

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

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 more information about the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, please write to us.

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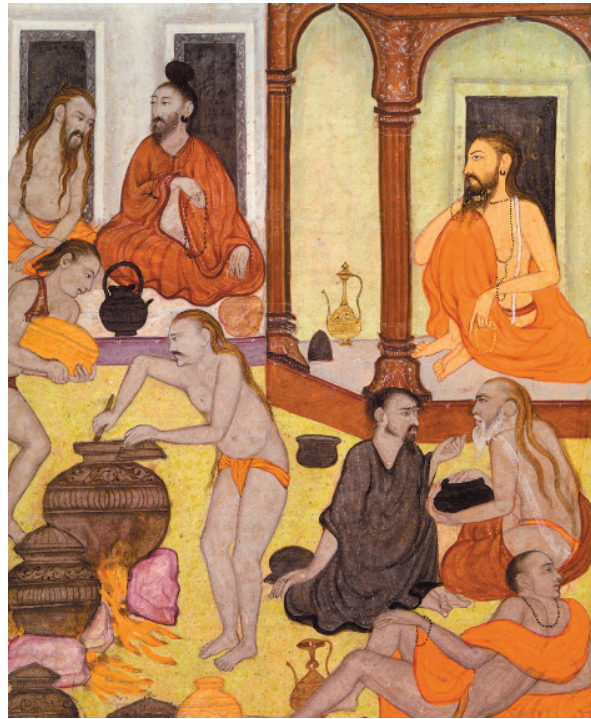
TO SUCCEED IN SADHANA

Rand Hicks

The Sanskrit root *siddh* means to succeed, to accomplish; *siddhi* is the successful completion of a goal. If you are a *siddha*, you have attained. In yoga the term applies to one who has so thoroughly succeeded in spiritual practice, *sādhana*, that he is perpetually aware of the Eternal beyond the worlds, but also recognizes that selfsame Divine spread throughout all the manifested worlds. Master of his own inner being, he works divinely in this world as well, extending through meditative power his unaltering experience of oneness, affecting people and events, effecting real change. Because the *siddha* (f. *siddhā*) sports in delight, wields powers which arise spontaneously from his awareness of the omnipresent Divine, he applies that knowledge freely across world phenomena. Siddha yogins were recognized in Brahmanical literature as far back as the Mahabharata, and later they figure prominently in the practices of Kashmir Shaivism and the Naths. The Siddhas in South India sought to impose immortality upon the body.

Sri Aurobindo had little acquaintance with the literature surrounding the Siddha tradition. He had little need of it. His inner life, led directly by the Supreme, outgrew all teaching, guidance, and provenance. Realization, he might say, tends towards transformation; it empowers harmony. Many know him for his voluminous writings and luminous poetry, but his path is a yoga first, a practice and not a philosophy. What he wrote flowed out of his dynamic inner life like radiant spokes. Integral yoga stems from profound experiences and states of realization that he patiently extended even into his body. Sri Aurobindo demonstrates that a radical change in life is possible, and that the soul's carriage can itself be a partner to the spiritual will. What was true for early Ashramites is true for us: we can verify these states in ourselves and extend their power in our lives if we deepen our experience of self and world and reality.

Perfection is an elusive goal. Even a harmonic balance of forces and states within us must flex and permit change so that we may further towards perfection. We should be able to surpass every attainment, as we would eventually leave



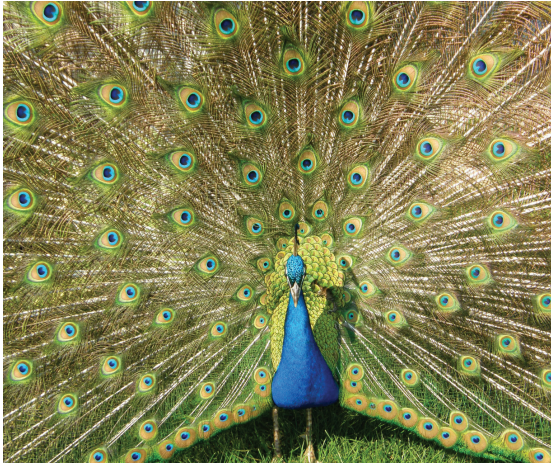
'The Feast of the Yogis' c. 1603-1604

a pleasant seat alongside a roadway, in order to advance. And complete self-change is based upon realization. As the poet writes in *Savitri* (p. 108):

