

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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HER HIDDEN HARMONIES

Rand Hicks

We know you as Mahalakshmi, we meditate on you as the Shakti of all. . . . It is whole, infinite being, consciousness, and bliss. One should meditate on that reality within the flaming light of consciousness.

Navashloki Devi Gita, Verses 1 and 6

So we learn from these verses on the Divine Mother that she is equivalent with the formless and nameless Brahman, that she is a reality expressed in a universal form, that she is the core truth behind each and every individual. She is the source and goal of every aspiration, whether for the pursuit of knowledge, love, or action. There is no other, so every process and every direction and every pathway can lead only through her to her.

But how we get there differs appropriately to the force that she has implanted in us, so variety is crucially important, and no one should surrender the truth of their soul's seeking to follow another's path. Not everyone has to succeed by meditation. The concentration behind meditation, the concentration behind the flood of devotion, the concentration behind the offered act is central to grasping our true nature, *swabhava*. If you can disappear into your work, then karma yoga will be fruitful for you — for the fruit we seek is oneness with the Divine. If you can melt into the rapturous oneness in which loved and beloved become inseparable, then bhakti yoga will be fruitful for you — for the fruit we seek is oneness with the Divine. And if you can merge your conscious being into relationless identity with the Divine, then the deep discrimination that sees essence behind form and the One behind multiplicity will be fruitful for you — for the fruit we seek is oneness with the Divine. We simply seek the Divine, and our search is measured out across all spaces and traverses all periods and stretches of time. The soul is endlessly questing for and tasting the divine delight hidden in all forms. To feel disconnected is a hint to us that the divisive mind should be searching still more ardently, hungrily, for that elusive presence; it does not hint that we should quit the world. If delight is elusive, we should not abandon the world because its superficialities cry woe, woe. We



Pahari, Kangra, c.1850

The lustration of Gajalakshmi, dispensing boons, banishing fear

are here for heroic and pioneering work. Tired of the mind's narrow views, sick of the self-centered vital's appetites, weary of the body's quick fatigue and incapacity to adapt, we are in the search for a new instrument by which the divine Mother can reveal and build a new order of being right here on our earth. We should be willing to sacrifice all in the real sense of the term: to cast our life and all its substance into the lustrating fire which calls down the divine response. Our offering of heart and life and body and mind please our soul deeply, and that offering brings the blessing of the Divine Mother. Her beauty and harmony await our readiness. She is so ready to give it. Are we ready to ask for it?

In 1920 on the 24th of April, the wonderful one we would call the Mother rejoined Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. Her arrival from the aesthetic soul of the world, Japan, must have felt like a descent of Lakshmi, a physical answer to the ardent aspiration of Sri Aurobindo and the small community around him. Her arrival sanctioned more: that the hour to attempt the great change had come. The Mother brought beauty and harmony and a measure of growing prosperity with her, but also a conscious force to shape the collective into a vehicle toned and strengthened and fitted to embody a transformative Shakti. New rhythms, new forms would come to challenge the old order of life and transform society from within. When Lakshmi comes, she not only brings the blessings of sweetness, but by conquering darkness with light, releases all the potencies hidden in us. She surmounts suffering with delight.



CONVERSATIONS WITH
SRI AUROBINDO
Pavitra

Friday, December 18, 1925

Your going back to France at the moment would be a defeat. You would fall off from the state of consciousness of which you have caught a glimpse. It could even be worse. Perhaps after a few years you would get over it, but in any case, you would be missing an opportunity and failing in what you have to do.

You bring a sincerity of heart in your search and the aptitude of your mind for learning (for reserving your judgment). But your mental activity is harmful; you must make your mind silent.

A new consciousness is seeking expression in you. There are in India people, yogis, who can help you in this and give you a new birth. But there will be some difficulties in finding them, for you do not speak their language and they are often hard of access. This, however, is one of the solutions before you.

This spiritual consciousness will give you mukti. Personally, my yoga would be finished if my goal were liberation. Mukti is only the first part. The second is to bring down the light into all the instruments, to make them perfect and to become the embodiment of Truth. The universal truth and power will then act through you and by your instrumentation. It is true that people are more or less unconscious instruments of the Shakti; but it is a question of remaining perfectly conscious.

This perfection of man is difficult — very, very difficult, and it is a life-time's work. One may fail and make a mess of one's life. It is in fact so hard that I do not advise anyone to take this path. However, there is a powerful aspiration in you and something which is seeking to come down. So I put this ideal before you. If you choose it remain here, with us, and see what I can give you and what you can take from me before going farther.

