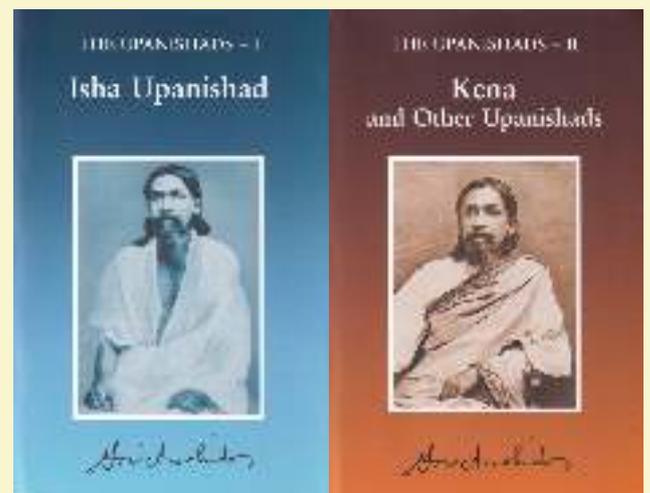
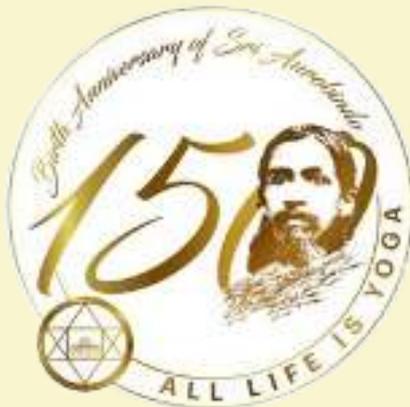


The Call Beyond





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SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM - DELHI BRANCH

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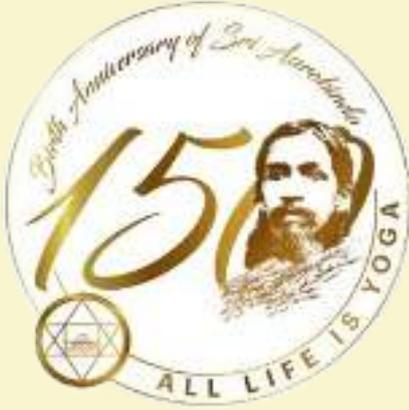
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Celebrating 150 Years of Sri Aurobindo

(1872-2022)



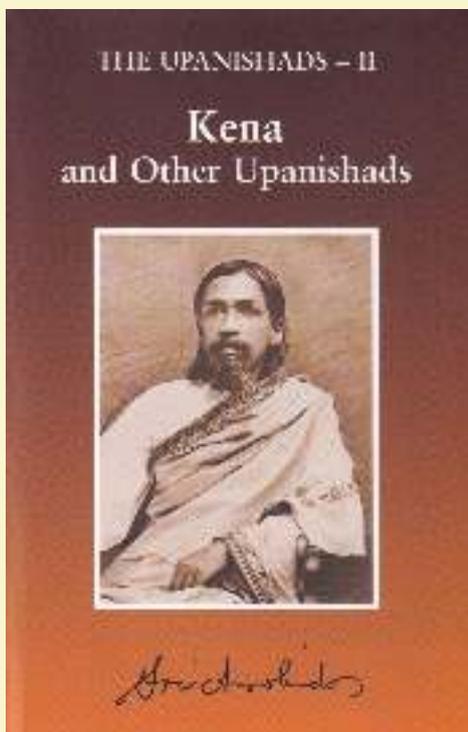
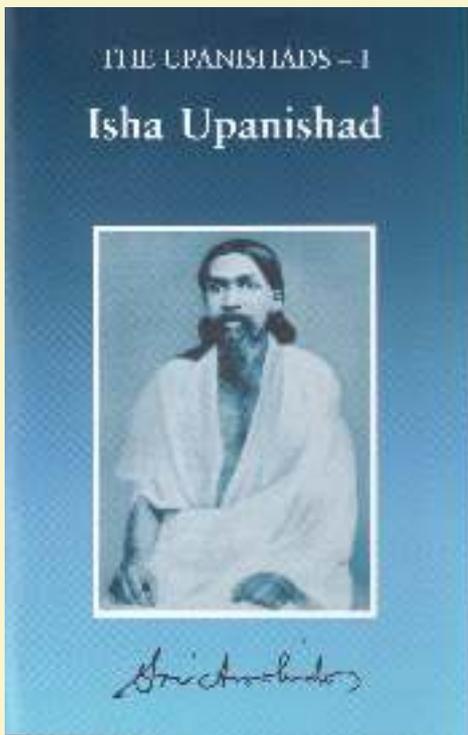
Who was Sri Aurobindo? A freedom fighter, who shook the British Empire within five years? A poet, who could give poetic expression to whispers from the heavens? A writer, who would have honoured the Nobel Prize for Literature, if it had been conferred on him? A linguist, who raised the level of the English language to that of Sanskrit, and deciphered the symbolism of the Veda? A yogi, who gave the world Integral Yoga, a powerful synthesis that incorporated the major traditional systems of yoga, and went beyond all of them? A rishi (a seer) and a muni (a thinker) rolled in one? Or, a spiritual master, radical, rational and revolutionary, far ahead of his times, who is today the Guru to millions in the world?

Sri Aurobindo was all this, and more. Due to our limitations, *The Call Beyond*, however, will concentrate on Sri Aurobindo, the writer. In the category of spiritual literature rooted in the Indian tradition, the original of which was written in the English language, Sri Aurobindo's works belong to a class apart, both in quantity and quality. In his works, Sri Aurobindo has given nothing short of a prescription for sculpting humanity into a new shape that would be beyond recognition. Even through the works that have their origin in the *Arya*, which were written over a period of just six years (1914-1920), he has created enough homework for the world to stay busy with for several centuries.

