

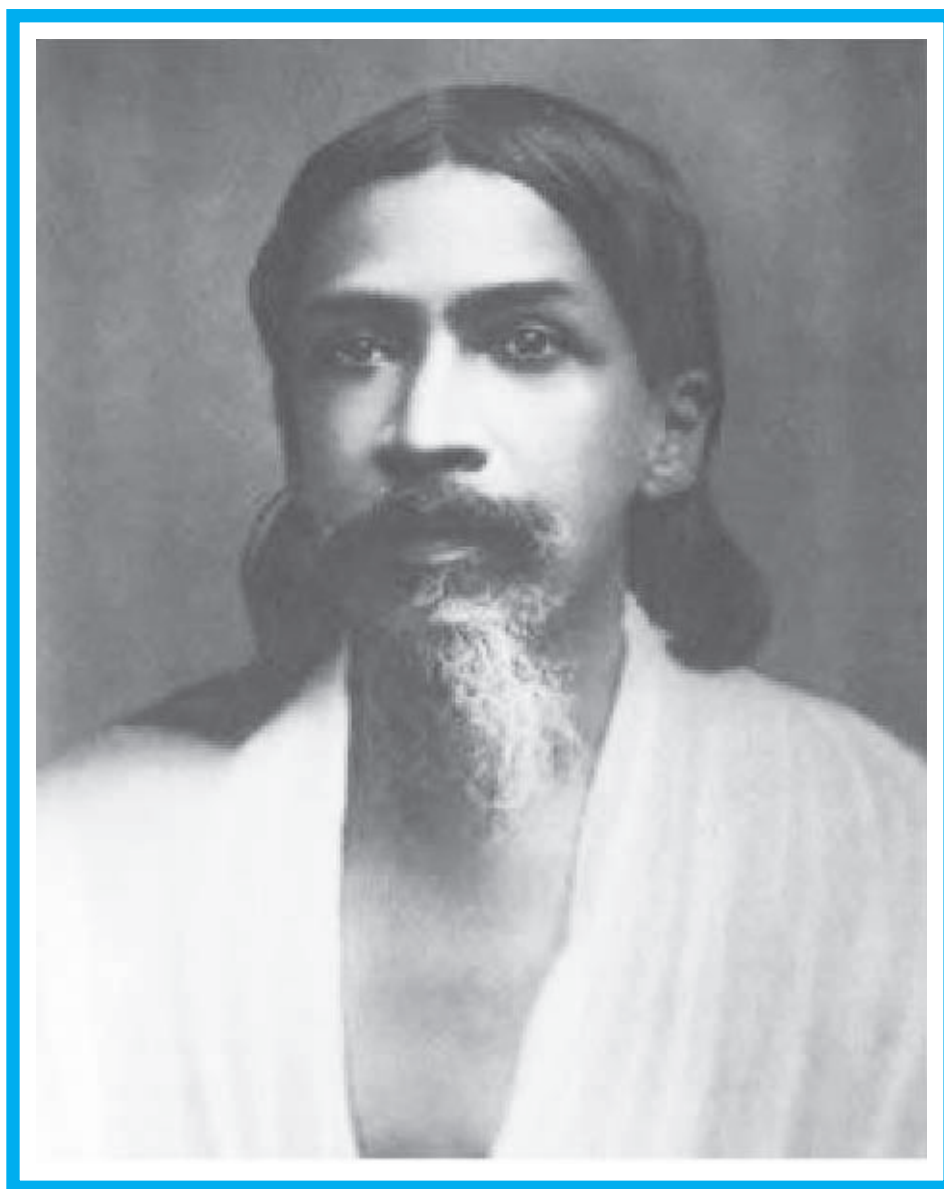


Sri Aurobindo's action

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*He is the prophet's voice, the sight of the seer.
He is Beauty, nectar of the passionate soul,
He is the Truth by which the spirit lives.*

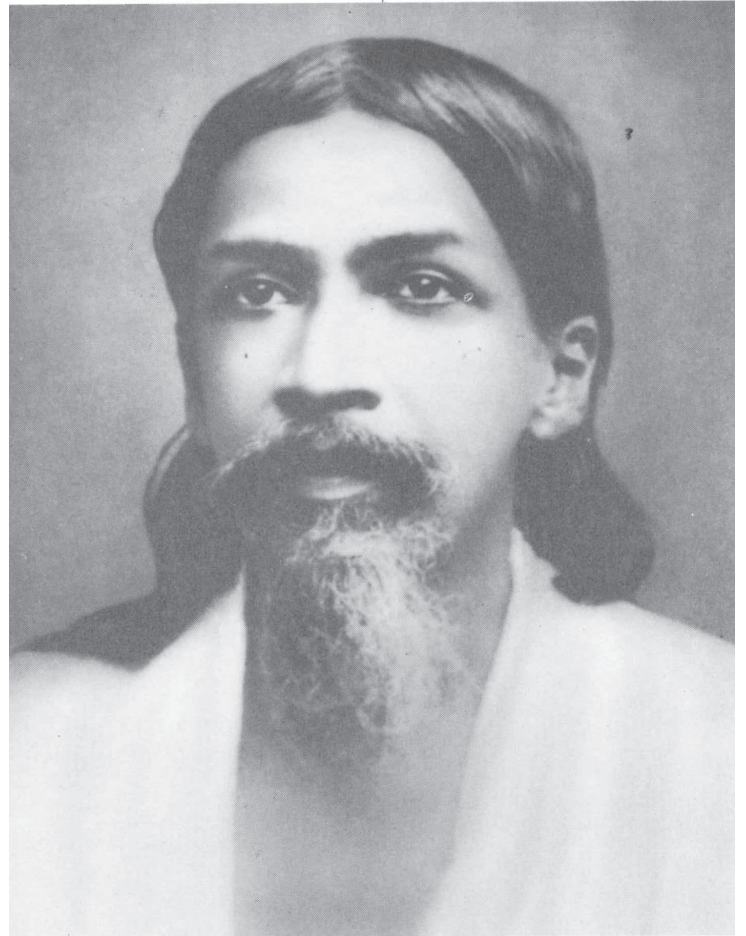
Foreword

In the year 1972, the Birth Centenary year of Sri Aurobindo, an exhibition was held on Sri Aurobindo as part of the Centenary celebrations. The Mother named the exhibition Homage to Sri Aurobindo. When the Mother was asked for a theme for the exhibition, She gave the three words: Respect, Sincerity, Adoration. She also said that the colour of Sri Aurobindo in the Centenary year was light blue; accordingly these three words were written in light blue and the Mother put her signature on the poster which was placed at the beginning of the exhibition.