*To seize the absolute in shapes that pass,
To fix the eternal's touch in time-made things,
This is the law of all perfection here.*

To fix that experience in the body was Sri Aurobindo's uncompromising commitment. Sustained decades of practice illuminated his body, all of it based first upon the firm realization of Brahman beyond time and space, seconded by the realization of the Godhead manifested throughout the world and all beings. Realization was his early foundation. He transcended all, then embraced all. He cared, infinitely, to descend from conquered heights to reclaim all that he had renounced. The descent uncovers the Divine's richness in the world. By the descent, Sri Aurobindo's conscious force poured like honey into the world, into his growing community, through cascading powers of imagination, revelation, inspiration. His accomplishment was transmissible and prepared us for a similar integration. His own golden body was a seat of bliss, a ground of light, a source of gathered power, a foundation for the future. Sri Aurobindo bridged spirit and matter in himself.





PEACOCK'S FAN

Our Sunday studies in *The Life Divine* have moved now into the eighth chapter, "The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge." Several friends from around the country participate through the Zoom conference app, and can both view and listen to the discussions with their smart phones, tablets, computers, or even their landline telephones. Incidentally, when you visit our website at iksc.org, you should see that our Indian dinners on Monday night have shifted from 7.30 to 6.30 p.m.

You will be happy to know that Santosh Krinsky at Lotus Press has published in e-book format a number of titles which are core to the study of the Integral Yoga. Many classics from Sri Aurobindo are available. And so are a number of books written by M.P. Pandit. Newest among the latter list is *Talks on the Life Divine-1*. (You can search MPP's titles at http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Ddigital-text&field-keywords=m.p.%20pandit%20.)

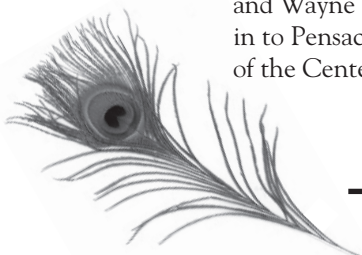
From early August onwards, the Center welcomed a succession of bright visitors. Around Sri Aurobindo's birthday, we had Beverly Day from Los Angeles, Wolfram Verlaan from Huntsville, Alabama, Neha Satak from Fort Walton Beach in Florida, and Judy and David Ellis from Whittier, California. A few weeks later, Diana Skrutskie from Raleigh, North Carolina, Jennifer Williams from Charlottesville, Virginia, and Wayne Hicks from Houston, Texas, all flew in to Pensacola. They came to honor a number of the Center's friends who attained the age of

60 in 2014. So fêted were Diana Skrutskie, Vicki Hall, Indigo Sundari, Nancy LaNasa, Tom LaNasa, Elaine Sargent, and Beverly Day.

Shortly afterwards we had Karen Litfin, from Whidbey Island and Seattle, for several days after her speaking engagement at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. She had been there to address students and faculty about themes raised in her new book on ecovillages. Karen was followed by John Eckre from Santa Fe, New Mexico. We enjoyed his sincerity and wit for a few days, then new friends from Tennessee arrived, including Shobhana Senthilkumaran and her mother, Uma Chittybabu, who have been devoted to the Mother for years. The family appreciated the ashram-like atmosphere of the Center.

Many were saddened to learn about the passing of Jesse Roarke on 10 August 2014. A poet of sublime capacity and an essayist of both depth and wit, few could contest with him on intellectual matters. Jesse introduced Robert Kleinman to Sri Aurobindo's work when they were graduate students at Columbia in the Philosophy Department in the 1950s. Jesse wrote a well-received book on Sri Aurobindo, which was published in Pondicherry at the Ashram Press on 24 November 1973, barely a week after the Mother's passing. His poetry is still available in two books, *Sea Sonnets* and *Yoshitsune/Atri*, and in past issues of the journal *Mother India*. The greater portion of his work lies unpublished, both in poetry and prose. As a preface to Jesse's unpublished epic poem, *Eurydice*, (in dactylic hexameters, no less, the meter of all the great classic epics) appears the following sonnet:

The Emyrean is the very earth,
And all of fire truth-revelation's smile,
As full the surfacemost in gravid style
Delivers and lives its perpetual birth,
Old wisdom faded for its proper worth
To burn where no unrest can cloud the dial,
As cosmic clarity revokes denial,
Enclosed in the expansive measure's girth,
That all-assimilative is the sea
Unbounded and the whole horizon's gift;
The suns are met, the air enkindles free
Direction in the comprehensive drift,
As no above and no below hold fair,
The Immortal in formation everywhere.