The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA) run into 36 volumes. The humble offering of *The Call Beyond*, however, would be limited to bringing you every month just the glimpses of one of the works of Sri Aurobindo.



The Upanishads



Sri Aurobindo's return from England in 1893 after a 14-year stay was followed by an almost equally long stay at Baroda. While he was at Baroda, he realized that although he knew so much about the Western civilization, he knew very little about the Indian culture. He went about addressing this handicap with the sincerity and thoroughness that few are capable of. He taught himself Sanskrit, and read the ancient Indian literature in its original. He not only read it, he also assimilated it and looked at it critically. The result was a perfect East-West synthesis, which was a divinely-planned preparation for what was to follow in the form of publication of the *Arya* from 1914 onwards. However, his translations and commentaries on the Upanishads did not have to wait till 1914; he started that around 1900 and continued this work for more than two decades. Now these writings from 1900 onwards have been published in Volumes 17 and 18 of the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA). Volume 17 has the translation and commentaries

on the *Isha Upanishad*, Sri Aurobindo's favourite Upanishad. Volume 18 has the translations and commentaries on many more, including the *Kena*, *Katha* and *Mundaka Upanishads*.



tion, formation and growth which are the very substance of life; but the visible principle of life can only emerge when the necessary material conditions have been prepared which will permit it to organise itself in Matter. So also Life is instinct with the stuff of Mind, abounds with an unconscious * sensation, will, intelligence, but the visible principle of Mind can only emerge when the necessary vital conditions have been prepared which will permit it to organise itself in living Matter. Mind too is instinct with the stuff of supermind—sympathies, unities, intuitions, emergences of pre-existent knowledge, inherent self-effectivities of will which disguise themselves in a mental form; but the visible principle of supermind can only emerge when the necessary mental conditions are prepared which will permit it to organise itself in man, the mental living creature.

This necessary preparation is proceeding in human development as the corresponding preparations were developed in the lower stages of the evolution,—with the same gradations, retardations, inequalities; but still it is more enlightened, increasingly self-conscious, nearer to a conscious sureness. And the very fact that this progress is attended by less ~~certainty~~ ^{certainty} in detail, less timidity of error, a less conservative attachment to the step gained ~~gives us~~ the hope and almost the assurance that when the new principle emerges it will not be by the creation of a new and quite different type which will leave the rest of mankind in the same position to it as are the animals to man, but by the elevation of humanity as a whole to a higher level. For Man, first among Nature's children, has shown the capacity to change himself by his own effort and the conscious aspiration to transcend.

These considerations justify to the reason the idea of a Mind beyond our mind, but only as a final evolution out of Matter. The Upanishad, however, enthrones it as the already existing creator and ruler of Mind; it is a secret

* I use the language of the materialist Haeckel in spite of its paradoxical form.

(the seekings and responses)

instincts,
(sympathies, light and movements)

engaged, as much as it
contradicts

(separated after its
creation)

(not by an opening
of the greater possibility
to all of the men who
have the will to rise)

The proof of a page in the 'Arya', with alterations and additions in Sri Aurobindo's handwriting.



Sri Aurobindo has called the Upanishads “the supreme work of the Indian mind.” Upanishads are the records of the peak spiritual experiences of the rishis (seers) of India. Finite words – and all words are finite – cannot do justice to the experience of the Infinite. This handicap has been overcome to some extent in the Upanishads by the rishis’ minds acting like unobstructed channels that allowed the free flow of words coming from the Infinite while they were one with It, in communion with It. The result was a rich collection of mantras, with which the Upanishads are jam-packed. Upanishads are therefore classified as *sruti*, that is, what has been heard, exactly as it has been heard. The Mother has described the process as ‘heard by the heart, and translated by the head’. Therefore, *sruti* is much more reliable than *smriti*, the narration of an experience that has stayed in memory. The overall experience of the rishis was that the Divine, generally called Brahman in the Upanishads, is One, but has become many in manifestation. **Being One and many; being Unimanifest and manifest; being Eternal and limited to time; being Infinite and finite simultaneously are possible for the Absolute Reality that Brahman is.** While the basic experience of every *rishi* was similar, the inventive human intellect has ensured that several philosophies have emerged from the experience. Vedanta, the philosophy of which the Upanishads are a major source and pillar, itself has several schools. Sri Aurobindo’s Vedanta, termed Integral Vedanta by David Frawley, is an emphatically life-affirming version, deeply couched in evolution, and optimistically futuristic in its vision. The major text of Sri Aurobindo’s Vedanta is *The Life Divine*, but the same philosophy emerges also from Sri Aurobindo’s small little 19-verse-long Upanishad in the Sanskrit language, wherein he says *jagadapi Brahma, satyam na mithya* (the universe is also Brahma, and therefore it is real, not an illusion).



Selections on the Upanishads*

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION AND POETRY MADE ONE

The Upanishads are the supreme work of the Indian mind, and that it should be so, that the highest self-expression of its genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word should be not a literary or poetical masterpiece of the ordinary kind, but a large flood of spiritual revelation of this direct and profound character, is a significant fact, evidence of a unique mentality and unusual turn of spirit. The Upanishads are at once profound religious scriptures,—for they are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences,—documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness and, whether written in verse or cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unfailing inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression. It is the expression of a mind in which philosophy and religion and poetry are made one, because this religion does not end with a cult nor is limited to a religio-ethical aspiration, but rises to an infinite discovery of God, of Self, of our highest and whole reality of spirit and being and speaks out of an ecstasy of luminous knowledge and an ecstasy of moved and fulfilled experience, this philosophy is not an abstract intellectual speculation about Truth or a structure of the logical intelligence, but Truth seen, felt, lived, held by the inmost mind and soul in the joy of utterance of an assured discovery and possession, and this poetry is the work of the aesthetic mind lifted up beyond its ordinary field to express the wonder and beauty of the rarest spiritual self-vision and the profoundest illumined truth of self and God and universe. Here the intuitive mind and intimate psychological experience of the Vedic seers passes into a supreme culmination in which the Spirit, as is said in a phrase of the Katha Upanishad, discloses its own very body, reveals the very word of its self-expression and discovers to



the mind the vibration of rhythms which repeating themselves within in the spiritual hearing seem to build up the soul and set it satisfied and complete on the heights of self-knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 20, The Renaissance in India, p. 329

