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## From the Editor's Desk..

### Sri Aurobindo and His Dreams

India's rebirth and Sri Aurobindo's 72nd birthday on 15th August 1947 were not a mere coincidence. Sri Aurobindo took it as "the sanction and a seal of the Divine Force" that guided his steps in his life. He gave a message to the country at the request of the All India Radio, Tiruchirappalli. It is a message that gives the essence of his aims, ideals and dreams.

The first dream was to see a "free and united India." Unfortunately, India was free but not united. Sri Aurobindo did not accept the division as "settled for ever." He foresaw that "the partition must go" and reunion will be of Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan into a confederation. The political condition of all these countries today may give us a hopeless vision and make us feel that what Sri Aurobindo envisioned is too far. However, it is a vision of a yogi. It may take some time but happen it will.

The second dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the Asiatic countries. If we go back a few decades we may observe that most of the colonised Asiatic nations have now gained freedom. The fourth one was for the spiritual gift of India to the world. Indeed Indian wisdom has gone far and wide across every corner of the world in the name of a religion or philosophy or a cult. However, when the United Nations Organisations accepted the proposal of celebrating the International Yoga Day, it was in a way a reinforcement of what India has been giving to the world. Her spiritual wealth has always been the source of inspiration for the entire world, now tangibly so.

What is of great significance is Sri Aurobindo's third dream – a World-Union. It may face tremendous difficulties and even a "catastrophe may intervene" but the "final result is sure." "Human imbecility and "stupid selfishness" may delay it but will not prevent it. We have seen many attempts towards various unions and even world unions and have seen them fail. However, we are moving forward with a trial and error method because through these errors, humanity learns and moves forward in consciousness. World unity can only come in a harmonious atmosphere not per force. Willy-nilly the world is moving towards it through different permutations and combinations. Though it may yet take some time for this dream of Sri Aurobindo to become a reality.

The fifth dream is a step in human evolution that would culminate in a new race that would bring solutions to all the human problems that have vexed it since time immemorial. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked towards the manifestation of this dream incessantly. They have carved the sunlit path to the new race and we are only to see it happen in due time. The right time has not yet to come on the physical plane. Humanity has to get ready to be superseded by another race, the reign of reason has to give way to intuition and higher faculties of perception. It is only then that new race can be expected to manifest on earth.

Even though a few dreams are still on their way, but the world forces are conspiring for their manifestation. Whether or not in our life-time, but we can surely see the footfalls in the near future of humanity.

Ananda Reddy

# TRUTH



(Source: Internet)

The earth will enjoy a lasting and living peace only when men understand that they must be truthful even in their international dealings.

O Lord, it is for this perfect truthfulness that we aspire.

The Mother

1945

## China, Japan and India

### A Complilation

*Sri Aurobindo*

a) It is significant of the tendencies of the twentieth century that all its great and typical events should have occurred no longer as in the last few centuries in Europe, but in Asia. The Russo-Japanese war, the Chinese Revolution, the constitutional changes in Turkey & Persia and last but most momentous the revival however indeterminate as yet of the soul of India, are the really significant events of the young century. In Europe except in its one Asiatic corner there has been no event of corresponding magnitude & importance. The abortive orgy of revolutionary fury in Russia, the growth of enormous strikes, the failure of the peace movement, the increase of legislation stamped with the pressure of a materialistic Socialism, although they may hold in themselves germs of greater things, are so far mere indistinct material symptoms of disorganisation & a disease vainly doctored with palliatives, not events of a definite movement of new birth & regeneration. The importance of this new tendency lies in the fact that great events in Europe, even when they are outwardly spiritual, have usually an intellectual or social trend & significance, but great events in Asia have even when they are outwardly intellectual, social or political a spiritual significance. Therefore when Asia once more becomes the theatre of the world's chief events, it is a sure sign that some great spiritual revolution, perhaps a great age of spirituality is preparing for humanity. (CWSA 12: 394)

b) The awakening of Asia is the fact of the twentieth century, and in that awakening the lead has been given to the Mongolian races of the Far East. In the genius, the patriotic spirit, the quick imitative faculty of Japan; in the grand deliberation, the patient thoroughness, the irresistible organization of China, Providence found the necessary material force which would meet the European with his own weapons and outdo him in that science, strength and ability which are his peculiar pride. The political instinct of the European races has enabled them to understand the purpose of the Almighty in the awakening of the Mongol. A terror is in their hearts, a palsy has come upon their strength, and with blanched lips they watch every movement of the two Eastern giants, each wondering when his turn will come to feel the sword of the Mikado or what will happen when China, the Titan of the world, shall have completed her quiet, steady, imperturbable preparation. The vision of a China organized, equipped, full of the clang of war and the tramp of armed men, preparing to surge forth westwards is the nightmare of their dreams. And another terror of economic invasion, of the Mongol swamping Europe with cheap labour and stifling the industries of Europe adds a fresh poignancy to the apprehensions which convulse the West. Hence the panic in America, in Australia, in Africa, the savage haste to expel the Asiatic at any cost before the military strength of China is sufficiently developed to demand entrance for her subjects with the sword emphasizing her demand. This is the Yellow Peril, and every European knows in his heart of hearts that it is only a question of the time necessary for his vision to translate itself into the waking world. But one thing the European has not yet perceived and that is that the Mongolian is no wild adventurer to go filibustering to Australia or bombard with his siege-guns San Francisco or New York before Asia is free. The first blow given by the Mongolian

fell upon Russia because she stood across the Asiatic continent barring the westward surge of his destiny. The second blow will fall on England because she holds India.

The position of India makes her the key of Asia. She divides the Pagan Far East from the Mahomedan West, and is their meeting-place. From her alone can proceed a force of union, a starting-point of comprehension, a reconciliation of Mahomedanism and Paganism. Her freedom is necessary to the unity of Asia. Geographically, she occupies an impregnable position of strength commanding the East of Asia as well as the West, from which as from a secure fortress she can strike the nations of the Persian or the Chinese world. Such a position held by an European Power means a perpetual menace to the safety of Asia. It will therefore be the first great enterprise of a Chino-Japanese alliance to eject the English from India, and hold her in the interests of Asiatic freedom and Asiatic unity. This necessity of India's position is one which neither the English nor the Mongolian can escape. No treaties, no attempts to reconcile conflicting interests will stand against the secret and inexorable necessity which forces nations to follow not the dictates of prudence or diplomacy, but the fiat of their environment. When the inevitable happens and the Chinese armies knock at the Himalayan gates of India and Japanese fleets appear before Bombay harbour, by what strength will England oppose this gigantic combination? Her armies which took two years to overcome the opposition of forty thousand untrained farmers in the Transvaal? Her fleets which have never fought a battle with a trained foe since Trafalgar? They will be broken to pieces by the science and skill of the Mongolian. And the key of Asia will pass into Mongolian hands and the strength of India, the Sikh and the Rajput and the Mahratta, the force of Mahomedan valour and the rising energy of new nations in Bengal and Madras will all be at the service and under the guidance of the Mongolian who will not fail to use them as England has failed, letting them run to waste, but will hammer them into a sword of strength for the fulfilment of his mission, the extrusion of the European from Asia, Africa, Australia, the smiting down of European pride, the humiliation of Western statecraft, power and civilisation and its subordination to the lead of the dominant Asiatic. (CWSA 7: 989-991)

c) In Asia a more perilous situation has arisen, standing sharply across the way to any possibility of a continental unity of the peoples of this part of the world, in the emergence of Communist China. This creates a gigantic bloc which could easily englobe the whole of Northern Asia in a combination between two enormous Communist Powers, Russia and China, and would overshadow with a threat of absorption South-Western Asia and Tibet and might be pushed to overrun all up to the whole frontier of India, menacing her security and that of Western Asia with the possibility of an invasion and an overrunning and subjection by penetration or even by overwhelming military force to an unwanted ideology, political and social institutions and dominance of this militant mass of Communism whose push might easily prove irresistible. In any case, the continent would be divided between two huge blocs which might enter into active mutual opposition and the possibility of a stupendous world-conflict would arise dwarfing anything previously experienced: the possibility of any worldunion might, even without any actual outbreak of hostilities, be indefinitely postponed by the incompatibility of interests and ideologies on a scale which would render their inclusion in a single body hardly realisable. (CWSA 25: 590-91)

# **The Chinese Betrayal, Early Warnings Unheeded Lessons from Sardar Patel and Sri Aurobindo**

*Sachidananda Mohanty*

## **Prologue**

On 28 March 1963, Sudhir Ghosh, the eminent Indian emissary of Gandhiji, and later of Jawaharlal Nehru, met with the President of the United States, John F Kennedy in the White House and shared the last testament of Sri Aurobindo [about the Chinese invasion of Tibet] that had appeared in Mother India on 11 November 1950 before Sri Aurobindo's passing on 5 December 1950:

The basic significance of Mao's Tibetan adventure is to advance China's frontier right down to India and stand poised there to strike at the right moment and with right strategy, unless India precipitately declares herself on the side of the Communist bloc... We must burn it into our minds that the primary motive of Mao's attack on Tibet is to threaten India as soon as possible.

As Ghosh records: "The President read the words of Sri Aurobindo's last testament several times over and said:

"Surely there must be some typing mistake here. The date must have been 1960 and not 1950. You mean to say that a man devoted to meditation and contemplation, sitting in one corner of India, said this about the intentions of Communist China..."

Similarly, in his last letter to the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, dated 7 Nov.1950, Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister wrote:

While our western and non-western threat to security is still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time, after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously...In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with communist China in the north and in the north-east, a communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.

It is time we heeded the warnings of the two great statesmen- visionaries of India, issued in 1950. We must recover the spirit of strength and resilience they had urged for the defense of our motherland.

## **Part – 1**

### **The Crisis Today and National Amnesia**

It is often said that 'those who forget history are condemned to repeat it'. The truth of this adage is seldom realized. With the brutal and savage killings of unarmed Indian soldiers by the death squads of the People's Liberation Army,[PLA] and the brazen claims of China over the entire Galwan valley of Ladakh and other vital territories that historically belonged to India, we seem to have come full circle from the debacle of 1962 when the nation had been given a deadly body blow by Chinese aggression in the then NEFA [now Arunachal Pradesh] and other areas currently under the gaze of Chinese expansionism. Despite the



passage in time, history seems to repeat itself. What is the way out? Could some of the earlier missing narratives help in our understanding as a new India is emerging?

### **Axiomatic wisdom**

It has become near axiomatic in most circles today that war and even limited wars, can never be the answer to conflicts among nuclear-armed nations, and diplomacy and dialogues are the only effective antidotes to war. The former U.S. Ambassador to India John K. Galbraith, was fond of using President John Kennedy's oft cited phrase : 'Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.' While self-blame may not be the answer, we can ill afford complacency and absence of genuine introspection, based on a sense of history that could take us out of the current impasse. In this context, it is worth recalling pages from Indian history dating back to 1950.

### **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**

Sardar Patel's last letter to Pandit Nehru regarding the Chinese invasion of Tibet November, 1950. In his letter dated 7 November 1950 before his passing on 15 December of the same year, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the then Home Minister, wrote to the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, cautioning him and the nation about the looming threat from China which went beyond the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Citing evidence from Intelligence and showing a remarkable sense of geopolitical understanding, he held out a scenario that he thought would be catastrophic to the safety and security of the entire North East of India including Assam on account of Mao's design on Tibet as a first step in his expansionist plans.

*[Source: <http://www.friendsoftibet.org/sardarpatel.html> accessed on 23.6.2020]*

He wrote:

My Dear Jawaharlal,

Ever since my return from Ahmedabad and after the cabinet meeting the same day which I had to attend at practically 15 minutes' notice and for which I regret I was not able to read all the papers, I have been anxiously thinking over the problem of Tibet and I thought I should share with you what is passing through my mind.

Although not in the best of health, the Home Minister showed an amazing alertness of mind and political acumen. He cited essentially nine sound reasons as he saw them, including the appreciation of the military and intelligence position, an appraisal of the strength of our forces, the question of the Chinese entry into the U.N. especially in the context of its active participation in the Korean War, measurement of internal security in the border areas, improvement of our communication, road, rail, air and wireless, in these areas and with the frontier outposts, the future of our mission at Lhasa and the trading post of Gyangtse and Yatung and the forces which India had in operation in Tibet to guard the trade routes, and finally, the policies in regards to McMahon line.

Patel drew the following conclusions which seem to have been largely ignored given the subsequent course of events. His views and advice do not seem to have outlived his own times. He added significantly:

In the background of this, we have to consider what new situation now faces us as a

result of the disappearance of Tibet, as we knew it, and the expansion of China almost up to our gates. Throughout history we have seldom been worried about our north-east frontier. The Himalayas have been regarded as an impenetrable barrier against any threat from the north. We had friendly Tibet which gave us no trouble. The Chinese were divided. They had their own domestic problems and never bothered us about frontiers. In 1914, we entered into a convention with Tibet which was not endorsed by the Chinese. We seem to have regarded Tibetan autonomy as extending to independent treaty relationship. Presumably, all that we required was Chinese counter-signature.

Patel was pragmatic enough to note that the Chinese would have a radically different perception of boundary divisions based on colonial rule especially agreements signed by the British with Tibet, Burma and the other political units of India's North East. He therefore argued that:

We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they [the Chinese] will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past. That throws into the melting pot all frontier and commercial settlements with Tibet on which we have been functioning and acting during the last half a century. China is no longer divided. It is united and strong. All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east, we have on our side of the frontier a population ethnologically and culturally not different from Tibetans and Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with its affinities to the Tibetans or Chinese have all the elements of the potential trouble between China and ourselves.

