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*Sri Aurobindo writes here, “It is possible, indeed, to begin with knowledge or Godward emotion solely or with both together and to leave works for the final movement of the Yoga.”*

*Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 86*

What is this knowledge?

There are three principal paths of yoga: the path of knowledge, the path of love and the path of works. So Sri Aurobindo says that it depends on each case and person. Some people follow more easily the path of knowledge, others follow more easily the path of love, of devotion, and others follow the path of works. He says that for the integral yoga the three must be combined and with them something else, but that everybody can’t do everything at the same time and that there are people who need to be exclusive and to choose one of the three paths first in order to be able to combine them all later.

The path of knowledge is the well-known path of Raja Yoga, in which one practises detachment from one’s physical being, saying, “I am not the body”, then detachment from one’s sensations, “I am not my sensations”, then from one’s feelings, saying, “I am not my feelings”, and so on. One detaches oneself from thought and goes more and more within until one finds something which is the Eternal and Infinite.

It is a path of meditation, which is truly the path of self-knowledge seen from the point of view of the divine reality. It is the path of meditation, concentration, of withdrawal from life and action. This was the one most practised in the old yogas.

Or else, the path of devotion and love, like that of Chaitanya or Ramakrishna.
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This book [Part One of The Synthesis of Yoga] is entirely about the yoga of works, of action, that is to say, the finding of union with the Divine in action and work, and in the consecration of one’s work to the Divine. That’s all.

_Sweet Mother, “the consecration of works is a needed element in that change. Otherwise, although they may find God in other-life, they will not be able to fulfil the Divine in life.”_

_The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 85_

Why these two words: “God” and “the Divine”? I don’t think that Sri Aurobindo contrasts them. This is only a way of speaking. He does not set one against the other.

_What does it mean?_

It means that they go out of existence to find the Divine, to find God, a God who is outside life; they themselves go outside life to find Him. While in the integral yoga it is in life that the Divine must be found, not outside life.

There are those, for instance, who consider life and the world an illusion, and think it necessary to leave them behind in order to find the Divine, whose nature, they say, is the opposite of that of existence. So Sri Aurobindo says that perhaps they will find God outside life but will not find the Divine in life. He contrasts the two things. In one case it is an extra-terrestrial and unmanifested Divine, and in the other it is the Divine who is manifested in life and whom one can find again through life.

_Do you catch the point?_

_Mother, when one is identified with the Divine in the higher part of the being while neglecting the lower parts — neglecting life — doesn’t the Divine, in the part where_
one is identified with Him, advise one to attend to the lower parts?

And if before even beginning, one has decided that this must not happen, perhaps one makes it impossible for oneself to receive the advice of the Divine!

For, truly speaking, each one finds only what he wants to find of the Divine. Sri Aurobindo has said this by turning it the other way round; he has said — I am not quoting the exact words, only the idea: what you expect from the Divine is what you find in the Divine; what you want from the Divine is what you meet in the Divine. He will have for you the aspect you expect or desire.

And His manifestation is always adapted to each one's receptivity and capacity. They may have a real, essential contact, but this contact is limited by their own capacity for receiving and approach.... It is only if you are able to go out of all limits that you can meet the total Divine as He totally is.

And this capacity for contact is perhaps what constitutes the true hierarchy of beings. For everyone carries within himself the Divine, and therefore everyone has the possibility of uniting with the Divine — that possibility is the same in all. But according to each one's capacity — in fact, according to his position in the divine hierarchy — his approach will be more or less partial or total.

It could be said — although these words deform things a lot — that the quality of the approach is the same in every being, but the quantity, the totality is very different.... It is very difficult to explain in words, but if one may say so, the point at which you are identified with the Divine is perfect in itself, that is to say, your identification is perfect in itself, at this point, but the number of points at which you are identified differs immensely.

And this is very marked in the difference between the paths followed to approach the Divine. Usually people set limits; they
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limit themselves by excluding everything that is not exactly the path they have chosen, for this is much easier and they go much faster — relatively. But if, instead of following one road, you go forward in a sort of movement which could be called spherical, where everything is included, which takes in all the possibilities of approach to the Divine, naturally the result is much more complete — and it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls the integral yoga — but the progress is much more difficult and much slower.

One who chooses the path of knowledge — and even in the path of knowledge a special method, for everyone has his own method — and follows it, eliminating from his consciousness and life all that's not it, advances much more rapidly, for he is in search of only one aspect and this is much more direct, immediate. And so he rejects, rejects, rejects all that is not this, and limits his being just to the path he travels. And the more you want your approach to be integral, naturally the more will it become difficult, complicated, long, laborious.

But he who follows only one path, when he reaches his goal, that is, when he is identified with the Divine, his identification is perfect in itself; that is to say, it is really an identification with the Divine — but it is partial. It is perfect; it is perfect and partial at the same time.

This is very difficult to explain, but it is a fact. He is really identified with the Divine and has found the Divine; he is identified with the Divine — but at one point. And so he who is able to identify himself in his totality with the Divine is necessarily, from the point of view of the universal realisation, on a much higher level of the hierarchy than one who could realise Him only at a single point.