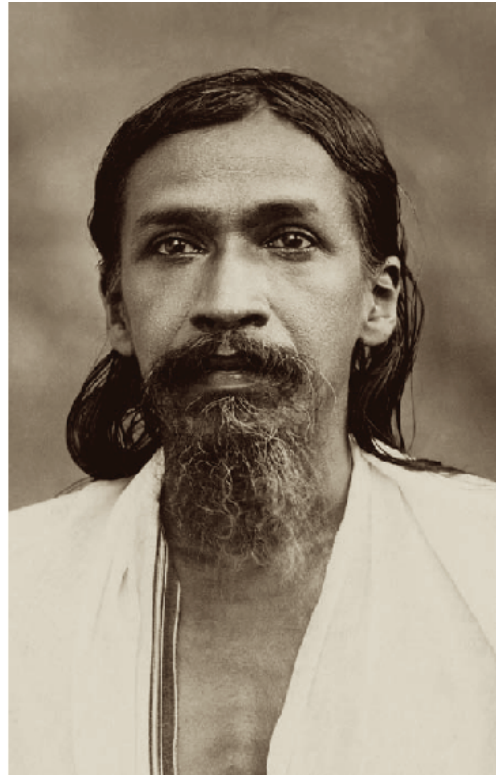
A WORLD-CHANGING YOGA

Sri Aurobindo

What is a perfect technique of Yoga or rather of a world-changing and Nature-changing Yoga? Not one that takes a man by a little bit of him somewhere, attaches a hook and pulls him up by a pulley into Nirvana or Paradise. The technique of a world-changing Yoga has to be as multiform, sinuous, patient, all-including as the world itself. If it does not deal with all the difficulties or possibilities and carefully deal with each necessary element, has it any chance of success? And can a perfect technique which everybody can understand do that? It is not like writing a small poem in a fixed metre with a limited number of modulations. If you take the poem simile, it is the Mahabharata of a Mahabharata that has to be done. And what, compared with the limited Greek perfection, is the technique of the Mahabharata?

Next, what is the use of *vicārabuddhi* in such a case? If one has to get to a new consciousness which surpasses the reasoning intellect, can one do it on lines which are to be judged and understood by the reasoning intellect, controlled at every step by it, told by the intellect what it is to do, what is the measure of its achievements, what its steps must be and what their value? If one does that, will one ever get out of the range of the reasoning intelligence into what is beyond it? And if one does, how shall others judge what one is doing by the intellectual measure? How can one judge what is beyond the ordinary consciousness when one is oneself in the ordinary consciousness? Is it not only by exceeding yourself that you can feel, experience, judge what exceeds you? What is the value of a judgment without the feeling and experience?

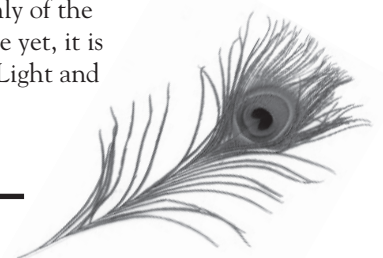
What the Supramental will do the mind cannot foresee or lay down. The mind is Ignorance seeking for the Truth, the Supramental by its very definition is Truth Consciousness, Truth in possession of itself and fulfilling itself by its own power. In a supramental world imperfection and disharmony are bound to disappear. But what we propose just now is not to make the earth a supramental world but to bring down the Supramental as a power and established consciousness in the midst of the rest — to let it work there and fulfil itself as Mind descended into



Life and Matter and has worked as a Power there to fulfil itself in the midst of the rest. This will be enough to change the world and to change Nature by breaking down her present limits. But what, how, by what degrees it will do it is a thing that ought not to be said now — when the Light is there, the Light will itself do its work — when the Supramental Will stands on earth, that Will will decide. It will establish a perfection, a harmony, a Truth-creation — for the rest, well, it will be the rest — that is all.