Patel was equally perceptive about the expansionist nature of international communism. Soviet Union during World War II was a glaring example of this trend. He went on to declare:

Recent and bitter history also tells us that communism is no shield against imperialism and that the communists are as good or as bad imperialist as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only covered the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include the important part of Assam. They have their ambitions in Burma also. Burma has the added difficulty that it has no McMahon line round which to build up even the semblance of an agreement. Chinese irredentism and communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the western powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous. In the guise of ideological expansion lie concealed racial, national or historical claims. The danger from the north and north-east, therefore, becomes both communist and imperialist. [Emphasis added]

At this point, Patel made a distinction between the threat from Pakistan vis a vis the newly emerging threat from China. It is this new threat, a greater menace, that needs our attention, he argued:

While our western and non-western threat to security is still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time, after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously.

Our defence measures have so far been based on the calculations of superiority over Pakistan. In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with communist China in the north and in the north-east, a communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.

After arguing out his case, in conclusion, Patel made the following urgent suggestions to Pandit Nehru:

These are some of the questions which occur to my mind. It is possible that a consideration of these matters may lead us into wider question of our relationship with China, Russia, America, Britain and Burma. This, however would be of a general nature, though some might be basically very important, i.e., we might have to consider whether we should not enter into closer association with Burma in order to strengthen the latter in its dealings with China. I do not rule out the possibility that, before applying pressure on us, China might apply pressure on Burma. With Burma, the frontier is entirely undefined and the Chinese territorial claims are more substantial. In its present position, Burma might offer an easier problem to China, and, therefore, might claim its first attention.

I suggest that we meet early to have a general discussion on these problems and decide on such steps as we might think to be immediately necessary and direct, quick examination of other problems with a view to taking early measure to deal with them.

Yours,

Vallabhbhai Patel

The political knowledge of the region and the astuteness of analysis that Patel demonstrated in the letter was simply masterly. As always, he was futuristic in his approach to the issues at hand and agonized about India's territorial integrity. To say that his views are dated and are to be seen in his context, would be to have blinkers in our eyes regarding the current crisis and the insufficiency of existing approaches.

It is not clear what steps if any Nehru and the Govt. of India took before or after the passing of Patel on 15 December 1950, but later history would prove the folly of ignoring his basic warning to the nation. Despite the later adulation to the Sardar, his China warnings seem to have been missing in the policy domains. The role of the military and civilian top brass including the Defence Minister Mr V.K. Krishna Menon during the 1962 crisis has been well recorded and do not need any repetition here.

## **Part-2**

### **Sri Aurobindo's Last Testament on the Invasion of Tibet: 11 November 1950**

In an uncanny manner, in the same month of November, within a gap of only four days, on 11 November, 1950, another great Indian nationalist and world-visionary Sri Aurobindo, sent out into the public domain, his last political testament through an approved editorial of his 'own paper' Mother India whose editor was K.D.Sethna. Sethna would later testify this fact as follows: 'Not only were my editorials written under his inner inspirations; they were also sent to him for approval. Only when his 'Yes' was wired to us did we plunge

into publication.’[ K.D.Sethna, *India and the World Scene*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society,1997 From the ‘Introduction.’]

### **Abiding political interest till the very end**

It is worth noting that unlike many other Indian spiritual thinkers, Sri Aurobindo never lost interest in the nation and the world from the political point of view. This is borne out by the many statements he made from time to time on national events, and the letters he wrote such as the letter to C.R.Das[1922] and Joseph Baptista,[1920] his Messages during World War II,[1940-43], Messages to Stafford Cripps during the Cripps Mission,[1942] the Wavell Plan[1945], the Cabinet Mission Plan,[1946] the Independence Day Message,[1947] Message after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi,[1948], Letter on the Kashmir Problem[ 1949] Message sent after the outbreak of the Korean War.[1950], Letter regarding the Nehru-Liaquat Pact and After[1950],On the Communist Movement [1950] and so on.

### **Sudhir Ghosh shares Sri Aurobindo’s Last Testament with President John F. Kennedy**

On 28 March 1963, Sudhir Ghosh, the Indian Member of Parliament and famous emissary of Gandhiji and later of Jawaharlal Nehru, met with the President of the United States John F Kennedy in the White House and shared the last testament of Sri Aurobindo that had appeared in *Mother India* on 11 November 1950 before Sri Aurobindo’s passing on 5 December 1950:

As Ghosh records in his memoir, the President read with attention Sri Aurobindo’s testament:

The basic significance of Mao’s Tibetan adventure is to advance China’s frontier right down to India and stand poised there to strike at the right moment and with right strategy, unless India precipitately declares herself on the side of the Communist bloc. But to go over to Mao and Stalin in order to avert their wrath is not in any sense a saving gesture. It is a gesture spelling the utmost ruin to all our ideals and aspirations.

Sri Aurobindo’s views on totalitarian Communism was an established fact reflected in his letters and socio-political writings. Freedom, he declared, was indispensable for human progress.

What then is the way out in the crisis in Tibet? The editorial continued:

The gesture that can save is to take a firm line with China, denounce openly her nefarious intentions, stand without reservations by the USA and make every possible arrangement consonant with our self-respect to facilitate an American intervention in our favour, and, what is still of greater moment, an American prevention of Mao’s evil design in India. Militarily, China is almost ten times as strong as we are, but India as the spearhead of an American defence of democracy can easily halt Mao’s mechanized millions.

After citing the reasons in political and military terms, the editorial raised the discourse to a higher moral and spiritual level; it saw the responsibility as civilizational and concluded in the following words:

And the hour is upon us of constituting ourselves such a spearhead and saving not

only our own dear country, but also South-East Asia whose bulwark we are. We must burn it into our minds that the primary motive of Mao's attack on Tibet is to threaten India as soon as possible. [Emphasis added]

[Sudhir Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2008, pp.277-78. First published in USA, by Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967. Also see, *Sri Aurobindo: A Contemporary Reader* by Sachidananda Mohanty, Routledge, 2008; rpt. 2016, pp.221-222 ]

Ghosh continues:

The President read the words of Sri Aurobindo's last testament several times over and said: 'Surely there must be some typing mistake here. The date must have been 1960 and not 1950. You mean to say that a man devoted to meditation and contemplation, sitting in one corner of India, said this about the intentions of Communist China...

He was somewhat shocked. 'So, there you are,' said the President. 'One great Indian, Nehru, showed you the path of non-alignment between China and America, and another great Indian Aurobindo, showed you another way of survival. The choice is up to the people of India.

Earlier in the meeting Ghosh had shared with the President, Nehru's letter, and this is how Ghosh records the reaction of Kennedy who was frankly quite indignant:

The President read it slowly and carefully and ruefully remarked: 'He [Nehru] cannot sacrifice non-alignment, eh? Are the people of India non-aligned between Communist China and the United States? I don't believe that anybody in India is non-aligned between China and the United States—except of course the Communists and their fellow travellers.' Then some thing fell from his lips which was perhaps unintentional. He indignantly said that only a few months earlier when Mr. Nehru was overwhelmed by the power of Communist China he made desperate appeal to him for air protection, and non-alignment or no non-alignment, the President had to respond. He added sarcastically that Mr Nehru's conversion lasted only a few days. He was impressed to see the speed with which the Prime Minister swung back to his original position with regard to the United States. [Gandhi's Emissary, p.276.]

Today as we keep wrestling with the question of the Chinese intrusions into the Indian territory, more than five decades down the line, and their growing demands and claims for our lands, it is worth recalling the two forgotten chapters from Indian history in the 1950.

### **Epilogue: Nehru, Tibet, America and the India- China War of 1962**

Despite being a watershed moment in the nation's history, the records of the 1962 War, seen from the Indian side, are safely locked up in classified files. The Top secret T.B. Henderson Brooks and P.S. Bhagat Report [Henderson Brooks- Bhagat Report in short] is yet to see the light of day. [Excerpts from this top-secret review can be found at [www.indiandefencereview.com](http://www.indiandefencereview.com), [www.indiatoday.com](http://www.indiatoday.com) and [www.nevillemaxwell.com](http://www.nevillemaxwell.com)] What we have instead is Neville Maxwell's somewhat erroneously titled *India's China War*. New Delhi: Nataraj, 2013. which pins the blame unfairly on the Indian side for Nehru's forward policy.

We may meanwhile read Bruce Riedel's excellent book based on the declassified documents from the US Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA]: *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA and the Sino- Indian War*, Harper Collins, 2016, [First published in USA by Brookings Institution Press, 2015] to realize the prophetic nature of Sri Aurobindo's last testament in *Mother India*, and Sardar Patel's early warnings. For, we

learn, as indicated in the extracts from Ghosh and Bruce Riedel, cited above, that towards the end of the '62 war, Indian and American sides had hammered out a secret military agreement for providing American air cover and the supply of armaments to Indian military during the 1962 crisis.

As Nehru argued in a top-secret message to Kennedy in 1962, [while asking effectively for roughly 350 combat aircraft and crews with matching personnel, radar and logistical support for the operations], the issue was 'not merely the survival of India, but the survival of free and independent Government in the whole of this sub-continent or in Asia.' He added that India would 'spare no effort until the threat posed by Chinese expansionist and aggressive militarism to freedom and independence is completely eliminated.' [U.S. Department of State Outgoing Telegram for Am embassy, New Delhi 2167, November 19, 1962. John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum: India; subjects: Nehru correspondence, November 1962:11-19. Quoted in Riedel, p.138.]

However, the Chinese abruptly ended the war on 19 November and declared an armistice. They had launched attacks in the West (Aksai Chin) and East (Northeast Frontier Agency) on 20 October 1962. Despite the protests by Ayub Khan and Pakistan, the American logistical support to India continued especially with regard to the raising of the new Mountain Divisions of the Indian Army, a relationship that existed most fruitfully during the Kennedy Administration. More could have been expected had he continued in office and not been tragically assassinated.

It is time we reminded ourselves of the prophetic words of Sardar Patel and Sri Aurobindo as we face renewed threats across the Himalayas. It is true the situation today is different from the one in 1950 or 60s. And yet the validity of the lesson remains: the firmness with which both spoke regarding national security has not lost its relevance. Even as we seek to avoid war and seek all avenues, diplomatic, political, economic, administrative and logistic; we must come together with like-minded groups and nations, establish partnership in the neighbourhood, across the Atlantic, the EU, the Asia Pacific regions, and the UN. Indeed, we must stand firm and resolute on our borders and recall the words of Sri Aurobindo to defend the nation with utmost strength and resilience.

As one of the editorials approved by Sri Aurobindo in a related context had said: 'There are certain values that have to be upheld and no dread of consequences should unnerve us... But, if we are brave and far-seeing, there may not be this war...'

*[K.D.Sethna, India and the World Scene, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society, 1997, pp. 249-50]*

*(Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty is widely published in the areas of British, American and postcolonial studies. He is the author of acclaimed volumes, including one on Indo-US Educational Exchange [Foreword by J.K.Galbraith]. Formerly he was the Senior Academic Fellow at the American Studies Research Centre [ASRC] Hyderabad. He is an honorary consultant to Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry. Views expressed are personal.)*

<https://tibetpolicy.net/the-chinese-betrayal-early-warnings-unheeded-lessons-from-sardar-patel-and-sri-aurobind/>

## **“He who chooses the Infinite, has been chosen by the Infinite”**

(A talk delivered on the occasion of Guru Purnima August 5, 2020)

V. Ananda Reddy

Good Morning. I wish you all an enlightened Guru Purnima day.

Today we shall talk about the significant role of the Guru in our lives in the light of Sri Aurobindo's explanations. “He who chooses the Infinite, has been chosen by the Infinite” says Sri Aurobindo. (CWS 23: 53) This can be considered as a Mahāvākya, the secret truth of the guru-shisya parampara – both on the human and Divine levels. Now, if this is the secret, then the shisya has first to make a personal effort that is called *utsāha* or enthusiasm in Sri Aurobindo's parlance. Why and for what should one make personal effort? First, there ought to be some kind of aspiration in the individual, some kind of an awakening to connect with the Divine, with the Supreme. Unless and until we have the first sign, the enthusiasm to go beyond ourselves with the help of a spiritual aspiration, this choosing by the infinite may not take place. So, there is first of all in the seeker a *utsāha*, an enthusiasm which should not be momentary -- ‘I would like to connect to the Divine or walk the path of spirituality’, it is more than that. We will start slowly thinking that somewhere we are not satisfied with this mundane life, there must be something more to it, something beyond it. And once we have this aspiration slowly mounting up in our being, there comes a point when we feel, as the biblical phrase says, “My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up”. It is this zeal for the Lord, this *utsāha*, this eagerness in the heart to attain the Divine which is very important. So, it is not a Sunday aspiration or Monday aspiration that we go to a Church or a Temple to pray and aspire. It is more or less a constant seeking, so that the flame of aspiration which is lit within, one day grows so big that it consumes us. That is the most important indication in our individual life. This fire, the flame within us, devours the ego and breaks out the limitations of this petty and narrow mould.

We are all under the servitude of our own ego. How do we get rid of that? There are many ways, many yogi's have shown various paths, but one of the best ones I feel, is to increase this flame of aspiration. That is the zeal for the Lord. This flame or zeal burns out all the undesirable elements. Sri Aurobindo says, the flame “devours our ego”.

As we go along the path, we see that we begin to understand that ‘I am not the doer’, that behind our actions and thoughts there is a greater force, a greater energy, a greater consciousness and that consciousness wants to work through us. So we have to open our mind and heart and body to let that higher force come in. There begins the second part of the personal effort. The first is to aspire and bring down that force, that energy within. At that time, that moment we begin to be an instrument of the Divine, instrument of God upon earth.

