

TOWARDS AN INTUITIVE MENTALITY IN THE YOGA OF SELF PERFECTION

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Intuitive Knowledge

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“Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge.”

(The Life Divine, CWSA, Vol. 21, p. 73)

Introduction

Man is a transitional being and is not perfect. The highest faculty possessed by the human being as of now is a reasoning and discriminating mind. He may choose to remain within the confines of the limitations of this ability which also seems as the only inevitable choice for him, or to aspire ardently for breaking the bounds within which he is struggling with the dualities imposed by life; to be able to grasp the single truth in which the need for making choices simply vanishes and everything is illumined in the shining sun of a greater knowledge. But growing beyond the reasoning mentality

for man would not be very different from the case of an animal growing into possessing the reasoning prowess of man, and one would simply recede baffled by the seeming immensity and complexity of the task with no aid to guarantee even a possibility. Sri Aurobindo brings to the aimlessly struggling humanity, knowledge of the purpose of life and a hope for the future. He enlightens humanity with a greater knowledge of the Supermind, the emergence of which in man is possible but gradual. Man has no organs in his present system for this possibility. He has only the instruments of mind, life and body which are both insufficient and incapable of attaining and manifesting the Supermind. He will have to grow in consciousness and to also evolve or adapt his existing instruments for this greater possibility. Man has to first grow beyond a reasoning mind to attain an intuitive mind as it is an intermediary between the mind and Supermind. The purpose of life for man should be to exceed the self for growing towards an intuitive mentality, a task which to his native reasoning mentality appears to be as impossibility.

Limitations of the Reasoning Mind

Reason, the highest ability that man has been endowed with is not a possessor but a seeker of Truth. It relies on sense-data to grasp, process, order and represent the facts of existence. Sri Aurobindo beautifully explains the limiting nature of reason when he writes, "Its concepts start from sense-data and though like a kite it can fly high into an air of abstractions, it is held to the earth of sense by a string of great strength; if that string is broken it drifts lazily in the clouds and always it falls back by natural gravitation to its original earth basis - only so can it receive strength to go farther. Its field is the air and sky of the finite, it cannot ascend into the stratosphere of the spiritual vision, still less can it move at ease in the Infinite." (*Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol.12, p.256-57) A reasoning intellect can observe, compare, contrast, deduce, induce, infer, memorize, imagine and judge but cannot obtain a direct knowledge. Reason will have to find reason in the need to surpass itself by aspiring to be illumined in a quest for the glory of a world of truer knowledge.

Intuitional Knowledge and the Mind

Sri Aurobindo writes, "Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity." (*The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol.22, p.981) Just as we know ourselves by identity and not through reasoning or observation as would be the case when we try to understand another being or an object, intuition knows things by identity. It is a state where the knower identifies itself with the known through knowledge. Intuition is yet to organize itself in the surface mind to be able to illumine it with direct knowledge. It

reaches us in flashes through our subconscious parts as a messenger from the superconscious planes but fails to make a conscious appeal to the waking mind. As of now, our surface mind recognizes reason as the one faculty apt for guiding us towards an understanding of reality and for ordering our thoughts, perceptions and actions. The reasoning mind strives to know all that is around and beyond but itself limits its sources of knowledge by not fully recognizing the less articulate parts of the being and finds it reasonable to ignore the messages received by them. The understanding aspect of the intellect, the *buddhi*, needs concrete proof for an acceptance into its own world. But there is also an 'over-standing' aspect of the mind beyond the reason by which it can serve as a recipient of intuitions and inspirations from a supramental faculty if it wills to listen to sources of information and knowledge that lie beyond the arena of the sources generally recognized for the purpose.