LUMINOUS BREVITY AND AN IMMEASURABLE COMPLETENESS

These supreme and all-embracing truths, these visions of oneness and self and a universal divine being are cast into brief and monumental phrases which bring them at once before the soul's eye and make them real and imperative to its aspiration and experience or are couched in poetic sentences full of revealing power and suggestive thought-colour that discover a whole infinite through a finite image. The One is there revealed, but also disclosed the many aspects, and each is given its whole significance by the amplitude of the expression and finds as if in a spontaneous self-discovery its place and its connection by the illumining justness of each word and all the phrase. The largest metaphysical truths and the subtlest subtleties of psychological experience are taken up into the inspired movement and made at once precise to the seeing mind and loaded with unending suggestion to the discovering spirit. There are separate phrases, single couplets, brief passages which contain each in itself the substance of a vast philosophy and yet each is only thrown out as a side, an aspect, a portion of the infinite self-knowledge. **All here is a packed and pregnant and yet perfectly lucid and luminous brevity and an immeasurable completeness. A thought of this kind cannot follow the tardy, careful and diffuse development of the logical intelligence.** The passage, the sentence, the couplet, the line, even the half line follows the one that precedes with a certain interval full of an unexpressed thought, an echoing silence between them, a thought which is carried in the total suggestion and implied in the step itself, but which the mind is left to work out for its own profit, and



these intervals of pregnant silence are large, the steps of this thought are like the paces of a Titan striding from rock to distant rock across infinite waters. There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure of each Upanishad; but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 20, The Renaissance in India, pp 323-334

THE ISHA AND THE KENA COMPARED

The Isha is concerned with the whole problem of the world and life and works and the human destiny in their relation to the supreme truth of the Brahman. It embraces in its brief eighteen verses most of the fundamental problems of Life and scans them swiftly with the idea of the supreme Self and its becomings, the supreme Lord and His workings as the key that shall unlock all gates. The oneness of all existences is its dominating note. **The Kena Upanishad approaches a more restricted problem, starts with a more precise and narrow inquiry.** It concerns itself only with the relation of mind-consciousness to Brahman-consciousness and does not stray outside the strict boundaries of its subject.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 15

AN INDISPENSABLE AID TO HUMANITY

The Upanishad alone of extant scriptures gives us without veil or stinting, with plenitude and a noble catholicity the truth of the Brahman; its aid to humanity is therefore indispensable. Only, where anything essential is missing, we must go beyond the Upanishads to seek it,—as for instance when we add to its emphasis on divine knowledge the indispensable ardent emphasis of the later teachings upon divine love and the high emphasis of the Veda upon divine works.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 96



INCOMPLETE AND INFERIOR, BUT NOT UNREAL

The Upanishad does not assert the unreality, but only the incompleteness and inferiority of our present existence. All that we follow after here is an imperfect representation, a broken and divided functioning of what is eternally in an absolute perfection on that higher plane of existence. This mind of ours unpossessed of its object, groping, purblind, besieged by error and incapacity, its action founded on an external vision of things, is only the shadow thrown by a superconscient Knowledge which possesses, creates and securely, uses the truth of things because nothing is external to it, nothing is other than itself, nothing is divided or at war within its all-comprehensive self-awareness. That is the Mind of our mind.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 68

THE CREATION OF A MANTRA

The theory of the Mantra is that it is a word of power born out of the secret depths of our being where it has been brooded upon by a deeper consciousness than the mental, framed in the heart and not constructed by the intellect, held in the mind, again concentrated on by the waking mental consciousness and then thrown out silently or vocally—the silent word is perhaps held to be more potent than the spoken—precisely for the work of creation.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 30

THE TWO POSSIBLE VIEWS OF THE UNIVERSE

There are always two possible views of the universe. The one supposes, with modern Science, Matter to be the beginning of things and studies everything as an evolution from Matter; or, if not Matter, then, with the Sankhya philosophy, an indeterminate inconscient active Force or Prakriti of which even mind and reason are operations,—the Conscious Soul, if any exists, being a quite different and, although conscient, yet inactive entity.



The other supposes the conscious soul, the Purusha, to be the material as well as the cause of the universe and Prakriti to be only its Shakti or the Force of its conscious being which operates upon itself as the material of forms. The latter is the view of the Upanishads.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 36

THE UNKNOWABLE AND ITS DUAL MANIFESTATION

It is an error to conceive that the Upanishads teach the true existence only of an impersonal and actionless Brahman, an impersonal God without power or qualities. They declare rather an Unknowable that manifests itself to us in a double aspect of Personality and Impersonality. When they wish to speak of this Unknowable in the most comprehensive and general way, they use the neuter and call It *Tat*, That; but this neuter does not exclude the aspect of universal and transcendent Personality acting and governing the world (of Kena Upanishad III). Still, when they intend to make prominent the latter idea they more often prefer to use the masculine, *Sa*, He, or, else they employ the term *Deva*, God or the Divine, or *Purusha*, the conscious Soul, of whom *Prakriti* or *Maya* the executive Puissance, the *Shakti*.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 17, Isha Upanishad, p40

**Titles added by the editor*

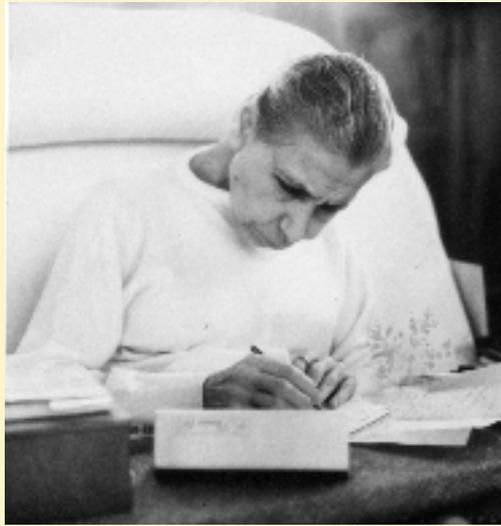


Vision is not sufficient; one must become what inwardly one sees. The whole inner life must be changed so as to represent perfectly in all parts of the being what is understood by the intellect and seen by the inner perception.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 17, Isha Upanishad, p. 36



Ascetic Methods



Mother, for self-mastery are not the ascetic methods useful sometimes?