Then there comes the third stage where we become a completely transformed person, we become or feel like a dot, a point of the Divine upon earth. So these are the stages of the personal effort. And unless we make this self preparation we cannot expect the spark, the Divine, the infinite to choose us. It is perhaps a little tricky to understand this, sometimes we have to prepare ourselves pretty much so that we are ready to be instruments of the

Divine. Where does this spark come from? In fact, Sri Aurobindo mentions "because the Divine in you has given you that spark of aspiration we even begin to aspire". Otherwise, lakhs of people are there who never think of aspiration for the Divine. They are happy with their day-today life, happy with their earnings and spendings, and regular life, whatever be the problems they are facing. But there are very few who start asking questions about the purpose of life or this human birth and really begin any seeking beyond this ordinary life. Hence, this ignition, if I can say, is again done by the Divine. So, lucky are those who receive this ignition within. That's why we see millions of people barring a very few who respond to anything higher and deeper. This happens because it is the Divine who has chosen them. Chosen not out of partiality or anything, but because of their personal effort. So this is the first preparation where we say that you are beginning to prepare yourself for a higher life.

In this preparation we require 'the Shastra', that is the Divine word. It is not necessarily the written Shastra, which every religion, every country, every civilisation has. We have something in the written mode that is called the Shastra, the sacred works, the sacred books. But not all can read the Shastra, their high language, thought and imagery. However, there is a word from within and a word from without. Word from within is the Shastra, it is the inspiration. Most of us start with the word from outside - like something given or taught to us by our parents, or Guru or master. They teach us certain ideologies, certain way of living and thinking and we follow it - that is called the word from the past. These are the things that help us in our aspiration. Therefore, Shastra is something inner but it is also the outer mode. And we have seen great many examples of the outer mode of the Word. Take for example Sri Krishna. It seems he had received a Word from Rishi Gora, and also we have the famous example of Sri Ramakrishna, who actually didn't need anything from any outer level. He attained a central illumination by his own from internal effort. As all of us know his life what he attained by his inner contact with the Divine, the Divine Shakti. Yet he had connected with some tantric Gurus to receive illumination, to receive the Word. Of course, for him it was not necessary. It is as we say, a concession for the human beings, may be to show that we require a Word from the outer, an inspiration, a clarification.

We have a very good example in Sri Aurobindo himself. Sri Aurobindo had attained, since his arrival in India, a lot of higher spiritual experiences. When he went to Kashmir he had the experience of the Nirguna Brahman, on the bank river Narmada he had the experience of Kali. So after getting all this inner spiritual experience, he said that he didn't get those through any sadhana. But once he began his conscious sadhana, he got stuck somewhere. And there temporarily he asked the help of a Guru, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, who instructed him to silence his mind through meditation, which he got in three days. And after that he didn't require any help from any Guru. And yet this is an example to show that there is the necessity of this outer Word. Sometimes it happens in our day to-day life, we hear, or we have some experience, some suffering, some damage, some calamity in our life and then it becomes a life changing incident. So, there are many such happenings which are externally useful to push us towards our aspiration or to turn us towards an inner longing. So this support of Shastra, the outer word, or the established Shastras that we have are both important. For common human lot, I would say it is the word from outside which is



of greater importance because not many people can go within and find out the unwritten Shastra. Therefore, we see that the need of the Shastra is there.

In Sri Aurobindo's own yoga the Shastra is more within because he is one who doesn't believe in taking support from outside. The Shastra is within, the Guru, is within, the Guide is within, the Jagat Guru, the world teacher is within, but all this is for higher Yogis and sadhaks. I am speaking here of the common human beings who can be helped by the inner guru. To begin with, we are all in the common mundane level. In this respect sometimes reading spiritual books is necessary and beneficial. Sometimes, I hear people saying, I have read the whole of Swami Vivekananda's work and others, and yet I see that they didn't discover that turning point in their life. It can happen that way because we don't know at what level is our seeking. Mentally, we are seeking something but our inner soul may be seeking something else. That's why people go to different spiritual gurus, have different spiritual seekings and yet one is not sure to have arrived at the desired point or guru. But, when it clicks, we say, 'Wow, I have found it' and the inner journey begins. This is what we call the turning point. And this turning point should come on the deeper level. Not just the mind telling -- 'O! Yes, it is a nice place to go for a meditation camp or it's a nice book to read'. There should be something of the inner. Once this turning takes place it may take some time for the mind and the heart to completely wed themselves to this ideal. That is the role of the Shastra, to turn us within. First we see is *utsāha*, the enthusiasm, then there are grades and stages of our evolution but each of these steps is helped from outside or within, by written word or spoken word, the help by Shastra. Most important of all I would say is the need of a Guru.

Human beings are such that they need an outer form, an outer personality to help them in their day to-day needs. We may have read the Gita, Upanishads, Vedas or any other book on spirituality in India, but then when one wants to follow the path of yoga or sadhana one has the need of somebody hand holding them. This is an innate need. Even if we have been seeking ourselves, we are novices on the path, we need somebody to hold our hands. And that is the issue where India with its culture has provided a new light. This guide could be in many forms as exemplified by Indian culture. The first and the most intimate form in India we have is the Ishta Devata. That means we have our own preferred deity, god or goddess whom we worship. That is the first outer form. It may be because of your culture, religion or tradition we have this god or goddess and that is how the divine has provided us with a form. And most people are happy, contented to worship that form, asking that form for help. Help not only in the outer living but also for one's spiritual growth. Help in one's spiritual, personal, mundane efforts. That is what we call the Ishta Devata. We may have devotion for Lord Shiva, Nataraja, goddess Durga or any other form, but human beings always require somebody to hold their hand on the path of spirituality. That is where India has brought in this concept of the Avatar. It is one of the most unique concepts given by Indian spiritual culture which is the descent of the Divine in the human form. It is a peculiar concept, not many modern minds will realise or accept that there is something called Avatar. But who is this Avatar? The Supreme himself comes into this human body, what we say 'Avatarana', taking the human form. Why does he do so? Well, when he comes down in the human form, he takes upon himself all the issues, problems, diseases, virtues, strength, everything

that human beings have. This divine form takes upon himself all that is ours. This is where we need to understand the concept which has been introduced in the Bhagawad Gita so profoundly.

In the human form the Avatar shows us the path. Normally, what we have understood through the Bhagawad Gita is that the Avatar comes only at the time of adharma, when humanity, human beings are into trouble of being under the pressure of anti-divine forces. Whatever the form, it may be Ravana or anyone doesn't matter! But what we call an adharmic force is the one that compels humanity to go on the wrong path. So it has been given to us in the Gita, to establish a new dharma, not in the brand new sense, but to establish a dharma which is higher than the level in which people are living at that time. Let us remember that humanity can be saved only by a higher consciousness, a higher dharma than what they are following. It is not a matter of tinkering with the old consciousness. Avatar doesn't come to tinker, he comes to really replace the old with the new. And that is the purpose of the Avatar as given by Sri Krishna in the Gita. But there is something more to it. Had it been so then the Avatar could have stationed himself in the Himalayan mountains and done the job incognito, without the need to connect with the human society. He not only comes to establish a higher dharma, he also sees that human society can connect with him at an individual personal level. That is because he shows by his example what human beings ought to do; that's why the handholding. The Divine or the Avatar says, 'I have become human so that the human beings can become Divine.' There has to be a rapport, an exchange, an understanding. So the Divine says, 'I have taken your suffering, and pain so that you become more and more god-like and rise in your consciousness.' Basically this is the give and take between the Avatar and the human beings. That is of greatest importance and that is where the Avatar fulfils the human requirement for a personal contact with a godly human form. That is an Avatar, we have seen in our own lives, in our own culture, Sri Krishna or Christ or Buddha. They have come, shared with us not only higher dharma, but we have seen Sri Rama showing us the way as to what kind of an ethical life we should lead. Take all the incidents of Sri Rama's life, they are nothing but the way to live an ethical spiritual life. The details do not matter but if you analyse every incident in his life it will be a perfect example of that. He had come to establish that. May be Sri Krishna also, so we cannot say mentally that Sri Krishna should not have done this or that in Kurukshetra war. He doesn't go by mental intellectual laws or morality. He wants to show us a higher spiritual path which alone can salvage the problems of lower beings facing the Kurukshetra of life. So, there are levels and levels of Avatar who come again and again, to take humanity to a higher rung of consciousness. It is not what we said Sri Krishna telling us about Dharma, it is a higher rung of consciousness. That is the necessity of the avatar in two ways, one to establish a higher rung of consciousness, and the other is as if leaning down to humanity to take our hands to pull us up. And this pulling us up is what we call the path, the path that Sri Rama, Christ, Buddha, Sri Krishna have shown us. There are different paths, and each of these paths leads us to a certain level of consciousness. We feel at home to choose any path we like. Each one chooses one particular Avatar, Guru, deity, religious leader, all that follows a need of the inner human being. Why it is that we have Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Sri Ramana, Swami Vivekananda, all are there, but each one is

attracted to one form of the Avatar. That is because of our own level of evolution of our inner soul. You see each one's soul is at a particular level of evolution, depending on that we even choose the form of the Avatar. There is no question of comparison why this avatar and why not that Avatar. This is because there is an inner evolutionary need in each one of us.

On the other hand, you see how the Divine also has different levels. First we have the Ishta Devata, then we have Avatar, further down, people have taken to Prophet, Teacher or the Vibhuti in the intermediary level. We have so many Vibhutis both in the West and the East. Vibhutis are again souls which have come down and remember they are not evolutionary souls. It is the soul which has come down in a particular period for a particular work for the coming Avatar in time or to establish an Avatar who has already come. We have a beautiful example in Swami Vivekananda. He was a Vibhuti, no doubt about that, a Vibhuti who had come to establish the truth of the great Avatar called Sri Ramakrishna. That means the Avatar comes to give the light, a new consciousness, and a Vibhuti helps him establish it, spread it, share it further with humanity. And so many people take to their teachings and follow the path shown to us by the Vibhutis. Human beings can turn to Vibhutis, Avatars or to the Ishta Devata, anybody, but for their own spiritual growth for religious satisfaction, for their own aspiration. There is a beautiful structure of helping those seeking higher spiritual light. It is also a reality that all of us do not seek higher spiritual consciousness. We, human beings require on common mundane day-to-day level also some kind of a divine grace, because we are ignorant, we have problems and sufferings. When a man suffers he really wants to come out of sufferings, he does not then seek for higher consciousness or realisation of the soul. He says, O Lord take me out of this sufferings or ignorance and the Lord Ishta Devata or Avatar or Vibhuti they all help in multiple ways, be it spiritual level or the mundane level, mental or psychological or any other; but then that is also not sufficient.

India has provided one more treasure, one more personality, one who is closest to us on a day-to-day level, and he is the Guru. Here comes the necessity, the function, and the role of the Guru in our day-to-day life. We may be devoted to one form of the Avatar, the Divine, but here we have somebody available to us. You see Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, they are Avatars but they are not available to me today physically. At the level of consciousness surely they are there, but when we are in trouble we want to go and speak to someone, as Sri Ramakrishna has asked Swami Vivekananda to go and tell his problems to Kali Ma. But we also know that Swami Vivekananda could not speak to Kali Ma about his mundane problems. He spoke about something else. We want to speak about our immediate, mundane problems and that's where the role of the guru comes in. This is where we see the role of a Guru in aspiration, in sadhana helping us in understanding the Shastra, because when there is an inner or written Shastra, we need a Guru to clarify it. Then of course a guru is a person who helps us on a day-to-day basis. Here is a wonderful structure, at physical level we have the Guru and at the intellectual and spiritual level we have the Avatar and Ishta Devata. Therefore, depending on the level of our requirement, we can approach them. Guru is the one most available to us, to connect, to speak to, to write our letters to, to be intimate with. I may love my Avatar, deity, but speaking to and sharing it with another human person is something different. That's why in India we have this concept of Guru so deeply embedded in our consciousness and culture.

He is one who gives new light. One who really destroys our ignorance as the word tells us. But I am afraid we have to be very clear about the Guru, while choosing a Guru. That's where most of the people get a little disappointed specially in the modern times. There are great Gurus who really understand our inner need. Now, how do we choose the right Guru or who is the best Guru. Here we can speak of three levels by which a Guru can impart knowledge. We have Gurus at different levels. A Guru who teaches and preaches, a Guru who is an example and teaches by his conduct and a Guru whose influences through his consciousness and presence. There could be a Guru who is on all the three levels simultaneously. Therefore, depending on the status of the Guru we can see which level he belongs to.

The first level is of knowledge among these three instruments teaching comes foremost, in the sense that it is easier. Be a teacher in the school or be it parents for imparting knowledge. But then what kind of knowledge or teaching are they imparting? "A true spiritual Guru will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind." (CWSA 23: 66). That is fundamentally so very important. A true spiritual master that is a Guru will not seek to impose himself. Those who seek to impose themselves on the receptive minds of the shishyas, thinking that the shishyas have surrendered themselves, hence all can be imposed on them are wrong. Sometimes this imposition gets onto the level of desire. A Guru starts imposing his wishes, his desires and impulses on to his shishyas. Such a Guru is not at all ideal. Instead he should throw a productive seed in his shishya and wait to see its fruition. Such is the role of a Guru, he puts in the seeds of thought, emotion, and consciousness, to grow themselves by the aspiration, by tapsya, by the personal effort of the seeker. It is important that the Guru does not give everything on the platter. He cannot and he should not, because he doesn't know the requirement. So he plants a seed idea, a seed thought, a seed advice, leaving the seeker to make it grow through the water of his own aspiration. That's the Knowledge part which is very important.

