

THE
NEW SYNTHESIS
OF
YOGA

AN INTRODUCTION

KIREET JOSHI



The New Synthesis of Yoga

An Introduction

A Bird's Eye-View of the History of the Indian Synthesis of Yoga:
From the Veda to Sri Aurobindo

Loknīketan



This book is addressed to all young people who, I urge will study and respond to the following message of Sri Aurobindo:

“It is the young who must be the builders of the new world, — not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India’s future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all those who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an acceding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity.”

(Sri Aurobindo, ‘The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth’ Vol. 16, SABCL, p.331)

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Integral Yoga and Evolutionary Mutation

Integral Yoga, Evolution and the Next Species

Dedicated to

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

THE
NEW SYNTHESIS
OF
YOGA

AN INTRODUCTION

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Preface

Yoga is a science, since it relies upon experiences and verification of experiences by strict methods of application and rediscovery.

The knowledge acquired by yoga can thus be regarded as verifiable and repeatable authentic knowledge, which is always open to the possibility of expansion of knowledge, — confirmation of knowledge gained in the past and discovery of new knowledge.

This book aims at showing that the new synthesis of yoga that has been developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is not a culmination of the past yogic effort and aim and, that it is based upon new yogic knowledge of the meaning and aim of life. The past yogic effort is, indeed, assimilated in the new synthesis and, the significance of the past yogic efforts can best be grasped in the light of the new synthesis of yoga which has come to be called the Integral Yoga.

There have been, in the Indian history of yoga, four great syntheses of yoga: the Vedic, the Upanishadic, the Vedantic as in the Gita, and the Tantrik. These four syntheses are fully reflected in the new synthesis, but the new synthesis also has its own distinctive aim and distinctive method.

Spirit and Matter are synthesized in the new synthesis for purposes of the fullest manifestation of spirit in Matter and of establishing divine life on the earth. This yoga, therefore, does not reject life but transforms life so as to bring out fully the hidden Spirit behind all manifestations of material life. This yoga rejects exclusiveness of any spiritual experience,

which has so far been claimed to be ultimate, and it also establishes that science of yoga is not a closed book, but continues to expand in the light of larger integral experiences.

The aim of this book is not philosophical; it therefore avoids philosophical speculations. The sole emphasis of this book is on experiences and integrality of experiences. A new synthesis of yoga affirms that experiences, even in the spiritual field, can be exclusive and can give rise to exclusive philosophies of life but that the resulting conflict can be resolved only by a new expansion in a new experimental adventure of consciousness, which is marked by scientific rigour and thrust towards furnishing experiential proof of the knowledge and power gained by larger integral experience.

The integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has put forward the possibility of establishing on the earth a new grade of consciousness, the supramental grade of consciousness embodied in material body, which will have a new structure, far different from that of the human body.

This yoga has also been termed as evolutionary yoga and as the supramental yoga. It examines critically the scientific theory of evolution and develops a new spiritual theory of evolution and envisages supramental supermanhood as the next stage of the evolutionary process. That man is a transitory being and that man will be followed by superman, — supramental superman, is one of the most radical visions that is neither speculative nor imaginative, but which is founded on sure knowledge derived from authentic scientific knowledge gained through methods of yoga.

It is hoped that this book will stimulate readers to study yoga as a science and to study the original works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Kireet Joshi

PART ONE

Two tendencies of development of Yoga

The history of yoga as developed in India brings out two tendencies in the development of yoga through the ages:

- (i) Complex effort of yoga, after arriving at a synthesis, seems to break up in the development of specialised systems of yoga;
- (ii) These specialised systems tend towards the development of a new synthesis.

The Vedic Samhitas

Historical documents suggest that the earliest synthesis of yoga can be found in the Vedic Samhitas. The very first hymn in the Rig Veda speaks of the old and the new, *pūrvebhiḥ nūtanaiḥ*, and this suggests that there was an earlier tradition to which the beginnings of yoga can be traced. According to the ancient tradition, there was an earlier period, — pre-Vedic period, — during which there was a great striving to fathom the mysteries of the existence of the world and of the purpose of human life on the earth.

The important point about the Vedic Samhitas is that the voluminous texts have remained uncorrupted for over 2000 years. Even though these texts are supposed to have an almost enormous antiquity, a supreme importance was attached to the accuracy of the text. That is the reason why today we find accuracy in respect of every syllable and of

every accent. It is true that at an earlier stage, there was a greater freedom in the use of the principle of euphonic combination of separate words and *saṁdhi*; the Vedic Rishis, therefore, combined sometimes the separate words, and sometimes they left them uncombined. But when, in due course, the Veda came to be written down, the law of euphonic combination had assumed a much more despotic authority over the language, and the ancient text was written by the grammarians as far as possible in consonance with its regulations. They were careful, however, to accompany it with another text, called the *pada pātha*, in which all euphonic combinations were again resolved into the original and separate words and even the components of the compound words indicated. As Sri Aurobindo points out, it is a notable tribute to the fidelity of the ancient memorizers that, instead of the confusion to which this system might so easily have given rise, it is always perfectly easy to resolve formal text into the original harmonies of Vedic prosody. As a result, we have today a very reliable Vedic text. Sri Aurobindo states:

“We have, then, as our basis a text which we can confidently accept and which, even if we hold it in a few instances doubtful or defective, does not at any rate call for that often licentious labour of emendation to which some of the European classics lend themselves. This is, to start with, a priceless advantage for which we cannot be too grateful to the conscientiousness of the old Indian learning.”¹

While the authenticity and accuracy of the Vedic texts constitute a valuable asset as a part of the valuable heritage of ancient humanity, there has been a wide difference in regard to the interpretation of the Veda. The original scholastic work on the Veda had begun with *Yaska* and his *Nirukta*, and even

Yaska acknowledges that there were in his times at least three alternatives, — *ādhibhautika*, *ādhidāivika* and *ādhyātmika*. In due course, the ritualistic interpretation of the Veda tended to become more and more predominant, and when we come to *Sayana*, whose commentary closes the period which began with *Yaska*, we find his interpretation obsessed always by the ritualistic formula. It is true that *Sayana* admits the spiritual, philosophical or psychological element in the Veda, but this element is insignificant in bulk and in importance. The element of naturalistic interpretation preponderates. *Sayana's* interpretation influenced greatly the modern scholarship, which tended to look upon the Veda as the hymnal of an early, primitive, and largely barbaric society, crude in its moral and religious conception, rude in its social structure and entirely childlike in its outlook upon the world that environed it. The modern theories are in harmony with the scientific theories of early human culture and of the recent emergence from the mere savage. But they do not accord well with the recent discoveries of the remarkable civilisations that existed in China, Egypt, Chaldea and Assyria many thousands of years ago. These discoveries have also spoken of the Age of Mysteries that is found to have developed among these civilizations. It becomes, therefore, more and more reasonable to suppose that the development of history has not been purely linear but has been cyclical; it has therefore been suggested that history in its spiral movements passed, during the period of infra-rational stage of early times, through periods of Intuition and Reason. Only within such a framework, can we explain the profundity of the concepts that we find in the Vedic intuitions and in the Platonic rational insights.

The modern theories rely upon comparative mythology which is the creation of the Hellenists interpreting un-Hellenic

data from the standpoint which is itself founded on a misunderstanding of the Greek mind. The modern theories also rely completely on philology, but in spite of its valuable contributions, comparative philology has failed to create a science of language. The cumulative result of the deficiencies of the modern theories is that the problem of interpreting of the Veda still remains an open field in which any contribution that can throw light upon the problem should be welcomed.

At this juncture, therefore, the contributions that have proceeded from Indian scholars starting from Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati who handled his materials with remarkable power and independence, and made creative use of that peculiar feature of old Sanskrit tongue, which has come to be known as the 'multi-significance of roots'. There is no doubt that the right following of this clue is of capital importance for understanding the peculiar method of the Vedic Rishis. Bal Gangadhar Tilak in his *Arctic Home in the Vedas* has established at least a strong probability that the Aryan races descended originally from the Arctic regions in the glacial period. T. Paramasiva Aiyar has attempted to prove that the whole of the Rig Veda is a figurative representation of the geological phenomena belonging to the new birth of our planet after its long-continued glacial death in the same period of terrestrial evolution. The theories of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aiyar have stimulated fresh speculations and, whatever may be the defects of their works, they seem to serve as a starting-point for a new external interpretation of the Veda which may explain much that is now inexplicable and recreate for us the physical regions, if not the actual physical environment, of the old Aryan world.

There is also the interpretation of the Veda that we find in the writings of Pandit Madhusudan Ojha, who has relied

largely upon the interpretations of the Brahmanas. In many respects, this interpretation seems to coincide with that of *Sayana* but also departs from it significantly and is able to throw light on the inner and spiritual meaning of the Vedic texts. The hypothesis that Sri Aurobindo has put forward proceeds from a basis that clearly emerges from the language of the Vedas itself. It avoids, therefore, the danger of manufacturing a system out of the scholar's imaginations and preferences instead of discovering the real purport of the figures chosen by the Rishis. This hypothesis has given rise to the Psychological Theory of the Veda, and a close study of this theory leads us to the conclusion that the Rishis arranged the substance of their thoughts in a system of parallelism by which the same cosmic powers and beings were at once internal and external powers and beings of universal Nature, and that they managed their expressions through a system of double values by which the same language served for their systems of the practice of yoga in both aspects. According to this psychological theory, the psychological sense predominates and is more pervading, close-knit and coherent than the physical. According to Sri Aurobindo, the Veda is primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture. The Veda is, therefore, primarily a book of yoga, and when we study this system of yoga, we find in it a complexity and a synthesis of many lines of enlightenment and self-culture that had developed earlier. In due course, the Vedic synthesis broke down in specialised lines of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga, as also those of Mantra Yoga and of several other esoteric systems.