No! You cure nothing. You only give yourself the illusion that you have progressed, but you cure nothing. The proof is that if you stop your ascetic methods, the thing is even stronger than before; it comes back with a vengeance. It depends upon what you call ascetic methods. If it is not to indulge in satisfying all your desires, this indeed is not asceticism, it is common sense. It is something else. Ascetic methods are things like repeated fasting, compelling yourself to endure the cold ... in fact, to torture your body a little. This indeed gives you only a spiritual pride, nothing more. It masters nothing at all. It is infinitely easier. People do it because it is very easy, it is simple. Just because the pride is quite satisfied and the vanity can get puffed up, it becomes very easy.

One makes a great demonstration of his ascetic virtues, and so considers himself an extremely important personage, and that helps him to endure many things.

It is much more difficult to master one's impulses quietly, composedly, and to prevent them from showing themselves – much more! – without taking ascetic measures. It is much more



difficult not to be attached to the things you possess than to possess nothing. This is something that has been known for centuries. It requires a much greater quality not to be attached to the things one possesses than to be without any possessions or to reduce one's possessions to a strict minimum. It is much more difficult. It is a much higher degree of moral worth. Simply this attitude: when a thing comes to you, to take it, use it; when for one reason or another it goes away, to let it go and not regret it. Not to refuse it when it comes, to know how to adapt yourself and not to regret it when it goes.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', pp. 51-52)

All the pages of The Mother's work, 'The Great Adventure', in Tara Didi's voice, have been uploaded on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The link to the channel is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcmF6JzAOsBMdqJjZbnmyng>



Knowledge does not end with knowing, nor is it pursued and found for the sake of knowing alone. It has its full value only when it leads to some greater gain than itself, some gain of being. Simply to know the eternal and to remain in the pain, struggle and inferiority of our present way of being, would be a poor and lame advantage.

A greater knowledge opens the possibility and, if really possessed, brings the actuality of a greater being. To be is the first verb which contains all the others; knowledge, action, creation, enjoyment are only a fulfilment of being. Since we are incomplete in being, to grow is our aim, and that knowledge, action, creation, enjoyment are the best which most help us to expand, grow, feel our existence.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 154



On Giving

Michael Virat

It seems that all spiritual teachings given to humanity are offered on a take it or leave it basis. And this feels right to me. If a practice calls to you feel it is appropriate, then follow it. If a particular teacher has earned your respect, then do what he says. The responsibility ultimately rests with the student. It is his choice, and the results will affect his life.

One very simple teaching often ignored in this world is on giving. Jesus told the rich young man: "Sell all you have and give alms and come and follow me and great will be your reward in heaven." Could this still have relevance in today's modern world? To actually carry out this teaching is a path few will choose to take. It is not for everyone one; and quite difficult for the wealthy.

How can we be sure this teaching really means what it says? **The intuition is the first and ultimately our only guide in reaching into the unknown.** Later, our experiences will prove or disprove the theory. There is another tool for analysing a teaching that at first appears strange; it is called the law of correspondences. What do other spiritual traditions say on the same subject? And how does this teaching fit into the general landscape?

In the Alice Bailey material we find: "To those who give, more will be given so they can give again; to those who give all, all is given."

In *A Course in Miracles* it is said: "To have, give all to all."

Here are 3 different teachings saying the same thing. And we cannot know if it is right unless we follow it through. No wonder few choose this path. But let's look a little deeper and see if it makes any sense.



“You say you would give, but only to the deserving. Well, the trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture. They give that they might live, for to withhold is to perish. And he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights is worthy of all else from. And he who deserves to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.”

The Prophet, Kahlil Gibran

All spiritual traditions point to an underlying oneness rejected by the ego and selfishness. They talk of the great heresy of separateness. They ask us to love—everyone.

We have all known some women who always give food to everyone...and they always have food to give. We have seen some girls who always give clothes away...and they always have clothes. Or those who continually give books...always have books to give. **If humanity is one single entity, if the universe is only one being, then giving is like priming the pump—it gets the flow started. “Cast your bread upon the waters and you will find it after many days.”**

As we look deeper, there is more to discover. We find that it is not just a simple act, but a path, a progression of events, an expansion of consciousness. If I am to give all to all, then I myself am included in the all. Also, what starts as an exercise in giving material things expands into giving respect, consideration, patience, time, guidance, forgiveness, joy, honour and love. The nicest discovery is that by following the process we gain wisdom.

What happens is that we find a global bank account where man can build a line of credit for future use. Although all traditions remind us that this is not a valid motive; nevertheless, it is what actually happens. If you hold onto something, it will and must disappear. If you give it away, you establish that it is yours forever.



Everyone knows there are many paths up the mountain—some are comfortable and easy with a gradual rise; and given sufficient time they eventually reach the summit. But a few people prefer the steep ascent, which takes more work, is more dangerous, but gets you to the top quicker. If you have a burning desire to serve your fellowmen and an aspiration to climb the spiritual mountain, then giving, offered in the right spirit, can accelerate your progress.

You are richer with the wealth you give...

