

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.

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TOWARDS PERFECTION

Rand Hicks

A thousand years ago, Goraksha Nath attempted to divinize his body. Beginning in Bengal with Buddhist tantra, he met and consumed all philosophies in his growing yogic experience, dynamically crossed India to its northwest region in a nondual state of awareness, and eventually conferred the power of his perfection, *siddhi*, into the forms and forces of *haṭha yoga*. He declared the omnipresence of divinity and meant to demonstrate it in life.

A thousand years later, the Mother reasserts matter's inherent right to divinity. Comfortable in every sphere of awareness, an adept of every path she encountered, she telescopes all teachings, every perspective, each insight into the conscious cells of her body. Her practical life is a long chapter in the book of transformation, working from within as well as from above. Like Goraksha Nath before her, she attempts the perfection of the body, but from a more potent source, utilizing the height and power of the supramental. Her genius is to transport the higher, anandic states into the body's awareness. An incarnate force of love and progress and inclusion, her aim is what we feebly call integration. We continue to pursue those aims in our own developing practices.

But consider how Goraksha Nath presaged this difficult yogic work a millennium back as spirit, power, and person. A realized yogin, his insights are partly revealed in the *Siddha-Siddhānta-Paddhati*. Core to his experience, which flowers into philosophy, is the supreme reality described as Brahman, a conscious existence whose nature is delight. But his experience is not of an utterly blank or void or featureless or passive reality. Brahman is dynamic, expansive, and from its essentiality comes the flow of a diverse self-manifestation. The real essence of being reveals or invests itself in a universal expression of its delight. The world is not an accident. Call it Brahman, give it a name, call it Shiva, but That loves to play and sport within its own supreme nature in which its inherent poles of power and serene immobility are interlocked in a divine dance. Call it Shiva and Shakti, the Two-in-One ever in union, and that union is *cid-vilāsa*, the play of consciousness figuring itself as

the universe. Yet to speak of this expressed reality as mere or sheer being, as some philosophies will, ignores another aspect central to Goraksha Nath's experience: the All is an organized whole summed up in the Person of Parapinda, the vast body of the Godhead. To borrow here from Sri Aurobindo, the Divine may not be seen merely as an existence but as an existent.

Of interest, too, is the Siddha's notation of the several planes of universal being, traceable and contactable within our personal inner natures in the now world-famous *cakra* system. The seven or nine chakras detailed by Goraksha Nath replicate the range and various conscious powers of the cosmic being in our own bodies. All that is in the universe is within us, too, as this tantric teaching tells us.

For Goraksha Nath, then, spiritual realization as an absorbed trance is not the entire purpose of yoga. The state of *samādhi* is an intermediate point. His sadhana aims at the perfect realization of the Supreme in physical mastery of the body. Picture spiritual light pouring out from every pore, from each plane, all in a harmonic expression of the One.

And when we look at the Mother's work in the world, we view the same principles at work, articulated matchlessly by the great Kavi, Sri Aurobindo. That Goraksha Nath would adumbrate in part some of what the pioneers of the Integral Yoga announced and attempted reminds us that we share this work in eternity. Whether we realize and liberate the body now or later — releasing spirit from every confine — a successful destiny is fixed.

DARSHAN MESSAGE

[Released on the occasion of The Mother's birth anniversary, 21 February 2011]

*The true aim of life is
to find the Divine's
Presence deep inside
oneself and to surrender
to It so that It takes the lead
of the life, all the feelings and
all the actions of the body.*

*This gives a true and
luminous aim to existence.*

The Mother





Integral Love for the Divine
“Pure, complete and irrevocable,
it is a love that gives itself for ever.”

PEACOCK’S FAN

Over the course of several Thursday nights, the Center sponsored a series on the Katha Upanishad. We went back to the Sanskrit in many passages, which lent force and richness to the study. Our survey of this key Vedantic work with its deep connections to the Bhagavad Gita ended in late November. In early February we offered a talk at the Center about the great medieval tantric yogin and Siddha, Gorakhnath. Our groups greeted both Gorakhnath and the Upanishad enthusiastically.

In our Sunday sessions at the Center, we have completed our most recent review of “The Yoga of Divine Works” in *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Laying stress on the affirmative nature of integral spirituality, our gatherings strongly resonated to Sri Aurobindo’s voice. Next we will review his powerful book *The Mother* and then look in March and beyond at some intriguing material in *Essays Divine and Human*.