In developing the psychological theory, Sri Aurobindo has taken the help of ancient and modern systems of

interpretations. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“Sayana and Yaska supply the ritualistic framework of outward symbols and their large store of traditional significances and explanations. The Upanishads give their clue to the psychological and philosophical ideas of the earlier Rishis and hand down to us their methods of spiritual experience and intuition. European scholarship supplies a critical method of comparative research, yet to be perfected, but capable of immensely increasing the materials available and sure eventually to give a scientific certainty and firm intellectual basis which has hitherto been lacking. Dayananda has given the clue to the linguistic secret of the Rishis and re-emphasised one central idea of the Vedic religion, the idea of the One Being with the Devas expressing in numerous names and forms the many-sidedness of His unity.”²

Psychological Theory of the Vedic Interpretation

The psychological theory of Sri Aurobindo has been explained and illustrated in two volumes, *The Secret of the Veda* and *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. A close study of these volumes provides convincing soundness of the method and the results. As Sri Aurobindo points out, it becomes clear that the principal ideas of the Vedic Rishis around which the entirety of the Vedic thought in its spiritual aspects is grouped are those of Truth-Consciousness, supramental and divine, the invocation of the gods as powers of the Truth to raise man out of the falsehoods of the mortal mind, the attainment in and by this Truth of an immortal state of perfect good and felicity and the inner sacrifice and offering of what one has and is by the mortal to the Immortal as the means of the Divine consummation.³

It is also clear that the Vedic Rishis investigated three powers of Consciousness, — cognition, conation and affection, — in their highest and widest possibilities and achieved a great synthesis and harmony of these three powers of Consciousness. By the development of the powers of cognition, the Vedic Rishis were able to arrive at victorious illuminations; similarly, by the development of the powers of conation, they were able to arrive at supreme all-achieving puissance; and similarly, again, by the purification and perfect development of the powers of affection, they were able to arrive at the highest spiritual ecstasies.

When we study the above mentioned two volumes of Sri Aurobindo, we find ourselves persuaded of the justification of the tribute that Sri Aurobindo has paid to the Vedic Rishis in the following words:

“They may not have yoked the lightning to their chariots, nor weighed sun and star, nor materialised all the destructive forces in Nature to aid them in massacre and domination, but they had measured and fathomed all the heavens and earths within us, they had cast their plummet into the inconscient and the subconscient and the superconscient; they had read the riddle of death and found the secret of immortality; they had sought for and discovered the One and known and worshipped Him in the glories of His light and purity and wisdom and power. These were their gods, as great and deep conceptions as ever informed the esoteric doctrine of the Egyptians or inspired the men of an older primitive Greece, the fathers of knowledge who founded the mystic rites of Orpheus or the secret initiation of Eleusis. But over it all there was the “Aryan light”, a confidence and joy and a happy, equal friendliness with the Gods which the Aryan brought with him into the world, free from the sombre

shadows that fell upon Egypt from contact with the older races, Sons of deep-brooding Earth. These claimed Heaven as their father and their seers had delivered his Sun out of our material darkness.”⁴

Significance of the Vedic Synthesis of Yoga

The reason why so much space has been devoted in this book to the exposition of the synthesis of Yoga in the Veda is that the entire history of the synthesis of yoga would remain inexplicable if the Vedic synthesis of yoga is not properly grasped and underlined. The Upanishads and the synthesis of yoga that we find in the Upanishads would remain incomprehensible if we cannot trace their origin in the Vedas. Similarly, the synthesis of yoga that we find in the Gita can be properly understood only if we can relate it to the Upanishads and the Veda. Moreover, the Upanishads and the Gita form the entire basis of different schools of Vedanta, and the synthesis of yoga that we find in each school of Vedanta and Puranas and Tantra can be understood only if the Vedic knowledge, as developed through the Upanishads and the Gita, gets related to these later developments.

It is also significant that although the synthesis of yoga that is found in the Tantra has, behind it, a history in which non-Vedic ideas seemed to have played a role, recent studies made by Kapali Shastri and M.P. Pandit have traced the origin of the Tantric concept of Shakti to the Vedic concept and experience of *Aditi*, who has been described in the Veda as the Mother of the gods or the cosmic powers and beings of the Truth. Tantric philosophy and Tantric yoga have influenced both Jainism and Buddhism, and thus, the Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Jainism bear the stamp of the Vedic yoga. The Shaiva Siddhanta and various forms of Shavism

can also be understood only when we have a true grasp of the Vedic synthesis of yoga and the Tantric synthesis of yoga. It may also be mentioned that, in the history of yoga, every system of synthesis has gradually broken down into specialized systems of yoga, and these specialized schools of yoga have again come to be combined in a new synthesis. This entire movement of specialised systems has behind it the large canvas of the original synthesis that we find in the Veda. It is also remarkable that the latest new synthesis of yoga that Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have given in our own times has brought back the knowledge contained in the Vedic synthesis and, even though their new synthesis breaks a new ground, this yoga cannot be understood if the Vedic synthesis of yoga is not understood. It may, therefore, be said that the Vedic synthesis of yoga pervades the entire atmosphere of the development of yoga in India, and even in this Introduction, it would be useful to expound, in some broad terms, the Vedic roots of the Indian history of yoga.

According to Sri Aurobindo, Vedic knowledge and subsequently also the Upanishadic knowledge was attained, not by a process of ratiocination but by the operation of the faculties of the supermind or of Intuition. As he points out, Intuition is our first teacher, and reason comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest. In this light, the history of Indian philosophy can be seen as beginning with the age of intuitive knowledge, which, beginning with the Veda, was subsequently represented by the early Vedantic thinking of the Upanishads. This age gave way to the age of rational knowledge, when inspired scriptures made room for metaphysical philosophy, even as afterwards metaphysical philosophy had to give place to experimental science. Sri Aurobindo, in the following

passage, describes briefly but illuminatingly the course of the development of Indian thought:

“Intuitive thought which is a messenger from the superconscient and therefore our highest faculty, was supplanted by the pure reason which is only a sort of deputy and belongs to the middle heights of our being; pure reason in its turn was supplanted for a time by the mixed action of the reason which lives on our plains and lower elevations and does not in its view exceed the horizon of the experience that the physical mind and senses or such aids as we can invent for them can bring to us. And this process which seems to be a descent, is really a circle of progress. For in each case the lower faculty is compelled to take up as much as it can assimilate of what the higher had already given and to attempt to re-establish it by its own methods. By the attempt it is itself enlarged in its scope and arrives eventually at a more supple and a more ample self-accommodation to the higher faculties. Without this succession and attempt at separate assimilation we should be obliged to remain under the exclusive domination of a part of our nature while the rest remained either depressed and unduly subjected or separate in its field and therefore poor in its development. With this succession and separate attempt the balance is righted; a more complete harmony of our parts of knowledge is prepared.”⁵

Salient Features of the Vedic Synthesis of Yoga

Sri Aurobindo’s interpretation of the Veda enables us to look upon the Veda as possessed of the highest spiritual substance of the Upanishads but as a body of knowledge that is yet insufficiently equipped with intellectual and philosophical terms. Sri Aurobindo finds in the Veda a system and a

doctrine, whose structure is supple and whose terms are concrete, and whose cast of thought is practical and experimental. In the Veda, he finds an ancient psychological science and the art of spiritual living of which the Upanishads are the philosophical outcome and modification and Vedanta, Sankhya and Yoga and other intellectual philosophies are late results of the labour of the rational logical endeavour.

The Vedic doctrine, as enunciated by Sri Aurobindo, describes a cosmology, and he compares the seven principles of Vedic cosmology with the seven Puranic worlds with sufficient precision in the following way:

| Principle | World |
|--|---|
| 1. Pure Existence – <i>Sat</i> | World of the highest truth of being (<i>Satyaloka</i>) |
| 2. Pure Consciousness – <i>Chit</i> | World of infinite Will or conscious-force (<i>Tapoloka</i>) |
| 3. Pure Bliss – <i>Ananda</i> | World of creative delight of existence (<i>Janaloka</i>) |
| 4. Knowledge or Truth – <i>Vijnana</i> | World of the Vastness (<i>Maharloka</i>) |
| 5. Mind | World of light (<i>Swar</i>) |
| 6. Life (nervous being) | World of various becoming (<i>Bhuvar</i>) |
| 7. Matter | The material world (<i>Bhur</i>) ⁶ |

Indeed, in the Vedic system, cosmic gradations are differently grouped, — seven worlds in principle, five in practice, three in their general groupings:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The Supreme <i>Sat-Chit-Ananda</i> | The Triple divine worlds |
| 2. The Link-World <i>Supermind</i> | The Truth, Right, Vast, manifested in <i>Swar</i> , with its three luminous heavens. |
| 3. The triple lower world <i>Pure Mind</i> | Heaven (<i>Dyaus</i> , the three heavens) |
| <i>Life-Force</i> | The Mid-Region (<i>Antariksha</i>) |
| <i>Matter</i> | Earth (<i>the three earths</i>) |

Our earth, according to the Veda, has been shaped out of the dark inconscient ocean of existence, and our physical life lifts its high formations and ascending planes towards the heaven of mind having its own formations. The streams of the clarity and the honey ascend out of the Subconscient Ocean upwards and they seek the Superconscient Ocean above. That upper ocean sends downwards its rivers of the light, truth and bliss even into our physical being. Thus, in the ocean of physical Nature, the Vedic poets sing the hymn of our spiritual ascension.

