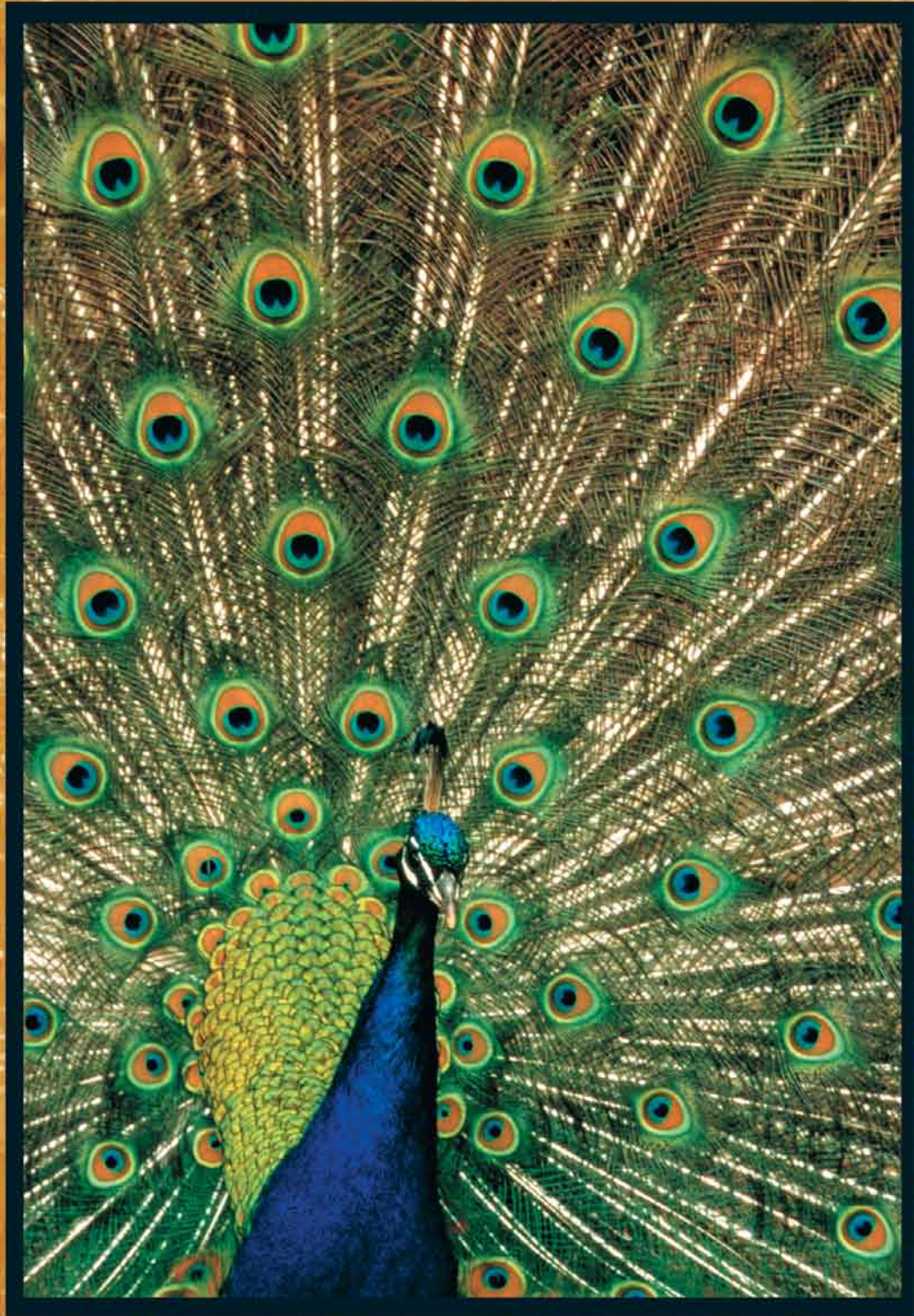


# THE PEACOCK LETTER



THE INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE STUDY CENTER

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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

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## A FLOWERING LIFE

Rand Hicks

*durjanaḥ sajjano bhūyāt  
sajjanaḥ śāntim āpnuyāt  
śānto mucyeta bandhebhyo  
muktāścānyān vimocayet*“May the wicked  
become virtuous. May the virtuous attain peace. May  
the peaceful be free from bonds. May the freed free  
others.”

