

# Introduction

## (A REVIEW OF *THE GITA* AND *INTEGRAL YOGA*)

“From the time of its first appearance, *the Gita* has had an immense spiritual action; but with the new interpretation that *Sri Aurobindo* has given to it, its influence has increased considerably and has become decisive.”

*The Mother*

Integral Yoga is the synthesis of all the wide and supple methods of All Nature pursued by (1) **exclusive** Spirituality of later *Vedantic* ascetics, the exclusive worshipper of the Being, the *Brahman*, the *Ishwara*; (2) the **synthetic** Spirituality of *Tantrics*, the exclusive worshipper of the Energy, the Consciousness, the Divine Mother, the *Ishwari* and (3) the **comprehensive** Spirituality of the ancient *Vedantic* Seers who work out passive and active relation between the *Purusha* and *Prakriti* in Ignorance, *Ishwara* and *Shakti* relation in Spiritual plane, *Jnana*, and *Brahman* and *Maya* relation in Supramental plane, *Vijnana*, resulting in *Ananda*.

The later *Vedantic* doctrine of exclusive union of Soul with the immutable Spirit is extended in *the Gita's* teachings of comprehensive union of Soul with the *Purushottama* Consciousness. In *Tantric* doctrine the highest realisation of liberation of later *Vedanta* is dynamised and it reconciles the two poles of Being, *Purusha* and Nature, *Prakriti* and includes four elements of purification, *Suddhi*, liberation, *Mukti*, perfection, *Siddhi*, and Delight, *Bhukti*. Its teaching of compelling the enemy of Spiritual life to become a means to a richer Spiritual conquest is bolder and more forceful than the Spiritually profound and subtle synthesis of *the Gita*. In ancient *Vedanta*, this later *Vedantic* and *Tantric* method are further integrated. When *the Prakriti*, *the Ishwari*, *the Maya* and *the Chit* are self-absorbed in the conscious existence of *the Purusha*, *the Ishwara*, *the Brahman* and *the Sat* respectively, there is rest, the passive silence, the *Nirvana*, the realisation of Oneness. When *the Purusha*, *the Ishwara*, *the Brahman*, *the Sat* pour themselves out in the action of *the Prakriti*, *the Ishwari*, *the Maya*, *the Chit* respectively then there is action, creation, manifestation of Love, Beauty and *Ananda* in Ignorance, exclusive Knowledge, comprehensive Knowledge and supreme Knowledge respectively. Integral Yoga proposes the triple realisations of (1) realisation of absolute Divinity by activation of Soul, (2) transformation and Divinisation of whole Nature by activation of Divine *Shakti* and (3) complete

union between the two sides of Duality or reconciliation of these highest aspirations through which Divine gives happy completeness of *Purusha*, *Ishwara*, *Brahman* and *Sat* with *Prakriti*, *Shakti*, *Maya* and *Chit* respectively. So, the inspiring motive of integral Yoga is the largest development of Spiritual Being, Spiritual Power of Nature and the dual Divine relation in the shortest way and shortest time.

*The Gita* categorically insists the five indispensable inner renunciation, *tyaga*, utterly that of desire, *kama*,<sup>13</sup> attachment, *sangam*,<sup>35</sup> ego, *ahamkaram*,<sup>14</sup> dualities, *dwanda*<sup>15</sup> and the three modes of Nature, *gunas*,<sup>16</sup> as starting point of Yoga and two dispensable outer renunciation, *sannyasa*, of home/life, *aniketa*<sup>45</sup> subjected to lower nature and outer renunciation of work born out of personal will, *sarbarambha parityagi*.<sup>46</sup> This renunciation, *vairagya*, is the precondition for self-purification, *atma-visuddhaye*,<sup>40</sup> and again purification stands as a pre-condition of liberation, *mukti*.<sup>1</sup> *The Gita* proposes exclusive concentration, *samyama*<sup>19</sup> through practice of an uncompromising inner renunciation, *parigraham*<sup>20</sup> of the above five faculties to arrive at partial mental consecration which culminates in the 'entire self-consecration to the One.'<sup>21</sup> It also proposes renunciation of all desire for the fruit of our works, *sarvakarma phala tyagam*<sup>22</sup> as the condition of arriving at equality, *samata*,<sup>23</sup> and again equality is the condition of arriving at self-surrender. This Yoga culminates with the 'highest mystery of absolute surrender to the Divine Guide, Lord'<sup>4</sup> which is identified as 'indispensable means of Supramental change.'<sup>4</sup> *The Gita* confirms that those who know the Divine integrally in true principles of Being and Becoming, *tattvena*,<sup>39</sup> are fit for an entire conscious self-surrender; others arrive at incomplete and partial self-giving and return again and again through rebirth in order to enlarge this consecration and widen their Spiritual experience.