Some time later in the year, the Mother expressed her wish that an Album on Sri Aurobindo on the lines of the exhibition be published. The general arrangement of the Album follows this pattern. Almost all the photographs are accompanied by a quotation from Savitri. There is also a selection of a passage mostly from the writings of Sri Aurobindo along with the photograph, sometimes on the same page and sometimes on the facing page. The intention of these passages is to give an idea of the development in Sri Aurobindo's life during that period as far as possible in Sri Aurobindo's own words. It must also be noted that this is not a strictly historical album; rather like in the exhibition of 1972 an attempt has been made to give an idea of the life of Sri Aurobindo more from the inner aspect and evolution.

We are selectively republishing extracts from "Homage to Sri Aurobindo — 1972". All photos and contents in it were seen, touched, approved by Divine Mother with her Blessings.

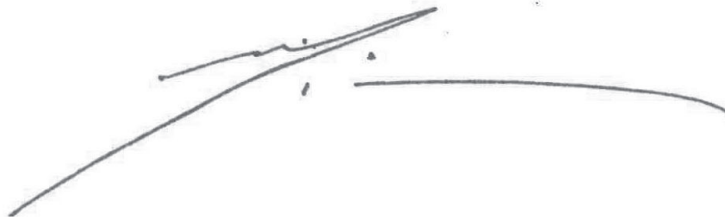
On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo we would like to reinvolve the Presence, Light and Love of the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo in this journal of offering.



*Without him, I exist not; without me, he is unmanifest.
The Mother*

Homage to Sri Aurobindo

What Sri Aurobindo
represents in the world's
history is not a teaching,
not even a revelation;
it is a decisive action
direct from the Supreme



Respect

Sincérité

Adoration

Benedictions





The Mother's observation on this photograph

The spontaneity and freshness of the nature and something, candid with which he came into this world. His inner being, was on the surface. He knew nothing of this world.

A Seer was born, a shining Guest of Time.

During this period... (St Paul's, London) for nearly two years he had to go practically without dinner at that young age. He had no overcoat to protect him from the rigours of the London winter and there was no heating arrangement in the office where he slept, nor had he a proper bedroom.

He had deep literary interests and one of his favourites was Shelley's "Revolt of Islam". He recalls:

"The Revolt of Islam was a great favourite with me even when I was quite young and I used to read it again and again, of course, without understanding everything. But evidently it appealed to some part of the being. There was no other effect of reading it except this that I had a thought that I would dedicate my life to a similar world-change and take part in it."

Once Sri Aurobindo was going in his carriage towards the city from the Camp Road. As he reached the side of the public garden there arose the possibility of an accident. He willed that it should be prevented and immediately a Being of Light emerged out of him, mastered the situation and averted the accident. This was his first experience of the Divinity within himself.



THE GODHEAD

*I sat behind the dance of Danger's hooves
In the shouting street that seemed a futurist's whim
And suddenly felt, exceeding Nature's grooves,
In me, enveloping me, the body of Him.*

*Above my head a mighty head was seen,
A face with the calm of immortality
And an omnipotent gaze that held the scene
In the vast circle of its sovereignty.*

*His hair was mingled with the sun and breeze;
The world was in His heart and He was I:
I housed in me the Everlasting's peace,
The strength of One whose substance cannot die.*

*The moment passed and all was as before:
Only that deathless memory I bore.*

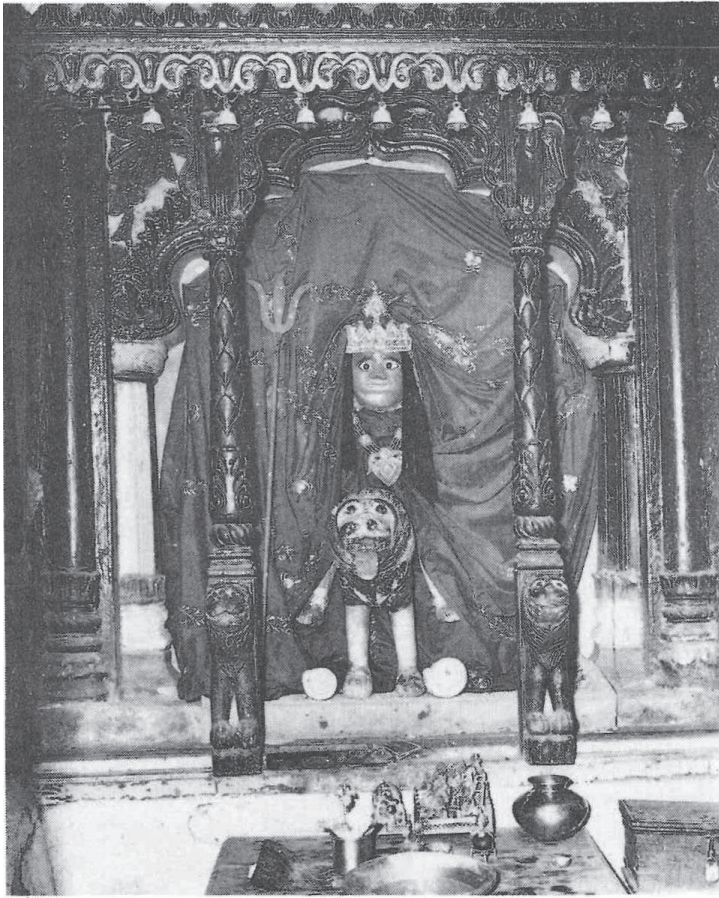


*...from life's external clasp
Beckoned into a fiery privacy
In the soul's unprofaned star-white recess*

Extract from a book of Dinendra Kumar Roy

The low and high of Baroda used to know the name of Aurobindo because of his gentle behaviour and charitable disposition. The intellectuals of Baroda used to respect him for his extraordinary genius. His students used to love and respect him like a god. His way of teaching was not customary and his students were charmed by it. ...His laughter was simple as a child's and as liquid and soft.

Though an inflexible will showed at the corners of his lips, there was not the slightest trace in his heart of any worldly ambitions of the common human selfishness; there was only the longing, rare even among the gods, of sacrificing himself for the relief of human suffering.



THE STONE GODDESS

*In a town of gods, housed in a little shrine,
From sculptured limbs the Godhead looked at me, —
A living Presence deathless and divine,
A Form that harboured all infinity.*

*The great World-Mother and her mighty will
Inhabited the earth's abysmal sleep,
Voiceless, omnipotent, inscrutable,
Mute in the desert and the sky and deep.*

*Now veiled with mind she dwells and speaks no word,
Voiceless, inscrutable, omniscient,
Hiding until our soul has seen, has heard
The secret of her strange embodiment,*

*One in the worshipper and the immobile shape,
A beauty and mystery flesh or stone can drape.*

On one occasion Sri Aurobindo visited a temple of Kali on the river bank of Narmada. He was there at the instance of his friends, he himself not having any faith in idols or image-worship. "With my Europeanised mind I had no faith in image worship and I hardly believed in the presence of God." He was to write later: "Or you stand before a temple of Kali beside a sacred river and see what? — a sculpture, a gracious piece of architecture, but in a moment mysteriously, unexpectedly there is instead a Presence, a Power, a Face that looks into yours, an inner sight in you has regarded the World-Mother."