The Mother

Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1997, p. 41



For the universe is the little, the divided, the parcelling out of existence and consciousness in which we know and express things by fragments, and we can never really cage in our intellectual and verbal fictions that infinite totality.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 74

To live in our present state of self-consciousness is to live and to act in ignorance. We are ignorant of ourselves, because we know as yet only that in us which changes always, from moment to moment, from hour to hour, from period to period, from life to life, and not that in us which is eternal. We are ignorant of the world because we do not know God; we are aware of the law of appearances, but not of the law and truth of being.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 153



Vedanta: Simple Answers to Difficult Questions

Out of himself he creates, in himself he becomes; all are in his being and all is of his being.

Sri Aurobindo ('Essays on the Gita', p. 333, SABCL edition)

Vedanta is probably the best known of the six classical systems of Indian philosophy, the other five being *yoga*, *sankhya*, *mimamsa*, *vaisesika* and *nyaya*. Yoga and Vedanta are closely related; Vedanta is to yoga as science is to technology. Vedanta literally means the end of the Vedas, or the ultimate knowledge of the Vedas. There are three pillars of Vedanta: the Upanishads, the Gita, and the 'Brahmasutras'. Upanishads have done away with symbolism and rituals; but along with being direct, they have also ended up being rather cryptic. The Gita, which came after the Upanishads, is both direct and simple. Upanishads are descriptions of mystical experiences (*shruti*, that which was heard), and Gita is a narrative (*smriti*, that which was recalled from memory). 'Brahmasutras', attributed to the philosopher, Badrayana, are based on rational analysis. Although they approach the subject differently, all the three pillars of Vedanta lead to the same worldview.

Vedanta is a spiritual philosophy. Like other such philosophies, it approaches on rational grounds questions regarding the existence of God, the relationship of God with His creation, and the continuing role of God in the affairs of His creation. Although Vedanta gets support for the existence of God from the mystic experiences described in the Upanishads, even on rational grounds accepting the existence of God is more rational than denying it. The fact is that the universe exists; and the creation of the universe may be explained either as an accident, or as the creation of a Creator who existed even before the universe. Explaining the creation of the universe as



an accident is like saying that tapping the keys of a typewriter by a monkey accidentally led to the creation of a poem. If the universe was created not accidentally, but on the basis of an intelligent design, it presupposes an intelligent designer. The Designer, or Creator, has been given many names. In Vedanta, It has been called Brahman; Sri Aurobindo generally refers to It as the Divine.*

If we assume that the universe was created by the Divine, one basic question still has to be resolved: where did the material for the creation of the universe come from? The all-knowing all-powerful all-pervasive Divine obviously existed only in a non-material form before the creation of the universe. According to Vedanta, the non-material Divine created the material universe by Itself becoming the universe. In other words, *the Creator did not create the creation, the Creator became the creation*. An analogy given in the Mundaka Upanishad (1-I:7) to understand this concept is that of a spider. Just as a spider creates the material for its web out of itself, the Creator also created the material for the universe out of Itself. This mode of creation leads to a corollary. Since the universe is the Creator in another form, no further evidence is required to prove that the Creator is present throughout the universe. For example, if a child folds a piece of paper to make a boat, we do not need any proof for the presence of paper in the boat: the boat is nothing but paper in another form; the paper is there throughout the boat. Similarly, the Divine is present throughout the universe. But since the all-pervasive presence of the Divine is not visible to us, we call this presence the Spirit. *The Spirit of the Divine in an individual is called the soul*.

The next question to be resolved is: why did the Divine create the universe? There are two rational answers to this question: either the Divine was compelled to do it, or it pleased the Divine to do it. The first of these answers violates two basic



principles associated with the idea of the Divine. Since the Divine is all-powerful, It cannot be compelled to do anything. Secondly, the Divine is all there is. If there is no other, who is the other that compelled It? Therefore, the Divine created the universe because It was pleased to do so. The Divine is the entire Truth, the Existent, or Sat. Sat is aware of itself, or self-aware, or conscious. The self-aware nature of the Existent is Chit. The self-awareness includes the awareness that It can do everything, or the awareness of its Force. This aspect of Chit is called Chit-Shakti. The Chit-Shakti expresses itself only for the delight of the Divine. Thus delight, or Ananda, is another permanent feature of the Divine. The three aspects of the Existent, namely existence, self-awareness and delight, have been summed up in the word Sat-Chit-Ananda, or Sacchidananda.

The next question to be resolved is: having created the universe, has the Divine abandoned it, or does It continue to play a role in running it? To some extent, the question is absurd because if the universe is a manifestation of the Divine itself, it is like asking whether the Divine runs itself. Being a self-aware force, it is understood that the Divine runs itself. But a simpler answer to this question depends on whether the universe is just drifting or has a sense of direction. We can answer this dilemma better for our own world rather than the entire universe. If nobody is looking after the world, it should be just drifting. However, a close look reveals that the world has been changing with a sense of direction ever since its beginning. Having started with dead matter, it began hosting live forms. After the emergence of life, there has been a progressive evolution of more and more complex forms of life. One way of looking at the evolving complexity is that the Divine Consciousness has been expressing itself less incompletely at each successive step. Man, the latest product of evolution, is still very far from completely expressing the Supreme Consciousness. But man is unique in



having the capacity, and the urge, to grow in consciousness during its lifetime through its own efforts. In short, the world is moving in a clearly identifiable direction, apparently with a 'purpose'. Having imposed upon itself drastic self-limitation when the Divine became dead matter, the Divine has been revealing itself progressively better in the world. The goal of the evolutionary movement seems to be as complete an expression of Divine consciousness as is possible in material forms. Hence, the evolutionary changes with a clear sense of direction indicate that the Divine continues to play a role in running the world. Man, in his ignorance, may delay or twist the design of the Divine, but the Divine, being eternal, is not in a hurry. The Divine seems to have inscrutable ways of applying mid-course corrections. Ultimately, one discovers that the Divine has an overall design for the world, which always prevails.