Integral Yoga accepts the method of self-discipline of *the Gita* identified as *trimarga*, wholly which can dynamise the three central forces of the Divine Will, Knowledge and Love by rejecting its ultimate aim of freedom from rebirth, *punarjanma nabidyate*.<sup>41</sup> The aim of the former has to be pursued through all life or successive lives through evolution of Spiritual and Mental Being till the undivided Divine Life is recovered and the immediate objective of the latter promises the Spiritual experience of extinction in *Brahman*, *Brahma Nirvana*,<sup>24</sup> Cosmic Consciousness, *Vasudevah sarvamiti*<sup>25</sup> and Divine form and body of *Purushottama*, *Viswarupa Darshana*<sup>26</sup> as acceptable stairs step by step leaving far behind the past limitations and thus a *Sadhaka* will arrive at the greater affirmation, ampler solution and Self-fulfilment in divine Nature<sup>47</sup> which is identified as passage towards perfection of integral Yoga. Integral Yoga accepts *the Gita*'s objective of personal salvation and 'intolerant passion for the extinction of life and action'<sup>43</sup> as one great path of entry into the Infinite but 'not the best way for man and this knowledge, though true, yet not the integral knowledge.'<sup>43</sup>

So a *Sadhaka* of integral Yoga ‘must break and cast away from him’<sup>44</sup> the attachment to escape from rebirth.

The Psycho-Physical methods,<sup>49</sup> *bahya-avalambana* of the later *Vedantic* ascetics, *Tantrics*, *Hatha and Raja Yogis* form the dispensable self-discipline of integral Yoga whereas Psycho-Spiritual methods, *antara-avalambana* of ancient *Vedantic* Seers and *the Gita* form its indispensable self-disciplines. The former is identified as lower Knowledge which approaches Divine indirectly from outside and from behind the veil and the latter approaches Divine directly from within, lifts the veil to get full realisation, vision and knowledge by identity. Integral Yoga further recommends that dispensable Self-disciplines can be used as subordinate and support of indispensable self-discipline and any violation of this norm will drive Spiritual life towards impatience<sup>34</sup> and subsequently towards fear and doubt of arriving at the final destination.

The integral Yoga can be pursued by self-giving to Supreme Being known as *Purusha Yajna* and Supreme Nature known as *Prakriti Yajna* after one has travelled a long and difficult stage of renunciation, *tyaga*, *vairagya*, effort, *abhyasa*, exclusive concentration, *samyama* and askesis, *tapasya*. This self-offering is the combination of dispensable *Vedic sacrifice* or ‘the sacrifice of the Divine Mother,’<sup>17</sup> where the descent of divine *Shakti* to lower nature is first witnessed followed by ascent of Soul to Spiritual and Supramental *Purusha* and the indispensable *Vedantic sacrifice* or ‘sacrifice of the *Purusha*, the *Ishwara*,’<sup>17</sup> where ascent of consciousness is first witnessed by the direct commerce between the Psychic being in the heart and the Spiritual and Supramental being above the head and corresponding descent of Divine *Shaktis* to transform the physical nature. Thus, integral Yoga begins with *the Vedantic* method of Sacrifice in order to arrive at *the Tantric* aim, which is identified as the secured development in shortest way and it is further complemented by the more powerful *Vedic* sacrifice in order to arrive at *the Vedantic* aim of Supreme Self.