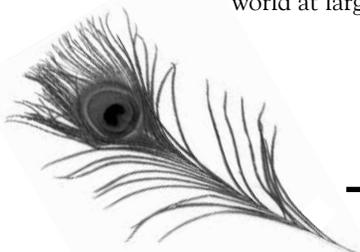
Since we haven’t updated our guest list recently, we should mention that Wolfram and Sue Verlaan from Corpus Christi and Angela Eades from Hawaii were with us for the Fifteenth. Too rare a delight, David Mitchell from Wisconsin joined us for some days in September. In October we enjoyed the company of Wayne Hicks and Setsuko Matsue from Houston and Kamaniya and Keshavacharya Das from the world at large.

MIND OF LIGHT

Sri Aurobindo

A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature. Even, the highest manifestations of a mind of Light would be an instrumentality of the supermind, a part of it or a projection from it, a stepping beyond humanity into the superhumanity of the supramental principle. Above all, its possession would enable the human being to rise beyond the normalities of his present thinking, feeling and being into those highest powers of the mind in its self-exceedings which intervene between our mentality and supermind and can be regarded as steps leading towards the greater and more luminous principle. This advance like others in the evolution might not be reached and would naturally not be reached at one bound, but from the very beginning it would be inevitable: the pressure of the supermind creating from above out of itself the mind of Light would compel this certainty of the eventual outcome. The first gleamings of the new Light would carry in themselves the seed of its highest flamings; even in the first beginnings, the certainty of their topmost powers would be there; for this is the constant story of each evolutionary emergence: the principle of its highest perfection lies concealed in the involution which precedes and necessitates the evolution of the secret principle.

For throughout the story of evolution there are two complementary aspects which constitute

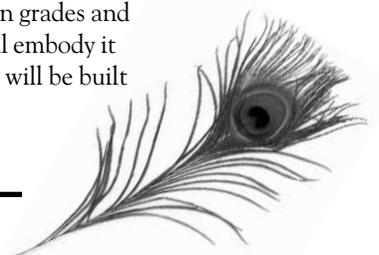


its action and are necessary to its totality; there is hidden in the involution of Nature the secret power and principle of being which lies concealed under the veil cast on it by material Nature and there is carried in that Nature itself the inevitable force of the principle compelling the process of emergence of its inherent powers and characters, the essential features which constitute its reality. As the evolutionary principle emerges, there are also two constant features of the process of the emergence: there are the gradations by which it climbs out of the involution and manifests more and more of its power, its possibilities, the force of the Godhead within it, and there is a constant manifestation of all types and forms of its being which are the visible, indicative and efficient embodiments of its essential nature. There appear in the evolutionary process organised forms and activities of Matter, the types of life and the living beings, the types of mind and the thinking beings, the luminosities and greatneses of the spiritual principle and the spiritual beings whose nature, character, personality, mark the stages of the ascent towards the highest heights of the evolution and the ultimate largest manifestation of what it is in itself and must become by the force of time and the all-revealing Spirit. This is the real sense and drive of what we see as evolution: the multiplication and variation of forms is only the means of its process. Each gradation contains the possibility and the certainty of the grades beyond it: the emergence of more and more developed forms and powers points to more perfected forms and greater powers beyond them, and each emergence of consciousness and the conscious beings proper to it enables the rise to a greater consciousness beyond and the greater order of beings up to the ultimate godheads of which Nature is striving and is destined to show herself capable. Matter developed its organised forms until it became capable of embodying living organisms; then life rose from the subconsciousness of the plant into conscious animal formations and through them to the thinking life of man. Mind founded in life developed intellect, developed its types of knowledge and ignorance, truth and error till it reached the spiritual perception and illumination and now can see as in a glass dimly the possibility of supermind and a truth-conscious



existence. In this inevitable ascent the mind of Light is a gradation, an inevitable stage. As an evolving principle it will mark a stage in the human ascent and evolve a new type of human being; this development must carry in it an ascending gradation of its own powers and types of an ascending humanity which will embody more and more the turn towards spirituality, capacity for Light, a climb towards a divinised manhood and the divine life.