The armed Immortal bore the snare of Time.

Everyone has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose.

The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature.

The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be ... A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development. ... The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit.



*Invested with a rhythm of higher spheres
The word was used as a hieratic means
For the release of the imprisoned spirit*

Extract from Bande Mataram, December 1907

We call upon Nationalists, who are at all desirous of the spread of Nationalist principles and Nationalist practice all over India, to make ready at whatever inconvenience and, if they find it humanly possible, go to Surat to support the Nationalist cause. We are aware of the tremendous difficulties in our way. Surat is far distant... and yet we must go. What is a Nationalist

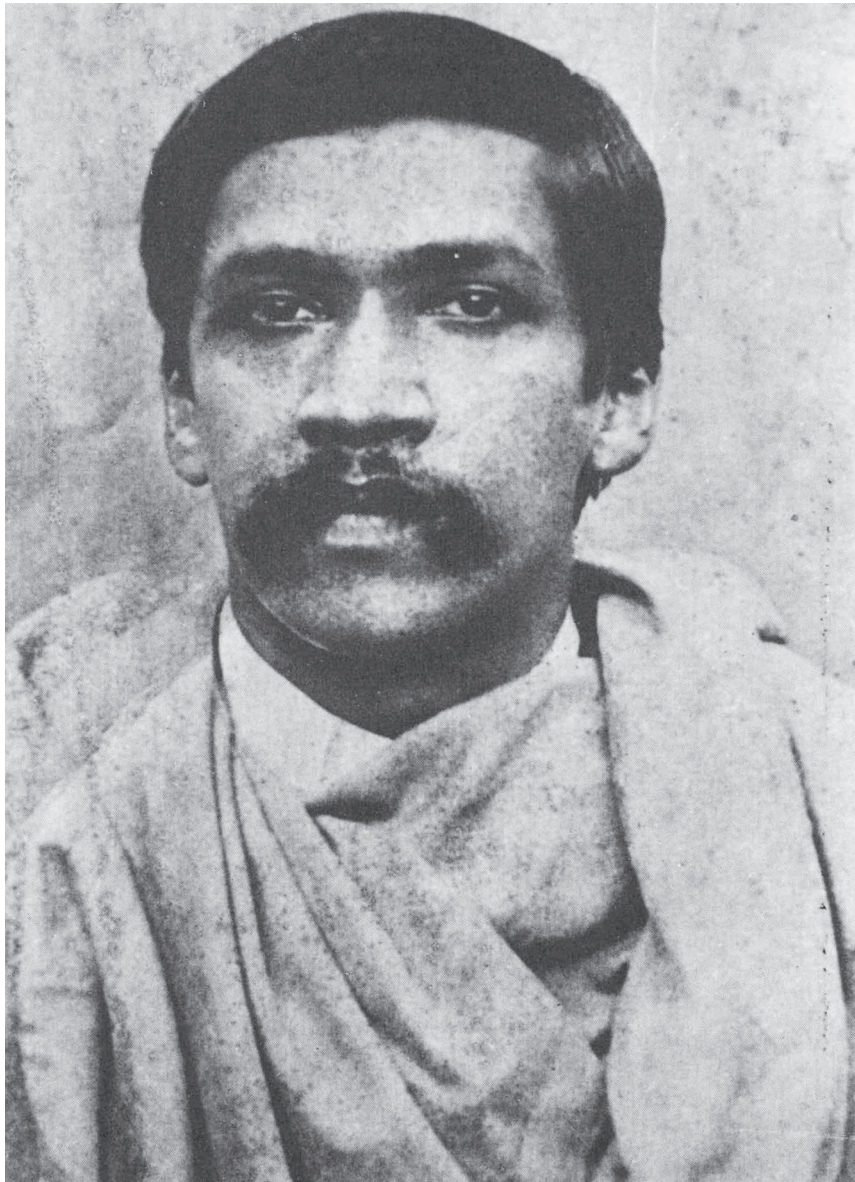
good for if he cannot make up by his enthusiasm and energy for his other deficiencies, if he cannot make nothing of difficulties and turn the impossible into the possible. It is to sweep away difficulties and to strike the word impossible out of the Indian's dictionary that our party has arisen.



*One in the front of the immemorial quest,
... A thinker and toiler in the ideal's air,*

We must go as poor men whose wealth is our love for Motherland. ...as pilgrims travelling to our Mother's temple. We have a great work to do and cannot afford to be negligent and half-hearted. Be sure that this year 1907 is a turning point of our destinies. ...Let us fear to miss by absenting ourselves the chance of helping to put in one of the key stones of the house we are bulding for our Mother's dwelling in the future, the house of her salvation, the house of Swaraj.

History very seldom records the things that were decisive but took place behing the veil; it records the show in front of the curtain. Very few people know that it was I (without consulting Tilak) who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress and was responsible for the refusal to join the newfangled Moderate Convention which were the two decisive happenings at Surat.



A scout in a reconnaissance from the sun,

There are periods in the history of the world when the unseen Power that guides its destinies seems to be filled with a consuming passion for change and a strong impatience of the old. The Great Mother, the Adya Shakti, has resolved to take the nations into her hand and shape them anew. These are periods of rapid destruction and energetic creation. ...they are periods when the wisdom of the wise is confounded and the prudence of the prudent turn into a laughing stock; for it is the

