

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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FROM PEACE TO POWER

Rand Hicks

*The Divine is that from which all comes, in which all lives, and to return to the truth of the Divine now clouded over by Ignorance is the soul's aim in life. In its supreme Truth, the Divine is absolute and infinite peace, consciousness, existence, power and Ananda.*¹

Sri Aurobindo

Several attainments are necessary to fulfill the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Among the first challenges to the seeker is awakening to the inner presence of the Divine, the flowering of the soul consciousness. That emergence is furthered by the lifting of one's awareness into the planes of consciousness overhead and the expansion of the personal awareness until it is conterminous with the cosmic. And there must come the irrevocable descent of the empowering higher consciousness into all the members of the being, lustrating and liberating the whole nature and presenting a fresh personhood in place of the old. As Sri Aurobindo noted, all this is really achieved by the Mahashakti, the wide working of the Mother's force in a receptive and willing aspirant.

Let's remember a simple point: peace comes first. Without it nothing in the sadhana can be stabilized or made sure. There can be no *siddhi*, no perfecting fulfillment, without this foundation of felicitous peace. Stilling the perturbations of the mind might be a prime object of yoga practice, but the peace Sri Aurobindo writes about is of another and more positive nature: it is not the absence of anything; it is a positive state of being, a fundamental attribute of purest being, "a tranquil waveless Ananda." Peace is not a mere cessation of movement; it is the harmonious nature of real being. Sri Aurobindo notes that the coming of dynamic peace into oneself is traceable to a descent from above, in other words, from the Divine's own transcendent nature, and sometimes comes in a continuous flow. When we are aware, receptive, collaborative, peace descends more readily into us: body, heart, and mind become a reservoir of peace, serene and fearless.

Whether or not it settles permanently into our nature depends upon our receptivity. One

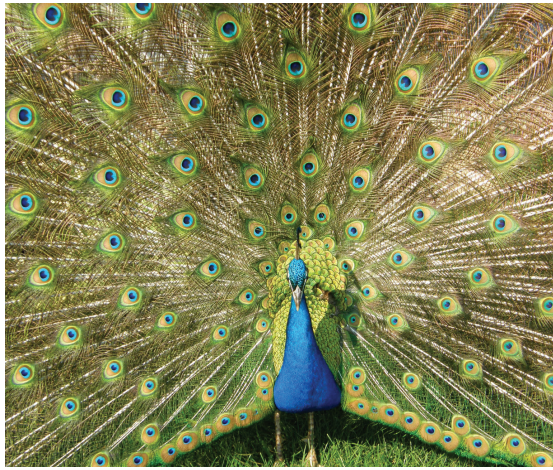
must work upon it. If peace is not secured, the consolidation of the higher consciousness into the nature is jeopardized. When peace is there, purity follows, and a consequent happiness and laughter become positive characteristics of life. Peace enables a forward movement which reduces and then refuses internal disruption.

Again, peace is not merely passive. It has also a dynamic character, as Sri Aurobindo emphasized, and installs in the nature a ground favorable for transformation. But transformation, a concept so significant to Siddhi Day, is the result of several factors coming into a coalescent harmony. If the first of these is the descent of peace, the everlasting support of the perfecting progression, it must be followed and complemented by the descent of power, light, and then delight. Conscious force too comes flowing down from regions supernal, but it cannot be safely fixed unless the human vehicle has been made stable through this installation of peace. Strength should follow peace, and may arrive quickly in an integrating practice, if the table has been correctly set. The Mahashakti, having prepared her foundation, knows the hour of inner consent. She sees too that the passing hours demand active progress. Ardent for the preparation, ardent for the fulfillment, she does not wait overlong.

Peace comes first. You can dynamically draw it towards yourself. Sit in meditation and imagine a white cloud of peace overhead. It is conscious, oceanic. It wants to come into you; it is waiting for your invitation. You feel its potency, its felicity, and quietly call it, asking it to descend into you. A drop of peace forms and falls gracefully into you, arriving at the crown of your head. Slowly, it trickles down through the mind, calming all the thoughts, courses through the heart, stilling all the emotions, arrives in the body, filling it with quietude and wakeful upturned joy. Another drop descends, and then another. With each drop you watch and oversee the filling up of your nature from top to bottom with peace. Yes, you become a reservoir of this tranquility, this silence, this happiness, this unfathomable and immaculately full reality.