Monday, April 19, 1926

This whole week I tried to withdraw again into the silent mind, but without much success. I have not yet come back to the point where I was before the arrival of X.



That great peace is there, behind. I have the feeling of a transparent milieu. I wonder whether this is not the experience the Christian mystics describe as the glassy sea and the Japanese as the Crystal Palace?

There are two principal forms under which one becomes aware of it: one is analogous to the sensation of a transparent stirless sea and the other of an ethereal expanse.

Last time you spoke to me about psychic knowledge and its character of truth. Does this knowledge concern facts, beings and events of the manifested world, or simply metaphysical truths?

The word “metaphysical” indicates a mental knowledge and there is in psychic knowledge a nearness, a concrete reality very different from intellectual speculation.

To say that it brings material knowledge would be wrong, that is not its field. It transforms the being into a being of truth, into a flame of aspiration for the truth. Psychic knowledge would be rather a contact, a feeling. When it is said that the heart knows better than the brain, one expresses something that would come near it, although there is a gulf between emotion, feeling and the psyche. The psychic being receives the truth but does not create it, as opposed to the supramental. There is a difference between the two.

The faculty of recognising the truth at first sight comes from intuition, one of the forms of the lower supramental knowledge. The true knowledge which never errs is that by identity.

Steiner distinguishes three degrees of occult knowledge: imaginative, inspired and unitive; the last, which cannot err, is probably knowledge by identity?

The first form of intuition is clothed in mental forms which distort it. Moreover, the mind is not satisfied with what it receives and it crystallizes everything around its own accretions. There is something true and much that is false.

Besides, the mind learns to pass off its data under the appearance of intuitions. When the

being begins to ask for intuitive knowledge, the personality sends its desires and prejudices under the guise of intuitions. And so at the beginning intuitive knowledge is not very sure. Then it develops; but even before it is brought to perfection, other modes of knowing develop.

There are four grades in intuition, the elementary form of supramental truth:

Intuition – proper, sporadic and irregular, which brings isolated elements. It gives the impression of remembering a latent, past or subconscious knowledge.

Discernment – Here there is a process, a non-intellectual work which accepts certain elements and rejects others.

Inspiration – Something comes from outside and expands within. Analogy of a voice which speaks in you.

Revelation – Analogy of a vision.

I thought you would like to join us in the evenings, once or twice a week. Which day suits you?

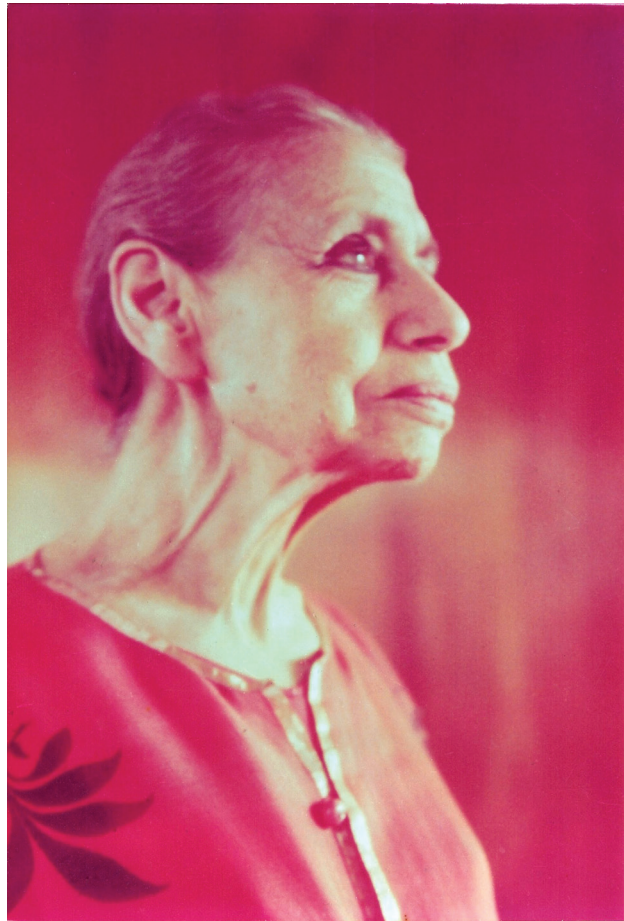
With great joy. For me any day is suitable.

I shall let you know, later, on which days you may come.

Saturday, October 23, 1926

At first, I will speak of my meditation alone. Then I feel, as I said, two workings of force, one is behind the heart. The impression it gives me is of living fire, but obscure. On the contrary the force coming from above in the mind has a light behind: though I don't see it, I know it is there. Taking for instance my meditation with Mother today, I will say what happens when meditating with her. I feel at first a preparatory period, when the force comes down to the head and remains there a certain time. Then it goes down and takes possession of the central being. There it remains. My consciousness is then drawn backwards, but as it is a new movement for my body, there is some difficulty arising from it, in the chest and throat, as for instance a choking sensation.