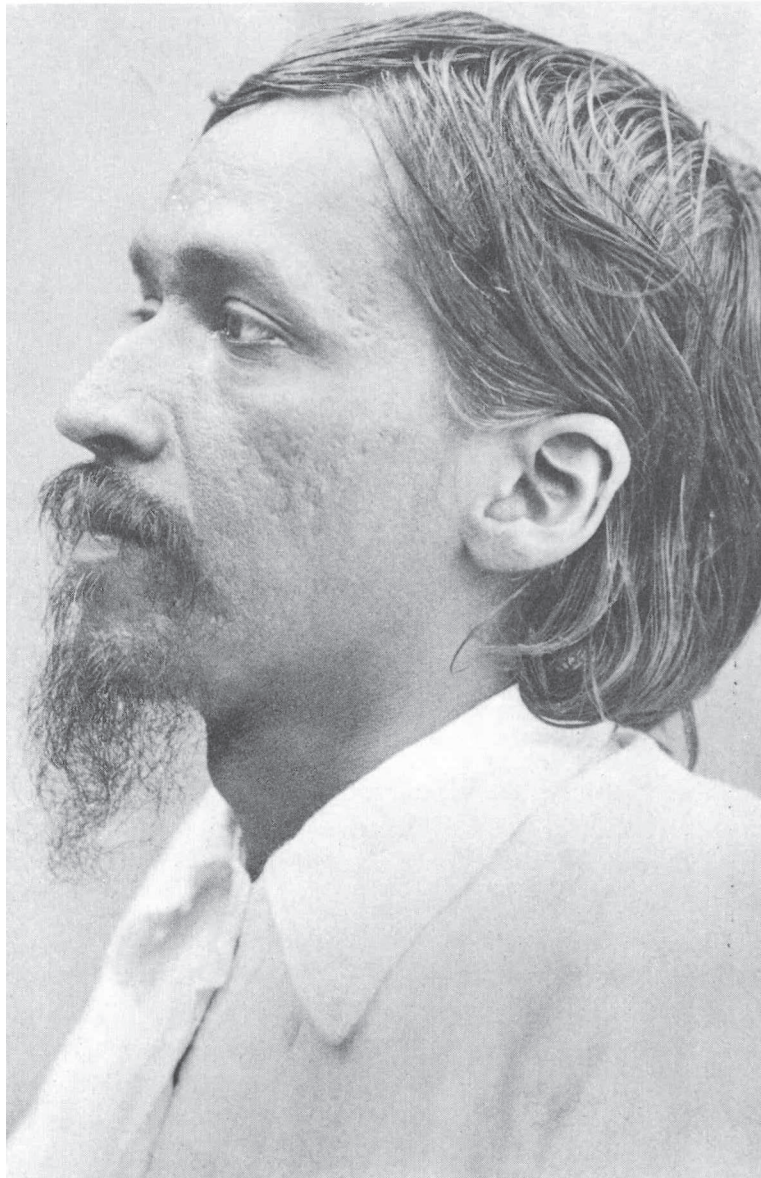
day of the prophet, the dreamer, the fanatic and the crusader, — the time of divine revelation when Avatars are born and miracles happen... in such a period we find ourselves at the dawn of this twentieth century the years of whose infancy have witnessed such wonderful happenings. ...We are assisting now at the birth of a new Asia and the modernisation of the East.



*A universal light was in his eyes,
A golden influx flowed through heart and brain;*

I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell, but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna who I saw standing there and holding over his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva.

It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. ...I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies.



*The Supreme's gaze looked out through human eyes
And saw all things and creatures as itself*

Extract from C. R. Das's speech

My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone,

his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India but across the distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the High Court of History.

Spiritual

Sri Aurobindo began his Yoga in 1904. Even before this he had already some spiritual experiences and that before he knew anything about Yoga or even what Yoga was. For example, a vast calm descended upon him at the moment when he stepped first on Indian soil after his long absence, in fact with his first step on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay. This calm surrounded him and remained for long months afterwards. There was also a realisation of the vacant Infinite while walking on the ridge of the Takhte-Suleman in Kashmir, the living Presence of Kali in a shrine on the banks of the Narmada, the vision of the Godhead surging up from within when in danger of a carriage accident in Baroda in the first year of his stay, etc. But these were inner experiences coming of themselves and with a sudden unexpectedness, not part of a sadhana. He started Yoga by himself without a Guru, getting the rule from a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda of Ganga Mutt; it was confined at first to assiduous practice of Pranayam (at one time for six or more hours a day). There was no conflict or wavering between Yoga and politics; when he started Yoga, he carried on both without any idea of opposition between them. He wanted however to find a Guru. He met a Naga Sannyasi, one of the heads, in the course of this search, but did not accept him as Guru, but was confirmed by him in a belief in Yoga-power when he saw him cure Barin in almost a moment of a violent and clinging hill fever by merely cutting through a glassful of water crosswise with a knife while he repeated a silent mantra. Barin drank and was cured. Sri Aurobindo also met Brahmananda and was greatly impressed by him; but he had no helper or Guru in Yoga till he met Lele in Baroda and that was only for a short time. Meditating only for three days with Lele, he followed his instructions for silencing the mind and freeing it from the constant pressure of thoughts; he entered into an absolute and complete silence of the mind and indeed of the whole consciousness and in that silence had suddenly the enduring realisation of the indefinable Brahman, Tat, in which the whole universe seemed to be unreal and only That existed. This silence he kept for several months and it remained always within him; for when activity returned, it proceeded on the surface and within him all was calm. But at the time there was not the slightest activity of any kind even on the surface; there was only a still motionless perception spiritual and mental in its character. But this was not what Lele wanted, for he wanted the silence only in order that the inner voice of the heart might be heard without any thought

interference; so he did his best to get him out of this Advaitic condition. A meeting was to be held in Bombay to hear Sri Aurobindo speak and he asked Lele how he was to speak when not even the shadow of a passing thought could arise in him. Lele told him to make *Namaskar* before delivering a speech to the audience and wait and speech would come to him from another source than the mind. So in fact, when he was about to address the meeting, speech came. It should be noted however that Sri Aurobindo was not at any time in trance and something in him saw all that happened and spoke and acted according to need without the necessity of any conceptual thought or personal volition. Ever since all the mental activities, speech, writing, thought, will and other kindred activities came to him from the same source above the brain-mind; he had entered into the spiritual mind and what he afterwards called the overhead consciousness. This was his first major and fundamental Yogic realisation and experience and the true beginning and foundation of his Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo himself once wrote in a letter about his practice of Yoga: "I began my Yoga in 1904 without a Guru; in 1908 I received important help from a Mahratta yogi and discovered the foundations of my sadhana; but from that time till the Mother came to India I received no spiritual help from anyone else. My sadhana before and afterwards was not founded upon books but upon personal experiences that crowded on me from within. But in the jail I had the Gita and the Upanishads with me, practised the Yoga of the Gita and meditated with the help of the Upanishads, these were the only books from which I found guidance; the Veda which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my sadhana. I sometimes turned to the Gita for light when there was a question or a difficulty and usually received help or an answer from it. It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence. The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on that subject."

