

THE PEACOCK LETTER



THE INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE STUDY CENTER

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THE INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE STUDY CENTER

The Integral Knowledge Study Center was formed in 1979, when a visit from India by M. P. Pandit and Vasanti Rao brought together a number of seekers into a collective endeavour of study, meditation, and inner growth. The overarching goal of the Center, in harmony with the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, has since been to aid in the discovery of the secret soul of delight that dwells within each person, and to promote the integral perfection of life that can flow from this discovery of authentic being.

A number of activities are sponsored that support this spiritual search, but the core of the Center's collective life is a weekly study group that meets on Sunday evenings. Appropriate books drawn from the extensive literature of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother serve as the focus of these meetings, where probing, positive discussions among the participants enhance clarity and lead into a concluding group meditation.

Among other public offerings are seminars and workshops covering a wide variety of themes relating to spiritual life, the viewing of significant films dealing with the growth of consciousness, and the occasional sponsorship of guest speakers. Private counselling and instruction in meditation are also available for individuals through the Center without charge.

On August 15, 1983, Sri Aurobindo's Relics were inaugurated at the Center. It marked the first time that the Relics had ever left India for another country. For many seekers in America the Relics offer profound significance and continuing inspiration.

THE PEACOCK LETTER

The Peacock Letter is an online quarterly published by the Integral Knowledge Study Center, 221 Clematis Street, Pensacola, Florida 32503, a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation. You can find us online at iksc.org, and email us at randhicks@iksc.org. Requests for digital subscriptions to The Peacock Letter should be sent to the Integral Knowledge Study Center at one of the above addresses. Contributions to defray associated expenses are appreciated. For past issues of The Peacock Letter and other information about the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, please write to us.

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THE DAWN AND OUR OFFERING

Rand Hicks

“It was the hour before the Gods awake.” We are always called to wakefulness when we read the mantric line with which Sri Aurobindo opens Savitri, his epic poem. The import of the opening moment, announcing the arrival of Dawn, contains a signal lesson for the soul rising to meet this day or any day: the promise and potential of a transformative moment. More than a symbol, it is an actual experience available to all.

Awake early and look deep within. In the hush before dawn, the inner forces can be gathered into order. In this favorable climate we can intensify aspiration more easily and draw the soul to the front of our nature. This profound moment of self-gathering and reflection recalls the timeless Indian motif of the *brāhma-muhūrta*, the divine hour: in the undisturbed quiet before day begins, the Divine acts without the interferences of the darting mind and confused life-energies. The ancient Sanskrit term, *cid-ghana*, suggests this, too, describing a great Consciousness dense and deep — the gathered self-awareness of the Divine prior to manifestation. Dawn radiantly pours out that potential. She is the face of the Divine Mother, Aditi. Dawn symbolizes the point of transition, the aperture through which the divine consciousness releases its multitudinous powers, the auspicious moment when the Infinite enters time and space. And we are one of its aspects, moving and conscious in the world. When we pattern our personal life-rhythms in partnership with the cosmos, we harmonize and ground ourselves in the Being behind the becoming.

Before dawn comes, begin well. Sit for meditation, concentrate intensely, summon and marshall self-awareness. The effort to consecrate the nature evokes the hidden deity. From its deep and felicitous composure, the dynamic soul comes forward more and more, day by day, ensphering, enriching, and offering every aspect of the natural being. The offering enables the climb. The dawning awareness of the soul empowers the lift: our active life expresses the aspiration, the process of progress, the finding of light, the scattering of darkness, the fulfilment of union, yoga.



Sunrise in Pondicherry

VEDIC IMAGES OF DAWN

व्युच्छन्ती जीवमुदीरयन्त्युषा मृतं कं च न बोधयन्ती
उषो यदग्निं समिधे च्चर्तु वि यदावृक्षक्षंसा सूर्यस्य
कियात्या यत्समया भवाति या व्युषुर्याश्च नूनं व्युच्छान्
अनु पूर्वाः कृपते वावशाना प्रदीघ्याना जोषमन्याभिरेति

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming, — Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead. . . . What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.

Kutsa Angirasa — Rig Veda I.113. 8, 10.
(Translated by Sri Aurobindo,
The Life Divine, page 1.)

तवेदुषो व्युषि सूर्यस्य च् सं भुक्तेन गमेमहि
प्रति त्वा दुहितर्दिव उषो जीरा अभुत्समहि

The Sun rising sends up its beams in that moment of dawn, a flaming star. O Dawn, of the Sun's brightening and your own, may we together receive our share.

Rishi Vasistha — Rig Veda VII.81.2.





“Heroic Action”
(ruellia makoyana)

PEACOCK’S FAN

If you have not recently visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram’s websites and the materials available there, then please survey <http://www.sriurobindoashram.org>, <http://www.sriurobindoashram.info>, and <http://www.sriurobindoashram.com>. On these sites are links to electronic versions of the collected works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and much more.