¹ *Letters on Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 28, p. 5.





PEACOCK'S FAN

We completed a long study on Sunday nights of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*, and then took up the Mother's *Conversations on Yoga* in early October. We review historical context and draw attention to points of convergence through the world's spiritual march. The Center has offered monthly profiles of some of India's greatest spiritual figures. In October we spoke of Sri Ramakrishna, in November of Swami Vivekananda, and in December we will present Sri Ramana Maharshi. Our talks around Siddhi Day this year will focus on the point of departure for Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and why he carried the conscious force of transformation into the interiors of the body.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press has released two new volumes in the *Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo*: the first volume of its four-volume *Letters on Yoga*, and *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*. We must draw attention to the robust addition of letters to these volumes which were previously unseen by almost all readers. It is a still vaster treasury of correspondence which has been rearranged by the editors at Archives & Research. They have done brilliant work in ordering the letters more logically and systematically. The Ashram Press will soon make these volumes available for individual purchase, but you can read even now this deeply constructive and fascinating material by downloading it in PDF form from <http://www.sriarobindoashram.org/ashram/sriarob/writings.php>. And Lotus Press ([\[lotuspress.com\]\(http://www.lotuspress.com\)\) is offering a new publication, *Readings in the Life Divine*, a commentarial by Santosh Krinsky with a foreword from David Frawley. Available in three volumes in printed form, they are also available as e-books. Another fifty talks by M.P. Pandit have been posted on our website. These are his talks on Sri Aurobindo's *The Yoga of Knowledge*, *The Yoga of Love*, and *the Yoga of Self-Perfection*.](http://www.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Dappling late summer to autumn, we've enjoyed the luminous company of Judy and David Ellis, Bill Flick, Jennifer Williams, and John Eckre.

MAKING THE BODY CONSCIOUS *Sri Aurobindo*

Each plane of our being — mental, vital, physical — has its own consciousness, separate though interconnected and interacting; but to our outer mind and sense, in our waking experience, they are all confused together. The body, for instance, has its own consciousness and acts from it, even without any conscious mental will of our own or even against that will, and our surface mind knows very little about this body consciousness, feels it only in an imperfect way, sees only its results and has the greatest difficulty in finding out their causes. It is part of the Yoga to become aware of this separate consciousness of the body, to see and feel its movements and the forces that act upon it from inside or outside and to learn how to control and direct it even in its most hidden and (to us) subconscious processes. But the body consciousness itself is only part of the individualised physical consciousness in us which we gather and build out of the secretly conscious forces of universal physical Nature.

There is the universal physical consciousness of Nature and there is our own which is a part of it, moved by it, and used by the central being for the support of its expression in the physical world and for a direct dealing with all these external objects and movements and forces. This physical consciousness-plane receives from the other planes their powers and influences and makes formations of them in its own province. Therefore we have a physical mind as well as a vital mind and the mind proper; we have a vital physical part in us — the nervous being — as well as the vital proper; and



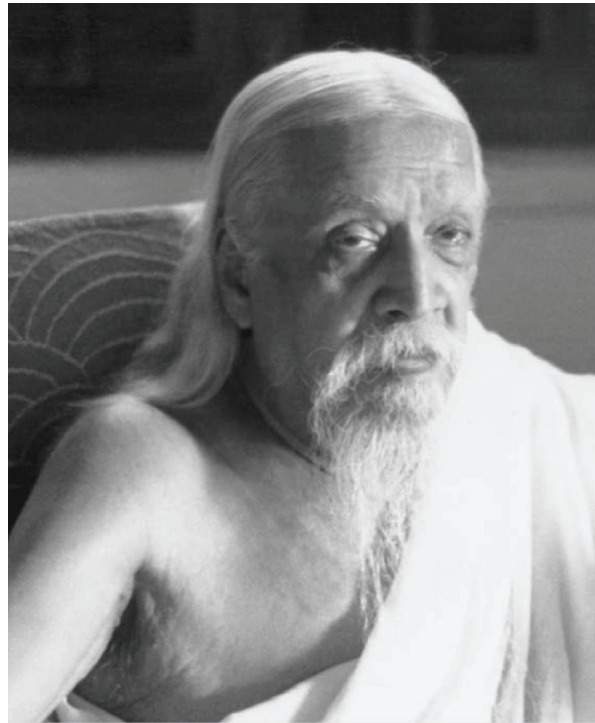
both are largely conditioned by the gross material bodily part which is almost entirely subconscious to our experience.

