

# 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.

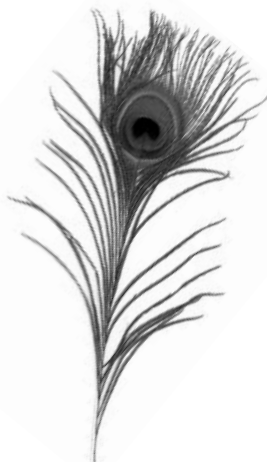
## THE PEACOCK LETTER

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## THE DIVINE SINGER

Rand Hicks

There is a song in everything. Mystics throughout the ages have shared this common experience: at the core of all things in the universe is a vibration, a sound that can be heard by the inner ear. Ancient tantric teachings called the vibration *spanda* and the sound *śabda*, but direct spiritual insight takes us beyond language or philosophic formulation. For this vibrating essence is the originating throb, this first tone is the sound of divine being announcing the universe.

It manifests, for it is its nature to manifest. Throwing out rhythms that increasingly reveal its Consciousness at the core of the vibration, this essence of true being stirs and builds a world from its own substance. All the teeming levels and planes and beings in the becoming emerge from its oneness, a unity that multiplies itself in the broadening universe. From this all else proceeds, the inner cosmos expressing itself in the outer. If we listen with an inner ear or penetrate with an inner eye, we can recover and experience this. The universe continues to unfold, and this core truth spreads itself further: the divine being, *brahman*, expands endlessly, installing its blissful and conscious self faultlessly throughout the singing worlds. All human voices, the aviary chorus, the rolling thunder, the intimations of the gods are echoes of that originating sound. Brahman is revealed in every circumstance.

This wonderful experience reveals the power of the creative word. It invites, accompanies, and follows the seer into every region of cosmic adventure. The potential for us is profound. Any experience might reveal a divine concordance. A thrilling revelation may suddenly summate the senses, scan and penetrate and unify a vast scale of differences. This bliss pulsating through all levels of the universe — in worlds seemingly hidden and in those which are extrovert — reveals profiles of unsuspected beauty to the partnering soul.

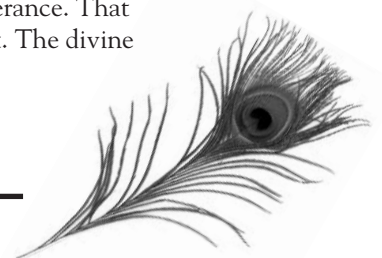
The revelation is delightful. For that first vibration, that song is self-delightedly present everywhere, in everything. It not only graces each thing: its dynamic purpose in each thing is to manifest its inherently harmonious truth; the purpose of this Sound encased in form is to



sing. Singing solo, singing in concert, this truth is common to all, expressed differently by each. Everything sings a song true to itself. By yoga, we discover this inner harmony and give voice and shape to the sage and singer in our actions.

Opening up to the inmost Self in all, then, the mystic hears that beautiful song in one thing and then another, as if each voice is calling out to its brother, is harmonizing with its sisters near and far. A universal harmony is building, and each developing voice of the One is revealing its unique secret. The individual is a vibrating world within a larger world, and both are moving towards a grander orchestration, scored or unscored, in which individuality and fellowship and cosmos will stand all-united. The original harmony re-emerges to dissolve transitional discords.

But even now there is a great harmony within, and our service as part of it all is clear. We are singer and chorus and audience, all at the same time. While the universe elegantly enlarges its many-toned richness, the integrated yogin is calm in the eternal self, enthusiastic in consecrated work, joyous in universal experience, strong in concording voice. The sage empowers the eternal, pouring supernal intensities moment by moment into revealing form. The Supreme is the vibrating heart of all that is, the essence of your own power and being, so give voice to your soul and the rising anthem of collaboration. Singing in service, you were launched in the Divine's first utterance. That first Word unites us all. We are all that. The divine singer is everywhere.





Poet's Ecstasy  
(*wisteria sinensis*)

## THE IDEAL SPIRIT IN POETRY

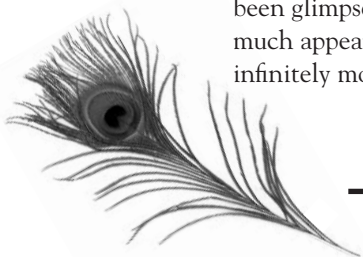
Sri Aurobindo

[continued from the last issue]