The final question to be resolved is: having created the universe, is the material universe all that the Divine now is? The answer is 'no', because the Divine is Infinite. The universe that it has become is vast but still finite. The logic of the infinite is that if we take something finite away from the Infinite, the remainder is still Infinite. Thus, the Divine exists not only in the universe, but also beyond it. Much of the spiritual philosophy of Vedanta is summarized in a popular Upanishadic verse:

Poornamadah poornamidam poornaat poornamudachyate

Poornasya poornamaadaya poornam-eva-avashishyate

(*Poorna* literally means complete – only the Infinite is complete, everything else is a part of the Infinite. Therefore, translating *poorna* as Infinite, the verse means: This is Infinite, that is Infinite. From the Infinite originated the Infinite. If the Infinite is subtracted from the Infinite, the remainder is still Infinite)



If the universe is finite, why does this verse call even the universe infinite? That is again based on the logic of the infinite. If infinity is divided up into a million parts, each part is also infinite. How can the universe be both finite and infinite? Sri Aurobindo has explained it beautifully by saying that the universe is “finite in expression, but infinite in essence.”

*Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual philosophy has been expounded in his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*. *The Life Divine*, and his epic poem, *Savitri*, may be considered recently composed Upanishads in the English language, because they are based on Sri Aurobindo’s mystic experiences.

Posted earlier as a blog on Speaking Tree on 23 August 2012.

For more than 250 short essays such as this one, you may see the book, ‘Spiritual Wisdom in Small Doses’, which is available for free download on <https://yesspirituality.wordpress.com/books/>



The child minds follow after surface desires and fall into the net of death who is spread wide for us; but the wise know of immortality and ask not from things inconstant that which is constant.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 20, The Renaissance in India, p. 339

But both the Self and the becomings are Brahman; we cannot regard the one as Brahman and the others as unreal and not Brahman. Both are real, the one with a constituent and comprehensive, the others with a derivative or dependent reality.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 17, Isha Upanishad, p. 25



From Point Loma to Pondicherry, From Judith to Jyotipriya

“You must know how happy I am to have something so genuine to offer those seeking truth.... I just must share my great happiness and blessing with others.”

Jyotipriya, in a letter to The Mother



Jyotipriya, the founder of East-West Cultural Center, Los Angeles, California

Difficult indeed is the path of the seeker who approaches the Divine through the root of knowledge. She wants to understand at the mental level truths that are beyond the mental; before she offers her work to the Divine, she has to be convinced that the Divine does exist; and she has no Guru till she finds someone who can answer all her questions to her satisfaction. One such seeker was Judith Tyberg, who travelled from the US to Banaras in search of the secret hidden in the Vedas.

Judith Tyberg was born on 16 May 1902 to a theosophist couple in Point Loma. All throughout the nine months that she spent in her mother's womb, her mother chanted a Vedic hymn to the newly embodied soul. At an early age, Jyoti could recite sections of the Gita by heart. Very early in her youth, it was quite obvious that that she was not in the world to lead an ordinary life, and that she had been given circumstances highly conducive to her spiritual evolution. At school, she stood out as the happiest child. Her zest for life was such that she was nicknamed “Judy Sunbeam,” somewhat similar to Jyotipriya, the name Sri Aurobindo gave her much later. At the same time, she had also a serious nature, which had earned her another name, “The Little Philosopher.”



Baby Judith Tyberg, 1902

Judith Tyberg as a teenager, 'the young philosopher'



With a keen interest in religion while still at school, her college education was at the Theosophical University, which culminated in a Ph.D. in Sanskritic studies. By age 30, she had an in-depth knowledge of the major scriptures of various traditions, and knew not only English and Sanskrit but also Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Danish and Swedish. She started her teaching career as a teenager at the Raja Yoga School of her alma mater, and went on to become head of its Sanskrit and Oriental Division in 1940, and served as Dean of Studies as well as Trustee of the Theosophical University from 1935 to 1945. Her journey as an explorer and scholar had reached a point where the preparation for her final calling was nearing its end. Circumstances were created by the Divine for her to break her ties with The Theosophical Society and move out of Point Loma. One of the triggers was a lecture by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, which she attended in 1946 at the University of Southern California. Dr. Radhakrishnan was then the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The same year she applied for a Sanskrit research scholarship at BHU. The response to her application was a three-year scholarship at the Oriental Division of BHU, and Judith Tyberg was made an honorary member of the All India Arya Dharma Seva Sangha.



Judith Tyberg, teaching Sanskrit at the Theosophical Society, Point Loma, 1943



Judith Tyberg and Arabinda Basu

Judith Tyberg arrived at BHU in June 1947. After studying humanity's sacred scriptures for twenty-five years and Sanskrit for seventeen years, she was convinced that a deep but undiscovered spiritual secret was encrypted in the Vedas' archaic, complex language and that Western explanations of the texts were "nonsense". Therefore, she chose the study of Vedic religious hymns as her topic for the Master's thesis. But, to her surprise and disappointment, she discovered that even the scholars at BHU knew of no one who could help her find 'this secret', if it even existed. She was advised to change her research topic. Arabinda Basu, then a young lecturer at BHU, overheard this exchange. He followed a crestfallen Tyberg into the corridor, quietly told her that there was someone who could help her, and then gave her an as-yet unpublished manuscript of *The Secret of the Veda* by Sri Aurobindo. Judith Tyberg stayed up all night reading, and the next morning, told Arabinda Basu that she had found the object of her lifelong search for truth. On his advice, she wrote to Sri Aurobindo, asking for permission to see him.

The permission was granted, and soon she was at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry for a two-month stay. During these two months came 24 November 1947, one of the four Darshan days, on which Sri Aurobindo could be seen briefly although



he had been in seclusion since 1926. On the Darshan day, she paid her respects to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and had an experience, which she described as “I just felt God”, “electric forces”, “stretched out to infinity”, and “I really knew what was my soul.” In a private audience with The Mother, Judith Tyberg asked to receive a spiritual name, which was chosen by Sri Aurobindo himself: “Jyotipriya, the lover of Light”. The jnana yogi had found her Gurus.