Secondly, "He will give a method as an aid, as a utilizable device, not as an imperative formula or a fixed routine". This is again so very beautifully put, "a method as an aid". Again there is nothing rigid about it. Any Guru who forms a rigid methodology, rigid formula or a routine, takes away the initiative of spirituality. Basically, spirituality is itself against any fixed or mechanical routine, because any routine takes away the enthusiasm. For example there are six hundred disciples under a guru; they may all have different levels of aspiration, and knowledge and experience, so we should not bind them in a particular routine. The Guru has to give them a method, an aid as a utilizable device. A Guru has to be extremely discriminative; he has to use his *viveka*. That means to each he gives what he needs. It is not that all the hundred shishyas receive the same advice, because the hundred shishyas may require hundred different levels of advice. So, the Guru has got to be extremely careful, of not making a monotony or uniformity of his teachings; that is the spiritual Guru. Otherwise it becomes so easy to establish a general rule and ask everybody to follow it. It is not so, a spiritual master must understand the levels of the disciples under him and guide him accordingly. And of course you have many Gurus working in this manner -- Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramana, Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. Each individual disciple has his own story to tell, 'How the master helped him.' Because the master has been helping each one

according to his inner need, aspiration and capacity. So that is the beauty of spirituality -- it is flexible, there is no mechanical rigidity, and each shisya is looked after individually. And of course the Guru doesn't seek any recognition.

There are times when the Guru says, 'my role with you is over, you need to reach higher consciousness, you need a higher progress, you need to go on, so I release you, you must go on, what I could give you I have given you.' We have to remember one thing that the Guru helps us on the path; he doesn't walk the path for us. We have to walk it. He is there sometimes as an umbrella, sometimes as a walking stick, sometimes as a doctor and sometimes as a helper. He is there to see that we stick to the path. But we have to walk the path ourselves. In this walking sometimes Guru may find that we have achieved what a Guru could give and then if he is sincere and not a possessive one, seeking greater numbers of disciples, he may say 'you may find another path and another Guru'. In the spiritual history of India there are many examples of such ideal gurus. So that is the first level of teaching. This is where we have innumerable number of Gurus who have taught in this manner. They have given a method, put in a seed, sometimes giving an instruction for awakening etc., sometimes Gurus make a uniformity, rigidity which is incorrect. This is the first level of teaching.

Then a greater Guru is one for whom example is more powerful than instruction. Not the example of outward acts nor that of the personal character. So when the Guru sets an example, it is not as to how he acts or how he eats. In such case there are chances of falsity setting in. Here, we have a story of Sri Shankaracharya, who taught a lesson to his shisya, who was trying to imitate him in everything. He was not trying to follow him but trying to show that he could do all that the Guru does. One day when he was going somewhere, he took a hot iron bar and put it in his mouth which the shisya could not do and he was caught. It is not the outward signs or acts which we should follow. He gives us something within, Sri Aurobindo calls that as "central fact of the divine realisation within him". This is an example of a particular level of consciousness, particular way, because each guru has his own level of consciousness, has his own path and his own discipline. By being what he is teaching, is the example. So, the Guru is the best example, by living exactly as per his own teachings. That's where most of the Gurus fail. They teach something in public, in the masses, but in their personal life they are just the opposite of what they have taught. That is where the spiritual master has to be very careful, that his teaching and his living remain the same. Here is the issue of the sadhak or the disciple following his Guru in his dynamic sadhana. If we see the Guru having certain level of realisation, I must aspire to get that level of consciousness. To get that level of consciousness we needn't imitate the Guru. Once, somebody asked Sri Aurobindo, if he could become Sri Aurobindo. He was trying to have the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo told him, 'you needn't be Sri Aurobindo for that, you can reach the consciousness of Overmind or Supermind by yourself by following your own path' not in words but meaning and essence. What it means is that we don't have to follow the external character of the Guru, but try to imbibe his inner dynamic consciousness.

Beyond the example is the third level, the influence which is more important than the example. We mark, each time there is a greater subtlety. First one was the teacher, then there

was the moral intellectual level where there is an example, then there is spiritual level and that's the highest one, where he says, "Influence is not the outward authority of the Teacher over his disciple, but the power of his contact, of his presence." (CWSA: 23-24: 67) This is the most important one. It is not the question of outward authority. For example if you are running an Ashram and you are the head. Then you have the authority to say to someone to do something. But the true spiritual master doesn't use his authority, it is through the power of his contact, of his presence that things move. If the sadhak or disciple feels the presence of his master, that's the highest thing. It is because no physical Guru lives life-long, it is only the disciples and who are younger and who live long. So, sometime or the other our Guru leaves his physical body, but how is it that the great spiritual work continues! It is because the disciples feel his presence. This is the case with most of the greatest Gurus, be it Guru Nanak, Sri Ramakrishna, or Sri Aurobindo, or Swamiji. Physically, they have left the world, but their work is being continued by their disciples. If we ask any disciple he will say that 'I feel the presence of my master. He comes to me many a times in my dreams and shows me the way and gives me instructions.' That is the highest point of contact of a disciple with the Guru. What we see here is that the physical presence is not required. What is required is the inner presence of the consciousness. If a Guru can establish that he has done his job, in the sense that his work will continue beyond his physical presence. This happens only with the spiritual masters. Those who are fake Gurus, their work ceases as soon as they leave the earth. But true spiritual consciousness continues with his work.

Now, we have understood how to choose a Guru, look at his teachings, his experience, his presence. If we can feel his presence that is the best thing that can happen. Feel him in meditation, prayer, Bhakti and every other way. These are the three levels of a true spiritual master. And if we find these three characteristics in a Guru, we will know who is a true Guru or a fake master. Those Gurus who go for the outward kingdom can never be spiritual masters. They could perhaps help humanity on a certain level. Definitely each Guru helps the community to a certain extent, but those seekers who want to have a spiritual growth they need the qualities in the master that we have just described.

Now, the most important point, no sadhak should arrogate to himself Guruhood in Integral Yoga. This is very important because in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, nobody is to arrogate to himself any Guruhood. He is not supposed to take the place of Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. Becoming a Guru in Integral Yoga is forbidden. It is very simple and straightforward. Yes a person himself can be a channel, helping his brothers, a child leading children, a Light kindling other lights, but not to arrogate that I am the Guru after so and so. In other systems, it is there, there are chains of Gurus. But in Integral Yoga Guruhood is not expected from any disciple however great he may be, he is only a helper on the way, himself a channel, a vessel, a representative of the higher consciousness, but we don't have any system of Guruhood here.

Now the concluding part. We have seen the issue of *utsaha*, *shastra* and *guru*, but there is one more element which helps the sadhak in his growth, that is the factor of time the *kala*. This is very important because many sadhaks get disillusioned, that 'I am doing Tapasya for so many years but nothing has happened to me, I have not reached my goal' etc. So, there comes in a point of disappointment, boredom, distrust, and they may leave the path.

That's where, Sri Aurobindo tells us that it depends on Kala, time. There are different ways of looking at time. One who is at the stage of personal effort on level one, for him time becomes a tyrant because he is putting all his effort with little result. So he is impatient. For the person on the first level time is a tyrant. But then those who are on the second level, who feel that the divine is doing the work for them, helping them, there is a recognition of a higher force, Hence, for seekers at this level time becomes a friend. He says, time is friendly, a medium and a condition. That means he understands that when the Divine is helping him on this path why should he care for time, it may be five years or ten years. So the first level, time as a tyrant becomes a friendly time not only friendly but also the feeling that I am in the hands of the Divine, he knows, when to give me what. But on the third level, when we see that we are neither the doer, nor the instrument, but it is the Lord who is the doer, instrument and the work, all in himself, then we get this Vedantic realisation, that he is doing everything, he is the object and the subject, knower and the knowledge, which is a very high level of realisation, where time becomes completely your servant and instrument. That's why Sri Krishna and Sri Rama are not in a hurry, because they know that things will happen in their own time. There is something called, evolutionary time. The Avatar cannot hasten any change in the human beings. There has got to be some time given, nothing should be imposed, then time becomes a servant and an instrument.

We see here the four factors but about time what we need to do at the common human level is that we should have endless patience as if we have all eternity for fulfilment. But it doesn't mean that we say God will do it in his proper time and we become lazy, that we didn't make any personal effort of reading the Shastras or seeking the Guru. On one side we think that we have all the eternity in front of us and at the same time we develop the energy that shall realise now. That is the beauty -- one side our attitude is that we have endless time because the Divine is doing but that doesn't give us the right to become lazy. We have got to do it as if you are going to realise it now. The beauty of spirituality is that we have to make efforts everyday, every hour and strive to grow and yet leave to the Divine the result of our efforts.

This is what we see about these four levels of spirituality, where Guru is fundamental, but he is one among the four; The Utsaha, Shastra, Guru and the Kala. When there is a combination of all these four then we will see that what we have had started with, “He who chooses the infinite has been chosen by the infinite” fits aptly. The divine has chosen, the divine is working for us, and the Divine himself becomes our Guru. And then we see what the Bhagawad Gita tells us in the last verse that wherever there is Krishna, the master of Yoga, wherever there is Partha, the archer, assured are their glory, victory and prosperity. When the disciple knows that it is the divine who has chosen me, the divine has become the spark in me, the divine who becomes the adhaka in me then of course the Nara And Narayana come together, Krishna and Arjuna come together, then there is all victory, all prosperity, everything in the outer life as well as the inner life. That is the plenitude of Divine Life that Sri Aurobindo has envisaged in his own Yoga.

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# **A Study of Savitri**

## **Book One, Canto 5**

*Sanjay Vasant Shirwalkar*

### **Introduction**

Sri Aurobindo documents about his and the Mother's spiritual experiences in *Savitri*. It is filled with their consciousness and light and is therefore sacred for us. In the present canto in discussion, Sri Aurobindo describes Aswapati's Yoga in which after acquiring the 'secret knowledge' depicted in the previous canto, he explains further the progress in his yoga. In short, it can be summed up in the title of the canto itself – "The Yoga of King: The Yoga of the Spirit's Freedom and Greatness".

There are in all seven stanzas in this canto and about 625 lines, and all the stanzas are not even in their length but complete in substance. We shall discuss each of the stanzas briefly.

### **First stanza**

Sri Aurobindo begins and ends his cantos with pithy and summary lines. The first line for this canto reads: "This knowledge first he had of time born men." This idea not only links to the previous canto but presents a summary of "The Secret Knowledge". He states that to reach this stage, it is necessary to also stop the heartbeats and breathing besides stilling the body and the mind. This he had himself experienced and even the Mother has noted this. When Aswapati casts off the hold of matter on him, makes his body still and cuts the cord of the mind after silencing it, he has *atmasakshatkar*, i.e. realisation of the soul that has been described in the previous canto. He finds the occult cave and the mystic door of the cave in which knowledge exists by identity and it is also the womb of the new creation. This knowledge by identity he gains when he reaches the soul. The cosmic Gods have to struggle to acquire it.

In the soul, there is also a chamber in which the secret of creation, the dark agreement between the Supreme and the manifestation is kept. The agreement is unreadable but there are luminous notes in the margin which Aswapati understands. He re-reads the agreement and interprets it newly. He understands the exceptions to the rigid laws of manifestation and knows how it can be disregarded. It is the home of the Vedic truth and Sri Aurobindo has mentioned this in *The Synthesis of Yoga*. It preserves the secrets of the manifestation.

He has described the Mother involved in manifestation, the Maya. It is the Supreme Mother but in manifestation, She obscures herself, hides and covers herself, progressively reduces light, contracts and finally enters into Inconscient. This portion is the holocaust of the Supreme but the Eternal has also promised to keep His part of the bargain and She, as if by magic, starts evolution and brings out living forms from apparent dead matter, which inhabits the spark of the Supreme and finally, after plants and animals, evolution of man with a soul takes place. This has been described poetically by Sri Aurobindo. I want to draw attention to lines below:

A sleeping deity opened deathless eyes:



He saw the unshaped thought in soulless forms,  
Knew Matter pregnant with spiritual sense,  
Mind dared the study of the Unknowable,  
Life its gestation of the Golden Child.

The Mother described an experience she had with Huta who has drawn a painting of this Golden Child and it is there in Savitri Bhawan (available on YouTube). In fact, the Golden Child can also be thought of as the Hiranyagarbha, the golden embryo waiting to come into manifestation. The stanza concludes with the line: “In the Void he saw throned the Omniscience supreme.” Although everything appears as Chance, the Will of the Supreme works out through fancies of the obscure Mother, the coming of God and so, nothing is pure Chance because the Supreme rules over everything in the universe as He is Immanent in it.

### Second Stanza

The secret knowledge obtained by Aswapati opens new possibilities for him; he has hope and the divine Will grips him until he wishes to see the future superhuman form of the Divine and therefore, looks upwards and aspires for it. This is brought out in *Savitri* for the first time and this is the aim of his quest. He learns that the secret God is working this out in Time but is at the mercy of the whims of mother Nature and it makes slow but comprehensive progress. However, if he wants to hasten up the time frame, can he not join in and put his weight behind it? This is the quest of Sri Aurobindo and it is expressed through the character of Aswapati.

How will the new consciousness that is brought down from above affect our world? The body will house the visible God, there will a consciousness of unity extending across all and all will be conscious of each other. This will be the ideal world. Hence, we need to grow in our consciousness. But the present condition of humanity is that it is in abject spiritual poverty, devoid of divine beatitude, splendour, absence of true knowledge, warped ecstasy, just a little satiation of the mind and senses, worthlessness of existence – all these things jar him and make him sad. The following lines bring it out:

Here even the highest rapture Time can give  
Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes

In a humorous vein Sri Aurobindo draws on banking terms

For all we have acquired soon loses worth,  
An old disvalued credit in Time's bank,  
Imperfection's cheque drawn on the Inconscient.

Further an epigram,

In each success a seed of failure lurks.

Or later

He is a smallness trying to be great  
An animal with some instincts of a god.

The poet remarks that although all this is disheartening and yet there is an element of hope as the eternal Spirit is his truth; he has the knowledge within him that he is a portion

of the Divine and therefore, he has the possibility to re-orient and reinvent himself into something new and go beyond his fate.

### **Third stanza**

Aswapati turns away from the miserable state of humanity and enters into the silence beyond the mind and seeks answers from within as he paces up and down. The lines evoke an image of Sri Aurobindo pacing up and down in his room, doing 'waking' meditation.

