

# 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 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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## THE POWER OF THE DESCENT

Rand Hicks

The great column of conscious existence, *skambha*, that stretches from the tops of the superconscious into the nadir of the inconscient appears often in Indian mythology, for in myth our tongues can suggest what is real to our intuition and experience but absent to our instruments. In Vedic imagery it is the sacrificial post which links earth to heaven. The Shiva Purana describes the cosmic pillar as a fiery reality which the best of the Gods cannot fathom; too far above for them, too far below. It represents all of reality and within its scope is impressed the significance of the Infinite.

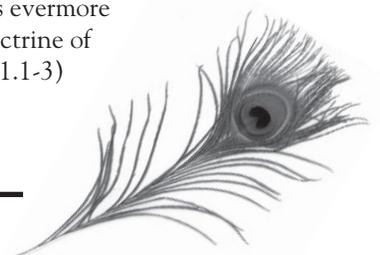
But along the column are staded the great planes of being, as branches along the trunk of a tree or as steps on a staircase, and each level posits a dynamic truth of being that ever climbs. Each step leads upwards to the next and also invites a greater integrating inclusion downwards. So from the superconscious into the blackness below, being organizes itself from the supramental through mind and life and into matter. But there is a transversal line, a threshold, which links both ranges of being. In the Isha Upanishad, it is described as a golden lid<sup>1</sup> which partially permits, partially blocks the full radiance of the Truth-Light.

The soul travels up and down the column of being as it grows and expands its capacity. The epic journey is finally complete when a person contains the entire stairway in universalized being and can focus anywhere at any point, yet be always inherent in the center. And thus the Taittiriya Upanishad proclaims in one of its last verses, "Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful! Oh, Wonderful! . . . I am the first-born of the world-order (*ṛta*), earlier than the Gods, in the navel of immortality."

Mythic structures are part of our practical lives, or can be, and the mystic realities they figure are vibrant in our consciousness and being. We move in moments of inspiration into communion with the higher spheres, and those moments set into motion a restructuring of life. The ascent and descent become inspiration and integration. Practical results flow from the dynamic circulation of conscious energy. It is even more true when the power of realization imposes a *hiranmayena pātreṇa satyasāpīhitam mukham*. *Isha*, v. 15



new and greater order upon the being. Siddhi, the perfecting fulfillment of yogic endeavor, goes beyond a revisioning of life; it concretizes a radical restructuring, where the inner life is fully transposed into the outer. Scaling the ladder of being to the summit enlarges our view of the cosmos and completes a journey to liberation. But the enlargement has no praxis until it returns to the earth and commands an integration. For the yogin, spiritual freedom is entire when we can range entirely through the cosmos, singing its victorious chant, as in the Taittiriya. But in effecting free travel up and down the staircase, the yogin impacts and liberates the matter which supports the whole cosmos as base. The enlightened can go and be anywhere, assume any role needed in the cosmos, enjoy without diminution all experiences in every clime, because in fact one becomes one with the supreme Light, which is omnipresent. Here's a verse from the Chandogya to complete the picture: "Having risen in the zenith, it will neither rise nor set. It will stand alone in the middle. . . . It is evermore day for him, who knows this mystic doctrine of Brahma." (Chandogya Upanishad, 3.11.1-3)





## PEACOCK'S FAN

Our Center welcomed Nishant and Savithri Dani from Seattle who joined us for several days. Savithri's rapid development in the field of classical realism is quite impressive. Wayne Hicks from Houston and Jennifer Williams from Virginia also visited. Kate Walker, who leads a group in Columbia, Missouri, has been installed in the State of Missouri's Sports Hall of Fame. She stands as the only member representing power lifting.

In outbound directions, Rand Hicks traveled in early October from Alabama to Maryland. Along the way he met with Bill and Debbie Flick in Auburn and Scott Kownslar and Debra Booth in their new home in Atlanta. H.P. Rama and his family hosted Rand in Greenville, South Carolina, and discussed many topics. Two days in the Blue Ridge took Rand to Jennifer Williams's new home in Crozet, Virginia. From there Rand drove to Salisbury, Maryland, where he was hosted by Madhumi Mitra and her husband Abhijit Nagchaudhuri, professors at the university. A number of their friends and associates came to hear a talk entitled "An Evolving Universe of Disguised Delight," presenting the large themes of Sri Aurobindo's vision. A most harmonious group.

In the middle of November, Rand flew to Houston at the invitation of Manas Pattanaik. His wife, Sarita, and parents were present and were strong contributors to the day's sessions. Some of the two dozen attendees were not familiar with the Integral Yoga, so the shared discussions and meditations circled around the theme of "Sri

Aurobindo: His Experience, His Vision, His Yoga." We met new friends from the Arya Samaj and a *sannyasin* from the Chinmayananda order.