We welcomed a number of dear friends in recent months, including Diana Skrutskie from North Carolina, Bill Flick from Alabama, Kamaniya and Keshavacharya (of Prema Hara) from New York, Wayne Hicks from Texas, Judy and Kent Ellis from California and Colorado, Adam Whitlock from California, Sraddhalu Ranade from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, Wolfram and Sue Verlaan from Texas, and Angela Eades from Hawaii.

Dr. R.L. Kashyap’s remarkable work with the Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture Trust in Bangalore continues to develop. Visit their updated website at www.vedah.com and follow the links to view their new publications (including Kapali Sastry’s translation of The Mother into Sanskrit and a new release of part of the Atharva Veda.) Note their experimental farm at www.auroveda.org.

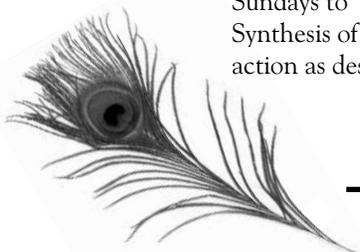
Having reviewed some of Mother’s commentaries and several of Sri Aurobindo’s unpublished essays, we recently shifted on Sundays to “The Yoga of Divine Works” in The Synthesis of Yoga to focus upon enlightened action as described by Sri Aurobindo.

THE DIVINE WORKER

Sri Aurobindo

To attain to the divine birth, — a divinising new birth of the soul into a higher consciousness, — and to do divine works both as a means towards that before it is attained and as an expression of it after it is attained, is then all the Karmayoga of the Gita. The Gita does not try to define works by any outward signs through which it can be recognisable to an external gaze, measurable by the criticism of the world; it deliberately renounces even the ordinary ethical distinctions by which men seek to guide themselves in the light of the human reason. The signs by which it distinguishes divine works are all profoundly intimate and subjective; the stamp by which they are known is invisible, spiritual, supra-ethical.

They are recognisable only by the light of the soul from which they come. For, it says, “what is action and what is inaction, as to this even the sages are perplexed and deluded,” because, judging by practical, social, ethical, intellectual standards, they discriminate by accidentals and do not go to the root of the matter; “I will declare to thee that action by the knowledge of which thou shalt be released from all ills. One has to understand about action as well as to understand about wrong action and about inaction one has to understand; thick and tangled is the way of works.” Action in the world is like a deep forest, *gahana*, through which man goes stumbling as best he can, by the light of the ideas of his time, the standards of his personality, his environment, or rather of many times, many personalities, layers of thought and ethics from many social stages all inextricably confused together, temporal and conventional amidst all their claim to absoluteness and immutable truth, empirical and irrational in spite of their aping of right reason. And finally the sage seeking in the midst of it all a highest foundation of fixed law and an original truth finds himself obliged to raise the last supreme question, whether all action and life itself are not a delusion and a snare and whether cessation from action, *akarma*, is not the last resort of the tired and disillusioned human soul. But, says Krishna, in this matter even the sages are perplexed and deluded. For by action, by works, not by inaction comes the knowledge and the release.

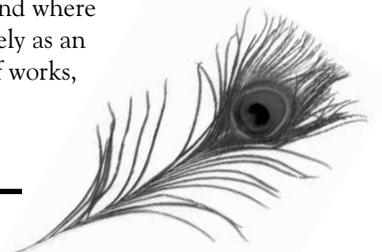


What then is the solution? what is that type of works by which we shall be released from the ills of life, from this doubt, this error, this grief, from this mixed, impure and baffling result even of our purest and best-intentioned acts, from these million forms of evil and suffering? No outward distinctions need be made, is the reply; no work the world needs, be shunned; no limit or hedge set round our human activities; on the contrary, all actions should be done, but from a soul in Yoga with the Divine, *yuktah kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*. *Akarma*, cessation from action is not the way; the man who has attained to the insight of the highest reason, perceives that such inaction is itself a constant action, a state subject to the workings of Nature and her qualities. The mind that takes refuge in physical inactivity, is still under the delusion that it and not Nature is the doer of works; it has mistaken inertia for liberation; it does not see that even in what seems absolute inertia greater than that of the stone or clod, Nature is at work, keeps unimpaired her hold. On the contrary in the full flood of action the soul is free from its works, is not the doer, not bound by what is done, and he who lives in the freedom of the soul, not in the bondage of the modes of Nature, alone has release from works. This is what the Gita clearly means when it says that he who in action can see inaction and can see action still continuing in cessation from works, is the man of true reason and discernment among men. This saying hinges upon the Sankhya distinction between Purusha and Prakriti, between the free inactive soul, eternally calm, pure and unmoved in the midst of works, and ever active Nature operative as much in inertia and cessation as in the overt turmoil of her visible hurry of labour. This is the knowledge which the highest effort of the discriminating reason, the *buddhi*, gives to us, and therefore whoever possesses it is the truly rational and discerning man, *sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu*, — not the perplexed thinker who judges life and works by the external, uncertain and impermanent distinctions of the lower reason. Therefore the liberated man is not afraid of action, he is a large and universal doer of all works, *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*; not as others do them in subjection to Nature, but poised in the silent calm of the soul, tranquilly in Yoga with the Divine. The Divine is the lord of his works, he is only their channel through the



instrumentality of his nature conscious of and subject to her Lord. By the flaming intensity and purity of this knowledge all his works are burned up as in a fire and his mind remains without any stain or disfiguring mark from them, calm, silent, unperturbed, white and clean and pure. To do all in this liberating knowledge, without the personal egoism of the doer, is the first sign of the divine worker.