Before coming to Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo had already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his Yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded. The first he had

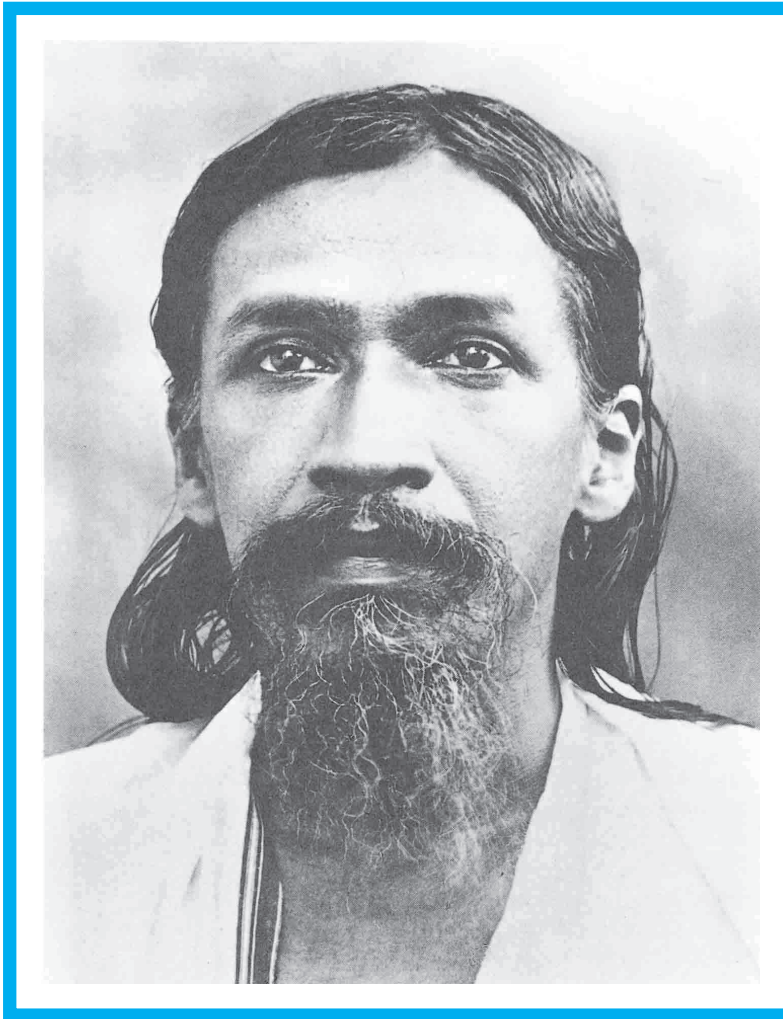
Life

gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realisation of the silent spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by the overwhelming feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, though this feeling disappeared after his second realisation which was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore Jail. To the other two realisations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading up to the Supermind, he was already on his way in his meditations in Alipore Jail. Moreover, he had accepted from Lele as the principle of his sadhana to rely wholly on the Divine and his guidance alone both for his sadhana and his outward actions.

Thus gathering the essential elements of spiritual experience that are gained by the path of divine communion and spiritual realisation followed till now in India, he passed on in his Pondicherry life in search of a more complete experience uniting and harmonising the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter. Most ways of Yoga are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and in the end, away from life; Sri Aurobindo's rises

to the Spirit to redescend with its gains, bringing the light and power and bliss of the Spirit into life to transform it. Man's present existence in the material world is in this view or vision of things a life in the Ignorance with the Inconscient at its base, but even in its darkness and nescience there are involved the presence and possibilities of the Divine. The created

world is not a mistake or a vanity and illusion to be cast aside by the soul returning to heaven or Nirvana, but the scene of a spiritual evolution by which out of this material inconscience is to be manifested progressively the Divine Consciousness in things. Mind is the highest term yet reached in the evolution, but it is not the highest of which it is capable. There is above it a Supermind or eternal Truth-Consciousness which is in its nature the self-aware and self-determining light and power of Divine Knowledge. Mind is an ignorance seeking after Truth, but this is a self-existent Knowledge harmoniously manifesting the play of its forms and forces. It is only by the descent of this Supermind that the perfection dreamed of by all that is highest in humanity can come. It is possible by



*He gazed across the empty stillnesses
And heard the footsteps of the undreamed Idea*

opening to a greater divine consciousness to rise to this power of light and bliss, discover one's true self, remain in constant union with the Divine and bring down the supramental Force for the transformation of mind and life and body. To realise

this possibility has been the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

During all his stay at Pondicherry from 1910 he remained more and more exclusively devoted to his spiritual work and his sadhana. On 15 August 1914, he started jointly with the Mother the philosophical monthly *Arya* through which he revealed the findings of his four years of seeking — new messages for humanity: man's divine destiny, the path to its realisation, the progress of human society towards its divine future, the unification of the human race, the nature and evolution of poetry and its future, the inner meaning of the Veda, the Upanishads and the Gita, the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture. All these have since been embodied in *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Future Poetry*, *On the Veda*, *The Upanishads*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. The *Arya* ceased publication in 1921 after six and a half years of uninterrupted appearance. Sri Aurobindo's supreme work in poetry is the epic *Savitri* in 23,813 lines of blank verse, the longest poem ever written in English, regarded by an American critic as 'probably the greatest epic in the English language... a perfect cosmic poem'. Besides *Savitri*, there is a large body of his poetic

creation, including several dramas, all of which have since been in book form.

Sri Aurobindo lived at first in retirement at Pondicherry with four or five companions. Afterwards more and yet more began to come to him to follow his spiritual path and the number became so large that a community of sadhaks had to be formed for the maintenance and collective guidance of those who had left everything behind for the sake of a higher life. This was the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram which has less been created than grown around him and the Mother as its centre.

It may be pointed out in this connection that Sannyas was never accepted by Sri Aurobindo as part of his Yoga. His Ashram at Pondicherry is a glaring contradiction to this popular idea of Sannyas connected with the name of an Ashram. Members of his Ashram are not Sannyasis, they do not wear the ochre garb or practise complete asceticism but are sadhaks of a life based on spiritual realisation, the ideal being the attainment of the life divine here on this earth and in the earthly existence.

KITTU REDDY

The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo

The teaching of Sri Aurobindo starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body. It is possible by a certain psychological discipline to remove this veil of separative consciousness and become aware of the true Self, the Divinity within us and all.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching states that this One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to

enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental. The next step of the evolution must be towards the development of Supermind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. For only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it become possible for life to manifest perfection.

But while the former steps in evolution were taken by Nature without a conscious will in the plant and animal life, in man Nature becomes able to evolve by a conscious will in the instrument. It is not, however, by the mental will in man that this can be wholly done, for the mind goes only to a certain point and after that can only move in a circle. A conversion

has to be made, a turning of the consciousness by which mind has to change into the higher principle. This method is to be found through the ancient psychological discipline and practice of Yoga. In the past, it has been attempted by a drawing away from the world and a disappearance into the height of the Self or Spirit. Sri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world, replace the mind's ignorance or its very limited knowledge by a supramental Truth-Consciousness which will be a sufficient instrument of the inner Self and make it possible for the human being to find himself dynamically as well as inwardly and grow out of his still animal humanity into a diviner race. The psychological discipline of Yoga can be used to that end by opening all the parts of the being to a conversion or transformation through the descent and working of the higher still concealed supramental principle.