The physical mind is that which is fixed on physical objects and happenings, sees and understands these only, and deals with them according to their own nature, but can with difficulty respond to the higher forces. Left to itself, it is sceptical of the existence of supraphysical things, of which it has no direct experience and to which it can find no clue; even when it has spiritual experiences, it forgets them easily, loses the impression and result and finds it difficult to believe. To enlighten the physical mind by the consciousness of the higher spiritual and supramental planes is one object of this Yoga, just as to enlighten it by the power of the higher vital and higher mental elements of the being is the greatest part of human self-development, civilisation and culture.

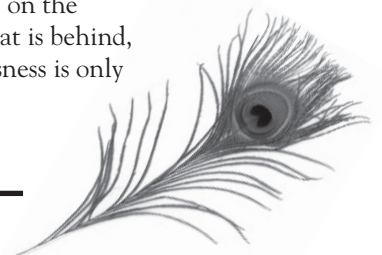
The vital physical on the other hand is the vehicle of the nervous responses of our physical nature; it is the field and instrument of the smaller sensations, desires, reactions of all kinds to the impacts of the outer physical and gross material life. This vital physical part (supported by the lowest part of the vital proper) is therefore the agent of most of the lesser movements of our external life; its habitual reactions and obstinate pettinesses are the chief stumbling-block in the way of the transformation of the outer consciousness by the Yoga. It is also largely responsible for most of the suffering and disease of mind or body to which the physical being is subject in Nature.

As to the gross material part it is not necessary to specify its place, for that is obvious, but it must be remembered that this too has a consciousness of its own, the obscure consciousness proper to the limbs, cells, tissues, glands, organs. To make this obscurity luminous and directly instrumental to the higher planes and to the divine movement is what we mean in our Yoga by making the body conscious, — that is to say, full of a true, awake and responsive awareness instead of its own obscure, limited half-subconsciousness.

There is an inner as well as an outer consciousness all through our being, upon all its levels. The ordinary man is aware only of



his surface self and quite unaware of all that is concealed by the surface. And yet what is on the surface, what we know or think we know of ourselves and even believe that that is all we are, is only a small part of our being and far the larger part of us is below the surface, the frontal consciousness. Or, more accurately, it is behind the frontal consciousness, behind the veil, occult and known only by an occult knowledge. Modern psychology and psychic science have begun to perceive this truth just a little. Materialistic psychology calls this hidden part the Inconscious, although practically admitting that it is far greater, more powerful and profound than the surface conscious self, — very much as the Upanishads called the superconscious in us the Sleep self, although this Sleep self is said to be an infinitely greater Intelligence, omniscient, omnipotent, Prajna, the Ishwara. Psychic science calls this hidden consciousness the subliminal self, and, here too, it is seen that this subliminal self has more powers, more knowledge, a freer field of movement than the smaller self that is on the surface. But the truth is that all this that is behind, this sea of which our waking consciousness is only

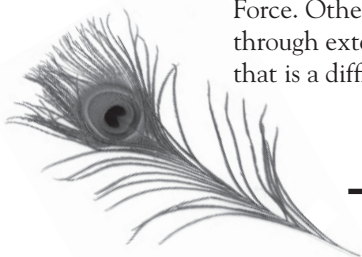


a wave or series of waves, cannot be described by any one term, for it is very complex. Part of it is subconscious, lower than our waking consciousness; part of it is on a level with it but behind and much larger than it; part is above and superconscious to us. What we call our mind is only an outer mind, a surface mental action, instrumental for the partial expression of a larger mind behind of which we are not ordinarily aware and can only know by going inside ourselves. So too what we know of the vital in us is only the outer vital, a surface activity partially expressing a larger secret vital which we can only know by going within. Equally, what we call our physical being is only a visible projection of a greater and subtler invisible physical consciousness which is much more complex, much more aware, much wider in its receptiveness, much more open and plastic and free.

