

Sri Aurobindo and the Age of Integration

“Another personality—the greatest after him—thrown into the limelight by the independence movement, was his young friend, Aurobindo Ghose. He was the real intellectual heir of Vivekananda”—Romain Rolland, Page 62, *Prophets of the New India*.

From his retirement since 1910 at Pondicherry, whither he had to escape the political persecution of England, Aurobindo Ghose published during the World War a Review of the greatest importance (unfortunately difficult to procure today): *Arya*, a Review of Philosophical Synthesis. A French edition of the first year appeared (from August 15, 1914), under the collaboration of Paul and Mirra Richard. In it Aurobindo Ghose published his chief works: *The Divine Life* and *The Synthesis of the Yogas* (I note in passing that this last work rests from first to last on Vivekananda’s authority). At the same time he gave learned and original interpretations of the Hindu scriptures, the discussion of which we must leave to Sanskrit scholars, while at the same time he bore unequivocal witness to their philosophical depths and fascination: *The Secret of the Veda*. Two Volumes of his *Essays on the Gita* have just appeared (1928) and have aroused animated discussion in India.”—fn. pp. 627-628 op. supre, Romain Rolland.

It is not one’s place here to review anything of Sri Aurobindo. A review is an **analysis**, and the analysis of an integral is stepping down of that integral to a common level. People use the word “integral” without any referent to its essential meaning in Mathematics, Philosophy or Mystical Development. It is one’s attention to keep on a high plane and also to find common with Sri Aurobindo on that plane, feeling he would wish it so.

In India Sri Aurobindo is called **Vijnanavadin**, which is to say, **Master of the Science of Integration**. It is regrettable that many western people, coming upon the Pali **Vijnana** have interpreted entirely out of context to mean something entirely different from its original Sanskrit intent and content.

Analysis and dialectic alike have thrown endless confusion into both the interpretation of Sanskrit terms and the communication of wisdoms and philosophies originally expressed in the Sanskrit language. And among the other accomplishments of Sri Aurobindo has been what we should call the **semanticization of the Sanskrit literature**. No doubt this has produced endless discussion but it has also pointed the way to understanding, understanding which can now be communicated to all peoples.

For **Vijnana** as presented in the Upanishads might be roughly interpreted as “seeing knowledge” or “experienced-knowledge” which is also common among the grades of sentient beings higher

than manusha or humankind. Unfortunately most of the interpretations of the Upanishads and Gita have been by people attached to manas and Ahankara, the very levels which Sri Krishna deplored. And all arguments for or against this procedure only keep interpretations at manushic and Ahankara levels. It is only when insight is evinced and used that we can get the functional-glimpse of the Scriptures.

One does not wish to hold that Sri Aurobindo is the only person who has communicated wisdom, but he has done this universally, for mankind, not just for the select disciples of some sage, guru, swami or rishi. And we must recognize that in India itself there is a growing acceptance of some of the psychological processes of Sri Aurobindo by those who do not regard him as a rishi or guru. This is very important, and is the first stage into the very New Age that he himself predicted.

The great question is, "What is meant by Integral Yoga?" We are apt to interpret this severally and this comes from the use of the manasic portion of the mind which speculates and analyzes but does not partake of concrete experience. For Yoga itself is experience, must be experience.

The first complex we encounter is the confusion between method and result. We can perform all the postures of Asana_vada and call it **Hatha Yoga**. It is not Yoga at all. "Vada" means method of science or analytical knowledge. It does not mean attainment. All Yoga systems originally mean attainment but in the analytical mind they mean something else. People today discuss without having any experience of union either with God or guru.

At this platform of ignorance we find manushic discussions of **Purna Yoga** (translated as "Integral Yoga") as if it were Jnana + Bhakti + Karma Yoga. An Integral is not an **addition**. Neither is it a **multiplication** nor a synthesis. The nearest English word etymologically, to **purna** is **full**. **Purna Yoga** means a **full** Yoga. But from the standpoint of the Upanishads and their presentations of **Vijnana**, it is a **stepping** up and all integral action or attainment is a stepping up a degree. And that is exactly what we understand in the various books of Sri Aurobindo; he is pointing out to a **stepping** of knowledge, of attainment, of consciousness, of morals, of everything.