The science and practice of that spiritual ascension is the secret science of the Veda or of the Vedic Yoga, the aim of which is immortality. This science assigns a great importance to *Agni*, the Mystic Fire, which causes growth, and which increases the power and forges and welds relations among vegetations, plants and herbs and which pushes forward the greater forces of Intelligence and of the higher world of light, *Swar*. *Agni* represents warmth and heat of the Yogin that creates the right condition for the path of sacrifice which, in the secret teaching of the Veda, is the path of the offering of

the works to the highest Object of light, knowledge and bliss. The entire significance of sacrifice and its practice, when examined properly, turns out to be the Karma Yoga of the Veda which is also, as explicitly stated in the *Bhagavadgita*, a synthesis with Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. *Agni* is not only the fire of the sacrifice, the fire of the journey of life, the *élan* of evolution, but also it is its leader and priest (*purohita*). *Agni* leads man in his search of the Truth (*satyam*). It is he who connects man with the cosmic forces and with all the gods of the three worlds (*triloka*), of earth (*bhur*), mid-world (*bhuvar*) and heaven (*swar*). At the head of *swar* is Indra, the god of Illumined Intelligence. It is Indra who shows man the path to the still higher realms and to the Supreme Reality. But before one can reach the Supreme or the Supreme Light, (*Savitri*), one has to cross the four gods: Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga. They are to be embraced and to be fulfilled before they lead the seeker to his goal.

Varuna represents vastness, infinite wideness, limitlessness. The Truth that the Veda worships is infinite; it is spaceless and timeless and yet is all Space and Time. This truth cannot be possessed without the widest wideness in our consciousness and in our being. The seeker has to learn to comprehend and to contain all, — all without limits. He has to grow in the wideness of Varuna, worship him and be as wide as he is.

But this is not enough; Mitra, the lord of Harmony is also to be fulfilled. The seeker must learn the secret of relations; know the threads that bind each to all and all to each. He must learn to be the friend of all creatures, of all men, of all gods. With the wideness of Varuna, he must combine the harmony of Mitra; wideness and relationships are both to be mastered. The Supramental Light is wideness but not empty

of contents or relations. Hence, the necessity of the union of Varuna and Mitra.

But even this is not enough. In all human endeavour, there is the stress and strain of effort. There is a struggle, and it is through struggle, through intense effort, that the narrowness of consciousness is overpassed, the conflicts are resolved, wideness is achieved, and harmony is established. One must have therefore the capacity for the highest effort, the intensest *tapasya*, a perfect mastery over all that needs to be done. Aryaman is the god of this mastery. Through him the highest effort is accomplished. He is total endurance. Without this endurance, we are like the unbaked jar, which will be broken at the touch of the Supreme Light. It will not be able to hold the nectar of immortality. The jar, our instrument, our body, our entire being, has to be baked, — baked fully by the heat and austerity of Aryaman.

But there is still Bhaga to be fulfilled. The Supreme Light is joy and we must learn to bear not only the intensest effort but also the highest degrees of delight. The Supreme Reality itself is supreme delight. Bhaga is to be approached, and in unity with Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman, he has to be embodied.

Highest Achievement of the Vedic Synthesis of Yoga

In his upward journey, the seeker then proceeds to *Savitri*, the lord of the Supreme Light, the sun in which ‘all the gods unyoke their horses’, the supreme in which gods cease to be *entities* and become His *aspects*.

This marks the victory of the Aryan seeker. He is now in the very home of the gods (*swe dame*). This is the home of the Truth, the Right and the Vast (*satyam, ritam, bhrihat*).

This is the supramental Truth-Consciousness (*Rita-Chit*), the highest cosmic consciousness. It is that by which reality expresses itself, and in which expression, even the Idea-Expression, is the concrete body of the Truth itself. It may therefore be described as the Real-Idea.

Attainment of the truth-consciousness, *Rita-Chit*, implies a process of finding and expanding vision of light which leads to immortality. First, the truth is held and enriched in thought; next, it is diffused in the entire being, as explained by *Parashara* in Rig Veda I.71.3,

dadhan ṛtam dhanayan asya dhîtim,
ād id aryo didhiṣvo vibhrtrāḥ

And *Parashara* speaks of the path which leads to immortality in the following words:

“They who entered into all things that bear right fruit formed a path towards the immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, the mother Aditi with her sons came (or manifested herself) for the upholding” (RV I.72.9).

Commenting on this statement of *Parashara*, Sri Aurobindo states:

“That is to say, the physical being visited by the greatness of the infinite planes above and by the power of the great godheads who reign on those planes breaks its limits, opens out to the Light and is upheld in its new wideness by the infinite Consciousness, mother Aditi, and her sons, the divine Powers of the supreme Deva. This is the Vedic immortality.”⁷

The secret knowledge of which the Indian tradition speaks is contained in the Vedic descriptions that relate to the human journey starting from the awakening of *Agni* which lifts us up

to attainment of immortality. It can be said that it is the Vedic science of the human journey in its upward rising towards truth-consciousness that has moulded Indian philosophical thought towards the goal of spiritual liberation and perfection, and this distinctive feature of Indian Philosophy owes its origin to the Veda.

When we study the yoga of the Veda, we find a great difficulty, since our mentality is governed by modern rationalism; the idea of God is itself in question, and since there are conflicting notions of God, we find the Vedic reference to God as the creator, and yet God Himself as the stuff and substance of creation as a matter of uncomfortable perplexity. But our discomfort increases greatly when the Veda speaks of a number of gods and goddesses and the curious relations that these gods and goddesses enjoy with the One Supreme God. Each god is described as the Supreme God, each god as interchangeable with other gods, and each god as having specific position in the hierarchy of the gods. The Vedic system is thus neither clearly monotheistic nor pantheistic, nor deistic; it is not even clearly polytheistic. European scholarship has called it henotheistic. But when we examine this system, we find it ultimately to be monotheistic and monistic. The polytheism of the Veda is subordinate to monotheism and monism. The gods in the Veda are cosmic frontal faces of God; they are distinguishable from each other by the cosmic domain in which they have their specific position and function. But that specific position and function is really speaking the position and the function that God Himself occupies in the cosmos. Hence, each God is really the supreme God; and since God is omnipresent, each god is interchangeable with the others, and yet since God Himself occupies all that is Space and

Time and all that is in Space and Time, the same God relates Himself in different positions of Space and Time in varying relationships with Himself.

Such, indeed, is the discovery of the nature of God; this is not philosophical speculation; this is what is discovered to be the nature of God when one enters into direct and experiential relationship with God by pursuit of the Vedic integral process of yoga. In the light of the Vedic knowledge, therefore, one can say that God exists; the multiplicity of God and the peculiar nature of His complexity is a fact manifesting itself as the multiplicity of gods, human beings and creatures and the peculiar nature of each being and each creature. The Vedic Rishis, through the processes of yoga, discovered the gods; they also discovered the functions of each of these gods that they have described in the Vedic hymns; it is for the seekers to verify through their own experiences, and the long traditions of yoga in India stand out as a recurring testimony of these gods, although the names by which they are called have often varied in different traditions. The affirmation of the Veda is that the methods, which have been identified and which have been practised again and again by a number of Rishis, and which have been described in the Veda itself, can be made available to each individual, if the seeker is keen to know them, and is ready to undertake the processes of enquiry and the processes of application. The polytheism, monotheism and monism of the Veda are not articles of dogma; they are articles of discoveries of a well-developed methodical science of yoga.

The Vedic experience of human journey underlines the concept of Ignorance, which has been a major concept in the subsequent systems of philosophy. In the second hymn of the fourth Mandala, we find the Rishi's prayer in the

following words:

“May he the knower discern perfectly the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the wide levels and the crooked that shut in mortals; and O God, for a bliss fruitful in offspring, lavish on us Diti and protect Aditi” (RV. IV.2.11).

The state of knowledge here is compared to the wide open levels of consciousness, which are also termed as the states of *citti*, and Ignorance, which is indicated by the word *acitti*, is described as a state of crookedness (*vrjnā*). The connection of Knowledge with *Aditi* and of Ignorance with *Diti* is also significant. *Aditi* refers to the power that is undivided and infinite, who is also considered in the Veda as the mother of the Gods or the Beings endowed with light. *Diti* is also called in the Veda *Dānu*, which etymologically means division and whose powers are described in the Vedas as obstructing powers or *vrstras*. These obstructing powers are referred to as *Dānus*, *Dānavas* and *Daityas*. It is also significant that Knowledge is associated with the concept of bliss, and with the offsprings of bliss, which obviously are manifestations of the Divine consciousness and which are effective through the conquest of *Diti*. But what is the meaning of the prayer that aspires to be lavished by *Diti* and which aspires the protection of *Aditi*? This prayer may become clearer when we read the Ishopanishad which declares the possession of the Knowledge and Ignorance, the unity and the multiplicity in the one Brahman as the condition of the attainment of Immortality.

The central concept of the Veda, it may be said, is that of the conquest of the Knowledge of the Truth that rises out of the darkness of Ignorance, and by the conquest of the Truth, the conquest also of Immortality. Inherent in this conception is the discovery of *Ṛtam*, which is the forerunner of the

concept of Dharma and the law of Karma which are so prominent in the subsequent development of Indian philosophical thought. *R̥tam* is the true being, the true consciousness and the true delight of existence which manifests the right action. The right action results from Truth-consciousness which has to be attained, as also the process of that attainment. That process is a process of thoughts, emotions and works in their upward journey, which is guided by the growth of true consciousness, true being and true delight of existence. This process is also the process of sacrifice which consists of giving by man of what he possesses in his ignorant consciousness to the higher or the Divine Nature. The sacrifice is governed by the law of the *R̥ta* which causes the ripening of the sacrifice into its corresponding fruits which consist of the gradual enrichment of the Faculties of Knowledge and the lavish bounty of the cosmic Divine, which can culminate in the total replacement of the Ignorance, and in the total possession of the Knowledge and of the attainment of Immortality. This process of sacrifice is conceived in the Vedic experience as a journey and as a progression, and the sacrifice itself is viewed as a travel led by *Agni*, the Mystic Fire, the burning aspiration and the zeal of self-giving. This journey is also described in the Veda as the battle, for it is opposed by the powers of evil and falsehood which are the results of Ignorance. The entire human life has been regarded in the Veda as a journey from darkness to higher light and still higher to the highest light – *ud vayam tamasapari svaḥ paśyanta uttaram, devam devatrā sūryamaganma jyotir uttamam*. (Rig Veda, I.50.10; see also Chhandogyopanishad, III 17.6,7)

Connected with the process of the attainment of Knowledge is the Vedic concept of *Usha*, which is the Divine

Dawn. Her coming signals the rising of the Sun, which is the symbol in the Veda of the Supreme Knowledge. The Sun brings the day, the day of the true life in the true Knowledge, and the night he dispels is the night of Ignorance which yet conceals the dawn in its bosom.