An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry. And towards three of them the higher mind of the race is in many directions turning its thought and desire with a new kind and force of insistence. The intellectual side of our recent progress has in fact been for a long time a constant arduous pursuit of Truth in certain of its fields; but now the limited truth of yesterday can no longer satisfy or bind us. Much has been known and discovered of a kind which had not been found or had only been glimpsed before, but the utmost of that much appears now very little compared with the infinitely more which was left aside and ignored

and which now invites our search. The description which the old Vedic poet once gave of the seeking of divine Truth, applies vividly to the mind of our age, "As it climbs from height to height, there becomes clear to its view all the much that is yet to be done." But also it is beginning to be seen that only in some great awakening of the self and spiritual being of man is that yet un-lived truth to be found and that infinite much to be achieved. It is only then that the fullness of a greater knowledge for man living on earth can unfold itself and get rid of its coverings and again on his deeper mind and soul, in the words of another Vedic poet-seer, "New states come into birth, covering upon covering awaken to knowledge, till in the lap of the Mother one wholly sees." This new-old light is now returning upon our minds. Men no longer so completely believe that the world is a machine and they only so much transient thinking matter, a view of existence in the midst of which however helpful it might be to a victorious concentration on physical science and social economy and material well-being, neither religion nor philosophic wisdom could renew their power in the fountains of the spirit nor art and poetry, which are also things of the soul like religion and wisdom, refresh themselves from their native sources of strength. Now we are moving back from the physical obsession to the consciousness that there is a soul and greater self within us and the universe which finds expression here in the life and the body.

But the mind of today insists too and rightly insists on life, on humanity, on the dignity of our labour and action. We have no longer any ascetic quarrel with our mother earth, but rather would drink full of her bosom of beauty and power and raise her life to a more perfect greatness. Thought now dwells much on the idea of a vast creative will of life and action as the secret of existence. That way of seeing, though it may give room for a greater power of art and poetry and philosophy and religion, for it brings in real soul-values, has by its limitation its own dangers. A spirit which is all life because it is greater than life, is rather the truth in which we shall most powerfully live. Aditi, the infinite Mother, cries in the ancient Vedic hymn to Indra the divine Power now about to be born in her womb, "This is the path of old discovered



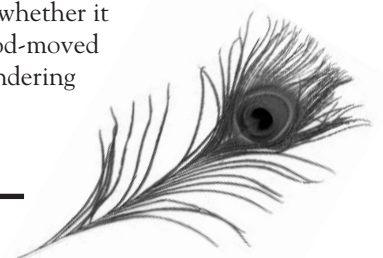
again by which all the gods rose up into birth, even by that upward way shouldst thou be born in thy increase; but go not forth by this other to turn thy mother to her fall," but if, refusing the upward way, the new spirit in process of birth replies like the god, "By that way I will not go forth, for it is hard to tread, let me come out straight on the level from thy side; I have many things to do which have not yet been done; with one I must fight and with another I must question after the Truth," then the new age may do great things, as the last also did great things, but it will miss the highest way and end like it in a catastrophe. There is no reason why we should so limit our new birth in time; for the spirit and life are not incompatible, but rather a greater power of the spirit brings a greater power of life. Poetry and art most of all our powers can help to bring this truth home to the mind of man with an illumining and catholic force, for while philosophy may lose itself in abstractions and religion turn to an intolerant otherworldliness and asceticism, poetry and art are born mediators between the immaterial and the concrete, the spirit and life. This mediation between the truth of the spirit and the truth of life will be one of the chief functions of the poetry of the future.

The two other sister lamps of God, colour suns of the Ideal, which our age has most dimmed and of whose reviving light it is most sadly in need, but still too strenuously outward and utilitarian to feel sufficiently their absence, Beauty and Delight, are also things spiritual and they bring out the very heart of sweetness and colour and flame of the other three. Truth and Life have not their perfection until they are suffused and filled with the completing power of delight and the fine power of beauty and become one at their heights with this perfecting hue and this secret essence of themselves; the spirit has no full revelation without these two satisfying presences. For the ancient Indian idea is absolutely true that delight, Ananda, is the inmost expressive and creative nature of the free self because it is the very essence of the original being of the Spirit. But beauty and delight are also the very soul and origin of art and poetry. It is the significance and spiritual function of art and poetry to liberate man into pure delight and to bring beauty into his life. Only there are grades and heights here as in everything



else and the highest kinds of delight and beauty are those which are one with the highest Truth, the perfection of life and the purest and fullest joy of the self-revealing Spirit. Therefore will poetry most find itself and enter most completely into its heritage when it arrives at the richest harmony of these five things in their most splendid and ample sweetness and light and power; but that can only wholly be when it sings from the highest skies of vision and ranges through the widest widths of our being.