*The Gita* does not speak directly of inverting the *Purushottama* Consciousness to transform earth nature but that has been extended as part of intensive exercise of integral Yoga. The former speaks of suffusion of *Purushottama* Consciousness into earth nature without giving any concrete sense of descent of divine Force. The mighty Lord of all the worlds, *sarvaloka Maheswaram*,<sup>42</sup> governs His creation not only from within but from multiple subtle bodies, from above and from His supreme transcendence. There are certain Supramental experiences in which ‘a consciously felt descent is not indispensable’<sup>18</sup> and there are still unknown higher source of Supramental where ‘actual feeling of a descent is not there.’<sup>18</sup> *The Gita* clearly indicates that the three *Purushas*, known as *Kshetraajna* is irreconcilable<sup>36</sup> with the Field, *Kshetra*, and hence those who realise the Supreme state of consciousness do not return to earth

after death to perfect the Divine's creation. On this point of obsessing idea of self-annulment of Nature, integral Yoga differs from *the Gita* and finds a reconciling equation between the Matter and the Spirit through *Tantric* and ancient *Vedantic* doctrine or transcendent down look through development of the doctrine of *Purushottama* Consciousness.

The highest secret of *the Gita*, *rahasyam uttamam*<sup>3</sup>, 'pauses at the borders of highest spiritual mind and does not cross them into the splendours of the Supramental Light.'<sup>4</sup> *The Gita* hinted of the preliminary stairs of Supramental Force and Supramental transformation which was developed by *Sri Aurobindo* through long journey of *the Gita's* Cosmic and *Purushottama* Consciousness in five successive gradations that of (1) secret all-inclusive knowledge, *guhya*<sup>5</sup> *Vijnana*, and corresponding Supramental transformation, *Madbhavam*,<sup>10</sup> (2) the more secret all-inclusive knowledge, *guhyataram*<sup>7</sup> *Vijnana*, and the corresponding transformation of *Sva Prakriti*,<sup>8</sup> (3) the most secret all-inclusive knowledge, *guhyatamam*<sup>9</sup> *Vijnana*, and the corresponding divine nature, *sadharmyam*,<sup>6</sup> (4) more than the most secret all-inclusive knowledge, *sarva guhyatamam*<sup>11</sup> *Vijnana*, and corresponding supreme Nature, *Param bhavam*,<sup>12</sup> and (5) juxtaposition of third and fourth Divine transformation.

A *Sadhaka* of integral Yoga can begin Yoga and govern for a long time 'in the line of the great *Hindu* tradition, by *the Gita*, for example, *the Upanishads*, *the Veda*'<sup>2</sup> and concurrently or after exhausting the above Spiritual truth he can follow the latest *Shashtra* that of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Life Divine*, *The Mother* and *Savitri* where synthesis and integration of Yoga, Evolution, *Shaktis* and Occult Creatrix Mother Powers have been pursued extensively and in his progress he 'must pass beyond all written truth,... beyond the limitation of word,... beyond one or several scriptures'<sup>2</sup> and become the *Sadhaka* of the Eternal and Infinite. For a developed Soul, living beyond the three modes of Nature, *trigunatita* state, the concentration on the above mentioned *Shastras* can call down immense Divine Presence and Influence and for a developing Soul, living within the boundary of three *gunas* can utilise *Shastric* knowledge as a mere cover for 'desires, prejudices, passions, egoisms, our personal, national, sectarian vanities, sentiments and preferences...'<sup>37</sup>