This, however, cannot be done at once or in a short time or by any rapid or miraculous transformation. Many steps have to be taken by the seeker before the supramental descent is possible. Man lives mostly in his surface mind, life and body but there is an inner being within him with greater possibilities to which he has to awake — for it is only a very restricted influence from it that he receives now and that pushes him to a constant pursuit of a greater beauty, harmony, power and knowledge. The first process of Yoga is therefore to open the ranges of this inner being and to live from there outward, governing his outward life by an inner light and force. In doing so he discovers in himself his true soul which is not this outer mixture of mental, vital and physical elements but something of the Reality behind them, a spark from the one Divine Fire. He has to learn to live in his soul and purify and orientate by its drive towards the Truth the rest of the nature. There can follow afterwards an opening upward and descent of a higher principle of the Being. But even then it is not at once the full supramental Light and Force. For there are several ranges of consciousness between the ordinary human mind and the supramental Truth-Consciousness. These intervening ranges have to be opened up and their power brought down into the mind, life and body. Only afterwards can the full power of

the Truth-Consciousness work in the nature. The process of this self-discipline or sadhana is therefore long and difficult, but even a little of it is so much gained because it makes the ultimate release and perfection more possible.

There are many things belonging to older systems that are necessary on the way — an opening of the mind to a greater wideness and to the sense of the Self and the Infinite, an emergence into what has been called the cosmic consciousness, mastery over the desires and passions; an outward asceticism is not essential, but the conquest of desire and attachment and a control over the body and its needs, greeds and instincts are indispensable. There is a combination of the principles of the old systems, the way of knowledge through the mind's discernment between Reality and the appearance, the heart's way of devotion, love and surrender and the way of works turning the will away from motives of self-interest to the Truth and the service of a greater Reality than the ego. For the whole being has to be trained so that it can respond and be transformed when it is possible for that greater Light and Force to work in the nature.

In this discipline the inspiration of the Master and, in the difficult stages, his control and his presence are indispensable — for it would be impossible otherwise to go through it without much stumbling and error which would prevent all chance of success. The Master is one who has risen to a higher consciousness and being and he is often regarded as its manifestation or representative. He not only helps by his teaching and still more by his influence and example but by a power to communicate his own experience to others.

This is Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice. It is not his object to develop any one religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found any new religion — for any of these things would lead away from his central purpose. The one aim of his Yoga is an inner self-development by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature.



Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. ...I am raising up this nation to send forth my word. This is the Sanatana Dharma, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you. ...What is this religion which we call Sanatana, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this Peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the Ages. But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly

and for ever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. ...It is the one religion which shows the world what the world is, that it is the Lila of Vasudeva. It is the one religion which shows us how we can best play our part in that Lila, its subtlest laws and its noblest rules. It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death.



What is needed now is a band of spiritual workers whose tapasya will be devoted to the liberation of India for the service of humanity.

...We need an institution in which under the guidance of highly spiritual men workers will be trained for every field, workers for self-defence, workers for arbitration, for sanitation, for famine relief, for every species of work which is needed to bring about the necessary conditions for the organisation

of Swaraj. If the country is to be free, it must first organise itself so as to be able to maintain its freedom. The winning of freedom is an easy task, the keeping of it is less easy. The first needs only one tremendous effort in which all the energies of the country must be concentrated; the second requires a united, organised and settled strength. If these two conditions are satisfied, nothing more is needed, for all else is detail and will inevitably follow.



*Each action left the footprints of a god,
Each moment was a beat of puissant wings.*

Her mission is to point back humanity to the true source of human liberty, human equality, human brotherhood. When man is free in spirit, all other freedom is at his command; for the Free is the Lord who cannot be bound. When he is liberated from delusion, he perceives the divine equality of the world which fulfils itself through love and justice,... When he has perceived this divine equality, he is brother to the whole world, and in whatever position he is placed he serves all men

as his brothers by the law of love, by the law of justice. When this perception becomes the basis of religion, of philosophy, of social speculation and political aspiration, then will liberty, equality and fraternity take their place in the structure of society and the Satya Yuga return. This is the Asiatic reading of democracy, which India must rediscover for herself before she can give it to the world.

*O spirit, traveller of eternity,
Who cam'st from the immortal spaces here
Armed for the splendid hazards of thy life
To set thy conquering foot on Chance and Time,*



4th April 1910

Arrival in Pondicherry

*A sound came quivering like a loved footfall
Heard in the listening spaces of the soul;*



29th March 1914

Arrival of The Mother in Pondicherry



*A flaming warrior from the eternal peaks
... Smote from Death's visage its dumb absolute*

Extract from a letter of Sri Aurobindo to the Mother

The whole earth is now under one law and answers to the same vibrations and I am sceptical of finding any place where the clash of the struggle will not pursue us. I must remain in touch with the world until I have either mastered adverse circumstances or succumbed or carried on the struggle between the spiritual and physical so far as I am destined to carry it on. This is how I have always seen things and still see them. As for failure, difficulty and apparent impossibility I am too much habituated to them to be much impressed by their constant self-presentation except for passing moments...

One needs to have a calm heart, a settled will, entire self-abnegation and the eyes constantly fixed on the beyond to live undiscouraged in times like these which are truly a period of universal decomposition. For myself, I follow the Voice and look neither to right nor to left of me. The result is not mine and hardly at all now even the labour.



Because he is there the world forgets to die.

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 constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality



A treasurer of superhuman dreams,

The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita's insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realisation and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and

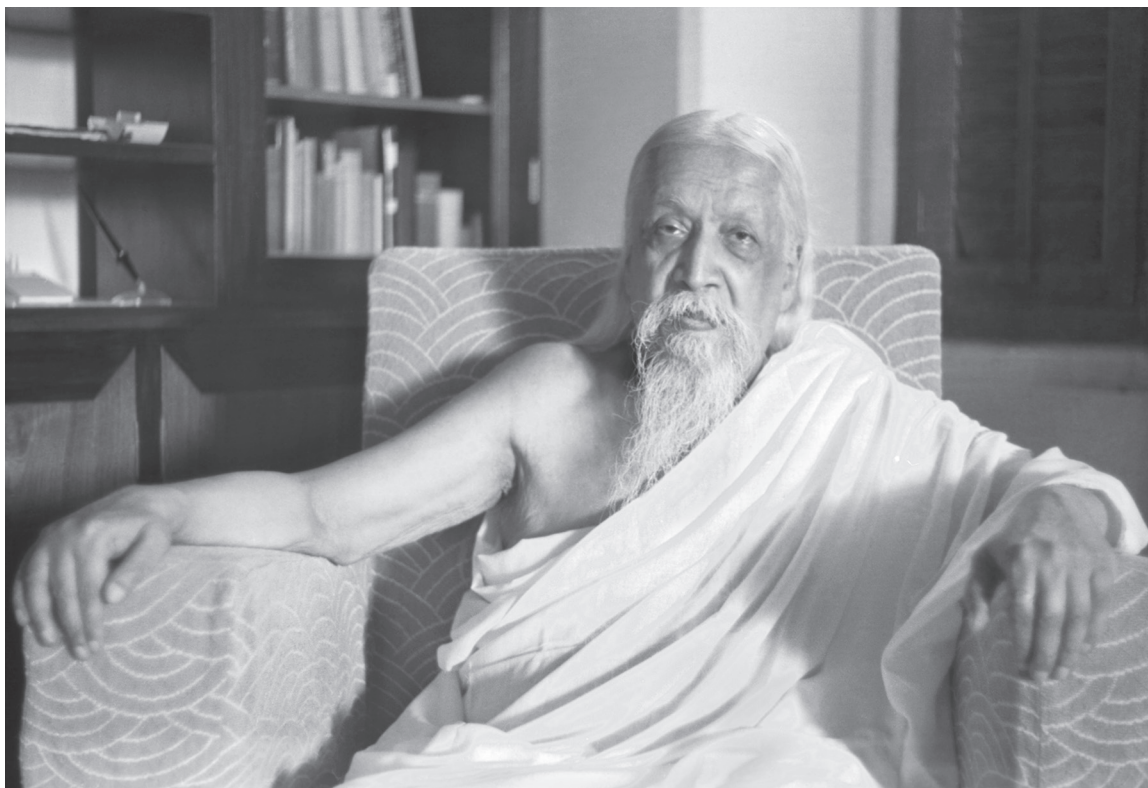
here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature.