Aswapati gets a call from the above, he knows the answer to his question lies there. He enters into cosmic consciousness and is no longer limited but universal in his outlook. In such a state, he receives an influx of golden light coming down from heights, probably a stream from the sea of Bliss, Kshirsagar and filling his limbs, heart and mind and filling him with indescribable joy. Sri Aurobindo has also described this experience in his sonnet "The Golden Light". Aswapati becomes a centre of the cosmic infinity and seeks his spiritual fate.

He goes in search of the Supreme that is poetically described as like an arrow shot from the bow of Time and appeared as if it was returning back from where it had come. A similar vision was described by an East Bengal yogi to a disciple when he was asked about what was Sri Aurobindo doing at present. The Inconscient tries to arrest his progress but he is beyond its reach, beyond death and immune from its effects.

"Death lay beneath him like a gate of sleep" How is Aswapati's quest? It is one-pointed and reminds of the hound that is on a quest for its prey:

Questing for God as for splendid prey,  
He mounted burning like a cone of fire.  
To a few is given that godlike rare release.

In fact, very few have gone up to the Supreme, saw Him face to face and returned to form. The reason being that one goes there only by becoming formless; only our souls go there, not the mortal body because it will otherwise be shattered. Now Aswapati has that fortune to come back because he is the chosen one who is the forerunner of our human race and he is guided by "a pointing hand of Light". His station is even beyond the cosmic state; it is in the upper hemisphere beyond manifestation. He travels to meet the Eternal and on seeing Him approach, he is filled with "a nameless marvel", something indescribable like bliss and the poet describes it as:

A nameless marvel fills the motionless hours  
His spirit mingles with eternity's heart  
And bears the silence of the Infinite.

One cannot imagine what the silence of the Infinite is as it is an experience beyond our limited scope; it is only when we enter into upper hemisphere that we can have an idea of it.

### **Fourth stanza**

Aswapati is able to ascend into the Supreme levels as he has been chosen and has an inner call; now when he approaches the Infinite, he experiences the great descent from above and the Supreme embraces him. It is like a powerful flame, a violent ecstasy and a dreadful sweetness that envelop and smother him. The power of bliss is so strong that with the touch

of the Supreme, his body shudders from the touch and the love of Supreme is ruthless. It is as if he is caught in a whirlwind of force and delight and he is borne upwards to the supreme heights as well as he is plunged into the deepest abyss. Such is the violence of contact with the Supreme. His being undergoes a transformation and his personality becomes infinite and without borders. He is inexorably drawn in the Divine's embrace. All these experiences have been noted by Sri Aurobindo in his book *Record of Yoga*. He followed a yogic programme of realising Saptachaturstaya siddhis and one of the components of his studies and research was the experience of the Divine Bliss, Kama or Supreme Ananda.

This transformation then brings about stupendous changes, he becomes a god. His ego drops off as it cannot limit him anymore and all the problems that preoccupied him earlier are no longer that ominous; they shrink to atomic sizes and he is as if breathing in pure spiritual air of the Supreme. There are no barriers to his personality, the boundaries created for human existence are no longer applicable to him, he transcends them:

Once figures of creation's vain ellipse,  
The expanding zero lost its giant curve.  
The old adamantine vetoes stood no more:  
Overpowered were earth's nature and obsolete rule;  
The python coils of the restricting Law  
Could not contain the swift arisen God  
Abolished were the scripts of destiny.

In fact, his being becomes infinite, without limits, without hedges or boundaries; so vast and powerful has he become that he can achieving anything and no there are no borders that can restrict him - he is unfettered and free.

### **Fifth and sixth Stanzas**

I have combined the two stanzas because basically both stanzas cover the aspects of the secret Nature and the secret Nature is the creator or the "Mother of Dreams" of this manifestation. Sri Aurobindo has spoken about the "Mother of Dreams" in his poem with the same title. There is a close resemblance to it. In fact, this secret Nature is a distorted aspect of the Divine Mother herself; it is in the subconscious region and has the power of doing good as well as evil.

Remember that in the initial stanza, we talked about a secret dark agreement between the Supreme and the manifestation. In that, the Supreme promised to be with her when she entered manifestation. She has the knowledge of magic, sorcery, limited command over diagrams, figures, numbers, etc. and by the waving of her wand, she creates things according to her fancy but she has lost the discerning portion within her and creates unconsciously both good as well as evil aspects without any hesitation. She is the progenitor of the gods as well as the demons. In fact, when the Supreme came down into manifestation, at each step she lost something and covered her light with thicker and thicker coats to such an extent that she lost her contact with the Supreme and plunged into an apparent nothingness or the sea of Inconscient. But she remembers something of the higher worlds and tries to ape the universal creator or competes with him. This is the holocaust of the Supreme, the involution. But as promised, the Supreme brings her back by the process of evolution and the secret

Mother Nature collaborates with him. He is there secretly present. One can recall the story of Angiras Rishi when how the cows meaning divine illumination or knowledge were stolen by panis or dasyus and hidden in a cave under a rock. This was found by the divine hound, Sarama, the goddess of intuition and how by the action of Dadhikravan, the horse representing Life Energy, a crack was made in the rock and the cows, meaning illumination, escaped from the den of panis or dasyus. This was the process of involution and through the process of evolution, the cows or illumination were recovered and returned.

This space was invaded for the first time by the mortal being called Aswapati. He enters this subliminal domain of secret Nature and challenges her activities. She fights with Aswapati but as the force of his tapasya gave him great powers, she accepts defeat and agrees to work as per his directions. He instructs her to dismantle all the evil that she had created and channelizes her energies godwards and makes her the collaborator in the new creation that is to be infused with divinity in the new creation that he is aspiring to bring down on earth. The following lines indicate this:

Her dangerous moods and arbitrary force  
She surrendered to the service of the soul  
And the control of a spiritual will.  
A greater despot tamed her despotism.  
Assailed, surprised in the fortress of her self,  
Conquered by her own unexpected king,  
Fulfilled and ransomed by her servitude,  
She yielded in a vanquished ecstasy,  
Her sealed hermetic wisdom forced from her,  
Fragments of the mystery of omnipotence.

In fact, she was an occult force and made many shining discoveries and the Supreme supported her in all her works. The magic powers were like lions crouching at her feet ready to carry out her commands while creating the manifestation. This is expressed as:

Behind her an ineffable Presence stood  
Her reign received their mystic influences,  
Their lion-forces crouched beneath her feet;

The new creation of gods is a thousand-fold house waiting to be born. In fact the beings there are bodiless and they have subtle forms and their foreheads shine with the Oversoul and there is more to them that is below the surface, in the rear of Life. It is expressed thus:

This was the forefront of God's thousandfold house, ...  
It shadows gleaming with the birth of gods,  
Its bodies signalling the bodiless,  
Its forehead glowing with the Oversoul,  
Its forms projected from the Unknowable,  
Its eyes dreaming of the Ineffable,  
Its faces staring into eternity.

There is more to life than that is visible to our senses; there is a huge subconscious rear that has promise.

Life in him learned its huge subconscious rear;  
The little fronts unlocked to unseen Vasts;  
Her gulfs stood nude, her far transcendences

Flamed in transparencies of crowded light.

### **Seventh stanza**

This stanza tells us about the greatness and glory of the Supreme. The traveller discovers that there is an order in creation and that there are planes or worlds stacked one upon the other. They have their own laws and characteristics and they extend right from the Inconscient to the Superconscient. It is like an electromagnetic spectrum that extends from longest waves like radio waves to shortest powerful rays like gamma rays, etc. and only a small part of its range that is visible to us, from red to violet in the rainbow colours and therefore, we mistake this part for the whole.

Ascending and descending twixt life's poles  
The seried kingdoms of graded Law  
Plunged from the Everlasting into Time ...  
Climbed back from Time into undying Self  
Up a golden ladder carrying the soul,  
Tying with diamond threads the Spirit's extremes.

There is a golden ladder joining the Superconscient sea of Bliss (kshirsagar) with the Inconscient black sea of darkness and it connects the world with "diamond threads". Sri Aurobindo has compared this act of Supreme to the musical scale of the organ. Then even the Inconscient finds its rightful place there and then is revealed supreme harmony which is nothing but music born in silence of Matter, i.e. the Inconscient having exquisite rhythm and it rises upwards by gathering all the lost links on the wayside and finally merges in the One. Otherwise, it was so far only groping in Ignorance. There are wonderful worlds to be explored and discovered. Sri Aurobindo tells that the traveller then dwells upon the world in the upper hemisphere where first begins the light of the Sachchidananda. There, all the dualities meet and unite as there is no clash of one truth with another - the opposites reconcile into unity and there is discovered the underlying harmony and the innate sense of unity and brotherhood. The finite becomes Infinite. This is nothing else but the region of the Supermind.

It grouped the golden links that they had lost  
And showed to them their divine unity. ...  
There was no quarrel more of truth with truth ...

There is a singing of praises of that wonderful place of harmony and truth and its music swells into a crescendo and reaches the Sachchidananda.

A paen swelled from the lost musing deeps  
An anthem pealed to the triune ecstasies,  
A cry of the moment to the Immortal's bliss. ...

The traveller views the calm and beautiful regions of the Immortal; these are the regions of the Supermind and in these regions, there are large tracts of knowledge and the air is filled with the ecstasy of supreme Bliss.

Calm continents of potencies were glimpsed  
Homelands of beauty shut to human eyes ...  
Sunbelts of knowledge moonbelts of delight  
Stretched out in an ecstasy of widenesses

Beyond our indigent corporeal range. ...

The voyager now has to turn his attention to other wonderful worlds that are waiting to be discovered and after spending some time in those realms, he goes further on uncharted routes to seek the unknown. He breaks into another space and time.

A voyager upon uncharted routes  
Fronting the viewless danger of the Unknown  
Adventuring across enormous realms  
He broke into another space and time.

### Summary

In the first stanza he recapitulates the previous canto of “The Secret Knowledge”; in the second stanza, he shows that with the coming of this knowledge, the scope of Aswapati’s search becomes wider and inclusive for the benefit of humanity. In the third stanza, he traces the ascent of Aswapati to higher realms and in the fourth stanza, he describes the descent of the Supreme in answer to the call of Aswapati and the great transformation in Aswapati takes place when he becomes a god. In the fifth and sixth stanzas, Sri Aurobindo discusses how the secret Mother has her sway over manifestation and how Aswapati overcomes her resistance and she accepts his dominance and collaborates with his plan of moving manifestation godwards and in the seventh stanza, he describes the zone of the Supermind and the wonderful world there and ends with Aswapati heading towards the unknown seas and continents of other planes and worlds of consciousness in order to understand the creation and its purpose.

(Mr. Sanjay Shirwalkar retired from DRDO and came in contact with Sri Aurobindo in the early 80s and decided to follow the path since then.)

ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरं रूपं ज्योतिः परस्य धीमहि ।  
यन्नः सत्येन दीपयेत् ॥

Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best) form of  
Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine  
us with the Truth.

## BEAUTY AND DELIGHT



*Take the rose, for example;  
its great perfection of form, colour, scent  
expresses an aspiration and a psychic giving.  
Look at a rose opening in the morning  
at the first touch of the sun,  
it is a magnificent self-giving in aspiration.*

*The Mother*

## The Spiritual Response to Environmental Aesthetics in the Light of Sri Aurobindo

*Oeendrila Guha*

Environmental aesthetics is a twentieth-century A.D. school of thought, which announces that nature is “all-inclusive, a total, integrated, continuous process” (Berleant 9). To experience the natural world, one must “inevitably realize that the limits of human reason are not the limits of the universe” (Berleant 9). Environmental aesthetics is “the aesthetics of everyday life”, otherwise known as Arnold Berleant’s “aesthetics of engagement”. It engages with the beauty of the natural world, filled with a psychic significance. “Environmental aesthetics of engagement” fights against hierarchy, ego statements and exploitation, thereby leading towards “acceptance, friendship, and love” of the helpless and accordingly, moulds human relationships and social values. For instance, the Romantics, says Abrams, have radically elevated the lowly position of the “object” called nature, thereby re-evaluating nature as the spirit - Abrams calls it “transvaluation”, which can take place through the three approaches of cognitive, emotional and imaginative.

Allen Carlson, Noel Carroll and Emily Brady are the three pioneering environmental aestheticians, respectively postulating the cognitive approach, the emotional-arousal approach and the imaginative response to environmental aesthetics. Carlson claims that an appropriate aesthetic experience of nature can be had only with a scientific understanding of nature. Carroll and Brady emphasise on the abstract essence of nature. Ned Hettinger explains Carlson’s cognitive approach as the “objectivity to environmental aesthetic appreciation (and judgment) should respond to what the aesthetic object is rather than what it is not” (416). Carlson lays emphasis on gaining appropriate knowledge of natural history. Noel Carroll, Carlson’s contemporary, proposes the emotional-arousal approach of the “scenery cult” by saying that aesthetic appreciation of nature can be appropriate if it is not based on false belief or erroneous scientific data (Hettinger 426). Carroll observes that based on true scientific information, the emotional-arousal caused by the perceived nature and the emotional-arousal experienced by the perceiver are real and appropriate. He distinguishes between objective and subjective emotions; the former is based on evidences that can be shared with others and the latter is founded on evidences that cannot be shared with others. Hettinger explains Carroll’s objective emotions as “cognitive in that they are underpinned by beliefs, thoughts, and patterns of attention” (427-428). Emily Brady’s imaginative response is based on “perceptual sensitivity, imaginative freedom, creativity and emotional expression” (280), which offer an enriching appreciation of nature. She distinguishes “appropriate” imagining from “inappropriate” imagining by suggesting that the former is founded on a non-utilitarian or disinterestedness imagining that can help to envision policies, preventing exploitation of natural resources. The “shift in consciousness” that Western environmentalists talk of is ethical and aesthetic.