If you understand and experience this truth, then only you will be able to realise what is meant by the inner mental, the inner vital, the inner physical consciousness. But it must be noted that this term "inner" is used in two different senses. Sometimes it denotes the consciousness behind the veil of the outer being, the mental or vital or physical within, which is in direct touch with the universal mind, the universal life forces, the universal physical forces. Sometimes, on the other hand, we mean an inmost mental, vital, physical, more specifically called the true mind, the true vital, the true physical consciousness which is nearest to the soul and can most easily and directly respond to the Divine Light and Power. There is no real Yoga possible, still less any integral Yoga, if we do not go back from the outer self and become aware of all this inner being and inner nature. For then alone can we break the limitations of the ignorant external self which receives consciously only the outer touches and knows things indirectly through the outer mind and senses, and become directly aware of the universal consciousness and the universal forces that play through us and around us. And then only too can we hope to be directly aware of the Divine in us and directly in touch with the Divine Light and the Divine Force. Otherwise we can feel the Divine only through external signs and external results and that is a difficult and uncertain way and very

occasional and inconstant, and it leads only to belief and not to knowledge, not to the direct consciousness and awareness of the constant presence.

As for instances of the difference, I may give you two from the opposite poles of experience, one from the most external phenomena showing how the inward opens to the awareness of universal forces, one of spiritual experience indicating how the inward opens to the Divine. Take illness. If we live only in the outward physical consciousness, we do not usually know that we are going to be ill until the symptoms of the malady declare themselves in the body. But if we develop the inward physical consciousness, we become aware of a subtle environmental physical atmosphere and can feel the forces of illness coming towards us through it, feel them even at a distance and, if we have learned how to do it, we can stop them by the will or otherwise. We sense too around us a vital physical or nervous envelope which radiates from the body and protects it, and we can feel the adverse forces trying to break through it and can interfere, stop them or reinforce the nervous envelope. Or we can feel the symptoms of illness, fever or cold for instance, in the subtle physical sheath before they are manifest in the gross body and destroy them there, preventing them from manifesting in the body. Take now the call for the Divine Power, Light, Ananda. If we live only in the outward physical consciousness, it may descend and work behind the veil but we shall feel nothing and only see certain results after a long time. Or at most we feel a certain clarity and peace in the mind, a joy in the vital, a happy state in the physical and infer the touch of the Divine. But if we are awake in the inward physical, we shall feel the light, power or Ananda flowing through the body, the limbs, nerves, blood, breath and, through the subtle body, affecting the most material cells and making them conscious and blissful and we shall sense directly the Divine Power and Presence. These are only two instances out of a thousand that are possible and can be constantly experienced by the sadhaka. (From *Letters on Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 28, pages 201-206.)



Voice of the Summits

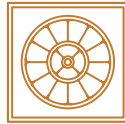
*Voice of the summits, leap from thy peaks of ineffable splendour,
Wisdom's javelin cast, leonine cry of the Vast.
Voice of the summits, arrow of gold from a bow-string of silence!
Leap down into my heart, blazing and clangorous dart!
Here where I struggle alone unheeded of men and unaided,
Here by the darkness down-trod, here in the midnight of God.*

*I have come down from the heights and the outskirts of Heaven
Into the gulfs of God's sleep, into the inconscient Deep.
All I had won that the mind can win of the Word and the wordless,
Knowledge sun-bright for ever and the spiritual crown of endeavour,
Share in the thoughts of the cosmic Self and its orders to Nature,
Cup of its nectar of bliss, dreams on the breast of its peace.*

Richard



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*The Divine's Peace must
swell constantly in
our hearts.*

with my blessings

A handwritten signature in red ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive name followed by a horizontal line.