Soon after her return from Pondicherry, Jyotipriya met a yogi. He saw her palm, and said that she was born on 16 May 1902. Having earned her admiration, he made three predictions and a disclosure. *First*, that she was destined to teach. *Second*, that one day she would have a building surrounded by seven trees, into which people would be streaming in and out. This she found difficult to believe because she had no money. But he assured her that she would always have money for her work, but not for any other needs. *Third*, that she would have health issues, but she would continue to work in spite of them. *Finally*, he told her that she had found her Guru. That was true, because she had just returned after her first darshan of Sri Aurobindo. The three predictions also came true. She continued teaching till her last day on earth. The East-West Cultural Centre that she created was landscaped with seven trees, and had a continuous stream of spiritual teachers and seekers coming and going. Finally, she had pretty painful arthritis, but that did not make her stop teaching, which her passion was.

When one dares and goes ahead with an unselfish heart and is convinced the work is for the progress of humanity help does come.

-Judith Tyberg

Judith, now Jyotipriya, went back to Banaras, completed her M.A. course, which she not only passed first class but also created a new record at BHU. It was perhaps more than a coincidence



that one of the questions that she got in her exam was ‘State clearly and briefly the philosophical and religious views of Sri Aurobindo’. About this question, in March 1949, she wrote to Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, “I answered fully and enjoyed pouring out my soul in it.”

Formal studies at BHU over, in Autumn 1949, Jyotipriya was back to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. But her destiny was to take Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s teachings to the US. Just as twenty-five years of studies at Point Loma were a preparation for her studies in India, her two years in India were preparation for what she had to do for the next 30 years in the US. Sri Aurobindo knew what she was in the world for. The Guru knows how to get the right disciples hooked. Just two days after she had sent a letter to Pondicherry requesting for permission to visit, she noticed something strange. She could smell Jasmine flowers wherever she went, although there were no such flowers around. The fragrance intensified whenever Arabinda Basu talked about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. She asked Arabinda Basu about this strange phenomenon. He told her that she had contacted Sri Aurobindo. Now he has contacted her, and that she would soon get a letter. Soon after that she got a letter telling her that she could visit Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, at any time. Later, when T.V. Kapali Sastry, a Sanskrit scholar at the Pondicherry Ashram, tried to apply to Jyotipriya his customary stringent standards for accepting a student, Sri Aurobindo told him, “Teach her anything she wants to know, she’s going to do good work in America.”

During her two years in India, Jyotipriya had kept up regular correspondence with an extensive network of American seekers. Once her annual Christmas letter sent from India consisted of 22 single-spaced typed pages, and she sent it to over 400 friends. Someone in the Ashram told her that her time would be better spent in the pursuit of her own sadhana. Jyotipriya shared it



with the Mother. The Mother's reply was "How do you think the Divine works if he doesn't work through people like you? You keep up all your contacts!" So Jyotipriya queried, "But if I keep to my own sadhana, I'll go along faster?" To which the Mother replied, "Yes. It is that way. Just work on your own sadhana and you go very high, but you leave everybody else behind. The way you grow, you take others along with you." Then She reminded Jyotipriya what The Mother had told her at their first meeting – that she was here in the world to serve, and that Jyotipriya had made that choice long ago!

In April 1950, Jyotipriya left for the US. Her arrival in Los Angeles was met with great enthusiasm. In just the first two weeks, she gave over ten lectures to more than 1,000 attendees. A similarly packed schedule was organized in San Francisco, where she received an enthusiastic reception at Stanford University. America was eager for "the uncensored truth about India" and, in Tyberg's words, California was "just teeming with interest in Sri Aurobindo". After doing her bit for the newly established American Academy of Asian Studies (now the California Institute of Integral Studies) in San Francisco, she returned to Los Angeles, where she established the East-West Cultural Centre (recently renamed the Sri Aurobindo Center of Los Angeles) on 1 May 1953. Under her guidance, the East-West Cultural Centre (EWCC) became the hub of intense activity that included classes, guest lectures and a school. Jyotipriya was particularly interested in inspiring children with "the highest ideals" by focusing on their "god-like qualities". EWCC provided a launching pad for a large number of yogis and spiritual teachers who went from India, and exponents of Buddhism from Sri Lanka, Japan and Cambodia, who went to the US.

For Jyotipriya, the high point of the week was her Thursday evening spiritual satsangs where the focus was the in-depth



teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, in her words “the highest path offered”. When she spoke, she said she felt a force that would come down in “great swirls” from above her head and get her “centralized to speak”. In her private office, Jyotipriya kept a framed personal message from the Mother: “For you who have realised your soul and seek the integral yoga, to help the others is the best way of helping yourself.” There are strong indications in Jyotipriya’s letter to the Mother of 8 March 1956, that she was one of the very few to have felt The Mother’s 29 February 1956 Supramental Descent experience.



Jyotipriya, 1965



Jyotipriya, with a few seekers and students, around 1970

The problems of EWCC were more than just financial. Derelicts would often stray there drunk and ask for meals and lodging for the night. That was provided. Some of them would, in return, steal things from the center, and were even caught red-handed. The person was duly asked “Please don’t steal” – that’s all! Because she saw good in everyone and the potential soul within, Jyotipriya’s quota for strange characters far exceeded any other person’s lifetime allotment. But that is not to say that Jyotipriya did not have a strong streak of Kali in her nature. **If a person**



proved insincere, as certain professed holy people turned out to be, Jyotipriya would immediately cut off all aid and connections. For she had a sharp impatience with falsehood — and particularly when it meant a misrepresentation of **India’s spiritual light**. Still, the upright person that she was, she would never speak against anyone. The only thing that could dampen her spirits was people who preferred what she called “spiritualistic phenomena of a rather low order” to the true spiritual light.