To recapitulate, this paper proposes nine broad guidelines common for all,

(1) that a *Sadhaka* is considered fit to pursue integral Yoga and will succeed if he satisfies the condition as indicated in *the Gita*, "the exceedingly dear, *atiba priya* devotee is he who makes *Purushottama* his one and only supreme aim of life and with full of faith, follows the written truth of reconciling *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti* Yoga in every detail or obeys the immortalising *Dharma* uttered by the Lord entirely;"<sup>33</sup> or as indicated in *Savitri*, 'Her consciousness grew aware of him (*Paramatma Satyavan*) alone.'<sup>38</sup>

(2) Secondly, he ‘must take his station, or better still, if he can, always and from the beginning he must live in his own soul,’<sup>2</sup> direct contact with the Divine, *pratakya*, and if he needs a *Shastra*, to enter indirect contact with the Divine, *parokhya*, through the outcome of the past Spiritual experience, then *the Gita* can provide the best previous foundation to enrich his root knowledge of strengthening individual Soul’s relation with the Divine; he can prepare himself to begin Yoga by obeying all the injunctions issued in this ancient *Vedantic Shastra*.

(3) Thirdly, integral Yoga has accepted *the Gita*’s doctrine of Divine Work where action is accepted as permanent base in ascending the hill of Yoga, a means and cause of conquest of the desire-mind and ego-self, of liberation, of *Nirvana in Brahman*, of the highest ascent of Self-perfection and this action of all type will still continue after complete liberation of Soul and transformation of Nature. A perfected Soul’s Divine action must accompany Spiritual equality, impersonality, an opening towards all superior energies, equal identification with all beings and an imperturbable oneness.

(4) Fourthly, *Sri Aurobindo*’s writings are to be approached in hierarchy of ascending Consciousness in which ‘less luminous gives place to the more luminous... or less essential to the more comprehensive, more perfect, more essential.’<sup>27</sup> The practice of His teachings or all *Shastra* can lead towards direct Divine revelation and for integral perfection His high concentration writings (like *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Life Divine*, *Savitri*) will be more useful in our *sadhana* than His formative writings. Formative writings are intermediate stairs, which can be extremely helpful if we are entirely conscious of the whole aim and the final destination and if it is formulated ‘too strictly’<sup>29</sup> then it can become ‘old and loses much, if not all, of its virtue.’<sup>29</sup> Or knowledge of the part is beneficial to them who are aware of the knowledge of the whole. The other disadvantage of formative writing is that it cannot give the full account of His final change of vision.<sup>30</sup>

(5) Fifthly, His high concentration approved comprehensive vision through writings are divided into two parts, that of truth and hierarchy of consciousness developed and experienced by Him and *the Mother* and the highest truth hinted and not developed by Him during this life which He left for future Spiritual seekers to explore; as comprehensive truth of existence and its infinite depths cannot be exhausted by one or many Scriptures and unfolding of all the significance of cosmic miracle is endless and infinite.

(6) Sixthly, the spirit of integral Yoga must be maintained which authorises absolute freedom to each *Sadhaka* to restate knowledge and Spiritual experience ‘in new terms and combinations’<sup>28</sup> and all the written truths are to be approached and practiced by constantly renovating it ‘by fresh streams of the spirit revivifying the dead or dying vehicle and changing it.’<sup>29</sup> Or ‘their stuff of permanent truth constantly reshaped and developed in the inner thought and spiritual experience of a developing humanity.’<sup>31</sup> This indicates that the restatement of integral *Shastra* is

possible only from higher planes of Consciousness and descent of new overhead Knowledge.