*A radiant hymn to the Inexpressible
And the anthem of the superconscient light.*

The spirit and ideals of our civilisation need no defence for in their best parts and in their essence they were of eternal value. India's internal and individual seeking of them was earnest, powerful, effective. But the application in the collective life of society was subjected to serious reserves... And now survival itself has become impossible without expansion. If

we are to live at all we must resume India's great interrupted endeavour; we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge.



*All grace and glory and all divinity
Were here collected in a single form;*

The integral Yoga takes up the essence and many processes of the old Yogas — its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method.

It is new as compared with old Yogas...

1. Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object.

2. Because the object sought after is not an individual

achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supracosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is a bringing in of a Power of Consciousness — the Supramental.

3. Because a method has been preconised for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive... Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.

Notes on the works of Sri Aurobindo

Life Divine

One of the greatest works of Sri Aurobindo it is in two volumes: the first volume entitled “Omnipresent Reality and the Universe” deals with the problem of the nature of the Ultimate Reality and whether and in what way it is related to our universe of the triple existence of Matter, Life and Mind. In considering this problem, Sri Aurobindo gives a critical exposition of the main theories of Reality and shows how partial truths can be reconciled in an integral view of Reality. While expounding and analysing the nature of Matter, Life and Mind, he utilises all the data available to mankind from the most ancient time to our time and of the most modern discoveries in various sciences and other disciplines of knowledge. He takes each major element of our universal existence and shows how its Ultimate is in the Omnipresent Reality; and in discovering this relation he shows how inevitably and logically we are forced to look for and find a link between the Ultimate Reality and the Universe. This link he calls the Supermind; he gives a detailed exposition of the concept of the Supermind in its essential nature and principle.

The second volume is in two parts; the first part entitled “The Infinite Consciousness and the Ignorance” takes us to a more detailed consideration of the nature of the Ultimate Reality as the Infinite Consciousness with all its epistemological implications. A new Logic which he calls the Logic of the Infinite is formulated along with its detailed application. Theories of dream, hallucination and illusion are given a thorough examination leading up to the more important examination of the human mind whose chief characteristic is Ignorance. The nature of Ignorance is analysed, its boundaries fixed and its relation to Knowledge determined. It raises the most baffling and so far pronounced to be unanswerable question of the origin of the Ignorance, and its relation with and place in Infinite Consciousness, and answers it with the help of the psychological concept of Tapas or the Exclusive Concentration of Consciousness. Finally, the nature of Evil, Error and Falsehood is analysed and shown how it is a resultant of the Ignorance which not being the primal principle could be remedied and although real at present could be finally destroyed.

The final part of the work entitled “The Knowledge and The Spiritual Evolution” takes us to the climax of the entire line of reasoning pursued so far by showing how the Integral Truth which is obscured can be made manifest, through what

processes and through what necessities of the workings of Nature itself can the Spirit be made fully manifest in our thinking and living body. In doing so, Sri Aurobindo analyses the working of Nature and finds therein a process of evolution as a profound and meaningful self-unfolding of the supramental Divine which after gradually and through stages veiling itself into its opposite, the Inconscient, rises again gradually and through stages towards its fullest manifestation in the most gross form of existence, the Matter. He develops his theory of Spiritual Evolution and illustrates it by an examination of humanity's development through the ages upto its present stage of achievement. The Theory of Rebirth also gets here a complete examination and together with the theory of supraphysical worlds, rebirth is shown to be acceptable as a machinery that Nature had adopted for its spiritual evolutionary purposes. Finally, Sri Aurobindo shows how Nature developed so far should make a further ascent from Mind to the Supermind, through what intermediary stages and, when that is accomplished, what will be the nature of the supramental or the Gnostic Being in psychological and existential aspects. The final chapter considers and visualises what will be the nature of the Divine life on earth and by an examination of the various current theories of social reconstruction and of the present critical stage through which humanity is passing shows of what rational lines humanity could safely plan for the building up of a future ideal humanity or superhumanity.

The Synthesis Of Yoga

This is in 4 parts with Introduction. The introduction which runs through 5 chapters considers the problem of the conditions of the Synthesis of Yoga; it considers the nature of Life and Nature and comes to the conclusion that Yoga is commensurate with Life and Nature: it shows that Yoga is the full and right utilisation of the energies of Life and Yoga, and that in fact, each Yoga is a special utilisation of a selected energy of Life and Nature. It considers briefly the systems of Yoga and seizes upon a central common principle and a central dynamic force capable of organising and combining the varied energies and different utilities of these systems, giving us in consequence a Synthesis of Yoga.

The rest of the book carries out this synthesis: it defines the Integral Yoga and lays down what are the aids for the requirements of the Sadhak of the Integral Yoga. It takes up each of the three paths of Yoga, those of Work, Knowledge

and Love, and considers how each of them can be taken up in the comprehensive sweep of the Integral Yoga. Thus the first part “The Yoga of the Divine Works” begins with the statement of the principle of self-consecration and Surrender in Works and then takes us to show the successive stages by which the sadhak ascends through the sacrifice of his works of Knowledge, Love and Life, and how during this process the psychic being and later on the superbeing and later on the supermind come into play to effectuate the supreme transformation of the sadhak into the Divine Worker.