With Mother my mind is quiet, its activity is greatly diminished and does not disturb me. But when alone, as I don't act upon it now, it is sometimes very chaotic and disturbs me very much.



What kind of movements?

Always the same old movement. A noise awakens some association and the mind spins around it and goes on. Then I find myself carried away and have to come back again and again.

Do you see what kind of movements they are? Are they true mental movements or do they arise from below?

They arise from below and I don't think there is anything new in them. But there is also another kind of mental movement. Very often now I find myself thinking of you or of Mother, thinking that I will see you tomorrow, for instance, what I will say to you, or seeing myself offering flowers to Mother...

Seeing?



Not seeing, imagining rather. The process is the ordinary mental one, it seems. But as I am awaking to the reality of what I had only an intuition formerly, and as I come in touch with the light here above, my mind is directed towards you. It may be there is something genuine, but then the mind immediately works according to its old fashion. What have I to do here?

You have nothing to do. The two movements you are conscious of are movements of the same force. When it comes to the centre in the chest, it awakens the being to the truth and turns it upwards. It is the human way of establishing the communication with what is above, a straight line with the supramental truth. When the force will be established there and the central being come out, seize upon the outer being, it will effect the transformation. It will direct the force downwards, everywhere, and effect the change.

I am so tired of my mind.

But these movements are not so important. They are the remnants of the old way of working and they will fade away.

I am awaiting a more radical change. Up to the present, though something very luminous is dawning in me, there is no radical change of consciousness. I am still the old self.

What are you expecting?

Well ! Many things. For instance I will see my lower self as I see others' selves. I will be no more bound by the body ...

Of course the time will come when you will see the movements of nature in you as in others. But what you are waiting for, is it not a mental demand? It is better not to make such demands, for they always misrepresent the Truth. What you are asking [for] is the Truth and you must not state in advance that the Truth must be so and so. The mental representations, even the best ones, are imperfect and they become obstacles. What is needed is to realise the experiences as a part of yourself.

Then it is too much to wait for such a change? I am awaiting a change. Perhaps it is wrong to await something?

No, but it is wrong to state in advance what the change will be.

Now, in meditation I only open myself to the force and allow it to work. I am not acting upon my mind any longer; that is why it is so restless at times. This change in my meditation occurred last Saturday. I was then very conscious of the presence in me and I kept the touch with it the whole day. But since that day, though it is still working, I am not so much conscious of it. Sometimes the force acts in the mind, sometimes in the central being. What shall I do? I have left the idea of directing the force.

But shall I follow all its movements?

Remain open and passive and follow. That is what you have to do. The force will transform by itself and by its own means and ways. The way of doing it with the mind is slow and imperfect, though the mind sometimes thinks it to be the best, because it feels itself acting. That is wrong. The mind does not know the conditions and the means. That force acts with a directness of which the mind is incapable. And you are receptive enough to allow it to work. Obstacles may arise, obstacles in the physical, vital or mental, as they arise always. But that does not matter. They will be worked out and rejected. Do not try to do something by yourself.

I feel also an increasing need for peace, tranquillity. And even the little work I do outside disturbs me for the present. I would like to minimise it, or even to give it up. But I suppose I have to keep it.

Yes. It is better to keep it. And you will arrive at a state where you will do that work only with the outer part of yourself. It will then no longer disturb you.

Yes. But for the present, it is a little difficult and painful. It seems a period of transition.

Yes. It is a period of transition.

(From Pavitra's *Conversations with Sri Aurobindo*, 2009, available through SABDA.)



The Miracle of Birth

*I saw my soul a traveller through Time;
From life to life the cosmic ways it trod,
Obscure in the depths and on the heights sublime,
Evolving from the worm into the god.*

*A spark of the eternal Fire, it came
To build a house in Matter for the Unborn.
The inconscient sunless Night received the flame,
In the brute seed of things dumb and forlorn*

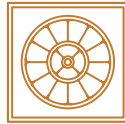
*Life stirred and Thought outlined a gleaming shape
Till on the stark inanimate earth could move,
Born to somnambulist Nature in her sleep,
A thinking creature who can hope and love.*

*Still by slow steps the miracle goes on,
The Immortal's gradual birth mid mire and stone.*

Richardson



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*New words are needed
to express new ideas,
new forms are necessary
to manifest new forces.*

With my blessings