(7) Seventhly, the objective of integral Yoga is not to divide, separate, depreciate and limit but to enlarge, heighten, harmonise, respect, unite, synthesize and universalise all the differences of Religion, Science, *Shastra*, Deity, *Vibhuti*, *Avatara* and Teacher by realising their highest common intensity unified in Supramental plane and by discovering their pioneering action, central principle, central secret, central truth, central dynamic force, central faith and by comparative and divergent examination of methods of Nature and Yoga. Thus, *the Gita's Vibhuti Yoga* is further reinforced by recognising Leader of men, great Scientists, Artists, Prophets, Religious Founders, Spiritual Masters and Sages as special manifestation, God's power of myriad becoming and partial revelation of the Godhead. In integral Yoga, if a *Sadhaka's* Psychic being and Spiritual being are open then he is identified as *Vibhuti* and he can assist the *Avatara's* unfinished world action of 'grand modification'<sup>48</sup> in upliftment of existing human consciousness. He, as God-doer, God-knower and God-lover, will be able to bridge the gulf between World, Self and God and solves the outer problem of his active human existence beyond 'the restless darkness of the human mind and the false limitations of ego'<sup>32</sup> and he can keep the hope alive to extend this perfection to collective mankind. He will not recoil from the great adventure of challenging the dark Forces of Subconscient and Inconscient planes with the aid of his luminous Soul Force.

(8) Eighthly, after *Sri Aurobindo's* prolonged *sadhana*, *the Gita's* highest hinted Truths are extensively developed which multiplied its Spiritual significance and value immensely, pointing the race towards attainment of Superhumanhood.

(9) Lastly, in integral Yoga Soul's exclusive and comprehensive relation with the *Brahman* as indicated in the later *Vedanta* followed by *the Gita* is combined with the *Tantric* discovery of Soul's relation with the Nature or Spirit's descent into the Matter through dynamic Divine union and it is further elevated through ancient *Vedantic* Teachings of fivefold Selves of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* which is amended in integral Yoga to discover the relation between tenfold Selves with tenfold Sheaths, *Koshas*, Nature. The highest secret, *uttammam rahasyam*,<sup>3</sup> of *the Gita* is the *Purushottama* consciousness, restated and developed in integral Yoga as Supramental consciousness in which the triple poise of the Self, Soul's relation with the Nature and the relation between the tenfold Selves and the tenfold *Koshas* are reconciled.

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#### References:

- 1: CWSA-24/The Synthesis of Yoga-675,
- 2: CWSA-23/The Synthesis of Yoga-55,

- 3: The Gita-4.3,  
4: CWSA-23/The Synthesis of Yoga-94-95,  
5: The Gita-9.2, 11.1,  
6: The Gita-14.2,  
7: The Gita-18-63,  
8: The Gita-9.8, 4.6,  
9: The Gita-9.1,  
10: The Gita-8.5, 10.6, 13.18,  
11: The Gita-18.64,  
12: The Gita-9.11,  
13: The Gita-18.53, 16.18, 16.12, 16.16, 2.62, 16.8, 7.20, 9.21, 2.70, 2.71, 16.23, 5.12, 5.26, 5.23, 16.10, 7.11, 17.5, 3.43, 3.39, 4.19, 2.55, 2.43, 18.24, 18.2,  
14: The Gita-3.27, 16.18, 18.58, 18.53,  
15: The Gita-10.33, 15.5, 7.27, 7.28, 4.22,  
16: The Gita-18.19, 13.14, 3.5, 13.23, 4.13, 3.28, 7.13, 7.14, 15.2, 3.29, 18.29, 13.21, 13.14, 14.18, 14.19, 14.20, 13.19, 15.10, 14.25,  
17: The Mother-37,  
18: CWSA-22/The Life Divine-967-68,  
19: The Gita-2.61, 2.69,  
20: The Gita-18.53,  
21: CWSA-23/The Synthesis of Yoga-73,  
22: The Gita-12.11,  
23: The Gita-10.5,  
24: The Gita-2.72, ***Brahma Nirvana***, extinction in the *Brahman*; it is ‘not the negative self-annihilation of the *Buddhist*, but the immergence of the separate personal self into the vast reality of the one infinite impersonal Existence.’ CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita- 104,  
25: “After many births of preparation, a *Jnana Yogi* with strong foundation of *Karma* and *Bhakti Yoga*, attains My *Purushottama* or Supramental state of Consciousness. He also realises the intermediate stair that all this existence is Divine, the Cosmic Consciousness, *Vasudevah sarvamiti*. Such great Soul or integral Yogi is very rare.” The Gita-7.19,  
26: The Gita-11.3, ‘The transcendence and cosmic aspect (of Divine, *Viswarupa Darshana*) have to be seen, for without that seeing the limitations of humanity cannot be exceeded.’ CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita-392,  
27: CWSA-21/The Life Divine-75,  
28: CWSA-23/The Synthesis of Yoga-56,  
29: CWSA-23/The Synthesis of Yoga-5,  
30: “Sri Aurobindo’s Conversation with Pavitra, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1926: In spiritual life, one should always be ready to reject every system and every construction. Any one form is helpful, then become harmful. In my spiritual life, since the age of forty, three or four times I have completely laid bare and broken the system I had reached.” The Mother’s Agenda-11/219,

