Working through these is the task of a lifetime, or more. In any case, our task is to try, to become increasingly conscious of the various elements of our being and work on ourselves and our natures, aspiring for change.

We can progress more effectively if, instead of focusing on self-blame for weaknesses and failings, we confront these honestly, acknowledging the various aspects and qualities of our particular nature to the extent we are conscious of them, and focus on the change we aspire to achieving, offering all to the Divine. We can take the attitude that: "This is my work. This is the task which the Divine has given me. He created me like this, to represent these particular human qualities. My responsibility, my job in this lifetime, is to become conscious of my nature, my strengths as well as weaknesses, aspiring and striving for progress towards perfection and offering all of myself and my efforts to the Divine." Offering is indispensable to this entire process. To the extent that we sincerely offer and surrender ourselves, the Divine takes up our lives and work. All that we are and do becomes more truly and fully His. We progressively experience the Grace and leave behind ego and its burdens, including anxiety associated with the sense of ourselves as the doer, rather than the Divine.

We do not only have a significant array of obstacles to our spiritual progress and transformation but, very fortunately, we have a significant array of strengths in the positive qualities each of us has been given by the Divine. The source of these positive qualities and our real strength is the psychic being, the soul, the inner spark of the Divine. This makes everything possible. The psychic being is the Divine innate within us. It is a gift to us from our Creator. Quietly it drives us forward through lifetimes. When fully formed and fully awakened, it determines everything in one's life, enabling one to live completely for the Divine, completely offering one's life and action, and living completely in That Light. This psychic transformation is the real solution to the problem of anxiety. It enables a life of faith and trust.

MY FRIEND - PAYNE

Falguni Jani

Today I woke up to find that it was friendship day. I thought of all the friends who I would like to wish and thank for the valuable contribution in my life on this day. Among number of friends, the name that stood out prominently was – Payne.

I met him long ago, but it took a long time before we became good friends. It is said that we choose our friends. In my case he chose me and despite my indifference, continued to help and guide me. In fact I never wanted him as I already had a very good, smiling and loving friend in Anand. It is interesting how I made a lasting and sincere companionship with Payne.

Years ago I ventured out in the world to see the wonders of The Mother Nature. Anand was with me. Later, Tejas, Sheela, Dheeraj, Sneha, Madhuri, Shruti and Drishti joined on the way. We started the journey from the southern tip of the country , kanyakumari (land surrounded by ocean) towards the North (land of the ancient Himalayas).

As we moved further north the road became rough and steep. The first person in the group to feel tired and bored of the journey was myself.

I saw many pilgrims on the way that never got up after taking rest.

On the last base-camp of the highest mountains there were campers (former pilgrims), no longer interested in the upward journey. They were sheltering, giving food and things of pleasure to many who stopped longer there.

In a moment of weakness I too stopped for a while to have fun and frolic with them but I could no longer sustain the monotony of rest and the atmosphere of excess indulgence in desires and wishes. I felt a sharp pang in my heart and an unknown mighty Hand pushing me out of the place.

I was happy to continue the journey once again.

To acquire different skills one needs to undergo training. We were not equipped for this journey and its demands. It tested our physical tenacity, vital strength and will power. All the friends who were travelling with me realised their weaknesses as they proceeded further.

Luckily an old person appeared from the opposite direction. He wondered why we did not take help from one of the pilgrims traveling with us. He pointed at a tough looking person sitting nearby who was always ready to guide and lift up all who needed his help. The wise old person advised us to bear up with his tough ways and a strict stern face, if we sincerely wished to complete the journey.

Dheeraj asked the old wise gentle person – “Sir, we thank you for your advise, but tell us what is the destination of your journey. You seem to have seen the whole world.”

He said – “I love to move forward on the Way. The world changes every time I go from north to south, and vice versa. The dynamic movement of life flows like a gentle stream and the mysteries to be discovered are endless. Hence the journey! As for the Goal, it is always within us”. Looking at our bewildered faces he left with a loving smile.

Soon we turned around to see our helper and guide. Looking at our desperate condition he slowly approached us. I was terrified of his countenance. My friend Sheela gathered courage to speak to him.

Sheela – “We are stuck up in the journey. Will you show us the way?”

He replied – “Sure, on one condition that each of you shall co-operate with me. And remember, my ways are different with each person.”

Shruti asked- “what is your name?”

He replied – “Call me Payne”

From this moment till the end of our journey Payne was with us. None of us liked his strong rough hands. Our gentle limbs bore the marks of his pressure.

Initially he was very gentle with me as I shrieked whenever he touched me. I cried as he dragged me up on the steep rough road strewn with thorns and boulders. Tears welled up in my eyes, legs refused to go one inch forward. I could not see my friends. They, too, were busy climbing. I could hear them from a distance but could not approach.

I realised bitterly at this moment that in this journey one is always alone. It is a solitary journey for everyone, full of unknown dangers and risks.

The companionship, sense of security, and solace enjoyed in a different terrain vanish in the mountain regions. Crestfallen, sad and dejected I was cursing my destiny.