In the birth of the mind of Light and its ascension into its own recognisable self and its true status and right province there must be, in the very nature of things as they are and very nature of the evolutionary process as it is at present, two stages. In the first, we can see the mind of Light gathering itself out of the Ignorance, assembling its constituent elements, building up its shapes and types, however imperfect at first, and pushing them towards perfection till it can cross the border of the Ignorance and appear in the Light, in its own Light. In the second stage we can see it developing itself in that greater natural light, taking its higher shapes and forms till it joins the supermind and lives as its subordinate portion or its delegate. In each of these stages it will define its own grades and manifest the order of its beings who will embody it and give to it a realised life. Thus there will be built



up, first, even in the Ignorance itself, the possibility of a human ascent towards a divine living; then there will be, by the illumination of this mind of Light in the greater realisation of what may be called a gnostic mentality, in a transformation of the human being, even before the supermind is reached, even in the earth-consciousness and in a humanity transformed, an illumined divine life.

(From *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. 13, pages 585-587.)

THE OBJECT OF OUR YOGA

Sri Aurobindo

The object of our Yoga is self-perfection, not self-annulment. There are two paths set for the feet of the Yogin, withdrawal from the universe and perfection in the Universe; the first comes by asceticism, the second is effected by tapasya; the first receives us when we lose God in Existence, the second is attained when we fulfil existence in God. Let ours be the path of perfection, not of abandonment; let our aim be victory in the battle, not the escape from all conflict. Buddha and Shankara supposed the world to be radically false and miserable; therefore escape from the world was to them the only wisdom. But this world is Brahman, the world is God, the world is Satyam, the world is Ananda; it is our misreading of the world through mental egoism that is a falsehood and our wrong relation with God in the world that is a misery. There is no other falsity and no other cause of sorrow.

God created the world in Himself through Maya; but the Vedic meaning of Maya is not illusion, it is wisdom, knowledge, capacity, wide extension in consciousness. Prajna prasrita purani. Omnipotent Wisdom created the world, it is not the organised blunder of some Infinite Dreamer; omniscient Power manifests or conceals it in Itself or Its own delight, it is not a bondage imposed by His own ignorance on the free and absolute Brahman.

If the world were Brahman's self-imposed nightmare, to awake from it would be the natural and only goal of our supreme endeavour; or if life in the world were irrevocably bound to misery,

a means of escape from this bondage would be the sole secret worth discovering. But perfect truth in world-existence is possible, for God here sees all things with the eye of truth; and perfect bliss in the world is possible, for God enjoys all things with the sense of unalloyed freedom. We also can enjoy this truth and bliss, called by the Veda amritam, Immortality, if by casting away our egoistic existence into perfect unity with His being we consent to receive the divine perception and the divine freedom.

The world is a movement of God in His own being; we are the centres and knots of divine consciousness which sum up and support the processes of His movement. The world is His play with His own self-conscious delight, He who alone exists, infinite, free and perfect; we are the self-multiplications of that conscious delight, thrown out into being to be His playmates. The world is a formula, a rhythm, a symbol-system expressing God to Himself in His own consciousness, — it has no material existence but exists only in His consciousness and self-expression; we, like God, are in our inward being That which is expressed, but in our outward being terms of that formula, notes of that rhythm, symbols of that system. Let us lead forward God's movement, play out His play, work out His formula, execute His harmony, express Him through ourselves in His system. This is our joy and our self-fulfilment; to this end we who transcend & exceed the universe, have entered into universe-existence.

Perfection has to be worked out, harmony has to be accomplished. Imperfection, limitation, death, grief, ignorance, matter, are only the first terms of the formula — unintelligible till we have worked out the wider terms and reinterpreted the formulary; they are the initial discords of the musician's tuning. Out of imperfection we have to construct perfection, out of limitation to discover infinity, out of death to find immortality, out of grief to recover divine bliss, out of ignorance to rescue divine self-knowledge, out of matter to reveal Spirit. To work out this end for ourselves and for humanity is the object of our Yogic practice.

(From *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. 12, pages 96-97.)



Rose of God

*Rose of God, vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven,
Rose of Bliss, fire-sweet, seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven!
Leap up in our heart of humanhood, O miracle, O flame,
Passion-flower of the Nameless, bud of the mystical Name.*

*Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,
Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing!
Live in the mind of our earthhood; O golden Mystery, flower,
Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.*

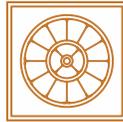
*Rose of God, damask force of Infinity, red icon of might,
Rose of Power with thy diamond halo piercing the night!
Ablaze in the will of the mortal, design the wonder of thy plan,
Image of Immortality, outbreak of the Godhead in man.*

*Rose of God, smitten purple with the incarnate divine Desire,
Rose of Life, crowded with petals, colour's lyre!
Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme;
Bridge our earthhood and heavenhood, make deathless the children of Time.*

Arichandros



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*A constant aspiration
conquers all defects.
with my blessings*
J. I.