The Veda speaks of the Angirasas, the forefathers who had traced the whole Path from Ignorance to Knowledge. In I.83.4,5, of the Rig Veda, we have the description of the Angirasas, of Atharvan, and Ushanas Kavya, in their process and in their attainment of the Knowledge of the Truth: "The Angirasas held the supreme manifestation (of the Truth), they who had lit the fire, by perfect accomplishment of the work; they gained the whole enjoyment of the Pani, its herds of the cows and the horses. Atharvan first formed the Path, thereafter, Surya was born as the protector of the Law and the Blissful One, *tataḥ sūryo vratapā vena ājani*. Ushanas Kavya drove upward the Cows. With them may we win by the sacrifice the immortality that is born as a child to the Lord of the Law."

Attainment of Knowledge is seen in the Veda, not as the possession of the intellectual knowledge, but as the direct experience, direct perception, which is not sensuous but super-sensuous, which can properly be called *Darshana*. It is against this background that we can understand rightly why Indian Philosophy has come to be regarded as *Darshana*, and it is significant that all the systems of Indian Philosophy except the system of *Carvakas*, contend that they constitute a preliminary intellectual preparation for surmounting the ordinary consciousness so that it can be refined, subtilised and ultimately transcended into supra-intellectual vision, *Darshana*. We see here once again the close connection between the Veda and the Indian Yoga and Philosophy.

Synthesis of Yoga in the Upanishads

The history of yoga marks a significant stage of the Vedic development, when after the period of Brahmanas and Aranyakas, Upanishads emerged as the culmination of the Vedic knowledge and thus they are known as the Vedanta. The secrets of the Veda which were lost during the intermediate period were recovered by the Rishis of the Upanishads. While the Brahmanas laboured to fix and preserve the minutiae of the Vedic ceremony, the Rishis of the Upanishads followed another method. They sought to recover the lost or waning knowledge contained in the Veda by the method of meditation and spiritual experiences. They used the text of the Vedic Samhitas as a prop or an authority for their own intuition and perception. These Rishis were like the Vedic Rishis; they were seekers of higher than the verbal truth and they used words merely as suggestions in the illumination towards which they were striving. As a result, the Upanishads are invaluable for the light they shed on the principal ideas and on the psychological system of the ancient Rishis. Their work is contained primarily in the twelve principal Upanishads, and when we study them, we find that they tended to subordinate more and more completely the outward ritual, the material utility of the *mantra* and the sacrifice to a more spiritual aim and intention. The Vedic Rishis had preserved a synthesis between the material and the spiritual life; but the Upanishadic Rishis developed a new synthesis, leaning finally towards asceticism and renunciation. The Vedic Rishis had developed a symbolical language which abounded with the veil of concrete myth and poetic figure; the Upanishadic Rishis adopted less symbolic language and arrived at a clearer statement and more philosophical

language. In due course, Upanishads became a fountainhead of the highest Indian thought and replaced the inspired verses of the Vedic Rishis.

The Upanishads are not philosophical speculations of the intellectual kind; they do not present systems of metaphysical analysis labouring to define notions and to logicise truth or else to support the mind in its intellectual preferences by a dialectical reasoning. The Upanishadic Rishis realized the Truth rather than merely thought it; they clothed it with a strong body of intuitive idea and disclosing image. When we read the Upanishads, we find in them a body of ideal transparency through which we look into the illimitable, because the Upanishadic seers fathomed things by processes of yoga in the light of self-existence and saw them with the eye of the Infinite. The words of the Upanishads have remained always alive and immortal and they have carried an inexhaustible significance, an inevitable authority, a satisfying finality that is at the same time an infinite commencement of truth. There are in the Upanishads, as in the Vedas, epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge. Even though they are mainly concerned with an inner vision and not directly with outward human action, we find in them the sources of the highest ethical systems that developed in the later periods as the Indian idea of Dharma.

The Upanishads constitute a continuation and development of the Vedic system of yoga. There are a number of passages which are at once poetry and spiritual philosophy of an absolute clarity and beauty. There are others in which subtlest psychological and philosophical truths are expressed with an entire sufficiency without falling short of a perfect beauty of poetical expression; in several passages,

the Upanishads repeat the Vedic images and ideas almost in the same terms, and when we read the Vedic texts and the principal Upanishads and study the later period of Indian history, we find that they are not only the fountainhead of Indian yoga and philosophy and religion, but of all Indian art, poetry and literature.

Sri Aurobindo points out:

“It was the soul, the temperament, the ideal mind formed and expressed in them which later carved out the great philosophies, built the structure of the Dharma, recorded its heroic youth in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, intellectualized indefatigably in the classical times of the ripeness of its manhood, threw out so many original intuitions in science, created so rich a glow of aesthetic and vital and sensuous experience, renewed its spiritual and psychic experience in Tantra and Purana, flung itself into grandeur and beauty of line and colour, hewed and cast its thought and vision in stone and bronze, poured itself into new channels of self-expression in the later tongues and now after eclipse re-emerges always the same in difference and ready for a new life and a new creation.”⁸

The greatest significance of the Vedas and the Upanishads is that they are ready for a new life and for a new creation in our own times. It is the scientific and the yogic trend in the Vedas and the Upanishads that have ensured the development of fresh minds of investigation and development of new knowledge. The Vedas have themselves celebrated the discovery of new knowledge. In a hymn addressed to Agni or the flame of aspiration, the Rigveda prays for the increase of the glorious treasures of those who from age to age speak the word that is new, the word that is a discovery of new knowledge:

yuge yuge vidat̥hyam

gr̥ṇadbhyaḥagne rayim̥ yaśasam̥dhehi navyasī m. (RV. VI.8.5)

Synthesis of Yoga in the Gita

The synthesis of yoga that we find in the Vedas and the Upanishads broke down in course of time, and there arose a period of the development of specialized systems of yoga. That there was a sharp conflict between the Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga at the time of the Mahabharata can be clearly seen in the colloquy between Arjuna and Sri Krishna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The Jnana Yoga as developed in Sankhya and the Karma Yoga which was to be found in what Sri Krishna refers to as yoga were in such a sharp state of conflict that Sri Krishna was required to dissolve this conflict through a long colloquy with Arjuna. The colloquy between Arjuna and Sri Krishna, which we find in the Gita, brings back the ancient Vedic synthesis as also the synthesis that we find in the principal Upanishads, although those systems of synthesis are reformulated with a sharper and assured knowledge of the Karma Yoga. Fortunately, the gospel of Karma Yoga as formulated in the Gita was itself a synthesis in which the powers of knowledge were synthesized with the powers of will and emotion, and this synthesis ensured a constant return in the history of yoga to the continuation of the spirit of synthesis that we find in the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is true that the synthesis of yoga that we find in the Gita broke down again in due course of time. There have arisen a number of specialised systems of yoga, such as Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, Kriya Yoga, and many others. Buddhistic yoga and the yoga of Jainism are also specialized systems of yoga.

Synthesis of Yoga in the Systems of Vedanta, Purana and the Tantra

It is remarkable that each one of these specialized systems of yoga developed greater subtleties and each one fathomed deeper profundities of specialized lines of yoga. It is also important to note that even though these specialized systems of yoga made claims and counter-claims, and even though each one claims superiority over the others, they still strove to arrive at some image of synthesis. We see this trend in the development of the synthesis of yoga of the systems of the Vedanta, those of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabhācāry and Śri Caitanya. In due course of time, we find Puranic elements in yogic systems of Bhakti and a synthesis that assigned to Bhakti the synthesising role. With the emergence of the yoga of Tantra, Siddhanta, Siddha, and Shaivism, a new synthesis came to be built up and this synthesis had far reaching consequences in imparting a fresh spirit of synthesis in various specialized systems of yoga. Hatha Yoga borrowed certain elements of Tantra; even Raja Yoga, which is historically the yoga of Patanjali and has in recent times been expounded by Swami Vivekananda, contains the concept of *kundalini* and *chakras*, which are special features of Tantra. Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Jainism are also systems of synthesis; and various forms of Shavism and Vaishnavism, whatever their specialized differences, reflect a good deal of Tantric system and spirit of synthesis. The yogic system of Sri Chaitanya adds a most precious contribution to the path of the Divine Love. The yogic system of Guru Nanak, too, manifests a synthesis, and it is a remarkable development that aimed at the assimilation of Hinduism and Islam. Guru Nanak also aimed at purifying the yogic life of his own time.

Later Systems of the Synthesis of Yoga

The Tantric system itself broke down into two parts and this division illustrates how the Indian history of yoga has been developing complexity into divisions and divisions into fresh synthesis; and in the last decades of the nineteenth century, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda developed a new synthesis of yoga. This synthesis provided a new impetus to the theme of the unity of religions and to the development of the knowledge that opened up important gates to Sri Aurobindo's new synthesis of yoga. There have been other developments of the synthesis such as that of Kaviraj Gopinath whose synthesis of yoga has been called the Akhanda Yoga.