The second part “The Yoga of the Integral Knowledge” deals first with the problems of knowledge, understanding and its purification, concentration and renunciation. Then it attempts a synthesis of the Disciplines of Knowledge whose primary preoccupation is with the liberation of the Self from subjection to the Mind, Heart and Body and Ego. But this liberation in the Integral Yoga is shown to lead to the realisation of not merely the Transcendent Satchidananda, the Inactive Brahman, but also to the Cosmic Self, the Cosmic Consciousness and the Active Brahman. In this context, Sri Aurobindo gives an account of the nature of the realisation of these various aspects of the Brahman, and chalks out the ladder of the Self-Transcendence from the lower planes of our ordinary existence. At the top of the ladder opens the planes of the Gnosis of the Supermind and Ananda. The nature of these principles is described and the conditions of their attainment laid down. Finally brief accounts of Samadhi, Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga, which are allied to the Path of Knowledge are given along with their valuation and place in the Integral Yoga.

The third part “The Yoga of Divine Love” opens with the discussion of the place of Love in the triple path. Then follows the statement of the Motives of Devotion and how in the Way of Devotion these motives and Godward emotions are utilised. The way of Devotion is stated and then comes the statement of the nature of the realisation of the Divine Delight and the Ananda Brahman. The question of the Divine Personality receives a detailed treatment. This part ends with the most profound statement of the Mystery of Love.

In the fourth part “The Yoga of Self-Perfection” the ideal of the Divine Life and integral perfection receives a detailed psychological treatment; the method of perfection each part of the being and instrument of the Spirit is laid down; the summit points of the various paths are further integrated and perfected; and finally, there is an elaboration of the supramental faculties, the gradations of the Supermind, the Supramental Thought and Knowledge, the Supramental Sense and the Way to the Supramental Time Vision.

Essays On The Gita

This work is in two series written to state the living truths the Gita contains in form and expression suitable to the mentality and helpful to the spiritual needs of our present-day humanity. In doing so, Sri Aurobindo brings forth the most fundamental concepts of the Gita and discusses them in order to bring out their true significance; in this sense, he reveals the original intentions of the Divine Teacher of the Gita, the Lord Krishna. Although it is a running commentary on the Gita and follows its course verse by verse, it discusses all issues at their proper places in the context of the whole burden of the Gita's teaching.

The most outstanding stresses of this work are that 1) the Gita is a dynamic and universal teaching revealed to the representative soul of humanity by the Divine Teacher who reveals himself as an Avatar, that 2) it is a book of a synthetic Yoga which synthesises the paths of Work, Knowledge and Love, that 3) it gives an integral knowledge of the Reality and reveals the supreme and secretmost nature of the Divine Reality, and that 4) the Gita has a message which still needs to be heard by the present humanity.

The first series deals with Karma Yoga and discusses the problems of the Man in the battle-field of life, the meaning and significance of Sacrifice, the purpose, significance and process of Avatarhood, the Divine Work and shows how by renunciation and sacrifice of desire in works one can attain to Equality, Knowledge, even Nirvana and Transcendence and then only can one be the instrument of the Divine for its work in the world. It ends with a chapter on the “Gist of Karmayoga”.

The second series which is in two parts, states the Gita's integral theory of Reality and shows how it becomes the basis of the Synthetic Yoga. It discusses most intricate concepts such as the Two Natures of the Divine, Vibhuti, Swabhava and Swadharma. Finally, it shows what exactly is the supreme secret of this synthetic teaching and what its core. It ends with a most powerful and inspiring essay entitled “The Message of the Gita”

The Human Cycle

A work on the Psychology of Social development. It gives a cyclical view of Social Progress by tracing the history right from the barbaric Age to the present Age of Reason and envisages the coming of the Spiritual Age. It discusses the concepts of Individualism, Objectivism and Subjectivism in Social Thought, Nationalism and enunciates the Ideal Law of

Social Development. It defines Civilisation and contrasts it with Barbarism and Culture. It also contrasts the Aesthetic and Ethical cultures and shows how their conflict can be overcome neither by Reason nor by Religion but by the suprarational spirituality. Finally, it analyses the psychology of our own times and shows how we find there an end of the Curve of Reason and the necessity of Spiritual Transformation. It lays down the conditions for the coming of a Spiritual Age and outlines how humanity will turn to that Age.

The Ideal Of Human Unity

A work devoted to the study of communal and collective life, the power that moves it and the sense of aim towards which it moves. It undertakes to establish a thesis that Nature drives towards larger agglomerations to arrive at a largest and ultimate union of the world's peoples. It examines the past aggregates and notes their imperfections; it discusses the relation of the individual and the group, and considers the real significance behind the urge for empire-building. The possibility of a World-empire is suggested and considered in the context of the recent growing tendencies of Nationalism and Internationalism. And after stating the Nature's Law of Unity in Diversity it proceeds to suggest an ideal solution of a free grouping of mankind. The conditions, possibilities and forms which this new creation may take are indicated. Finally it arrives at the conclusion that there must result a World-State which would be a federation of free nationalities.

A Post-script chapter dealing with the world conditions today is added so as to bring the book up-to-date.

The Riddle Of This World

The writings collected in this small volume are replies given by Sri Aurobindo to questions dealing with certain occult truths of our world-existence which come to be dealt with in Yoga, and they throw much light on such topics as Supernals, Graded Worlds, Rebirth, False Lights, etc. Some letters deal with the questions about Yoga, Western Metaphysics, Agnosticism, Doubt and Faith.

On The Veda

A work in four parts: the first part "The Secret of the Veda" raises the problem of the secret meaning of the Veda, discusses Sayana's theory and theories of the European Scholars and comes to the conclusion that the Vedic Mantras have esoteric meaning and they embody spiritual knowledge. It takes up illustrative hymns to Agni and other gods, makes a comparative study of their various interpretations and shows how when interpreted in their true and esoteric sense they reveal a natural flow and smooth lines of thought and knowledge. Finally, it reveals to us the inner meanings of the Vedic symbols such as those of Seven Rivers, the Herds of Dawn, the Cow and the Sun, the Seven-headed Thought and the Hound of Heaven. The last chapter states the summary and conclusions.

In the second part "Selected Hymns" Sri Aurobindo gives the translation of certain selected hymns and gives interpretative commentaries on them, while in the third part he gives further elucidation of the doctrine of the Mystics and also gives translations of 28 hymns to Agni and other hymns to Guardians and Lords of Light, to Varuna, and Savitri. These translations are further explained by several brief footnotes.

The fourth part takes up still further hymns to the God of the Mystic Fire, Thought, Gods and the Vedic Fire. And finally, there is an appendix of an essay dealing with the problem of the Origins of the Aryan speech.

The Problem Of Rebirth

This thin volume consists of three sections: the first deals with the problem of Rebirth and discusses it with reference to the theories of Evolution, Heredity, Karma, Free Will and shows the significance of Rebirth.

The second section deals with the complex lines of Karma with reference to the Terrestrial Law and Mind Nature while the third deals with the higher lines of Karma and of Truth.

KIREET JOSHI

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