The second sign is freedom from desire; for where there is not the personal egoism of the doer, desire becomes impossible; it is starved out, sinks for want of a support, dies of inanition. Outwardly the liberated man seems to undertake works of all kinds like other men, on a larger scale perhaps with a more powerful will and driving-force, for the might of the divine will works in his active nature; but from all his inceptions and undertakings the inferior concept and nether will of desire is entirely banished, *sarve samārambhaḥ kāmasaṅkalpavarjitāḥ*. He has abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, and where one does not work for the fruit, but solely as an impersonal instrument of the Master of works,



desire can find no place, — not even the desire to serve successfully, for the fruit is the Lord's and determined by him and not by the personal will and effort, or to serve with credit and to the Master's satisfaction, for the real doer is the Lord himself and all glory belongs to a form of his Shakti missioned in the nature and not to the limited human personality. The human mind and soul of the liberated man does nothing, *na kiñcit karoti*; even though through his nature he engages in action, it is the Nature, the executive Shakti, it is the conscious Goddess governed by the divine Inhabitant who does the work.

It does not follow that the work is not to be done perfectly, with success, with a right adaptation of means to ends: on the contrary a perfect working is easier to action done tranquilly in Yoga than to action done in the blindness of hopes and fears, lamed by the judgments of the stumbling reason, running about amidst the eager trepidations of the hasty human will: Yoga, says the Gita elsewhere, is the true skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*. But all this is done impersonally by the action of a great universal light and power operating through the individual nature. The Karmayogin knows that the power given to him will be adapted to the fruit decreed, the divine thought behind the work equated with the work he has to do, the will in him, — which will not be wish or desire, but an impersonal drive of conscious power directed towards an aim not his own, — subtly regulated in its energy and direction by the divine wisdom. The result may be success, as the ordinary mind understands it, or it may seem to that mind to be defeat and failure; but to him it is always the success intended, not by him, but by the all-wise manipulator of action and result, because he does not seek for victory, but only for the fulfilment of the divine will and wisdom which works out its ends through apparent failure as well as and often with greater force than through apparent triumph. Arjuna, bidden to fight, is assured of victory; but even if certain defeat were before him, he must still fight because that is the present work assigned to him as his immediate share in the great sum of energies by which the divine will is surely accomplished.

The liberated man has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions;

he receives what the divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none: what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment; what goes from him he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control; they are free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things. His action is indeed a purely physical action, *śārīram kevalam karma*; for all else comes from above, is not generated on the human plane, is only a reflection of the will, knowledge, joy of the divine Purushottama. Therefore he does not by a stress on doing and its objects bring about in his mind and heart any of those reactions which we call passion and sin. For sin consists not at all in the outward deed, but in an impure reaction of the personal will, mind and heart which accompanies it or causes it; the impersonal, the spiritual is always pure, *apāpavidham*, and gives to all that it does its own inalienable purity. This spiritual impersonality is a third sign of the divine worker. All human souls, indeed, who have attained to a certain greatness and largeness are conscious of an impersonal Force or Love or Will and Knowledge working through them, but they are not free from egoistic reactions, sometimes violent enough, of their human personality. But this freedom the liberated soul has attained; for he has cast his personality into the impersonal, where it is no longer his, but is taken up by the divine Person, the Purushottama, who uses all finite qualities infinitely and freely and is bound by none. He has become a soul and ceased to be a sum of natural qualities; and such appearance of personality as remains for the operations of Nature, is something unbound, large, flexible, universal; it is a free mould for the Infinite, it is a living mask of the Purushottama.

[To be concluded.]

(From Essays on the Gita, CWSA, Vol. 19, pages 177-181.)



The Divine Worker

*I face earth's happenings with an equal soul;
In all are heard Thy steps: Thy unseen feet
Tread Destiny's pathways in my front. Life's whole
Tremendous theorem is Thou complete.*

*No danger can perturb my spirit's calm:
My acts are Thine; I do Thy works and pass;
Failure is cradled on Thy deathless arm,
Victory is Thy passage mirrored in Fortune's glass.*

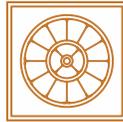
*In this rude combat with the fate of man
Thy smile within my heart makes all my strength;
Thy Force in me labours at its grandiose plan,
Indifferent to the Time-snake's crawling length.*

*No power can slay my soul; it lives in Thee.
Thy presence is my immortality.*

Arichandor



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*The Divine's Presence gives
us peace in strength, serenity
in action and an unchanging
happiness in the midst of
all circumstances.*

With my blessings