And that is the true meaning of the spiritual hierarchy, this is why there is a whole spiritual hierarchical organisation, otherwise it would have no basis, for from the minute you touch the Divine, you touch Him perfectly: the point at which you touch Him is perfect in itself. And, from this point of view, all who are
united with the Divine are equally perfect in their union — but not equally complete, if I may say so.

Do you catch a little of what I mean?

What I wanted to ask, Mother, was whether in the part where they are identified, after their identification with the Divine, they don't find that this identification is not complete, that is, that they have left behind other parts of their being, and that they must begin once again?

This may happen.

This may happen, but usually they have so well eliminated from themselves all that was not that, that nothing remains for them to realise that the identification is not perfect. They have the experience of identification, they are lost in the Divine. From the personal, individual point of view, that is the most they can hope for.

It is not that what you say is impossible, indeed I think it is possible — but it is rare. It is not frequent. That would mean that in spite of their work of elimination they have retained in their consciousness something which would be able to feel that they are not entirely satisfied.

After the identification, there is no longer the position, for example, of Master and disciple, the Lord and the aspirant. At the moment of identification that relationship disappears; there is no longer any Master or disciple, any Lord or aspirant: all is the Divine. So, who receives the lesson? That could only happen if there were an element of consciousness which did not participate in this identification, because it needed another approach than the one it had. And all would depend on how perfectly the aspirant has eliminated from his being all that has nothing to do with the exclusive path he follows. For instance, if he keeps latent in his consciousness, elements of devotion or love, then if he has followed the path of knowledge, well, at the time of identification these will miss something. And then he
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will be able to understand that his experience is not complete. But if they have been so well eliminated that they no longer exist, then who will notice that the union is not perfect? The union is perfect in itself at this particular point. It is purely a phenomenon of consciousness.

*(Turning to the child)* In your consciousness there is still the idea that you unite with “Something” which knows more about it than you and will make you recognise your mistake. But that no longer exists after the identification! That is just the first contact, but not the identification.

In identification there is no longer any difference between the one who is identified and what he is identified with: it is the same thing. So long as there is a difference, it is not identification.

I say that by any path whatever and by eliminating all that is not of this path, it is possible for each one to be perfectly identified with the Divine, that is to say, to become the Divine — but at only one point, the point he has chosen. But this point is perfect in itself. I don’t say it contains everything, I say it is perfect in itself, that is, the identification is perfect — but it is not total.

*They have the full bliss?*

Perfect bliss — perfect bliss, eternity, infinity, everything.

*Then what’s the difference?*

The difference exists only in the manifestation. By this identification, whatever it may be, one automatically goes out of the manifestation, except at the point where one is identified. And if, in the path one has followed, the aim is to go out, as for instance with those who seek Nirvana, if it is a going out of the manifestation, well, one goes out of the manifestation, it’s the end. And once one goes out of the manifestation, there is no longer any difference or any hierarchy, it is finished, one
has gone out of the manifestation. That is it, you understand, everything depends on the goal one pursues. If one goes out of the manifestation, one goes out of the manifestation, then there is no longer a possibility of any hierarchy at all. But as soon as one enters the manifestation, there is a hierarchy. That is to say — if we take the realisation of the supramental world — everybody will not be on the same level and made in the same pattern, and with the same capacity and possibility. It's always this illusion, isn't it, of a sort of indefinite repetition of something which always resembles itself — it is not that. In the realisation, the manifestation, there is a hierarchy of capacity and action, and of manifestation. But if the aim is to go out of the manifestation, then quite naturally, at whatever point you go out, you go out.

It all depends on the ideal one puts before oneself. And while you go out because you have chosen to do so, to enter into Pralaya, there is all the rest of the universe which continues.... But that's totally immaterial to you. As your aim was to get out of it, you get out of it. But that doesn’t mean that the rest also go out! You are the only one to go out, or those who have followed the same aim and the same path as you.

(Long silence)

That is precisely the problem which faced Sri Aurobindo here and me in France: should one limit one’s path and reach the goal first, and later take up all the rest and begin the work of integral transformation; or should one go step by step, not leaving anything aside, not eliminating anything on the path, taking in all the possibilities at the same time and progressing at all points at the same time? That is to say, should one retire from life and action until one reaches one’s goal, becomes conscious of the Supermind and realises it in oneself; or should one embrace the entire creation and with this entire creation gradually go forward towards the Supermind?
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(Silence)

One can understand that things get done by stages: you go forward, reach one stage, and so, as a consequence, take all the rest forward; and then at the same time, in a simultaneous movement, you reach another stage and again take others forward—and so on.

That gives the impression that you are not moving. But everything is on the move in this way.

That’s all.

Sweet Mother...

I would rather we didn’t fall back into inessentials. If you have understood what I said and it is about that you want to ask a question, ask it.

No? Well, then, it would be better to meditate.