Page 4 of the original paper is missing—Ed.

If we examine disciples of Sri Aurobindo we do find Bhakti Yogins, we do find Karma Yogins (especially), we do find Jnana Yogins, we do find selectivists and synthesists, but we also find some who have the **full-ness** of Yoga. One realizes that to name names can introduce dissonances for there are camps among the followers of Sri Aurobindo. But there is also that inevitable factor C found in all Integral formulae, of the meaning "Wholes which are more than the sums of their parts." And an Integral must be a "Whole which is more than the sum of its parts."

As many scholars are not mathematicians and not acquainted with the philosophy of the Integral Calculus they do not realize this. And as many devotees seek to bask in the shadows and not in

the light of their gurus, they do not realize this.

For example Christians say, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow,. But while there is an Aurobindo who has written on “The Coming Race,” it is this same Aurobindo who has given us most interesting, and to me most wise, interpretations of the Vedas, That is, stepping up in Time, to an Integral of Time, he has not only endeavored to penetrate the future, he has essayed to penetrate the past. This is an action of Integration, this is the Vijnana and this ultimately leads to **Purna Yoga**, for Purna Yoga must take in considerably all the facets of Indian culture as symbolized by Sri Aurobindo himself, the symbol being adopted by hundreds of millions who are not among his direct followers.

Rivers are analytical bodies of water and the oceans are integrated bodies of water. If we say that the Ganges or the Sacramento is the same yesterday and today and tomorrow we would know it is not true. And especially according to the teachings of Lord Buddha it could not be true. But we cannot say if the great oceans are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow for the word **sameness** applies only to equivalents a certain levels. Or if we apply it to infinitudes as to finitudes, we know that psychologically we are working at different levels.

One can point to Sri Aurobindo’s prophecies—which I personally find far, far beyond anything any Jean Dixon can conceive—and we find that they came true because he could see beyond the immediacy. This may have been because he was in control of all three bodies, and it may have been because he could function beyond the three bodies. Anyhow as we look around us, and especially to Haight Street, we find the manifestation of personalities who already take for granted many of the teachings introduced into this culture not so long ago.

Let us say Dr. Chaudhuri or Swami Ram Das spoke in public here. Those words entered the ethers. They became fixated in the ethers here. This fixation attracted souls who were unconsciously drawn to the area where their words and thoughts and wisdoms had been expressed. We now have them in our midst. It cannot be otherwise. This is the way the universe operates.

But suppose we cannot look ahead but can only extend **time** backwards, as the subconscious is capacitated. We come to the same conclusions?

The character called Paris (Phoenician name) or Alexander (Greek name) was given a choice between the goddesses Hera, Pallas Athena and Aphrodite. All of us are also given the same choice, though we do not know it, between their Indian counterparts, Lakshmi (for Hera), Sarasvati (for Pallas Athena) and Parvati (for Aphrodite).

If we wish to actualize this we can practice what I call **Aurobindo Yoga**. It is not strictly Aurobindo Yoga. It is Tapas or Veda-Yoga. If we can accept Sri Aurobindo as Guru or Rishi (better), we can utilize the Vedic practices and Vedic interpretation as he has related them to us and become attuned to one aspect of the Divine Mother as above. It is a grand effort and grand experience.

One has done this, unlike Paris-Alexander, with the goddess Pallas Athena, or Sarasvati or Isis and thus come into an **Integral Knowledge** which brings also an understanding of the type of souls which are now appearing. That is to say, by a method which **analytically** points backward, **integrally** it must point in both directions in time. And which analytically stretches the subconsciousness, or stretches the student or devotee into a superconscient state (this word, coined by Sri Aurobindo, is a much better term and can be suggested for our “superconsciousness”) is used by people who have not experienced it, and a word to be semantically valid should be used in accord with a person who has experienced it. This applies to all forms of valid knowledge.

In other words, to understand Sri Aurobindo we must make every endeavor to rise above manas and ahankara into the Vijnanavada, however we comprehend and apprehend it. No particular upaya, or method is supported or introduced here for one does not know all the successful means that have been employed by chelas.

Actually everything said here may be found in one sense or another in **Bhagavad Gita**. It is only a question of applying the divine wisdom to the human world both relatively and absolutely.

Om! Hare Om!