The New Synthesis of Yoga: Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

The supreme significance of yoga, of the history of synthesis of yoga, as also of the history of specialized systems of yoga comes out clearly in the new synthesis of yoga or Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. There is, we come to realize, a secret intention behind the entire endeavour of yoga. Yoga is a methodized effort towards self-perfection, by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being, and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence that we see partially expressed in man and in the cosmos; it derives its significance from the fact that all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast yoga of Nature attempting to realize her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In this light, yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the

ordinary processes of World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self-fulfillment. A given system of yoga, it can be seen, is nothing more than a selection or a compression into a narrower but more energetic form of intensity. The general methods of yoga are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement in the unconscious evolutionary movements of life; the leisurely movement of life permits a profuse apparent waste of material and energy; yoga and various systems of yoga aim at substituting the leisurely and unconscious movement and its apparent waste by self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which the highest purposes of life can be attained more swiftly and powerfully. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said that yoga may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence. In this view, yoga reveals itself, Sri Aurobindo points out, as an intense and exceptional use of powers that life and World-Energy have already manifested or is progressively organising in a less exalted but in a more general operation. In the light of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, we find that the earlier systems of yoga, specialised or synthetic, have prepared a vast background, and each one of them has fathomed some secret truth of the potentialities of human nature, and each of them can be studied for purposes of integral enrichment. At the same time, it can be seen that the exceptional results which each specialised system utilise have their disadvantages and losses. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“The Yogin tends to draw away from the common existence and lose his hold upon it; he tends to purchase wealth of spirit by an impoverishment of his human activities, the inner freedom by an outer death. If he gains

God, he loses life, or if he turns his effort outward to conquer life, he is in danger of losing God. Therefore, we see in India that a sharp incompatibility has been created between life in the world and spiritual growth and perfection, and although the tradition and ideal of a victorious harmony between the inner attraction and the outer demand remains, it is little or else very imperfectly exemplified. In fact, when a man turns his vision and energy inward and enters on the path of Yoga, he is popularly supposed to be lost inevitably to the great stream of our collective existence and the secular effort of humanity.”⁹

But this turn of effort in which other-worldly attainment tends to be fixed as the aim of yoga has to be seen as a temporary necessity under certain conditions or a specialised extreme effort imposed on the individual so as to prepare a greater general possibility for the race. A stage has been reached when the past yogic effort of humanity can be taken as a foundation to build up a new synthesis of yoga in which a true and full object and utility of yoga can be accomplished; the conscious yoga in man can become outwardly coterminus with life itself. In the new synthesis of yoga, therefore, we find the full application of the dictum that all life has to be accepted in yoga and that in doing so all life has to be transformed so that the totality of life manifests perfection even in the bodily existence on the earth. The new synthesis of yoga recognises the value of the past developments of yoga, and the specialising and separative tendencies have been seen in their justifying and even imperative utility; but it also finds it inevitable to seek a synthesis of specialised aims and methods which have come into being, as also of those which the new needs of evolution demand.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the evolution of the spiritual man has two intentions. The first intention is to awaken the spiritual man to the supreme Reality and release him from his bondage to the complex nature of body, life and mind which are limited, obscure and ignorant; this intention is fulfilled when the spiritual man attains the capacity of a departure from Nature and its Ignorance into a higher status of being elsewhere. In essence, it can be said that this intention has been already been accomplished because the ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, and the goal or the last height of the creation is manifest. With the help of the systems of yoga which have been developed so far, what is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the chosen system of yoga and pass by its own path out of the inferior existence of bondage and enter into liberation. But, both rationally and spiritually, the second intention of Nature also becomes more and more evident. That intention is not only to arrive at a revelation of the Spirit, not only to arrive at *liberation from Nature*, but also to bring about a great victory of the Spirit which could result in a radical and integral *transformation of Nature*.

As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“There is a will in her (Nature) to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being....What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with

the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature."¹⁰

If we approach the problem rationally, we shall find that the movement of Nature can be viewed in terms of evolution, and even Science now affirms an evolutionary terrestrial existence. It may, however, be argued that the generalisations which science arrives at are short lived. It may be contended that Science holds these generalisations for some decades or some centuries, then passes to another generalisation, another theory of things. In the field of biology and psychology, the instability of generalisations is still greater. It may further be argued that in the field of psychology, the relevance of which is obvious since the evolution of consciousness comes into the picture, Science passes from one theory to another before the first is well-founded; it can even be shown that several conflicting theories hold the field together. It may further be argued that no firm metaphysical building can be erected upon these shifting quick sands.

A line of reasoning can be constructed to question the contention that Nature intends to develop on this earth a supramental being. Sri Aurobindo himself has stated this line of reasoning that can be constructed. That argument can be briefly summarised as follows:

(a) Heredity, upon which Science builds its concept of life-evolution, is an instrument for conservation rather than

for evolution; all the facts show that a type can vary within its own specification of Nature but there is nothing to show that it can go beyond it.

- (b) It has not yet been established that ape-kind developed into man; for it would rather seem that a type resembling the ape, but has a characteristic of itself and not of apehood, developed within its own tendency of nature and became what we know as man, the present human being.
- (c) The progress of Nature from Matter to Life, from Life to Mind may be conceded: but there is no proof yet that Matter developed into life or Life-energy into Mind-energy; all that can be conceded is that Life has manifested in Matter, Mind in living Matter.
- (d) The constant creation of types is visible but that is no indubitable proof of evolution. In this light, man is a type among many types; he is one pattern among the multitude of patterns in the manifestation in Matter. To exceed himself, to create into a superman, to put on the Nature and capacities of God would be a contradiction of his self-law, impracticable and impossible.
- (e) If a supramental being has to appear in the terrestrial creation, it must be a new independent manifestation; but there is no sign of any such intention in the operations of Nature.
- (f) It may even be argued that the world can be explained as a self-organising dynamic Chance that is at work. An inconscient and inconsequent Force acts at random and creates this or that by a general chance; a persistent repetition of the same rhythm of action appears as a repetitive rhythm. It is the work of Chance that elucidates

the free play of the endless unaccountable variations which are visible in the evolution. It may be concluded that there is no such thing as intention in Nature, and therefore, there can be no question of the intention in Nature to manifest a supramental being.

The above line of reasoning may seem at first to be cogent and even formidable, but that line of reasoning, in some of its aspects, assumes that the theory of materialism is unquestionable and even irrefutable. Sri Aurobindo points out that this assumption is unfounded. The premise on which materialism stands is that the physical senses are our sole means of Knowledge and that Reason, therefore, cannot escape beyond the domain of physical existence even in its most extended vigorous flights. But this premise is, Sri Aurobindo points out, arbitrary, and it assumes its own conclusion as its undeniable basis. Sri Aurobindo points out that the world of Matter is affirmed by the experience of the physical senses which, because they are themselves unable to perceive anything immaterial or not organised as gross Matter, would persuade us that the supra-sensible is unreal. But there are today increasing evidences, of which only the most obvious and outward are established in the name of telepathy and cognate phenomena, cannot long be resisted. As soon as we begin to investigate the operations of mind and of Supermind, in themselves and without the prejudgement that is determined from the beginning to see in them only a subordinate term of Matter, we come into contact with a mass of phenomena which escape not only from the rigid hold and the limiting dogmatism of the materialistic formula. Sri Aurobindo adds:

“And the moment we recognise, as our enlarging experience compels us to recognise, that there are in the

universe knowable realities beyond the range of the senses and in man powers and faculties which determine rather than are determined by the material organs through which they hold themselves in touch with the world of the senses, — that outer shell of our true and complete existence, — the premiss of materialistic Agnosticism disappears. We are ready for a large statement and an ever-developing inquiry.”¹¹

Sri Aurobindo points out that even though the Inconscient is discovered to be at the origin of the evolutionary movement, the emergence of consciousness of the Mind out of the Inconscient is a stumbling block in the materialistic theory of Chance. For, it is a phenomenon which can have no place in an all-pervading truth of the Inconscience. For it may be asked as to what this mind is, this consciousness which differs so radically from the Energy that produced it that for its actions is required to impose its idea and need of order on the world it has made and in which it is obliged to live. There would then be a double contradiction, Sri Aurobindo points out, of consciousness emerging from a fundamental Inconscience and of a Mind of order and reason manifesting as the brilliant final conclusion of a world created by inconscient Chance.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the evolutionary process cannot be explained unless Inconscience is conceived and realised as involved Superconscience, which, in turn, points to the higher and highest operations of the Supermind. The argument that he puts forward is stated as follows:

“We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of

material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realization of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to

condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realization of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth."¹²

In regard to the infirmities of the scientific theory of evolution, Sri Aurobindo points out that the theory of spiritual evolution is not identical with the scientific theory of form-evolution and physical life. The theory of spiritual evolution may accept the scientific account of the physical evolution as a support or an element, but that support is not indispensable. What is common between the theory of spiritual evolution and scientific theory is the account of certain outward aspects of evolution, namely, that there is in the scale of terrestrial existence the development of forms, of bodies, a progressively complex and competent organisation of Matter, of Life in Matter, of consciousness in living Matter, and that in this scale the better organised the form, the more is it capable of housing a better organised, a more complex and a more developed or evolved Life and consciousness. In regard to these common aspects, there does not seem to be a basis for dispute, once the evolutionary hypothesis is put forward and the facts supporting it are marshalled. The dispute arises in regard to those aspects which are not indispensable for the theory of spiritual evolution, namely, the precise machinery by which the evolutionary process is effected or the exact genealogy or chronological succession of types of beings, the development of one form of life out of a precedent less

evolved form, natural selection, struggle for life and the survival of acquired characteristics. As Sri Aurobindo points out, this may or may not be accepted; what is of primary consequence is the fact of a successive creation with a developing plan in it. The essential point in the theory of spiritual evolution is the fact of evolution of consciousness, a progression of a spiritual manifestation in material existence, and that essential point follows naturally from the refutation of the materialism and from the consequent theory of consciousness and its involution in the original Inconscient.