This simple prayer, untraceable in India’s past, reminds us of what we may become. We are souls emerging and evolving through matter’s obscurity with no upper limit to our growth. No one in this world is sitting still. We grow sinuously, adventurously, from level to level. We are all learning and we are learning too to love.

Certainly we can push from us the crooked self-centeredness that mistranslates what our unique soul possesses and misinterprets what the world offers. We can move from darkness to light by choosing it. Action will learn to follow a sincere will. And when we act without ego and with a heart and mind equal to all, then we make a real offering of our lives, we experience the sacred in every circumstance and in every dimension. We become tranquil and pure and sattwic. We consecrate our experience in that selfless offering, we make our lives sacred. The Divine possesses us more and more. And we experience the deep satisfaction of a peace that transcends all and yet permeates all.

Peace is not a final goal of the Spirit but a cardinal attribute; peace is its nature, so to speak. Part of our journey is spiritually realized when we no longer need the definitions of nature to know who we are and what we are. When the form does not bind, when time does not limit, when we are delightfully conscious of our real being, then we are unshakably free. But a liberated awareness does not free the form, and to transform the vehicle itself is the next great task before us.

And that calls us to the context of our life. We do not live singly or in a vacuum. All the world around is That One (*tad ekam* in Vedic Sanskrit) which is configured in myriad shapes and planes in an encompassing universality. That is situated in us even as it is situated in the world; its oneness



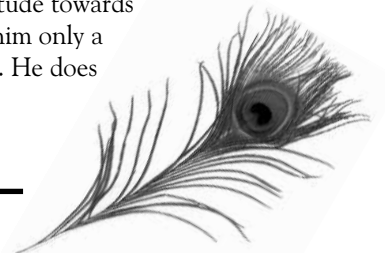
*Collective Harmony*

is expressed individually and cosmically without losing its essentiality. Our worldly business is incomplete if we do not recognize our responsibility to the One in all. We must work to liberate the delight in our fellows, in society, in all the beings abounding on our precious globe. To us none is in essence unlovable or unreachable or unteachable. If we have been graced with the awareness of soul or Self, then we may be called to soulfully greet the forms we meet working in the world. The ancient Indian prayed that the freed should free others. So first we lift and liberate ourselves from ignorance, then seed the transformation of our social being. And we shall sincerely serve the truth emerging across all the cosmos, in its uncountable forms of wonderment.

## THE DIVINE WORKER

*Sri Aurobindo*

The result of this knowledge, this desirelessness and this impersonality is a perfect equality in the soul and the nature. Equality is the fourth sign of the divine worker. He has, says the Gita, passed beyond the dualities; he is *dvandvātīta*. We have seen that he regards with equal eyes, without any disturbance of feeling, failure and success, victory and defeat; but not only these, all dualities are in him surpassed and reconciled. The outward distinctions by which men determine their psychological attitude towards the happenings of the world, have for him only a subordinate and instrumental meaning. He does

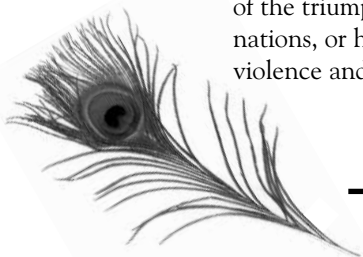


not ignore them, but he is above them. Good happening and evil happening, so all-important to the human soul subject to desire, are to the desireless divine soul equally welcome since by their mingled strand are worked out the developing forms of the eternal good. He cannot be defeated, since all for him is moving towards the divine victory in the Kurukshetra of Nature, *dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre*, the field of doings which is the field of the evolving Dharma, and every turn of the conflict has been designed and mapped by the foreseeing eye of the Master of the battle, the Lord of works and Guide of the dharma. Honour and dishonour from men cannot move him, nor their praise nor their blame; for he has a greater clear-seeing judge and another standard for his action, and his motive admits no dependence upon worldly rewards. Arjuna the Kshatriya prizes naturally honour and reputation and is right in shunning disgrace and the name of coward as worse than death; for to maintain the point of honour and the standard of courage in the world is part of his dharma: but Arjuna the liberated soul need care for none of these things, he has only to know the *kartavyam karma*, the work which the supreme Self demands from him, and to do that and leave the result to the Lord of his actions. He has passed even beyond that distinction of sin and virtue which is so all-important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimise the hold of its egoism and lighten the heavy and violent yoke of its passions, — the liberated has risen above these struggles and is seated firmly in the purity of the witnessing and enlightened soul. Sin has fallen away from him, and not a virtue acquired and increased by good action and impaired or lost by evil action, but the inalienable and unalterable purity of a divine and selfless nature is the peak to which he has climbed and the seat upon which he is founded. There the sense of sin and the sense of virtue have no starting-point or applicability.