*

I certainly hope to bring down an effective power of the Truth which will replace eventually the Falsehood that has governed the minds and hearts of men for so long. The liberation of a few individuals is a thing that is always possible and has always been done — but, to my seeing, it cannot be the sole aim of existence. Whatever the struggles and sufferings and blunders of humanity, there is still in it an urge towards the Light, an impulse towards a greater Truth not only of the soul but the life. If it has not been done yet, it is surely because those who reached the Light and



the greater Truth, rested there and saw in it more a means of escape for the soul than a means of transformation for the life. The liberation of the spirit is necessary, nothing can be done without it — but the transformation is also possible.

*

You have missed altogether the qualifying words which I put with great care and prominent emphasis¹ — if you don't read carefully, you will necessarily misunderstand what I write. I said "This transformation cannot be done individually in a solitary way only." No individual solitary transformation apart from the work for the earth (which means more than any individual transformation) would be either possible or useful. (Also no individual human being can by his own power alone work out the transformation, nor is it the object of the Yoga to create an individual superman here and there.) The object of the Yoga is to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth, to fix it there, to create a new race with the principle of the supramental consciousness governing the inner and outer individual and collective life. Therefore the existence of the Asram, whatever difficulties it created for ourselves or for the individual, was inevitable. The method was the preparation of the earth consciousness in the human being as represented by the members of the Asram and others (with also a certain working in the general earth consciousness) so as to make the descent of the supramental Force possible. That Force accepted by individual after individual according to their preparation would establish the supramental consciousness in the physical world and so create a nucleus for its own expansion.

*

As far as I can see, once the supramental is established in Matter, the transformation will be possible under much less troublesome conditions than now are there. These bad conditions are due to the fact that the Ignorance is in possession and the hostile Powers an established authority, as it were, who do not care to give up their hold and there is no full force of Light established in the

¹ In a letter published in *Letters on Himself and the Ashram*, volume 35 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO, p. 649. — Ed.

earth consciousness which would not only meet but outweigh their full force of darkness.

*

It is the darkest nights that prepare the greatest dawns — and it is so because it is into the deep inconscience of material life that we have to bring, not an intermediate glimmer, but the full glory of the divine Light.

(From *Letters on Yoga-1*, Volume 28, CWSA, pp. 294-296.)

TRANSFORMATION OF THE BODY *Sri Aurobindo*

It is quite true that the surrender and the consequent transformation of the whole being is the aim of the Yoga — the body is not excluded, but at the same time this part of the endeavour is the most difficult and doubtful — the rest, though not facile, is comparatively less difficult to accomplish. One must start with an inner control of the consciousness over the body, a power to make it obey more and more the will or the force transmitted to it. In the end as a higher and higher Force descends and the plasticity of the body increases, the transformation becomes possible.

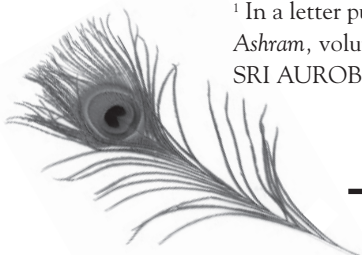
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It is absolutely idle to think of transforming the body when other things that are so much easier to do — though of course none is easy — are not done. The inner must change before the outermost can follow . . . What has to be done with the body at first is to make it open to the Force, so as to receive strength against illness and fatigue — when they come, there must be the power to react and throw them off and to keep a constant flow of force into the body. If that is done, the rest of the bodily change can wait for its proper time.

*

The supramental perfection means that the body becomes conscious, is filled with consciousness and that as this is the Truth consciousness all its actions, functionings etc. become by the power of the consciousness within it harmonious, luminous, right and true — without ignorance or disorder. The Hathayogic method is to bring an immense vital force into the body and by this and by certain processes keep it strong and in good health and a capable instrument.

(From *LY-1*, Vol. 28, CWSA, pp. 305-306.)



The Golden Light

*Thy golden Light came down into my brain
And the grey rooms of mind sun-touched became
A bright reply to Wisdom's occult plane,
A calm illumination and a flame.*

*Thy golden Light came down into my throat,
And all my speech is now a tune divine,
A paean song of Thee my single note;
My words are drunk with the Immortal's wine.*

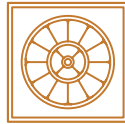
*Thy golden Light came down into my heart
Smiting my life with Thy eternity;
Now has it grown a temple where Thou art
And all its passions point towards only Thee.*

*Thy golden Light came down into my feet;
My earth is now Thy playfield and Thy seat.*

Richardson



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*The Lord has said,
"The time is come"
and all the obstacles
will be overcome
my blessings*