Towards an Intuitive Mentality – Methods and Challenges

Intuition that reaches the mind at present is fragmentary and intermittent as the instruments to receive it are not suited to the purpose. More so, whatever light reaches the higher mind is laid hold upon by the lower mind and colored, interpreted and used for its own use. In the Yoga of Self Perfection one may come to know of several methods to make intuition more constant and persistent, to the extent of being effective enough to be able to transform the lower mentality by its pressure; yet Reason has to come out of its habituated mode of judging the efficacy of one method over another so that the Divine *Shakti* is able to work in us effectuating the change by using one or the other at different times to make us progress in our intuitive pursuit. Knowing the various methods will help towards enhancing our faith in the possibility of such a stupendous task and in opening our mind to the possible methods, but enabling it within us has to come from a greater power. The possible methods brought to light by Sri Aurobindo are as enumerated below:

- 1) The first method that appeals to our mind and is also a great and powerful discipline is to be able to silence the mind to achieve a state of peace and tranquility leaving thought, will and feeling to occur in us when the Divine *Shakti* wills it and to make of oneself a purified temple waiting for revelation of the Lord. In the state of a silent mind, intuition can be wider and can be received with greater receptivity and purity but it cannot seize upon the mind to transform it from its accustomed nature of obstructing, disfiguring, distorting and depreciating the incoming knowledge after a breaking of the silence.
- 2) A method suited to *bhakti* is to reject the intellect and wait for the voice from within, the *aadesa*. The secret Self within us is seated in the nervous, the emotional, the volitional, the cognitive and other higher

spiritual centres and this method must tend to intuitivise the whole nature including thought, will and feeling. But this movement cannot be complete because the heart is not the highest center of our being or directly moved by supramental sources. The intuitive light from here is intense but narrow in intensity and prone to disfigurations as imbalance, exaggeration and excitement.

- 3) The highest center of the Self is the *sahasradala*, the thousand-petaled lotus which communicates directly with the supramental. So the most direct method is to refer all thought and action to the veiled truth of the Divinity seated above the mind and to receive all as a sort of descent from above. *Siddhi* of this is when we can lift the center of conscious thought above the mind. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "If we can feel ourselves thinking no longer with the brain but from above and outside the head in the subtle body, that is a sure physical sign of a release from the limitations of the physical mind, and though this will not be complete at once nor of itself bring the supramental action, for the subtle body is mental and not supramental, still it is a subtle and pure mentality and makes an easier communication with the supramental centres." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol.24, p.805)
- 4) Another method suited to the thinking person is to develop the intellect not by elimination but the will to heighten it and not cherishing its limitations until it reaches a stage where it can be transcended. The supramental energy is necessary to remove the essential defects of will, thought and feeling.

Conclusion

We may conclude that humanity instead of drifting aimlessly like a boat rowed by reason in the waters of existence, dashing now and then with islands of pleasure and pain, success and failure should look above for light to guide it towards an anchor where it is enhanced in its functionality to follow a guided path with true knowledge of itself and a direct knowledge of the surroundings and the beyond. The various methods explained to us by Sri Aurobindo are the guiding light to all those who aspire for self perfection. The methods when employed in unison by the Divine Shakti to enable a greater perfection in us should lead to the organisation of a predominantly intuitive mentality in the present imperfect one. It will lead to thought being heightened and full of concentrated light, power and accuracy. Will and feelings will also be intuitivised, with the senses and the body consciousness not being left behind. It is important that the intuitive mind be constantly on guard and in pursuit of ever widening and heightening itself so that it does not relapse to an earlier state or gravitate downwards and this is possible by the intuitive mind itself being enlightened and transformed into the full status of the supramental.

References

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 21-22, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry: 2005
2. Sri Aurobindo, *Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol. 12, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry: 1997
3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23-24, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry: 1999

MAN THE THINKING ANIMAL

A trifling unit in a boundless plan
 Amidst the enormous insignificance
 Of the unpeopled cosmos' fire-whirl dance,
 Earth, as by accident, engendered man:

A creature of his own grey ignorance,
 A mind half shadow and half gleam, a breath
 That wrestles, captive in a world of death,
 To live some lame brief years. Yet his advance,

Attempt of a divinity within,
 A consciousness in the inconscient Night,
 To realise its own supernal Light,
 Confronts the ruthless forces of the Unseen.

Aspiring to godhead from insensible clay
 He travels slow-footed towards the eternal day.

Sri Aurobindo, (CWSA, Vol.2, p.593)