Arjuna, still in the ignorance, may feel in his heart the call of right and justice and may argue in his mind that abstention from battle would be a sin entailing responsibility for all the suffering that injustice and oppression and the evil karma of the triumph of wrong bring upon men and nations, or he may feel in his heart the recoil from violence and slaughter and argue in his mind

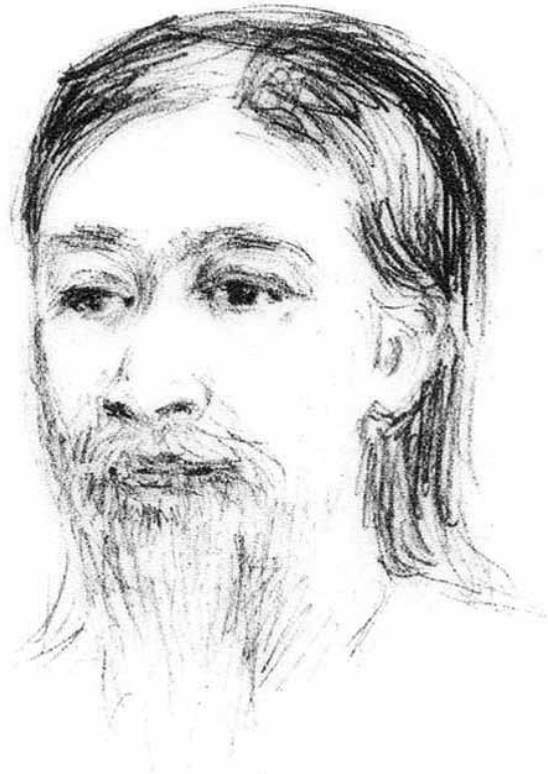
that all shedding of blood is a sin which nothing can justify. Both of these attitudes would appeal with equal right to virtue and reason and it would depend upon the man, the circumstances and the time which of these might prevail in his mind or before the eyes of the world. Or he might simply feel constrained by his heart and his honour to support his friends against his enemies, the cause of the good and just against the cause of the evil and oppressive. The liberated soul looks beyond these conflicting standards; he sees simply what the supreme Self demands from him as needful for the maintenance or for the bringing forward of the evolving Dharma. He has no personal ends to serve, no personal loves and hatreds to satisfy, no rigidly fixed standard of action which opposes its rock-line to the flexible advancing march of the progress of the human race or stands up defiant against the call of the Infinite. He has no personal enemies to be conquered or slain, but sees only men who have been brought up against him by circumstances and the will in things to help by their opposition the march of destiny. Against them he can have no wrath or hatred; for wrath and hatred are foreign to the divine nature. The Asura's desire to break and slay what opposes him, the Rakshasa's grim lust of slaughter are impossible to his calm and peace and his all-embracing sympathy and understanding. He has no wish to injure, but on the contrary a universal friendliness and compassion, *maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca*: but this compassion is that of a divine soul overlooking men, embracing all other souls in himself, not the shrinking of the heart and the nerves and the flesh which is the ordinary human form of pity: nor does he attach a supreme importance to the life of the body, but looks beyond to the life of the soul and attaches to the other only an instrumental value. He will not hasten to slaughter and strife, but if war comes in the wave of the Dharma, he will accept it with a large equality and a perfect understanding and sympathy for those whose power and pleasure of domination he has to break and whose joy of triumphant life he has to destroy.