In regard to the argument that man is a type among many types and therefore to suppose that man can exceed himself and can grow into a superman would be a contradiction of the law governing the types, Sri Aurobindo concedes that each type of pattern of consciousness and being in the body once established, has to be faithful to the law of being of that type to its design and rule of nature. But he points out that it may very well be that part of the law of the human type is its impulse towards self-exceeding, that the means for a conscious transition has been provided along with spiritual powers of man and that the possession of such a capacity may be a part of the plan on which the creative Energy has built him.

It has further been pointed out that there has been a tremendous human progress since man's appearance or even in his recent ascertainable history, and this progress suggests fresh steps of progression until the highest consummation is reached. It may, however, be argued that the progress that has been registered so far has not carried out the human race beyond itself, into self-exceeding. In reply, Sri Aurobindo contends that that was not to be expected until a critical stage

was reached and that it is only now that that stage is being reached. The action of evolutionary nature in a type of being and consciousness is first to develop the type to its utmost capacity by a stabilization and increasing complexity till it is ready for bursting the shell, ripened decisive emergence and universal turning over of consciousness on itself.

According to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual theory of evolution, what man has achieved is that he has sharpened, subtilised and made an increasingly complex and plastic use of his capacities. All that he has so far developed can be regarded as a process of developing the human type to its utmost capacity, and it is only now that it has ripened for a decisive emergence or mutation. It is not contended that the whole human race is ready to rise *en masse* to the supramental level. What is suggested is nothing so revolutionary or astonishing, but the capacity in the human mentality, when it has reached a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, to press towards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment in the being. It has been further suggested that the urge of man towards self-exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race, and that the human mental status will always be there, not only as a degree in a scale but also as an open step towards the spiritual and supramental status.

According to Sri Aurobindo, man is a transitional being, and his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, and therefore, there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of the supermind.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution is not merely a philosophical theory, but the uniqueness of this

theory is that Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have developed this theory on the basis of a long and a difficult process of experimentation. During the course of this experimentation, they have found it necessary to develop new objects and new methods of yoga, even while incorporating in a suitable manner the objects and methods of yogic systems of the past. As a result, a new synthesis of yoga, involving a long programme of experiments by evolving supramental action in the body itself has been undertaken. It is also envisaged that even the human body will undergo mutation, so that it can be no longer a clamorous animal and impeding clod it now is, but become instead a conscious servant and radiant instrument and living form of the Spirit.

PART TWO

Concept of the Synthesis of Yōga

The synthesis of yoga presupposes the existence of partial or specialised systems of yoga, each leading to partial or specialised results or accomplishments. A synthesis can be a combination, and there have been in the history of yoga several ways of combination. An indiscriminating combination *en bloc* would not be a synthesis, but confusion. A successive practice of different systems of yoga may result in some kind of synthesis. Sometimes, for example, the practice of Hatha Yoga is followed by the practice of Raja Yoga. Or, as in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, we find a powerful example, even a unique example, of a colossal spiritual capacity, as a result of which the great yogin drove straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then he seized upon one yogic method after another and extracted the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experiences and by the spontaneous play of an individual intuitive knowledge. But it is obvious that the process of successive practice of different systems of yoga can not be generalised, since ordinarily within the short span of human life and its limited energies, one cannot expect the capacity to cross the stages and hurdles of specialised systems with the kind of rapidity that was exemplified in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri

Ramakrishna was a master-soul, whose object was to exemplify in the great and decisive experience the demonstration that all sects are forms and segments of a single integral truth and all disciplines labour in their different ways towards one supreme experience. That object is imperatively necessary at the present juncture of development of humanity, since there is today a crisis of world civilisation where the problem of the conflict of jarring sects and schools has assumed critical proportions. What a master-soul could achieve with incredible rapidity can not be represented as something generally realisable.

There have been several other examples of the synthesis of yoga. There was, for example, the Vedic synthesis of yoga. In this synthesis, the psychological powers of the intellect, will, and feeling were sought to be raised up to their highest flights and widest rangings of divine knowledge, power, joy, love and glory. This process was sought to be accomplished by synthesising the individual with the cosmic powers and beings in their operations in those higher planes which are hidden from the physical senses and the material mentality. This synthesis was crowned by the experience of the transcendental and blissful divine reality and its unity with the increasing soul of the individual and the eternal divine fullness of the cosmic powers; the highest point of realisation was the manifestation of the supramental truth-consciousness in the physical consciousness up to a point where the body consciousness of the individual could become universalised. This synthesis of yoga was later on broken into specialised processes of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Mantra Yoga and several other specialised processes. During the immediately succeeding period of Brahmanas, the great synthesis of the Vedic yoga came to be reduced to ritualistic

practice of sacrifice, and there came about an opposition between the ritualistic *karma kanda* and Jnana Yoga. In the next period, the synthesis of the Vedic yoga was recovered by the Upanishads which took up the crowning experience of the Vedic seers and made it their starting point for a high and profound synthesis of spiritual knowledge. The Upanishads harmonised all that had been seen and experienced by the inspired and liberated knowers of the Eternal throughout the great and fruitful period of spiritual seeking. During the subsequent period of the development of the Upanishads, the tendency towards exclusive path of jnana became more and more prominent, and by the time we come to the Gita, we witness a great conflict between the path of knowledge and the path of works. The yoga of the Gita confronted this conflict and recovered the Upanishadic and even Vedic synthesis, and it built upon the basis of the essential ideas of that synthesis another harmony and synthesis of three great means and powers, Love, Knowledge and Works, through which the soul of man can directly approach and cast itself into the Eternal. But this synthesis also broke down, and various other specialised systems of yoga developed in the subsequent period of Indian history. During the Purano-Tantric Age, however, we find another synthesis of yoga, the synthesis of the Tantric yoga. While that synthesis was developing, the Puranas continued the synthetic tendencies which were present in the Gita and developed a synthesis with increasing stress on the yoga of Divine Love. There were also other Vedantic systems of yoga, and each one of these systems reflected the synthesis of yoga of the Upanishads and the Gita, even though each one of them laid a special emphasis either on the power of knowledge or on the power of Divine Love, and these systems of synthesis often presented a scene of

conflict among themselves. That conflict has continued right up to the present time. In the Tantra, however, the synthesis that was attempted was in a certain way more bold and forceful than the synthesis of the Gita, although it was less subtle and spiritually profound. The Tantra seized upon the obstacles to the spiritual life and compelled them to become the means for a richer spiritual conquest so that the seeker could be enabled to embrace the whole of Life in the divine scope of the cosmic play of the Divine. In some directions it is more immediately rich and fruitful, for it brings forward into the foreground along with the divine knowledge, divine works an enriched devotion of divine Love, the secrets also of the Hatha Yoga and the Raja Yoga. Thus the Tantra seeks to use the body and mental askesis for the opening up of the divine life on all its planes. Moreover, the Tantra grasps at that idea of divine perfectibility of man, which was possessed by the Vedic Rishis but thrown into the background by the intermediate ages. In the Vedantic yoga which was developed by Sri Caitanya, a new element in the synthesis was added by means of which the psychic love for the divine consciousness could inundate the mind, life and the body.

In the nineteenth century, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda have provided a vast system of synthesis in the light of which the conflict of religions could find a helpful solution. The twentieth century presents a new synthesis that has been proposed in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. That synthesis has not been arrived at either by combination *en masse* or by successive practice.

The foundation of the new synthesis of yoga rests on the integrating tendencies of will, knowledge and love, which are the principal three divine powers in human nature; all

these three powers can be integrated, and the union of man with the divine in its integrality unites these three divine powers. There is an organic relationship between will, knowledge and love, and the true synthesis of yoga manifests this organic relationship. Knowledge is always the foundation and ultimate basis of integration; will is always subordinate to knowledge, and will, therefore, always seeks knowledge as its basis, and the effectivity of will attains certainty and unfailing victory only when it proceeds from knowledge. Even when will is utilised as a first initial instrument of yoga, it constantly strives to find its true basis in knowledge, and it is in knowledge that will and works of will fulfil themselves. That is why we have in the Gita the famous pronouncement: *sarvaṃ karmākhilam jñāne parisamāpyati* (Bhagavadgita, IV.33), — works fulfil themselves in knowledge. Divine love is always the crown, having achieved which, nothing more remains to be achieved. But divine love attains its fullness only by the luminosity of knowledge, and its basic security and foundation rest on knowledge. These three powers assert their natural and organic interrelationship in the true synthesis of yoga when knowledge is sought after as the basis, when will is sought after as an expression of knowledge and when divine love is sought after as the crown of yoga. One can begin, however, with the yoga of works and of will-power, or one can begin with knowledge as the way of access and line of contact, or else, one may begin with love as a starting-point; but as one proceeds on one of these three paths, the three paths begin to converge upon each other, and ultimately the three paths get united. In the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, there is a constant striving to unite the three powers, and the seeker is counselled to avoid

or throw away the misunderstanding and mutual deprecation which is often found between the followers of the three paths.