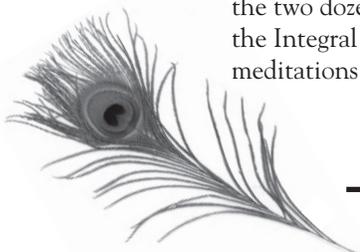
## THE HIGHER, THE LOWER

*Sri Aurobindo*

The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of supermind towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the higher and the lower hemisphere,<sup>1</sup> is where mind and supermind meet with a veil between them. The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illumining descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending supermind, the soul realise its divine self in the all-possessing all-blissful Ananda, life repossess its divine power in the play of omnipotent Conscious-Force and Matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence. And if there be any goal to the evolution which finds here its present crown and head in the human being, other than an aimless circling and an individual escape from the circling, if the infinite potentiality of this creature, who alone here stands between Spirit and Matter with the power to mediate between them, has any meaning other than an ultimate awakening from the delusion of life by despair and disgust of the cosmic effort and its complete rejection, then even such a luminous and puissant transfiguration and emergence of the Divine in the creature must be that high-uplifted goal and that supreme significance.

But before we can turn to the psychological and practical conditions under which such a transfiguration may be changed from an essential possibility into a dynamic potentiality, we have much to consider; for we must discern not only the essential principles of the descent of Sachchidananda into cosmic existence, which we have already done, but the large plan of its order

<sup>1</sup>*parārdha and aparārdha.*



here and the nature and action of the manifested power of Conscious-Force which reigns over the conditions under which we now exist. At present, what we have first to see is that the seven or the eight principles we have examined are essential to all cosmic creation and are there, manifested or as yet unmanifested, in ourselves, in this “Infant of a year” which we still are, — for we are far yet from being the adults of evolutionary Nature. The higher Trinity is the source and basis of all existence and play of existence, and all cosmos must be an expression and action of its essential reality. No universe can be merely a form of being which has sprung up and outlined itself in an absolute nullity and void and remains standing out against a non-existent emptiness. It must be either a figure of existence within the infinite Existence who is beyond all figure or it must be itself the All-Existence. In fact, when we unify our self with cosmic being, we see that it is really both of these things at once; that is to say, it is the All-Existent figuring Himself out in an infinite series of rhythms in His own conceptive extension of Himself as Time and Space. Moreover we see that this cosmic action or any cosmic action is impossible without the play of an infinite Force of Existence which produces and regulates all these forms and movements; and that Force equally presupposes or is the action of an infinite Consciousness, because it is in its nature a cosmic Will determining all relations and apprehending them by its own mode of awareness, and it could not so determine and apprehend them if there were no comprehensive Consciousness behind that mode of cosmic awareness to originate as well as to hold, fix and reflect through it the relations of Being in the developing formation or becoming of itself which we call a universe.

Finally, Consciousness being thus omniscient and omnipotent, in entire luminous possession of itself, and such entire luminous possession being necessarily and in its very nature Bliss, for it cannot be anything else, a vast universal self-delight must be the cause, essence and object of cosmic existence. “If there were not” says the ancient seer “this all-encompassing ether of Delight of existence in which we dwell, if that delight were not our ether, then none could breathe, none could live.” This self-bliss may become subconscious, seemingly



lost on the surface, but not only must it be there at our roots, all existence must be essentially a seeking and reaching out to discover and possess it, and in proportion as the creature in the cosmos finds himself, whether in will and power or in light and knowledge or in being and wideness or in love and joy itself, he must awaken to something of the secret ecstasy. Joy of being, delight of realisation by knowledge, rapture of possession by will and power or creative force, ecstasy of union in love and joy are the highest terms of expanding life because they are the essence of existence itself in its hidden roots as on its yet unseen heights. Wherever, then, cosmic existence manifests itself, these three must be behind and within it.

But infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss need not throw themselves out into apparent being at all or, doing so, it would not be cosmic being, but simply an infinity of figures without fixed order or relation, if they did not hold or develop and bring out from themselves this fourth term of Supermind, of the divine Gnosis. There must be in every cosmos a power of Knowledge and Will which out of infinite potentiality fixes determined relations, develops the result out of the seed, rolls out the mighty rhythms of cosmic Law and views and governs the worlds as their immortal and infinite Seer and Ruler.<sup>2</sup> This power indeed is nothing else than Sachchidananda

<sup>2</sup>The Seer, the Thinker, He who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent.— Isha Upanishad, Verse 8.