Recent pictures of the Sri Aurobindo Center of Los Angeles (East-West Cultural Center) at Marshall Street, Culver City, California. (Courtesy: Dr. Manish Kamal)

In 1972, Jyotipriya’s finances finally permitted a last trip to see The Mother on the occasion of the Sri Aurobindo Centenary celebrations. Despite the constant arthritic pain that afflicted her body, Jyotipriya kept “cheerfully going on” as she often said, managing the EWCC’s rich diversity of activities while continuing to provide spiritual teaching and personal counselling, always for free. **Jyotipriya once wrote to the Mother: “It feels so strange to have these ills of body and yet feel so well and energetic and enthusiastic in my work for you.”** The Mother once had told Jyotipriya: “You were in such a rush to come down and join in the work, that you were careless about the body you chose!” Jyotipriya often said that it was in the joy of teaching that she transcended all pain.



Jyotipriya, a powerful speaker, much-admired teacher, and prolific writer, left her body on 3 October 1980. In her last testament she had written: “In the event of my death, I would like my body to be cremated and the ashes therefrom thrown among the flowers of a happy garden. **May any service that may be held be one of meditation, music and prayer for the speedy return of my soul to the Divine for new joy, power and wisdom, so I may return again to serve the Light.**”

Sources consulted and Suggested reading

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Tyberg

<https://sriurobindocenterla.wordpress.com/jyoti/> (also the source of almost all the pictures)



We renounce ourselves in order to find ourselves; for in the mental life there is only a seeking, but never an ultimate finding till mind is overpassed.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 23

Ego is only a faculty put forward by the discriminative mind to centralise round itself the experiences of the sense-mind and to serve as a sort of lynch-pin in the wheel which keeps together the movement. It is no more than an instrument, although it is true that so long as we are limited by one normal mentality, we are compelled by the nature of that mentality and the purpose of the instrument to mistake our ego-function for our very self.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 18, Kena and Other Upanishads, p. 25



Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback on the film 'Sri Aurobindo: the Indian Mystic Who Worked for Human Unity'

This film has been made with great deal of care to faithfully represent the life and times of Sri Aurobindo. Such a film was long overdue, and that Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch took up the Project during the 150th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo was not only a great gesture but also a great responsibility. The film has come out really well, and I am sure, sooner rather than later, people will appreciate the content not only in India but also abroad. The film will help spread the awareness of Sri Aurobindo's contribution not only to India's freedom but also to human evolution and beyond.

Ashok Kumar Acharya

(in an email dated 18 September 2022)

Editor's note:

This 50-minute film is available on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7gQFRUSRqk>

Feedback from a volunteer teacher

Most Respected Tara Didi!

I am very glad to inform you that I have been interacting with Jagat via Google Meet. I found him to be a very sincere and intelligent student. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to serve the cause very dear to The Sweet Mother. My gratitude to you and Pranjal Bhai for making me a more useful instrument in this work. For the last more than twenty two years I have been working as a teacher and teacher educator, but it is the first time that I feel inwardly the deep satisfaction from my work. I am confident of The



Mother's Grace in helping me grow in the right direction to become a better instrument of her work.

Yours

Sheojee

(in an email dated 7 October 2022)

Feedback on a 2018 Workshop on Integral Education

Ramesh Bhaiya!

I hope you are doing well!!

I was a B.El.Ed. student in a batch from Lady Sri Ram College that had come to attend a session with you on 'Integral Education' in 2018 at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch

The way the events have transpired in my life for the last few months (especially the last month) is what urged me to write to you. Currently, I am pursuing an M.A. in Psychology and have just begun with the final year. We have a specialty named 'Indian and Transpersonal Psychology' which I have been pursuing since the last semester. It is through that, and through the persistent efforts of our professor, that I got the opportunity to visit Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry and stay around there for a good 20 days. I, along with a few of my classmates, went there as a part of our internship. What an extraordinary experience it has been, I can't put into words!

What you told us makes sense to me now. I stayed at an Ashram guest house there, attended talks and sessions with Dr. Alok Pandey, visited the dining room, and other Ashram departments. The people there seem to be made of a different kind of fabric altogether. Never in my life before had I met this many kind-hearted and warm and well-wishers together at a place! The entire place resonates with uplifting energies. It is there that I began engaging with Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings and I feel just overjoyed and



overwhelmed (the good kind). As far as matters of Education are concerned, we also got the opportunity to visit the Centre of Education and interact with Gayatri di. I feel this brings me a little closer to understanding Integral Psychology, Integral Education, Integral Yoga; and a little closer to try and live with that aspiration.

I want to thank you, thank you for that session that day 3 years ago. Although, I couldn't realise it then, it was nevertheless a beginning for me- a beginning into this vast universe, a beginning that I have now come to cherish!

The song that we sang with you has stayed with me over the years:

*"Aa chal ke tujhe, main leke chalu, ik aise gagan ke tale,
jaha gam bhi na ho, aansu bhi na ho, bas pyaar hi pyaar pale."*

Thank you, and take care!

Deeksha (Arora)

(in an email dated 8 October 2022)



Atman, our true self, is Brahman; it is pure indivisible Being, self-luminous, self-concentrated in consciousness, self-delighted. Its existence is light and bliss. It is timeless, spaceless and free.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 17, Isha Upanishad, p. 31

The beginning of wisdom, perfection and beatitude is the vision of the One.

Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 17, Isha Upanishad, p. 35



Contact us

Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, '*Sri Aravind Karmadhara*', is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriaurobindoashram.net.

For a free subscription to '*Sri Aravind Karmadhara*', please send an e-mail to sakarmdhara@gmail.com

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For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project, please visit the website www.auromira.in



Note

In view of the Hundred and Fiftieth Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 2022, the Ashram is expanding its mailing list to reach out to more and more who may benefit from the teachings of the Master and the Mother. To get included in the Mailing List, please go to <http://erp.saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm> to fill in a form, which will take you only a few minutes.



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Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch

Sri Aurobindo Marg

New Delhi 110 016

contact@aurobindoonline.in

91-11-2656-7863