It has been seen in the history of yoga that even in some of those systems, which are synthetic in character; there are claims of the superiority of one of the chosen paths over the other paths. It is, for instance, claimed by some that even when works and love are proper means to be adopted along with the path of knowledge, the ultimate deliverance of liberation comes only by knowledge; works may lead, as it is sometimes said, to liberation but cannot give liberation; similarly, it is said that the divine love is helpful up to a certain point, but since the path of love or devotion involves the duality between seeker and the object to be attained, and since the liberation can come only by identity, the relationship of love or devotion has ultimately to be given up in order to achieve the object of the path of knowledge. On the other hand, some of those who follow the path of devotion often seem to look down upon those who follow the path of knowledge or works; even when they permit some place to these two powers of knowledge and works in some kind of synthesis, the Divine Love is considered to be the power of ultimate deliverance. There is also a similar tendency towards those who follow the path of works. There is an intensity of love, as there is intensity of knowledge, and in that state of intensity, works seem something outward and distracting. But in the new synthesis of yoga, works appear to be outward and distracting only when one has not found oneness of will and consciousness and when one has not yet seen the being of the Beloved Lord working tirelessly for the establishment of the highest welfare of all creatures. In the real synthesis, works become the very power of

expression of knowledge and the very outpouring of love. Sooner than later, the three paths grow as complements of each other, and they meet in perfect synthesis where consciousness and knowledge will be found always to be the foundation and culmination of works and for ever the secret basis for the perfection of works, where love will be always the crown of all endeavour of knowledge and works and where knowledge will perfect love and love will perfect knowledge, and they will both lend their powers for perfection and accomplishment of God's work in the world. The essential and the inalienable relationship between knowledge, will and delight will also determine the principle of the synthesis of yoga. It is that synthesis which, in Sri Aurobindo's view, has to serve the higher and the highest aims of the yoga of supramental perfection or the yoga of self-perfection. The supramental perfection implies a complete enjoyment and possession of the whole divine and spiritual nature; and it is complete lifting of the whole nature of man into its higher and highest power of divine and spiritual existence. Integrality becomes, in this context, the essential condition and content of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supramental Yoga.

If the aim of the yoga were to be only an escape from the world to God or to the inactive Brahman or world-negating Nirvana or Nihil, synthesis is unnecessary and a waste of time. But, as Sri Aurobindo points out, if our aim is to attain a complete and harmonious integration and also the transformation of our integral being into the terms of God-Existence, then the synthesis of yoga becomes indispensable.

Again, as Sri Aurobindo points out, an integral and synthetic yoga cannot be bound by any written or traditional

Shastra; for while it improves the knowledge received from the past, it seeks to organise it anew for the present and the future. Hence, an absolute liberty of experience and of the restatement of knowledge in new terms and new combinations is a necessary condition.

In the new synthesis of yoga, Sri Aurobindo provides for an infinite liberty in the receptive human soul. Sri Aurobindo points out that Swami Vivekananda had said that the perfect state of the essential unity of all religions would come when each man had his own religion, so that one can follow freely his relations with the Supreme. In the same way, Sri Aurobindo insists, one may say that perfection of the integral yoga will come when each individual is able to follow his or her own path of yoga, pursuing the development of his or her own nature in its upsurging towards that which transcends the nature. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "Freedom is the final law and the last consummation."

It has been contented that the contemporary humanity is passing through a crisis, and according to the latest records of yogic research, it can be said that this crisis can be resolved only by increasing the study and practice of the largest possible synthesis of yoga. It is for the seeker to determine whether this conclusion of yogic research meets the demand of his or her own quest. This book only seeks to contribute to his or her quest as a possible aid.

Supramental Supermanhood

One important conclusion that this book has put forward is that of supramental supermanhood, which is visualised as a new step in evolution. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who have presented this vision have made it clear that the

supramental supermanhood must not be confused with the past and the present ideas of supermanhood. The supramental supermanhood would mean the manifestation of divinity at a new critical point of development of the supermind which can serve as the new instrument of the Spirit. In recent times, Niétzsche has spoken of supermanhood, but when we examine the stuff and the qualities that characterise his idea of supermanhood, one feels in it the marks of some great but undivine magnitude of Asuric or Rakshasic ego. Sri Aurobindo takes a special care to distinguish the Nietzschean idea of supermanhood from his own idea of the divine supermanhood. Sri Aurobindo, while explaining this distinction, states as follows:

“...supermanhood in the mental idea consists of an overtopping of the normal human level, not in kind but in degree of the same kind, by an enlarged personality, a magnified and exaggerated ego, an increased power of mind, an increased power of vital force, a refined or dense and massive exaggeration of the forces of the human Ignorance; it carries also, commonly implied in it, the idea of a forceful domination over humanity by the superman. That would mean a supermanhood of the Nietzschean type; it might be at its worst the reign of the “blonde beast” or the dark beast or of any and every beast, a return to barbaric strength and ruthlessness and force: but this would be no evolution, it would be a reversion to an old strenuous barbarism. Or it might signify the emergence of the Rakshasa or Asura out of a tense effort of humanity to surpass and transcend itself, but in the wrong direction. A violent and turbulent exaggerated vital ego satisfying itself with a supreme tyrannous or anarchic strength of self-fulfilment would be the type of a Rakshasic supermanhood: but the giant, the ogre or devourer

of the world, the Rakshasa, though he still survives, belongs in spirit to the past; a larger emergence of that type would be also a retrograde evolution. A mighty exhibition of an overpowering force, a self-possessed, self-held, even, it may be, an ascetically self-restrained mind-capacity and life-power, strong, calm or cold or formidable in collected vehemence, subtle, dominating, a sublimation at once of the mental and vital ego, is the type of the Asura. But earth has had enough of this kind in her past and its repetition can only prolong the old lines; she can get no true profit for her future, no power of self-exceeding, from the Titan, the Asura: even a great or supernormal power in it could only carry her on larger circles of her old orbit. But what has to emerge is something much more difficult and much more simple; it is a self-realised being, a building of the spiritual self, an intensity and urge of the soul and the deliverance and sovereignty of its light and power and beauty, — not an egoistic supermanhood seizing on a mental and vital domination over humanity, but the sovereignty of the Spirit over its own instruments, its possession of itself and its possession of life in the power of the spirit, a new consciousness in which humanity itself shall find its own self-exceeding and self-fulfilment by the revelation of the divinity that is striving for birth within it. This is the sole true supermanhood and the one real possibility of a step forward in evolutionary Nature.”¹³

The supramental life that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have envisaged would be the life of unity, mutuality and harmony. The synthesis of yoga that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have put forward envisages that evolution in material nature is an evolution of being with consciousness and life as its two key-terms of power; the evolutionary process has

reached today at a point where the fullness of being, fullness of consciousness and fullness of life are struggling to manifest. This fullness will manifest at an early or later stage of the march of humanity. According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in spite of the problems and hurdles of the contemporary crisis, humanity will survive and arrive at the supramental manifestation at its crest of evolution and in due course of time, it would spread in larger and larger circle of humanity. This great hope which has been put forward has, as its basis, a colossal effort of yogic research and a vast store of knowledge that can be tested by anyone who cares and anyone who is filled with the highest aspiration to put forward the highest possible effort to test the acquired knowledge and to move forward by developing vaster efforts of yogic research.

Concept of Immortality

It would be useful, at this stage, to bring into focus, although very briefly, the theme of immortality. The word Immortality has been used in various systems of yoga, and one needs to have some precision as to what exactly is meant by this word. The earliest document of the synthesis of yoga, the Rig Veda, has spoken of the wisest forefathers who had discovered the path to immortality. When we try to understand what was the nature of the path to immortality and the nature of immortality that was attained, we find that the path consisted of the manifestation of the supramental truth by holding the truth-consciousness in the mind and diffusing it in all parts of the being (Rig Veda, I.71.3), and the state of immortality consisted of the attainment of the universalisation of the physical consciousness as a result of the visitation of the supramental consciousness (Rig Veda,

I.72.9). In the later developments of the Indian yoga, the word immortality appears to indicate a state of consciousness in which one realises one's identity or imperishable relationship with the immortality of the imperishable ultimate Spirit, which can be variously described as Brahman, Atman, Purusha, or Ishwara or the Supreme Transcendent. It is maintained that when one attains this realisation, one feels free from the sting of death. This realisation of immortality is sought to be attained by various alternative systems of yoga. The main process in these systems of yoga is that of withdrawal from identification with the consciousness that is riddled with the ego and with the limitations of the body, life and mind. There are, however, a few more composite systems of yoga where immortality is sought to be attained not only by withdrawal from the ego and from the life and mind and the body, but there are also processes that aim at enlargement of the powers of the mind and life and body to their maximum level of perfection; in some of these systems of yoga, there has been a vision of the attainment of perfection of the mind, life and the body to such an extent that they too can attain the state of deathlessness. It appears that attempts have been made to arrive at the bodily perfection and thus to attain the state of deathlessness of the body. However, the attainment of the immortality of the body is still considered to be impossible.

That the individual soul is immortal is acknowledged in a number of religions and systems of yoga, as a result of which survival of the soul after death is admitted and therefore life after death in one form or the other is also admitted. But mere survival after death can not be equated with the realisation of the immortality of the soul; it may

only mean continuation of life in other planes of existence or else travel of the soul in other planes of existence and rebirth or series of rebirth. In the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the individual soul, by the process of integral yoga, can be experienced as the eternal portion of the Supreme Spirit, and just as the immortality of the Supreme Spirit is an object of yogic realisation, the realisation of the immortality of the individual soul is also an object of yogic realisation.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who admitted and reworked all the great achievements of the past systems of yoga have confirmed the truth and validity of the realisation of the immortality of the individual soul, as also of the realisation of the identity or the union of the soul with the immortal Supreme Spirit.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have distinguished between the realisation of the essential immortality of the Supreme Spirit and that of the temporal immortality of the psychic being; they have also acknowledged the possibility of the immortality of the mind, life, and body, if certain conditions are fulfilled. Immortality of the mind can come about only if the mental being of the individual comes to be so powerfully individualised on the surface consciousness and so much with the inner mind and inner mental Purusha and at the same time so open plastically to the progressive action of the Infinite that the soul no longer needs to dissolve the old form of mind and create a new one in order to progress. Similarly, the vital being can also attain immortality, if it becomes similarly individualised and integrated and at the same time becomes open on the surface consciousness to the inner vital Purusha and to the progressive action of the Infinite. The wall between the inner

self and the outer individuality would have broken down. The immortality of the mental being and the vital being would arrive at a continuous progressive expression of the soul; the permanent mental and vital being from within, the mental and vital representatives of the immortal psychic entity would govern the life. The mental personality and the life-personality would then subsist without dissolution from birth to birth; they would be in this sense immortal, persistently surviving, continuous in their sense of identity. But the immortality of the mental and vital being would still not ensure the survival of the physical body. The physical being could only endure, if by some means its physical causes of decay and destruction could be overcome and at the same time it could be made so plastic and progressive in its structure and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person. The physical being must be able to keep the pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality, its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental of our spiritual existence. The immortality of the mind, life and the body, which can be termed as a triple immortality, would fulfil on the physical plane the realisation of the essential immortality of the Spirit and that of the immortality of the psychic being or soul; but even then, as Sri Aurobindo points out:

“The true immortality would still be the eternity of the Spirit; the physical survival would only be relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the Spirit’s victory here over Death and Matter.”¹⁴

It may be instructive to observe that the discovery of the Supermind (Truth-Consciousness or *ṛta-cit*) was of capital

importance in the yoga of the Veda, as it has been in the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In the Vedic yoga, the method consisted of the ascent to the Supermind as also of the descent of the Supermind; in the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, too, the method has been the same, but it underlined the Gita's method of self-surrender and applied it in fullness, as a result of which the descent of the Supermind in the physical consciousness could result in fixing the Supermind in the mind of the cells of the body, which is the precondition of the attainment of the immortality of the body. The Vedic immortality was the attainment of the universalisation of the physical consciousness by the method of the ascent to and the resulting descent of the Supermind; but this universalisation is not enough for physical immortality, although it is a necessary pre-requisite. After the attainment of the universalisation of the physical consciousness, much remains to be done, — and it is that difficult process that has been carried out and it is only when the Supermind gets *fixed* by full descent in the physical consciousness as a permanent step in the evolutionary process that is what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have envisaged as the Divine Body can be gradually constructed. It is that Divine Body which will have the power of the physical immortality, — the immortality that is terminable at will, — a temporal sign of the spirit's victory in the physical world over Death and Matter.

Synthesis of Science and Spirituality

We speak today of the need of the synthesis of science and spirituality. This need is promised to be fulfilled by the new synthesis of yoga that is developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. And this synthesis of yoga can be properly

understood both in its significance and fullness when we study the history of the synthesis of yoga, an outline of which has been sought to be presented in this book. There are two sections of humanity that are likely to study more readily the history of the synthesis of yoga, — in particular the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, — with the highest degree of earnestness. These are: seekers who are wedded to scientific knowledge and scientific method and the seekers who are wedded to the methodical quest of psychic, spiritual and supramental realisation. There are today an increasing number of scientists who have begun to open themselves, without abandoning their scientific rigour of quest, to the insights and illuminations that come to them from the spiritual seekers and spiritual quest; and there are also increasing number of those who are keen to develop scientific and illumined synthesis of science and spirituality. It may even be said that the theme of the synthesis of science and spirituality is a most important theme of the quest of our times. Fortunately, yoga has been developed in India as science, and yogic methods have, as has been noted elsewhere, something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of natural forces of electricity or of steam to the operations of steam and of electricity. These methods have been formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant results. Fortunately, too, the Indian systems of yoga and the history of the development of these systems have, from time to time, maintained precise records. In the case of the latest synthesis of yoga, the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, there are two valuable accounts available to us. These are: Sri Aurobindo's *'Record of Yoga'*, and thirteen volumes of the

account of the yogic experiments and realisations of the Mother in '*Mother's Agenda*'. It can be said that these records can successfully stand the rigorous tests that can legitimately be applied in regard to the methods as also in regard to the results that have been achieved. Considering this work, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have advanced the theme of synthesis of science and spirituality to a high degree of maturity. There are, indeed, many levels of proofs, and during the course of the progression of the research conducted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, we find various levels of proofs, philosophical, experiential and even scientific which transcend the limits of subjectivity and even of the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity. It is for each one to make his or her demands of proof, and, in the meantime, to continue to sharpen and sensitise oneself to higher and higher degrees of consciousness. In the pursuit of truth, there has to be no compulsion, and one has to demand the proofs that one needs. In the records of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, one will find, it may be said quite confidently, the answer that one needs for the next stage of development. Nonetheless, the rigour of the demand of proof can not be minimised, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have aimed at working out the fabrication of the Divine Body, the proof of which will be found when that task is accomplished; that proof will be clinching even for the one who demands material evidence of the supramental manifestation. Since the fabrication of the Divine Body is a matter of further evolution, there is the need to continue the tasks of research; these tasks of research will ultimately integrate science and spirituality at their highest level of perfection. In this context, it can be said that the summit of the synthesis of science and spirituality has not yet been

reached. The book of Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is an open book, which demands further tasks of research.

This book has presented important landmarks of the experiences and experiments of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; the aim has been to present only a few glimpses, which might invite the reader to go back to the original records. Considering that humanity is passing today through an evolutionary crisis, and considering that the theme of the synthesis of yoga, as presented in this book, is directly relevant to the solutions of the problems of this crisis, and considering, further, that evolution, as presented by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is striving towards the mutation of human species, which is bound to be the most important preoccupation of humanity of today and of tomorrow, it is hoped that this book will be found useful to all pilgrims of progress who aim at untiring pursuit of the highest and the best.

Notes and References

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Socrates

Nachiketas

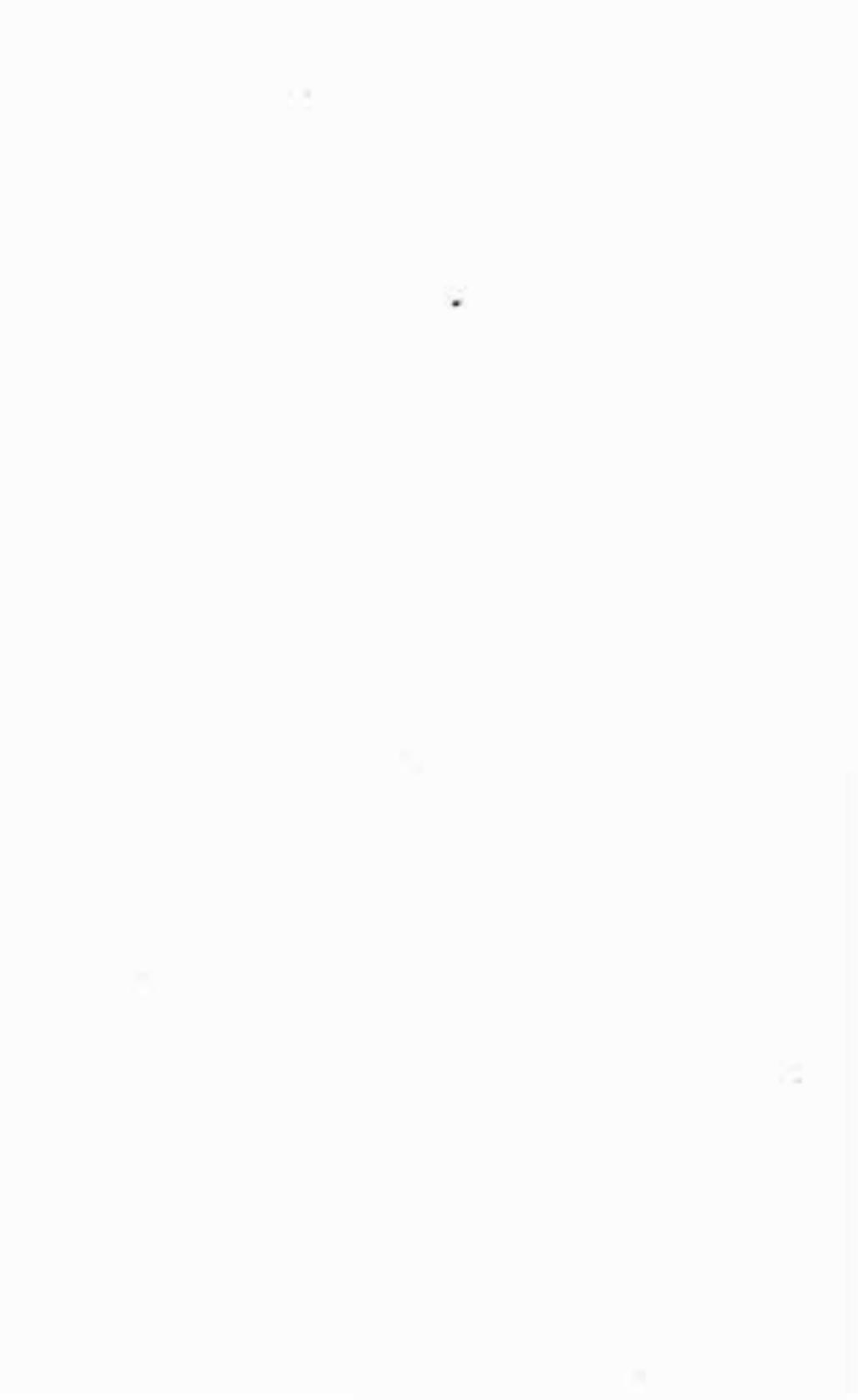
Sri Rama

Compiled by Kireet Joshi

On Materialism

Towards Universal Fraternity

Let us Dwell on Human Unity



The new synthesis of yoga that has been developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is not a culmination of the past yogic effort and aim and, it is based upon new yogic knowledge of the meaning and aim of life. Spirit and Matter are synthesized in the new synthesis for purposes of the fullest manifestation of spirit in Matter and of establishing divine life on the earth. This yoga, therefore, does not reject life but transforms life so as to bring out fully the hidden Spirit behind all manifestations of material life.

This yoga has also been termed as evolutionary yoga and as the supramental yoga. It examines critically the scientific theory of evolution and develops a new spiritual theory of evolution and envisages supramental supermanhood as the next stage of the evolutionary process. That man is a transitory being and that man will be followed by superman, — supramental superman, is one of the most radical visions that is neither speculative nor imaginative, but which is founded on sure knowledge derived from authentic scientific knowledge gained through methods of yoga.