Himself; it creates nothing which is not in its own self-existence, and for that reason all cosmic and real Law is a thing not imposed from outside, but from within, all development is self-development, all seed and result are seed of a Truth of things and result of that seed determined out of its potentialities. For the same reason no Law is absolute, because only the infinite is absolute, and everything contains within itself endless potentialities quite beyond its determined form and course, which are only determined through a self-limitation by Idea proceeding from an infinite liberty within. This power of self-limitation is necessarily inherent in the boundless All-Existent. The Infinite would not be the Infinite if it could not assume a manifold finiteness; the Absolute would not be the Absolute if it were denied in knowledge and power and will and manifestation of being a boundless capacity of self-determination. This Supermind then is the Truth or Real-Idea, inherent in all cosmic force and existence, which is necessary, itself remaining infinite, to determine and combine and uphold relation and order and the great lines of the manifestation. In the language of the Vedic Rishis, as infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are the three highest and hidden Names of the Nameless, so this Supermind is the fourth Name<sup>3</sup> — fourth to That in its descent, fourth to us in our ascension.

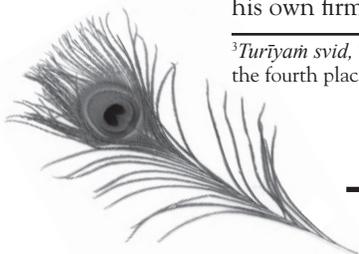
But Mind, Life and Matter, the lower trilogy, are also indispensable to all cosmic being, not necessarily in the form or with the action and conditions which we know upon earth or in this material universe, but in some kind of action, however luminous, however puissant, however subtle. For Mind is essentially that faculty of Supermind which measures and limits, which fixes a particular centre and views from that the cosmic movement and its interactions. Granted that in a particular world, plane or cosmic arrangement, mind need not be limited, or rather that the being who uses mind as a subordinate faculty need not be incapable of seeing things from other centres or standpoints or even from the real Centre of all or in the vastness of a universal self-diffusion, still if he is not capable of fixing himself normally in his own firm standpoint for certain purposes of

<sup>3</sup>*Turiyam svīd*, “a certain Fourth”, also called *turiyam dhāma*, the fourth placing or poise of existence.

the divine activity, if there is only the universal self-diffusion or only infinite centres without some determining or freely limiting action for each, then there is no cosmos but only a Being musing within Himself infinitely as a creator or poet may muse freely, not plastically, before he proceeds to the determining work of creation. Such a state must exist somewhere in the infinite scale of existence, but it is not what we understand by a cosmos. Whatever order there may be in it, must be a sort of unfixed, unbinding order such as Supermind might evolve before it had proceeded to the work of fixed development, measurement and interaction of relations. For that measurement and interaction Mind is necessary, though it need not be aware of itself as anything but a subordinate action of Supermind nor develop the interaction of relations on the basis of a self-imprisoned egoism such as we see active in terrestrial Nature.

Mind once existent, Life and Form of substance follow; for life is simply the determination of force and action, of relation and interaction of energy from many fixed centres of consciousness, — fixed, not necessarily in place or time, but in a persistent coexistence of beings or soul-forms of the Eternal supporting a cosmic harmony. That life may be very different from life as we know or conceive it, but essentially it would be the same principle at work which we see here figured as vitality, — the principle to which the ancient Indian thinkers gave the name of Vayu or Prana, the life-stuff, the substantial will and energy in the cosmos working out into determined form and action and conscious dynamism of being. Substance too might be very different from our view and sense of material body, much more subtle, much less rigidly binding in its law of self-division and mutual resistance, and body or form might be an instrument and not a prison, yet for the cosmic interaction some determination of form and substance would always be necessary, even if it be only a mental body or something yet more luminous, subtle and puissantly and freely responsive than the freest mental body.

(From “The Sevenfold Chord of Being” in *The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 21, pages 278-282.)



## **The Cosmic Dance**

(Dance of Krishna, Dance of Kali)

*Two measures are there of the cosmic dance.  
Always we hear the tread of Kali's feet  
Measuring in rhythms of pain and grief and chance  
Life's game of hazard terrible and sweet.*

*The ordeal of the veiled Initiate,  
The hero soul at play with Death's embrace,  
Wrestler in the dread gymnasium of Fate  
And sacrifice a lonely path to Grace,*

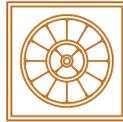
*Man's sorrows made a key to the Mysteries,  
Truth's narrow road out of Time's wastes of dream,  
The soul's seven doors from Matter's tomb to rise,  
Are the common motives of her tragic theme.*

*But when shall Krishna's dance through Nature move,  
His mask of sweetness, laughter, rapture, love?*

*Arichandoo*



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*A simple and  
faithful heart is  
a great boon.*

*With my blessings*

*—*