Hettinger says, “I reject such an aesthetics apartheid: Aesthetics is a part of life, which means that aesthetics, ethics, and cognition cannot be strictly separated” (427). There is another model of environmental appreciation, so far excluded, which rejects “aesthetics



apartheid”. This model is found in Eastern traditions, in particular in Sri Aurobindo’s works since one of the persistent tropes in his writings is the realisation of nature as Divine:

The art and poetry of the East have been the creation of a larger and quieter spirit, intensely responsive as in the far East to deeper psychic significances and finding there fine and subtle harmonies of the soul’s experience or, as in India, expressing in spite of the ascetic creed of vanity and illusion much rather the greatness and power and satisfied activity of human thought and life and action and behind it the communion of the soul with the Eternal. (CWSA 26: 272) He has called his Yoga the Yoga of Nature, a statement, which elucidates a new dimension to understanding nature.

In the East, the mind is attributed with the sense of the sight (mental perception) but this sight does not denote the physical eye but the faculty of cognition, which includes becoming aware of itself as the instrument. Sri Aurobindo observes, “...the mind and the intellect are not the key-power of our existence for they can only trace out a round of half-truths and uncertainties and revolve in that unsatisfying circle” (1997: 230). Carlson’s, Carroll’s and Brady’s theory of cognitive approach, emotional-arousal approach and imaginative response to environmental aesthetics is based on the pretext of the intellect as “the key-power” of understanding life around us. As long as humanity continues to apply the intellect to address its problems, nature will continue to be exploited since a divided mind cannot offer a holistic vision of unity. Thus, arises the necessity to rise above the duality of the mind to a higher consciousness, which embraces contradictions as the multi-faceted manifestation of the Divine or Spirit!

In order to achieve oneness with nature, humanity must identify with “the very self and soul and conscious being of Nature, her profoundest psychic suggestion and significance” (CWSA 26: 272-273). Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual approach of “the Spirit in the world” (CWSA 26: 250) can be added to the existing approaches of the cognitive, the emotional and the imaginative to formulate the inclusive environmental aesthetics, thereby positing a complete identification with the natural world and dissolving the exploitive human claim on the dwindling resources of nature. Hence, his approach initiates the new era of environmental aesthetics since it brings with it “a new depth of the intimacies of the soul with Nature” (CWSA 26: 272).

One of the visible signs of establishing link with “the soul of Nature” is by experiencing nature as an embodiment of “universal delight, Ananda” or the Aurobindonian “psychic joy” or “psychic Ananda”, which is engendered of the “directness and spiritual clarity and reality” (Gokak 146) of the natural activity of God. Ananda is not an intellectual or aesthetic or imaginative “indulgence of the sense” but it is “the spiritual beatitude in which a realized or liberated soul is absorbed” (V. Raghavan 15). It is the enduring vibration of the Spirit in nature or “the soul of existence”. Sri Aurobindo says that Ananda arises from “a supreme essence of experience, a supreme aesthesis which is in its own nature spiritual, impersonal, independent of the personal reactions and passions of the mind” (CWSA 26: 259). One wanting this understanding lacks a complete consciousness. As long as humanity limits itself to the workings of the mind, it will continue to plunder nature out of desire and greed. For

instance, the Romantics' emotional and imaginative response critiqued the exploitive nature of industrial revolution and yet no visible social changes were made vis a vis treatment of nature during their time.

Similarly, by restricting nature to an intellectual exercise, conducted within the four walls of the Parliament (framing laws in the interest of nature) or the classroom, it is near impossible to achieve the desired result. Take the case of America pulling out of the Paris climate agreement in 2017 - America was one of the pioneering countries to discuss environmental atrophy as a twentieth-century discipline. This move affirms the dichotomy in human nature and human principle and that there is no such thing as objectivity of the mind; hence, the mind, even though based on scientific understanding, cannot offer an objective "environmental aesthetic appreciation (and judgment)" (Hettinger 416). But something else can; it is a consciousness, born of knowledge by identity, that is greater than the mind and can influence the mind, as clearly asserted by Sri Aurobindo.

The Aurobindonian 'aesthesis' denotes the most intense appreciation of nature through knowledge by identity or by becoming conscious of the existence of the Divine behind the outer forms, as exemplified in "Rose of God". In this poem, the flower is symbolic of the divine intensities of "Bliss", "Light", "Power", "Life" and "Love", revealing to us the presence of the spirit in nature. There is a "vast occult Intelligence" in the rose and in nature which can be recognized if humanity can rise above its ego-consciousness and identify with It. K. D. Sethna suggests that Aurobindonian exegesis of the spirit supports the hypothesis of

...the Spirit is an ineffable freedom from all that is here, it is not limited by anything, it exceeds all that we can conceive; but, while exceeding all, it does not negate all: of its reality they are phases and in it must be the archetypes, the perfect patterns, of which all the formations of the world are evolving terms. (1992: 4)

The rose is the perfect pattern of the divine Consciousness and this pattern is violated when humanity extorts it. Through this argument the poet clarifies that consciousness is simultaneously the essence and the substance called the rose.

In the Aurobindonian tradition, "flame" or fire represents the psychical aspiration of the individual towards the Divine, thereby indicating a movement in terms of stages of "experience of consciousness" or "God-knowledge" in nature. By addressing rose as a symbol of "Love", the poet brings to our notice the love of the Divine for nature. A complete love is the issue of a complete identification, manifesting also as "Bliss" or Ananda. Consequently, the poet hails the flower as "Rose of Bliss". Through these lines, the poet identifies with the very soul of the rose and learns of its true and inner nature. Only such an ultimate identification can deliver humanity from its abject position of the exploiter of nature.

The "flame" or the psychical aspiration is the "spiritual excitement", which can endure and "Rose of God" uses extensive visual and auditory imagery to indicate "God-touch" and "God-presence" in nature and the ascension and expansion of the poet's consciousness to this supreme realisation. This poem is a magnificent example of the Aurobindonian "ecorhapsody" based not on intellectual or imaginative or emotional excitement but the

poet's "spiritual excitement", "world-vision" and "world-awareness". Sethna mentions that the tenor and style of Sri Aurobindo's poetry comprises "a direct rhythm from an inner or upper poise: the mundane scene and the supra-mundane principalities and powers are given their image and value and secret life-throb as realised from a consciousness aware directly from the supreme Spirit" (1974: 89). The Aurobindonian "ecorhapsody" affirms "on the one hand the absolute existence of the One and on the other the reality of the many" (Sullivan 207) because Sri Aurobindo does not superimpose objective reality over subjective reality as appropriate and inappropriate based on true scientific information or its lack of it. Subjective reality and objective reality can be simultaneously accessed on the cosmic plane of consciousness!

The Aurobindonian 'aesthesia' of nature transforms the environmental "life values" into "soul values" (CWSA 26: 262). Nature is still an external body, separate from the human being and imposing moral values to check its destructive impulses vis a vis nature is vital until one day they realise "If each thing created is a form of the manifest Divine Existence, each is divine in itself by the spiritual presence within it, whatever its appearance, its figure or character in Nature" (CWSA 21& 22: 859). Brady's argument of "it has to be kept in mind that aesthetically sensitive beings are not always morally sensitive" (280) brings to relief Sri Aurobindo's spiritual take on nature.

With Sri Aurobindo, the "shift in consciousness" is three-layered: the individual consciousness identifies with the Eternal or Transcendental consciousness which extends itself as cosmic/universal consciousness or nature. Sri Aurobindo does not endorse the partially-aware 'dream' of a better social and political set-up, which through legal restraints, contains natural exploitation; instead he endorses "self-awareness" leading to eco-awareness. As stated by him, imparting moral lessons is "a vanity and a delusion, precisely because the heart is not the mind and to instruct the mind does not necessarily improve the heart" (CWSA 1: 389). Unless humanity chooses to discipline itself, a mere imposition of environmental ethics enforcing an appropriate aesthetic experience of nature is futile.

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### **Rose, I have loved**

Rose, I have loved thy beauty, as I love  
The dress that thou hast worn, the transient grass,  
O'er which thy happy careless footsteps move,  
The yet-thrilled waysides that have watched thee pass.  
Soul, I have loved thy sweetness as men love  
The necessary air they crave to breathe,  
The sunlight lavished from the skies above,  
And firmness of the earth their steps beneath.  
But were that beauty all, my love might cease  
Like love of weaker spirits; were't thy charm  
And grace of soul, mine might with age decrease  
Or find in Death a silence and a term,  
But rooted in the unnameable in thee  
Shall triumph and transcend eternity. (CWSA 2: 180)

## Humility: Message from a flower

Falguni Jani

Flowers express themselves by their colour, and fragrance. A flower in full bloom looks as if it is spreading its smile to the world and manifesting the qualities given by the creator. One need not have spiritual orientation to appreciate the beauty of a lovely rose or a magnificent lotus in the pond. Flowers have been used since centuries for decoration, adornment and most importantly for religious worship, ceremonies and social events like birthdays and weddings. Mother earth has blessed us with millions of varieties of flowers of different colours, sizes, and fragrances. We wonder at the marvel of Nature who paints different colourful strokes in exquisite style like a magician in a tiny petal. Some flowers dare to sprout in a concrete wall as if defying the odds to claim its right to live and express. Human beings have not only used them as objects of beauty but also consumed the petals and leaves of flowers as medicines to restore and maintain health. Surely there is more in a flower that meets the eye. Hidden secrets that still need to be unravelled and wonders, yet unexplored. As close companions of human beings like other creatures, flowers too have a major role to play in our lives. Perhaps they carry signs and signals in their own language which we are unable to decode.

For the first time, the occult messages of flowers were revealed by the Divine Mother. She would give the children, the devotees and visitors each a flower with her blessings for a particular purpose. To some She would give a flower carrying the message of devotion, to others psychological perfection, faith, sincerity etc. Here I would like to share my inner experiences with a flower, called, *Tarenna asiatica*. This flower has tiny intensely fragrant cream coloured flowers with five twisted curved petals and a prominent style; borne in terminal panicles. The spiritual significance of the flower lies in its message: “Humility before the Divine in Physical Nature: First attitude needed for transformation”.



Sri Aurobindo, elaborates the process of transformation required in the physical nature as follows:

It (the physical mind) is the instrument of understanding and ordered action on physical things. Only instead of being obscure and ignorant and fumbling as now or else guided only by an external knowledge it has to become conscious of the Divine and to act in accordance with an inner light. Will and knowledge putting itself into contact and an understanding unity with the physical world. (CWSA 28: 181)

This message opens our eyes in the way we conduct our affairs in the world with the usual confidence and knowledge that we possess. We think and firmly believe that our knowledge and understanding is perfect. Our so called common sense is infallible. Life has taught us many things and our experience is good enough to make decisions, judgment and evaluation of things, events and circumstances. We also take pride in our success and achievement. We are happy and satisfied with our material progress and psychological well

–being which boosts our ego. In short, the life that we lead is utterly ignorant and unaware of the true light of the Divine within. Our mind is always groping for knowledge. Only when it is silent and inwardly attentive that wisdom awakens from the depths of the psychic being. While contemplating on the above message, I realized the utter folly of the surface personality which never pauses to reflect and refer to the inner guide. Our physical mind is a bundle of habits, mechanical; like a machine it churns out thoughts, propels actions, evoke responses without pause.

To practice humility before the Divine, which is the first step in transformation in Integral yoga, one must step back, review the whole situation and call for guidance before throwing oneself in action. To be humble means to have the courage to admit that we may be wrong or perhaps there is a better way to handle things. It also inculcates in us plasticity, simplicity and sincerity, in the sense that we do not complicate things with the mind and do not forget to remember the divine each time we take a decision or try to solve a problem. In fact, all the virtues needed to walk on the path towards the divine begin with humility before the divine in the physical nature. We may have faith, devotion, adoration for the divine inwardly, but the outward nature may remain dense, ignorant, and egoistic. If we really want to serve the divine we must never forget that without constantly referring to the divine light, our actions are full of imperfection. This can be done by increasing awareness of all our movements, physical and mental. It is an experience that constant contact with the inner light helps in doing the external work with skill and perfection. Besides, one is in the state of receiving Grace which helps in protection against hostile forces. A friend said that the practice of humility has opened an inner door in the consciousness to receive the light of divine knowledge that guides her in solving difficult problems at work. Being alone and a pioneer in the work assigned to her, she relies only on the guidance within for restoring rocky and unfertile land to develop a forest. This was a near impossible task of plantation, preservation and acquiring water in that terrain, to create bio-diversity. An unshakable Faith in the Divine Mother guided her steps, revealed ideas about which flowers and fruits to plant at a particular location and how to preserve rain water. One of the most challenging tasks faced by every country is protection of natural resources, preservation of bio-diversity and saving environment from pollution. The above message speaks about unity that must be established with the physical nature. How can this be achieved? It can be done when “Will and knowledge putting itself into contact and an understanding unity with the physical world.” This means that we must sincerely try to understand the physical world which includes everything on earth; plants, insects, animals, fish, river, sea and forests. There is an underlying unity of consciousness between all living and non-living entities. Not by any economic angle of reaping profit from nature but to live in harmony with all because the survival of each creature including human beings depends upon the survival of all. It is not need but greed that exploits the natural resources. Environmental laws have not curbed malpractices so far. This can only be done by a conscious and willed collaboration of man, nature and Divine.

The greatest challenge that most of us have is due to the stubborn habits of the physical mind and vital ego. The practice of humility in the physical nature helps to become quiet

and receptive to the inner voice. Most of our difficulties are due to our own resistance to change, but we blame people or circumstances for our sorrows and failures. Humility also teaches equanimity. It reminds us when we expect things to turn in our favour at our time and convenience. When we acknowledge a higher power guiding our destiny, we learn to wait, along with a steady faith in the working of the Divine in us and in the world gives us a constant energy to work. We, no longer focus on the goal, but on the journey.