These powers can indeed be possessed in every scale, because on whatever grade of our ascent we stand, the Spirit, the divine Self of man is always there, can break out into a strong flame of manifestation carrying in it all its godheads in whatever form, and poetry and art are among the means by which it thus delivers itself into expression. Therefore the essence of poetry is eternally the same and its essential power and the magnitude of the genius expended may be the same whatever the frame of the sight, whether it be Homer chanting of the heroes in god-moved battle before Troy and of Odysseus wandering





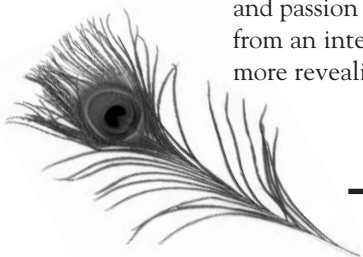
among the wonders of remote and magic isles with his heart always turned to his lost and far-off human hearth, Shakespeare riding in his surge of the manifold colour and music and passion of life, or Dante errant mid his terrible or beatific visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, or Valmiki singing of the ideal man embodying God and egoistic giant Rakshasa embodying only fierce self-will approaching each other from their different centres of life and in their different law of being for the struggle desired by the gods, or some mystic Vamadeva or Vishwamitra voicing in strange vivid now forgotten symbols the action of the gods and the glories of the Truth, the battle and the journey to the Light, the double riches and the sacrificial climbing of the soul to Immortality. For whether it be the inspired imagination fixed on earth or the soul of life or the inspired reason or the high intuitive spiritual vision which gives the form, the genius of the great poet will seize on some truth of being, some breath of life, some power of the spirit and bring it out with a certain supreme force for his and our delight and joy in its beauty. But nevertheless the poetry which can keep the amplitude of its breadth and nearness of its touch and yet see all things from a higher height will, the rest being equal, give more and will more fully satisfy the whole of what we are and therefore the whole of what we demand from this most complete of all the arts and most subtle of all our means of aesthetic self-expression. The poetry of the future, if it fulfils in amplitude the promise now only there in rich hint, will kindle these five lamps of our being, but raise them up more on high and light with them a broader country, many countries indeed now hidden from our view, will make them not any longer lamps in some limited temple of beauty, but suns in the heavens of our highest mind and illuminative of our widest as well as our inmost life. It will be a poetry of a new largest vision of himself and Nature and God and all things which is offering itself to man and of its possible realisation in a nobler and more divine manhood; and it will not sing of them only with the power of the imaginative intelligence, the exalted and ecstatic sense or the moved joy and passion of life, but will rise to look at them from an intenser light and embody them in a more revealing force of the word. It will be first

and most a poetry of the intuitive reason, the intuitive senses, the intuitive delight-soul in us, getting from this enhanced source of inspiration a more sovereign poetic enthusiasm and ecstasy, and then, it may even be, rise towards a still greater power of revelation nearer to the direct vision and word of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes.

A poetry of this kind need not be at all something high and remote or beautifully and delicately intangible, or not that alone, but will make too the highest things near, close and visible, will sing greatly and beautifully of all that has been sung, all that we are from outward body to very God and Self, of the finite and the infinite, the transient and the Eternal, but with a new reconciling and fusing vision that will make them other to us than they have been even when yet the same. If it wings to the heights, it will not leave earth unseen below it, but also will not confine itself to earth, but find too other realities and their powers on man and take all the planes of existence for its empire. It will take up and transform the secrets of the older poets and find new undiscovered secrets, transfigure the old rhythms by the insistence of the voice of its deeper subtler spirit and create new characteristic harmonies, reveal other greater powers and spirits of language, proceeding from the past and present yet will not be limited by them or their rule and forms and canon, but compass its own altered perfected art of poetry. This at least is its possible ideal endeavour, and then the attempt itself would be a rejuvenating elixir and put the poetic spirit once more in the shining front of the powers and guides of the ever-progressing soul of humanity. There it will lead in the journey like the Vedic Agni, the fiery giver of the word, *yuvâ kavîh, priyo atithir amartyo mandrajihwo, řtacid řtâvâ*, the Youth, the Seer, the beloved and immortal Guest with his honeyed tongue of ecstasy, the Truth-conscious, the Truth-finder, born as a flame from earth and yet the heavenly messenger of the Immortals.

[Concluded]

(From *The Future Poetry*, CWSA, pages 222-226.)



## *The Word of the Silence*

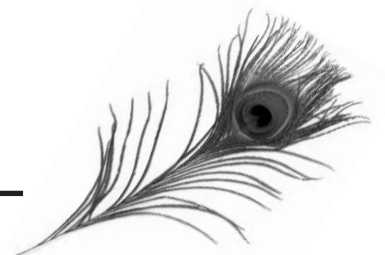
*A bare impersonal hush is now my mind,  
A world of sight clear and inimitable,  
A volume of silence by a Godhead signed,  
A greatness pure of thought, virgin of will.*

*Once on its pages Ignorance could write  
In a scribble of intellect the blind guess of Time  
And cast gleam-messages of ephemeral light,  
A food for souls that wander on Nature's rim.*

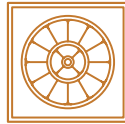
*But now I listen to a greater Word  
Born from the mute unseen omniscient Ray:  
The Voice that only Silence' ear has heard  
Leaps missioned from an eternal glory of Day.*

*All turns from a wideness and unbroken peace  
To a tumult of joy in a sea of wide release.*

*Arichordos*



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*look into the depths  
of your heart and you  
will see there the  
Divine Presence*

*With my blessings*