For in all he sees two things, the Divine inhabiting every being equally, the varying manifestation unequal only in its temporary circumstances. In the animal and man, in the dog, the unclean outcaste and the learned and



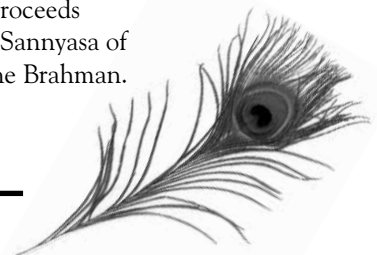
virtuous Brahmin, in the saint and the sinner, in the indifferent and the friendly and the hostile, in those who love him and benefit and those who hate him and afflict, he sees himself, he sees God and has at heart for all the same equal kindness, the same divine affection. Circumstances may determine the outward clasp or the outward conflict, but can never affect his equal eye, his open heart, his inner embrace of all. And in all his actions there will be the same principle of soul, a perfect equality, and the same principle of work, the will of the Divine in him active for the need of the race in its gradually developing advance towards the Godhead.

Again, the sign of the divine worker is that which is central to the divine consciousness itself, a perfect inner joy and peace which depends upon nothing in the world for its source or its continuance; it is innate, it is the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, it is the very nature of divine being. The ordinary man depends upon outward things for his happiness; therefore he has desire; therefore he has anger and passion, pleasure and pain, joy and grief; therefore he measures all things in the balance of good fortune and evil fortune. None of these things can affect the divine soul; it is ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, *nitya-trpto nirāśrayaḥ*; for its delight, its divine ease, its happiness, its glad light are eternal within, ingrained in itself, *ātma-ratiḥ, antaḥ-sukho 'ntar-ārāmas tathāntar-jyotir eva yaḥ*. What joy it takes in outward things is not for their sake, not for things which it seeks in them and can miss, but for the self in them, for their expression of the Divine, for that which is eternal in them and which it cannot miss. It is without attachment to their outward touches, but finds everywhere the same joy that it finds in itself, because its self is theirs, has become one self with the self of all beings, because it is united with the one and equal Brahman in them through all their differences, *brahmayoga-yuktātmā, sarvabhūtmāma-bhūtmāmā*. It does not rejoice in the touches of the pleasant or feel anguish in the touches of the unpleasant; neither the wounds of things, nor the wounds of friends, nor the wounds of enemies can disturb the firmness of its outgazing mind or bewilder its receiving heart; this soul is in its nature, as the Upanishad puts it, *avranam*,



without wound or scar. In all things it has the same imperishable Ananda, *sukham akṣayam āsnute*.

That equality, impersonality, peace, joy, freedom do not depend on so outward a thing as doing or not doing works. The Gita insists repeatedly on the difference between the inward and the outward renunciation, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*. The latter, it says, is valueless without the former, hardly possible even to attain without it, and unnecessary when there is the inward freedom. In fact *tyāga* itself is the real and sufficient Sannyasa. "He should be known as the eternal Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires; free from the dualities he is happily and easily released from all bondage." The painful process of outward Sannyasa, *duḥkham āptum*, is an unnecessary process. It is perfectly true that all actions, as well as the fruit of action, have to be given up, to be renounced, but inwardly, not outwardly, not into the inertia of Nature, but to the Lord in sacrifice, into the calm and joy of the Impersonal from whom all action proceeds without disturbing his peace. The true Sannyasa of action is the reposing of all works on the Brahman.