In a most natural and spontaneous way humility develops in us a constant gratitude towards the Divine for everything; material and non-material. There are times when we lose touch and are in the outer surface physical, vital and mental consciousness, the sense of gratitude is not there. In its absence we often feel sad and tired of working. Humility in the physical nature brings in gratitude in the outer nature which constantly experiences joy and enthusiasm in work because all is done for the Mother. There is no pride regarding one's talents and virtues, nor false satisfaction in the success of work. One constantly acknowledges the Mother's help in the work done and offers all the results at Her feet.

Another experience with the practice of humility is increase in the widening of being, in the sense of accommodating the viewpoint of another person and working in harmony with fellow workers. Most often conflict in the family, community or workplace occurs because of the feeling of self-righteousness and vanity. Therefore, the change in attitude is necessary for the collective growth of consciousness. Flowers teach us to be generous, kind, loving and forgiving. It is a fact that the more we give, the more we can receive.

The following words of the Mother sum up the entire philosophy and yoga of Sri Aurobindo:

[Humility is] the recognition that one does not know, that one knows nothing, and that there may be something beyond what presently appears to us as being truest, noblest, most disinterested. True humility consists in referring oneself constantly to the Lord, in placing everything before Him.

It is very simple: when you tell people, "Be humble", they immediately think of being humble before other men, and that humility is not always desirable. True humility is humility before the Divine - that is, the precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, can do nothing, understands nothing without the Divine, that even if one is an exceptionally intelligent and capable person, one is nothing in comparison with the Divine Consciousness. And one has to keep that always, because always one has the true attitude of receptivity, a humble receptivity which does not put personal pretension in the way of the Divine. ( CWM; 5: 44-45)

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# LIFE



*Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit;  
our life must be a spiritually inspired effort  
to create a body of action  
for that great new birth and creation.  
Sri Aurobindo*



## On Psychic Being\*

*The Mother*

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness. ...

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.

*Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?*

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought—there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic—it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being.

If only you were an experienced observer, if you could tell what goes on in a person, simply by looking into his eyes!... It is said the eyes are the mirror of the soul; that is a popular way of speaking but if the eyes do not express to you the psychic, it is because it is very far behind, veiled by many things. Look carefully, then, into the eyes of little children, and you will see a kind of light—some describe it as candid—but so true, so true, which looks at the world with wonder. Well, this sense of wonder, it is the wonder of the psychic which sees the truth but does not understand much about the world, for it is too far from it. Children have this but as they learn more, become more intelligent, more educated, this is effaced, and you see all sorts of things in their eyes: thoughts, desires, passions, wickedness—but this kind of little flame, so pure, is no longer there. And you may be sure it is the mind that has got in there, and the psychic has gone very far behind.

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at school, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind. Such boys do not respond to the vibration. One would say they are made of wood or plaster.

(CWM 4: 25-27)

\*Title given by the editors

## Ego and its Role in becoming an Individual

Gopal Ahir

We will start from the childhood of a being/a person. A child (below 2 years) does not have a sense that he is a separate entity. His only want is satisfaction of his hunger. Once his hunger is satisfied, he is happy. 'I am a separate individual from the living beings around me', that sense develops later on slowly as he grows. But to separate yourself from others, a name is given to you by others or you accept a name. For example 'I am Gopal'; 'I exist'; 'I want'; and the famous 'I think therefore I am'. By the time you are grown up, your ego is fully developed and you start thinking and forming ideas independent of others. But when we are in deep sleep, there is no ego. Also an unconscious person is egoless.

### *What is Ego?*

As per the *Glossary of Terms in Sri Aurobindo's Writings*:

It is nothing fundamentally real in itself but only a practical constitution of our consciousness devised to centralise the activities of Nature in us. We perceive a formation of mental, physical, vital experience which distinguishes itself from the rest of being and that is what we think of as ourselves in nature—this individualisation of being in becoming. We then proceed to conceive of ourselves as some-thing which has thus individualised itself and only exists so long as it is individualised,—a temporary or at least a temporal becoming; or else we conceive of ourselves as someone who supports or causes the individualisation, an immortal being perhaps but limited by its individuality. This perception and this conception constitute our ego-sense. (p. 33)

The Mother says, "In order to become a conscious, individualised being, one needs his ego; that is why it is there. It is only when one has realised his own individuality sufficiently, has become a conscious, independent being with its own reality, that he no longer needs the ego. And at that time one can make an effort to get rid of it. ... And a certain number of years are needed, years of intensive inner formation, to become a being who thinks for himself, is conscious of his own will, and conscious of his own nature, his purpose of existence, independent of the human mass." (*Our Many Selves*: 105)

What is the purpose of my existence? I have often asked this question to myself. Is it to enjoy childhood, get an education, find a job, find a life partner, produce children, earn money, spend money after pleasure and then die? No, certainly not. I do not want to become an amorphous mass as the Mother said.

So if one does not want to become an amorphous mass, Mother says, "First one must become a conscious, well-knit, individualised being, who exists in himself, by himself, independently of all his surroundings. ... He receives from outside only what he wants to receive; he automatically refuses all that is not in conformity with his plan..." (*Our Many Selves*: 109-110)

Indian philosophy talks about ego purification. When your consciousness expands and becomes universal, you feel yourself a part of this large universe. Like a wave, when a wave rises, it seems to be a wave with an independent constitution and nature. But when it falls

back it merges with the sea and becomes part of the big, large, shoreless ocean from where it came. Thus it becomes universal.

In *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo talks about “The Three Modes of Nature”: 1. Tamasic nature 2. Rajasic nature and 3. Sattvic nature. Sri Aurobindo writes (234), that Sattvic nature is a better and more enlightened way one can deal with the surrounding impacts of life.

This is the mode of sattwa, the turn of Nature that is full of light and poise, directed to good, to knowledge, to delight and beauty, to happiness, right understanding, right equilibrium, right order: its temperament is the opulence of a bright clearness of knowledge and a lucent warmth of sympathy and closeness. (*The Synthesis of Yoga*: 234)

If I write in my words and my belief then this is the purification of ego. Purification of ego leads to the consummate achievement of the Sattvic nature. In India, ego is generally described as self-pride or self-admiration or self-centeredness. It is considered as a bad character or trait of a person. Such an ego would bring downfall of a person in the long run. But these writings by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother compiled in *Our Many Selves* helped me to understand that ego in a person is not a destructive trait if you use it as a tool for individualisation. If you have a pure ego, an empowering ego, it would help you to separate yourself from amorphous mass. I would say I have a conscious ego and my conscious ego has helped me in individualising myself and not becoming a being without a definite form, shapeless being without definite character or nature. Individualisation has helped me to take concrete decisions about my way of ideal/ spiritual life. I have not become a member of a hypocritical religious group or a society because of my individualisation.

When a seeker undergoes the process of individualisation he tends to ask; what is the purpose of my existence? Why does he question himself? Mother replies, “Simply because this is the nature of the mind! With the mind individualisation began and a very acute feeling of separation, also a kind of impression, more or less precise, of freedom of choice-- all that, all these psychological states are the natural consequences of mental life and they open the door to everything we see now, from aberrations to the most rigorous principles.” (*Our Many Selves*: 161)

What is the next step after individualisation? Mother talks about merging of one’s ego in the Divine:

...Before speaking of merging one’s ego in the Divine, one must first know a little what one is. The ego is there. Its necessity is that you become conscious, independent beings, individualised—I mean in the sense of independent—that you may not be the public square where every-thing goes criss-cross! That you may exist in yourselves. That is why there is an ego.....

(After a silence) And then, later, one offers all this to the Divine. Years of work are needed. You must not only ... become conscious of yourself, conscious in all details, but you must organise what you call ‘yourself’ around the psychic centre,

the divine centre of your being, so that it would make a single, coherent, fully conscious being. And as this divine centre is itself already consecrated entirely to the Divine, if everything is organised harmoniously around it, everything is consecrated to the Divine. And so when the Divine thinks it proper, when the time has come, when the work of individualisation is complete, then the Divine gives you permission to let your ego merge in Him, to live henceforward only for the Divine.” (*Our Many Selves*, p. 112)

For a spiritual seeker and a practitioner of Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, individualisation is a continuous process and depends on organisation, harmonisation, and unification, because as the Mother tells us: “A human being is made of many different parts and it takes time and conscious effort to harmonise and unify all these parts.” (*Our Many Selves*: 130).

In another text, we see that the Mother says: “...A truly harmonious personality implies a conscious arrangement of inner individualities. This arrangement may be effected spontaneously before birth, but that is rare. The arrangement is achieved later, by means of a discipline, a proper education. But to succeed in this, one must consciously take the psychic being as the centre, and arrange, harmonise the various individualities around it.” (*Our Many Selves*: 130-131)

Sri Aurobindo has written about integral yoga and subjects related to integral yoga in many of his books. He has drawn our attention to the practice of sadhana. He has written, “The Gita itself thus declares that the Yogin in his progress must pass beyond the written Truth ... beyond all that he has heard and all that he has yet to hear.... For he is not the sadhaka of a book or of many books; he is a sadhaka of the Infinite” (*The Synthesis of Yoga*: 55-56)

Before Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, we are all their students. A student is ready to learn and accept the knowledge imparted by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. A student is an ego-less person always eager to learn about integral yoga. I recite the following prayer often which is written by the Mother. The Mother calls it ‘A Student’s Prayer.’

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become  
May we fight successfully the great battle of the future,  
That is to be borne against the past that seeks to endure,  
So that the new things may manifest  
And we be ready to receive them.

### **Works Cited:**

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## A few Answers from the Students

***Explain the different parts of human personality from the point of view of Integral Yoga psychology?***

Human beings have no clear knowledge about different parts of the human personality. They feel that there are no different parts in human personality. We assume the name is the person and the mind is only a part. Some people even do not know about the other parts of the human being except their physical body. It is because of the influence of western education. Now there are no curricula in schools and colleges about the psychic and spiritual education. The psychic and spiritual education is the back bone of the Indian culture. So, people became ignorant and now they do not even know that the physical body of the human being consists of five natural elements. They do not know about the physical body, the astral body and the causal body and its functions.

We are composed of many parts, each of which contributes something to the total movement of our consciousness - thought, will, sensation, feeling and action. But we do not see these impulses; we are aware only of their confused results on the surface. The remedy can only come from the parts of the being that are already turned towards the Light. To call in the light of the Divine Consciousness from above, to bring the psychic being to the front and kindle a flame of aspiration which will awaken spiritually the outer mind and set on fire the vital being, is the way out.

As per the Yoga psychology, the human being is made up of many parts. The whole being has to be made one in the presence of Light so that all parts may act harmoniously according to the Truth. The consciousness has many parts and movements and in different conditions and different activities, it changes position and arranges its activities in a different way to suit what it is doing but most people are not aware of this because they live only on the surface and do not look into themselves. By doing sadhana, we can become conscious and notice these differences.

In waking consciousness, it shows us that a great part of our individual being is ignorant; it is steeped in the Inconscient, just as much as the life of the plant, the metal, the earth, the elements. But if we widen our consciousness by psychological experiment and observation and push beyond their normal bounds, we find how vast the sphere of this supposed Inconscient or this subconscious is in our total existence. The subconscious is a concealed consciousness and a small and fragmentary portion of our being is covered by our waking self-awareness.

The concealed self and consciousness are our real or whole being of which the outer is a part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a surface us to know our inner being. This is the first step towards a real self-knowledge. If we undertake this self-discovery, we can enlarge our knowledge and head towards the Superconscient. There is a superconscient part of our total existence where we can discover our highest self.

Everybody is an amalgamation of many personalities. It is a part of the Yogic perfection. In this Yoga, to accord and to transmute them is vital so as to “integrate” the human

personality. It is said that man is not made up of one piece but of many pieces and each part of him has a personality of its own. That is a truth which people have not yet realised. Psychologists have begun to glimpse it but only when there is a marked case of double or multiple personality disorder.

*Jagan Mohan Rao*

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A person or a being has different parts of personality which one is unaware of. It is only through widening of consciousness by the practice of sadhana that one can become aware of all the hidden personalities and be in harmony with oneself. It is in truth that one can be in contact with the Divine and consistently be under the power of the Divine. There is a reason why each and every person's viewpoint differs from one another. One person may be talkative in his/her workplace while that same person, when meet him at his home, is completely the opposite. Therefore, some beings act differently in different places and with different people. It also happens because of the things they already know or if something new has intrigued them. It is also through different perspectives of a being when a particular thing can give a person peace while the same thing will be disturbing to another. Every person witnesses a shift in personality throughout his or her life. As of now, it is only the psychologists or the people who are into psychology are able to understand it. But it can be better understood through yoga because by harmonizing the various parts of the being and by being conscious of the work we do and working towards truth, we can make each and every part of our body come in contact with the Divine. This is one sure way to succeed. By focusing on the changes that need to be done in the central being and by remaining true to the Divine and surrendering ourselves to the Divine, one can overcome all the difficulties. By becoming conscious and making each part of the personality aware of its true nature with the help of Divine, one is sure to progress.

*Sushmita Mallick*

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Our personality is made up of multiple components that we do not recognize while we function from the surface level. Whatever we know of ourselves is but only a minor part of ourselves. There is a vaster part of our personality that we do not know about. Our waking mind and ego, the surface nature of our self, are only a superimposition on the Self. The waking Self-awareness is a minor part of our being. Though we seem to perceive only a small section of the environment, the inner being perceives everything that is present in its environment. Unlike the surface nature, the inner being retains and can present immediately everything that it has received. The inner being needs no training for the aforementioned process and yet is capable of organizing and presenting the received information with little loss. The workings of the inner being have a wider and subtler reach extending beyond that of the physical senses. Knowing the inner being is the first step towards "real self-knowledge". The inner being is the subliminal self while below lies the subconscious and above is the superconscious nature of our total existence. The psychic being is the one to be developed through Yoga so that all other components are harmonized under its influence.