The difficulties of the journey, the pangs of separation from the loved ones surrounded me with a thick darkness, as if trapped in a deep dungeon. At this moment I could not take help from the tough saviour who was willing to guide me. I still wonder at his capacity for persisting with me with infinite patience, to lift me up again and again.

After a long time I learned to hold his strong hands and allowed myself to be guided by his wisdom. It was quite a revelation for me to find that Payne knew all the short cuts in those mountains. I seemed to reach the peaks faster. My feet grew steady. At times Payne would leave me. I realised with delight that I, too, possessed the strength to go forward.

His teachings were simple and straightforward. I laughed at myself for making everything complicated unnecessarily. In fact, the minds of all my friends and associates worked in the similar manner. We could never work out a problem, by looking at it from different dimensions. Also, our outlook at life was full of dualities. Our strong likes and dislikes, our preferences, prejudices, notions of strengths and weaknesses, often, clogged our perspective in life. These dilemmas and contradictions made our journey difficult and sucked our strength.

Payne, inculcated strength, plasticity, endurance, perseverance, and a sense of gratitude towards all the happenings in life.

As we came closer to our destination, unimaginable thrill ran through our nerves, all weariness and exhaustion vanished. We were filled with a new strength, fresh enthusiasm, and an undying hope in the heart.

Our friend snatched away, perforce, our heavy baggage, all those belongings which gave us a sense of security. The sense of loss was soon compensated by a wonderful feeling of Peace and lightness never felt before. His touch made us realise the presence of *tamas*, in the physical, stubbornness in the vital and the rigidity of mind.

The tragedy and triumph of human effort, in winning and losing, in the touch of happiness and the dark pit of despair.

We concluded that the contribution of Payne, with whom we had, at last, cooperated willingly was instrumental in bringing us closer to our goal. Here, all were at the same height.

Drishti was looking for our friend and guide, who had suddenly vanished from the scene.

Komal – “Let us search for Payne. We have not expressed our gratitude for the invaluable help.

Drishti – “Ananda is also not with us. Komal, where is he? Both of you were inseparable.”

Shruti - “ I can hear the footsteps, some one is coming towards us.”

Tejas - “Isn’t it strange that I cannot differentiate between Ananda and Payne.” Our friend understood our confusion and said.

Payne – “ Ananda is my twin. You all wanted him and not me. Hence I was always walking behind. Now that you have accepted me I shall walk with you forever.

From that decisive moment Payne became one of us.

Through him all friends enjoy an immortal bliss and oneness with each other.

Upcoming Events

Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR),

Pondicherry

plans to organise

“Living Within” Study Camps

in Sri Aurobindo Studies

from the month of

August to February every year in different languages:

English, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil etc.

Group Leaders / Speakers wanting to organise

such study camps may write to:

sacarstudycamps@gmail.com

Ph.: +91 9994190403, 9443019172, 7639920796

Visit us: www.sacar.in

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“Living Within” Study Camp 2014

18th to 23rd November

**CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION:
ITS PROCESS AND PURPOSE**

Facilitator: Dr. Ananda Reddy

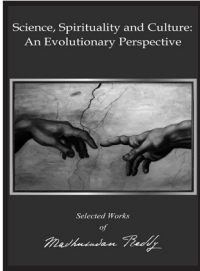
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Venue: SACAR Campus

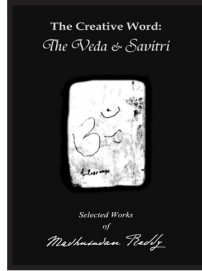
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NEW RELEASES

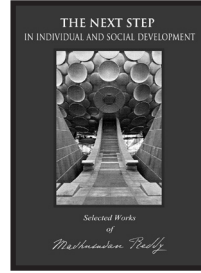
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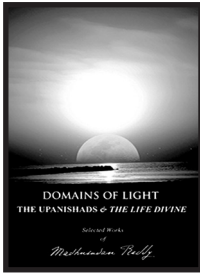
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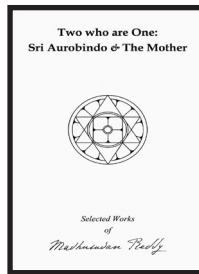
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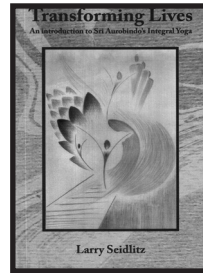
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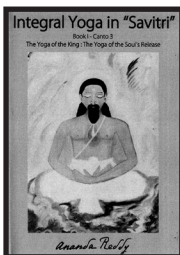


*Two who are One:
Sri Aurobindo & The Mother*

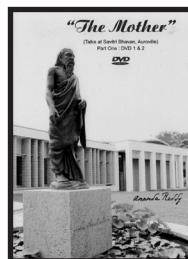


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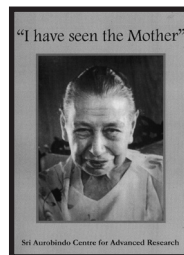
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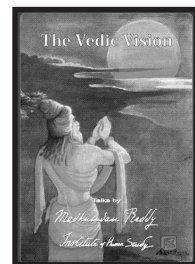
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*Talks on
"The Mother"*



*I have seen
The Mother*



The Vedic Vision