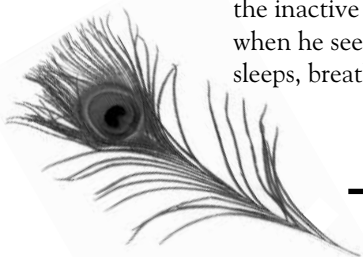
“He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing (or founding) his works on the Brahman, *brahmanyādhāya karmāṇi*, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus-leaf.” Therefore the Yogins first “do works with the body, mind, understanding, or even merely with the organs of action, abandoning attachment, for self-purification, *saṅgam tyaktvātmasuddhaye*. By abandoning attachment to the fruits of works the soul in union with Brahman attains to peace of rapt foundation in Brahman, but the soul not in union is attached to the fruit and bound by the action of desire.” The foundation, the purity, the peace once attained, the embodied soul perfectly controlling its nature, having renounced all its actions by the mind, inwardly, not outwardly, “sits in its nine-gated city neither doing nor causing to be done.” For this soul is the one impersonal Soul in all, the all-pervading Lord, *prabhu, vibhu*, who, as the impersonal, neither creates the works of the world, nor the mind’s idea of being the doer, *na karṭṛvaṁ na karmāṇi*, nor the coupling of works to their fruits, the chain of cause and effect. All that is worked out by the Nature in the man, *svabhāva*, his principle of self-becoming, as the word literally means. The all-pervading Impersonal accepts neither the sin nor the virtue of any: these are things created by the ignorance in the creature, by his egoism of the doer, by his ignorance of his highest self, by his involution in the operations of Nature, and when the self-knowledge within him is released from this dark envelope, that knowledge lights up like a sun the real self within him; he knows himself then to be the soul supreme above the instruments of Nature. Pure, infinite, inviolable, immutable, he is no longer affected; no longer does he imagine himself to be modified by her workings. By complete identification with the Impersonal he can, too, release himself from the necessity of returning by birth into her movement.

And yet this liberation does not at all prevent him from acting. Only, he knows that it is not he who is active, but the modes, the qualities of Nature, her triple *guṇas*. “The man who knows the principles of things thinks, his mind in Yoga (with the inactive Impersonal), ‘I am doing nothing’; when he sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes, speaks, takes, ejects, opens his

eyes or closes them, he holds that it is only the senses acting upon the objects of the senses.” He himself, safe in the immutable, unmodified soul, is beyond the grip of the three *guṇas*, *triguṇātīta*; he is neither sattvic, rajasic nor tamasic; he sees with a clear untroubled spirit the alternations of the natural modes and qualities in his action, their rhythmic play of light and happiness, activity and force, rest and inertia. This superiority of the calm soul observing its action but not involved in it, this *traiguṇātītya*, is also a high sign of the divine worker. By itself the idea might lead to a doctrine of the mechanical determinism of Nature and the perfect aloofness and irresponsibility of the soul; but the Gita effectively avoids this fault of an insufficient thought by its illumining supertheistic idea of the Purushottama. It makes it clear that it is not in the end Nature which mechanically determines its own action; it is the will of the Supreme which inspires her; he who has already slain the Dhritarashtrians, he of whom Arjuna is only the human instrument, a universal Soul, a transcendent Godhead is the master of her labour. The reposing of works in the Impersonal is a means of getting rid of the personal egoism of the doer, but the end is to give up all our actions to that great Lord of all, *sarva-loka-maheśvara*. “With a consciousness identified with the Self, renouncing all thy actions into Me, *mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātmacetasā*, freed from personal hopes and desires, from the thought of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, delivered from the fever of the soul, fight,” work, do my will in the world. The Divine motives, inspires, determines the entire action; the human soul impersonal in the Brahman is the pure and silent channel of his power; that power in the Nature executes the divine movement. Such only are the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*, for in nothing does he act from a personal inception; such are the actions of the accomplished Karmayogin. They rise from a free spirit and disappear without modifying it, like waves that rise and disappear on the surface of conscious, immutable depths. *Gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-cetasah, yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagraṁ pravṛityate*.

[Concluded.]

(Essays on the Gita, CWSA, Vol. 19, pp. 181-187.)



*O Thou of whom I am the instrument,  
O secret Spirit and Nature housed in me,  
Let all my mortal being now be blent  
In Thy still glory of divinity.*

*I have given my mind to be dug Thy channel mind,  
I have offered up my will to be Thy will:  
Let nothing of myself be left behind  
In our union mystic and unutterable.*

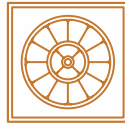
*My heart shall throb with the world-beats of Thy love,  
My body become Thy engine for earth-use;  
In my nerves and veins Thy rapture's streams shall move;  
My thoughts shall be hounds of Light for Thy power to loose.*

*Keep only my soul to adore eternally  
And meet Thee in each form and soul of Thee.*

*Arichochilobos*



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*Let us keep flaming  
in our heart the  
fire of progress.*

*With my blessings*