The multiple components of the being are to be integrated and harmonized. The activities of the components are changed in order to facilitate the movements of the Inner Being. Sadhana makes us aware of our components - "Yoga is nothing but practical psychology". Nature moves both the higher and lower nature. But that doesn't make it divine or undivine, respectively as Nature is also a part of the Divine. Each individual has a low point from where one has to choose to rise -towards the Divine. "The whole of life is the Yoga of Nature." Yoga is the process by which the lower nature within oneself is replaced by the higher nature of the Divine. Escaping from the world and attaining God requires no synthesis. Synthesis becomes necessary if we need complete transformation of our being into God existence. The method to follow is to surrender oneself completely to the Divine who can guide the instrument that has surrendered to It. The surrender, in terms of psychology, is that of the limited ego to the Infinite, thereby transcending the ego. Faith, courage and patience are the requirements. Though this seems difficult, it is the easiest and most definite in comparison to other paths.

Three features of this process are:

- There is no specific practice and hence, it happens with increasing levels of purpose in the individual.
- "Each man in this path has his own method of Yoga".
- The change happens without rejecting the state of components of the sadhaka's being.

All life is used as a means in Integral Yoga. All the once scattered energies, intentions and movements of the components in the lower states of evolution are harmonized and given purpose at the onset of the process of Yoga when there is an increasing self-awareness. A part of the foundation of Yoga is to become aware of the existence, workings and interactions of the various components of our personality. The pride of ignorance has to be surrendered to have the experience. The harmonization of the components must be around the psychic being. The descending Truth from above will harmonise the lower parts of the being. Despite the varying components of the being, we ignorantly and superficially assume it to be one single entity.

*Abhinav Kadambi*

***How does the development of Will and Imagination help in one's growth and Progress?***

Along with the skill of observation, the will to progress and to make perfect should be instilled at a very early stage. A constant and sincere example will help awaken this will to surmount and conquer. Once this resolution is firm, one has only to proceed rigorously and not succumb. This will can be cultivated like the muscles. It can be strengthened by effort. One has to choose with discernment the goal that one is to follow. The development of will and imagination helps one's growth and progress. One gains full knowledge of one's character and acquire control of one's movements to achieve perfect mastery and the transformation of all elements.

*Leelavathi T*

***How can suffering teach us to grow and become better persons? In what way do Will power,***

***Imagination and Faith aid in Personality Development?***

Suffering teaches us to grow and become a better person as we learn to face adversities in life without getting disturbed by them. Until we don't feel pain or we don't suffer, we enjoy the little pleasures of life. We are confined to it. We don't feel the need to turn towards the Divine. But once we experience pain and suffering, we look for a helping hand from the Divine. We learn that these things actually don't matter much in our life. What matters is our relationship with the Divine because he is our wisest and best friend who knows when to smite as well as to love. While we face suffering, we must keep faith in the Divine, as is said by Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri*.

Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break  
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,  
His slow inertia as of living stone.  
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,  
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,  
And never thought to exceed the human start  
And never learned to climb towards the Sun.

When we have a strong will power, we are able to face all challenges in life and are able to come out of them. When we imagine something, we send vibrations in the universe and increase the probability of that happening, be it a good imagination or a bad imagination. As the Mother has said that Fear is the magnifying glass which increases the possibility of that happening because we attract such vibrations around us. Imagination is just like a driver which takes us where we wish to reach.

Faith makes miracles happen. When we have faith, we surmount all the difficulties. When we have faith that the Mother is with us, we can do anything - anything means anything because the Mother is actually with us when we have faith. But there is a difference between faith, trust and belief. Faith should be unshakeable like a child's faith in the mother. It should be something which no reason or vital suggestions can disturb. And when we have this faith that the Mother is with us, who can harm us? A few examples of people with absolute faith are Meera Bai, Shabri, etc. who had an intense faith that the Lord existed and would come to them and indeed they had divine union. So, this is the significance of faith in life.

*Manjari Kedia*

***What are the characteristics of the psychic being?***

The psychic is not by definition that part of the being which is in direct touch with the Supramental plane, although once the connection with the supramental is made, it gives to it the readiest response.

The psychic being can come in direct contact with the Divine and is in touch with the lower triple manifestation of Mind, Life and Body. There is the divine element in all living beings but it stands hidden behind the ordinary consciousness and is not at first developed and so, is not always or often in the front; it expresses itself, so far as the imperfection of the instruments allows, by their means and under their limitations. It grows in the consciousness by Godward experience, gaining strength every time there is a higher movement. Thus, there is a developed psychic individuality - that which we call usually the psychic being. It



is always this psychic being that is real and often it is the secret cause of man's turning to the spiritual life and his greatest help in it. It is therefore that which we have to bring to the forefront in the Yoga.

The psychic is the soul that develops in the evolution - the Spirit is the self that is not affected by evolution. It is above it – only it is covered or concealed by the activity of Mind, Life and Body.

There is a difference between the psychic being and the self. The self is the Atman above which is one in all and remains always wide, free, pure, untouched by the actions of life in its ignorance. Its nature is peaceful, free. It is filled with light, wideness, Ananda. The psychic being (Antaratma) is the individual being which reincarnates and travels from birth to birth and undergoes experiences and grows by them till it is able to join itself with the free Atman above.

The psychic being is concealed in the depths, behind the heart centre. Love, joy and happiness come from the psychic being.

*Vani Sekhar Panigrahy*

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The psychic being has two aspects - first the soul and second our psychic personality. The psychic being expresses itself through its instruments, mental, vital and physical and is usually hidden. Only when a person by a strong determination does sadhana with an aim to awaken the psychic being, then it comes to the frontal zone.

The Bhagavad Gita describes the reason for all agony as 'desire'. We constantly strive to fulfil different kinds of desires, majority of them being materialistic. One desire gives rise to another and the chain keeps on lengthening. In a less amount of time, we are lost in the desires of the world which take us away from the realisation of the psychic being. Thus, if we really have to fulfil a desire why can't it be to know ourselves? As our revered Mother says, strive to know ourselves, our aim, why we are here. Once this desire takes place in our heart, then the psychic being is not far away and once it is awakened it becomes the medium of expression for all spiritual experiences.

The psychic being is different from the other overhead planes. It is without what we call the 'ego' or illusion. Sri Aurobindo describes the psychic being as pure, sweet, filled with light and tender. It has less of greatness and power and holds the strength of true perception. I would like to explain this a little. The psychic being is the true being or the true consciousness that we should try to search for in ourselves. When Sri Aurobindo says that it has less of greatness or power, it can be said that the psychic being is the awakened consciousness which is beyond all worldly measures and external movements. Thus, it does not have ego or pride. It is pure and sweet. Once we are beyond this worldliness, we come to see the cosmic truth, the true light which is in ourselves and in every being. When this is realised can our perception be distorted? Will we have the same way of looking at people and situations as we used to have previously? No. That is why the psychic being has the power of true perception. The outer being leads us to ego, pride, being judgmental, etc. Very few

people on this planet have realised the separation of the outer and the inner and hence, will continue to nourish all these worldly impurities. But once the psychic being comes in front, the veil is rent and we can see what our truth is. The psychic is in action even in ordinary life but through some or other media and this is its action is heavily veiled, needing always the mental or vital to express it, just as a writer many a times tries to express his own emotions and feelings through a play or a particular character in the play. It is what he feels but it gets conveyed to the people through the medium of the character. But the psychic being seldom gets the full chance to express itself in the outer consciousness as it is hidden. And for this we need Yoga or Sadhana. The ones, who quit very fast, remain in the veil of the outer being as realising the inner one is not a single sure shot. A strong determination is needed to get the psychic in front or to feel its presence. Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa said that there are pearls in the deep sea but one must hazard all perils to get them. So, can this be done in a single dive? And if we fail to get them in a single dive, can we conclude that the sea is without pearls? To get the pearls of the psychic being, one must dive again and again in the sea of sadhana without quitting in few attempts.

One of the natures of the psychic is luminous. It is full of light as it removes the darkness of ego. It makes us see the beauty of the highest consciousness and the beauty of the Divine which is spread over the universe like a cosmic quilt. The lines from a famous shloka very well define our journey from the outer being to the psychic being – *Tamasomaa Jyotirgamaya*. From darkness towards the light, that is all our journey is about!

*Samriddhi Karnik*

***How can we come in contact with the Inmost presence?***

The psychic being is imaged in the Vedic hymns as Agni, the flaming Will. It is always pointing in the upward direction and is developing. In most of us, it is present as the psychic essence. It gains experience from each birth. It is situated in the heart region. It is a direct link between earthly life and Divine Truth.

If one wants to see and realize the Divine within, the first step is to orient our consciousness inwards. In most humans the consciousness is in a fragmented state, i.e. between the mind, body, vital. He needs to gather this consciousness and start looking inwards. He needs to discipline his mind to look inwards, reduce the noise and calm the mind. The idea is to progressively silence the mind.

One needs to consciously close the mind to the sensory world (pratyahara). Aspire to connect with the flame within. Fix the mind on the inner light and try and cut out all thoughts (Dhyana). It is difficult in the initial stages with the mind constantly wandering. With relentless perseverance, one can reduce and finally quieten the mind. Mind needs to be controlled, disciplined and quietened into a habitual calm. The aim is to have a silent mind (Dharana). The world appears to be like watching a movie in this state. Constant and ceaseless vigil is required to remain connected to the inner light. One needs to inculcate purity, be joyful, helpful and promote harmonious feelings within and around us. An environment needs to be created which is conducive to the growth of the inner light. As the light grows

within us, it starts influencing our outer life. The process of surrender is a tapasya. It takes a very long time and could take a number of births to really start taking some shape.

Another method employed is to remain detached from the routine activity and hold the consciousness in a witness position. The activity will go on but we do not identify with it. Ceaseless vigilance and discipline are required for this. The paramount of all is the grace of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Without their help, it is very difficult.

*Hemant Shirwalkar*

***What did you learn about yourself in self-observation? Where does your consciousness dwell in the major part of the day; physical, vital, mental or psychic consciousness?***

Self-observation is self-awareness. Through self-observation, I study myself and my own being and came to know what is happening inside me, my thoughts, feelings, body sensations at any given moment. I connected with my breath. I remained aware of natural and normal respiration. It was difficult to make the mind concentrate using the object of natural respiration but it is very important in order to progress on this path. I came to know my own experience that if one adds any word to the incoming and outgoing breath and recite it repeatedly, the mind quickly becomes concentrated. After visualizing an image with closed eyes and observing respiration at the same time, the mind gets concentrated very easily. There will be very little difficulty to make the mind concentrate.

I gained full understanding of the body, the mind and mental states at the level of direct experience. I developed in the field of direct experience and gained knowledge of progressively subtler and subtler truths. First, I started observing things objectively, without reacting, layers of negativities and grossest truths of the body to the stage where I experienced the subtlest truths of the body. I observed the entire field of body and mind at the experiential level and found that it was impermanent, ephemeral, changing every moment. This was not a mere belief; I understood this truth of impermanence at the level of direct experience, until I reached a stage beyond mind and matter, which is the ultimate truth. I examined the truth about myself at the level of experience. Through self-observation, more presence came into my life automatically. The moment I realized that I am not present, I was present. Whenever I started observing my mind, I was no longer trapped in it. Another factor came in, something that was not the mind: the witnessing presence. It was present as the watcher of my mind, thoughts and emotions as well as my reactions in various situations. I was not as interested in my reactions as in the situations or the persons involved in the situations. I noticed also how often my attention was in the past or the future. I didn't judge or analyze what I observed. I was only watching thoughts, feeling emotion, observing my reactions.

*Ranjana Swain*

***In what way can the knowledge of the Psychic Being help in our growth and development?***

The psychic being or the inmost being is the soul principle that contains all soul possibilities. And it establishes these possibilities through its personality, developed across lives, on the surface level of each of its lives. It is the one in connection with the Divine. When the individual is still in association with the outer consciousness, his responses - physical, emotional, intellectual, etc. to the events around him hinder both himself and also

the development of things associated to him. The psychic being expresses its personality through these reactions. Its impressions continue to exist in the surface. Knowing the psychic being will enable us to play with these impressions. One who is a bit playful will test these impressions initially and then revert to the surface reactions. One who really wishes to delve deeper, will not focus on these impressions but will start viewing from the psychic perspective. A deeper understanding of the psychic being will then provide us with the ability to ponder well during various situations. We will start to perceive the broader notions of the events, connect it universally and always think about the progress. We will have a greater hand at analysing and deducing thoughts along with the ideology that conclusions restrict us and hence, we will push ourselves to find more about Truth. The psychic being has major qualities like pureness, sweetness, truth and it aims for universality. It tries to expand even beyond the observable limit, etc. These qualities will be reflected in the layer of the inner consciousness.

As we expand our inner consciousness, we will eventually overlap it over the outer consciousness and we will be constantly awake all the time. This awakening puts the seed for growth of the individual in various aspects with the help of harmonious actions from all the parts of the being.

*Sheela Deshpande*

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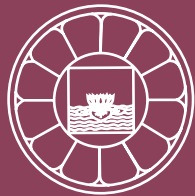
There is then no real division or limitation of being, no fundamental contradiction of the omnipresent Reality; but there does seem to be a real limitation of consciousness: there is an ignorance of self, a veiling of the inner Divinity, and all imperfection is its consequence. For we identify ourselves mentally, vitally, physically with this superficial ego-consciousness which is our first insistent self-experience; this does impose on us, not a fundamentally real, but a practical division with all the untoward consequences of that separateness from the Reality.

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In the whole creation the earth has a place of distinction, because unlike any other planet it is evolutionary with a psychic entity at its centre. In it, India, in particular, is a divinely chosen country.

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India is the *guru* of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit.

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Sri Aurobindo