31: “Only those Scriptures, religions, philosophies which can be thus constantly renewed, relived, their stuff of permanent truth constantly reshaped and developed in the inner thought and spiritual experience of a developing humanity, continue to be of living importance to mankind. The rest remain as monuments of the past, but have no actual force or vital impulse for the future.” CWSA/19/Essays on the

Gita-5

32: CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita-570-71,

33: The Gita-12.20,

34: “It was a **later (Vedantic) impatience** of heart and mind, vehement attraction to an ultimate bliss or high masterfulness of pure experience and trenchant intelligence which sought the One to deny the Many and because it had received the breath of the heights scorned or recoiled from the secret of the depths.” **Sri Aurobindo**/CWSA/21/The Life Divine/40, “The older creeds, **more patient**, more broodingly profound, not touched with the torture and the **feverish impatience of the soul under the burden of the Iron Age**, did not make this formidable division; they acknowledged Earth the Mother and Heaven the Father and accorded to them an equal love and reverence...” Sri Aurobindo/CWSA/21/The Life Divine/246,

35: The Gita-5.10/11.55/12.18/18.23,

36: The Gita-13.35,

37: CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita-112,

38: “As when a soul is merging into God  
To live in Him for ever and know His joy,  
Her consciousness grew aware of him alone  
And all her separate self was lost in his.” Savitri-410,

39: The Gita-9.24,

40: The Gita-6.12,

41: The Gita-8.16,

42: The Gita-5.29,

43: CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita-570,

44: CWSA/23/They Synthesis of Yoga-270.

45: The Gita-12.19,

46: The Gita-12.16, 14.25,

47: “But what is the divine nature? It is not entirely and solely that of the *Akshara*, the immobile, inactive, impersonal self; for that by itself would lead the liberated man to actionless immobility. It is not characteristically that of the *Kshara*, the multitudinous, the personal, the *Purusha* self-subjected to Prakriti; for that by itself would lead him back into subjection to his personality and to the lower nature and its qualities. It is the nature of the *Purushottama* who holds both these together and by his supreme divinity reconciles them in a divine reconciliation which is the highest secret of his being, *rahasyam hyetad uttamam*.” CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita-139-140,

48: “The crisis in which the Avatar appears, though apparent to the outward eye only as a crisis of events and great material changes, is always in its source and real meaning **a crisis in the consciousness** of humanity when it has to undergo some grand modification and effect some new development. For this action of change a divine force is needed; but the force varies always according to the power of consciousness which it embodies; hence the necessity of a divine consciousness manifesting in the mind and soul of humanity. Where, indeed, the change is mainly intellectual and practical, the intervention of the Avatar is not needed; there is a great uplifting of consciousness, a great manifestation of power in which men are for the time being exalted above their normal selves, and this surge of consciousness and power finds its wave-crests in certain exceptional individuals, *vibhutis* , whose action leading the general action is sufficient for the change intended.” CWSA/19/Essays on the Gita-168,

49: “For the methods of the integral Yoga **must be mainly spiritual**, and dependence on physical methods or fixed psychic or **psycho-physical processes** on a large scale would be the **substitution** of a lower for a higher action.” CSWA/23/The Synthesis of Yoga-542,

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