

Agenda of the Ascetics' Fortress

“I would myself say that no man can be **spiritually complete** if he cannot live ascetically or follow a life as bare as the barest anchorites.”

Sri Aurobindo

“In practice also the ascetic spirit is an **indispensable** element in human perfection and even its separate affirmation cannot be avoided so long as the race has not at the other end liberated its intellect and its vital habits from subjection to an always insistent animalism.”

Sri Aurobindo

“This surrender may take the ascetic form, as when he leaves the ordinary life of men and devotes his days solely to prayer and praise and worship or to ecstatic meditation, gives up his personal possessions and becomes the monk or the mendicant whose one and only possession is the Divine, gives up all actions in life except those only which help or belong to the communion with the Divine and communion with other devotees, or at most keeps the doing from the **secure fortress of the ascetic life** of those services to men which seem peculiarly the outflowing of the divine nature of love, compassion and good.”

Sri Aurobindo

“It secured in India a society which lent itself to the preservation and the worship of spirituality, a country apart in which as in a **fortress** the highest spiritual ideal could maintain itself in its most absolute purity unoverpowered by the siege of the forces around it.”

Sri Aurobindo

“The child of immemorial ages, preserved by its vitality and truth into our modern times, it is now emerging from the secret schools and **ascetic retreats** in which it had taken refuge and is seeking its place in the future sum of living human powers and utilities.”

Sri Aurobindo

There is some thing in the composition of our Nature which goes beyond the first material need of humanity, of his entire preoccupation in the terrestrial needs, interests, desires, ideals of the individual and the race. So the race cannot accept or follow for a long time to confine us entirely to a purely terrestrial way of living. So the formula of a beyond intellect Intuition and a feeling of a Soul and Spirit return upon us and end by their complete possession. The moderate Soul seeker satisfies this appetite by devoting to it in his leisure moments or exceptional hour or latter part of his life when age shall have dulled the enthusiasm of his earthly nature or he recognizes it as something behind and above his normal Nature to which he can more or less imperfectly direct his natural being. The Ascetic turns to this supraterrrestrial urge as the one and only aim and law of living by diminishing and mortifying as much as possible his earthly parts in the hope of

developing his celestial Nature. There has been a period in which this ascetic view has gained momentum and a part of humanity dwindles between the imperfect moderate living which cannot take a large spiritual plunge and a sick ascetic longing for celestial living which also cannot acquire in more than the few its best pure and happy movement. Thus in this transition the law of evolutionary capacity is ignored and humanity misses a reconciling equation between the Matter and the Spirit which must exist some where in the Divine dispensation of our Nature.

Ascetics' Fortress is the Divine Mother's intermediate perfect shrine of collective living developed through practice of traditional schools of Yoga. An ascetic is a soul who has taken retirement from the world and the Divine Mother chooses this state for Her brief felicitous hour in world's play of joy and strife and discloses some of Her mystic secrets, anchorite solitude, forests with their multitudinous chant, the lurking doors of beauty, sweetness and surprise and masked divinity's door. He is a stranger on the sorrowful roads of Time and immortal under the yoke of death and fate. An ascetic is a soul seeker who climbs above his mind and lives in the calm vastness of the One. It offers severe noble atmosphere to work and thought and measured delight as steps to climb God's far secret height. After this realization our life become a tranquil pilgrimage and we consider each year as a mile upon the heavenly way and each dawn opens into larger light, and waking and sleep are opportunities of soul flowerings and so can we rise to pure unvanquished Spirit of wide vesper calm, gentle as sky and soft as flower. Asceticism or rejection of material life is a temporary necessity and short cut, not the true solution of problem of existence for the ascending soul because the material life seems so much the negation of all spiritual existence.

Practice of Integral Yoga begins with the mind's method of abstraction which can be followed by practice of one or many traditional schools of Yoga. Traditional system of Yoga gives exclusive importance to rejection of one part of the lower nature to the exclusion of others and uses that as lever to escape into higher nature.

Brotherhood of Saints:

“The aim of religion may include a social change, but it is then a change brought about by the acceptance of a common religious ideal and way of consecrated living, **a brotherhood of saints**, a theocracy or the kingdom of God reflecting on earth the kingdom of heaven.”

Sri Aurobindo

“It is the divine love which so emerges that, extended in inward feeling to the Divine in man and all creatures in an active universal equality, will be more potent for the perfectibility of life and a more real instrument than the **ineffective mental ideal of brotherhood** can ever be.”

Sri Aurobindo

“Another possible conception akin to the religious solution is the guidance of society by men of spiritual attainment, **the brotherhood** or unity of all in the faith or in the discipline, the spiritualization of life and society by taking up of the old machinery of life into such a unification or inventing a new machinery.”

Sri Aurobindo

Brotherhood can be divided into two parts as the brotherhood of Mind and brotherhood of the Spirit; firstly, its mental concept attained momentum in the French revolution which later took refuge in Indian asceticism and Russian Marxism as mere sympathy created by love and understanding of mental knowledge; secondly, brotherhood is a weak binding force invented by mind and cannot hold the burden of Divine Love; thirdly it does not represent the original seven fold personalities of the Divine, which needs attention for integral human development, rather brotherhood is considered as a derivative of the God’s original faculty of Fatherhood; fourthly, it was also observed from The Mother’s writings, that She gave the name of the physical mind or material mind as ‘big brother’ who has the capacity to turn nectar into poison and crystalline water into muddy water instantly.

In Integral Yoga the mental brotherhood of mere sympathy is to be substituted by the fundamental Spiritual equality, or the realization of unity of all, realization of all as brother Soul for a Divine purpose. This significance of brotherhood is heightened in Spirit when the Supreme instructs Savitri not to ‘shrink from any brother soul’ and Savitri’s extension of hope as ‘sister of thy soul’ during the critical hour of escape of Satyavan’s death in the midst of all difficulties. We must arrive at conscious unity with our fellow beings and the fullness of this universal relation of brotherhood is established in Supermind.

The Law of Renunciation or The Law of *Tapasya*-1:

In her illumined script, her fanciful
Translation of God’s pure original text,
He thinks to read **the Scripture Wonderful**,
Hieratic key to unknown beatitudes.

Savitri-193

He saw through depths that **reinterpret all**,
Limited not now by the dull body’s eyes,
New-found through an arch of clear discovery,
This intimation of the world’s delight,
This wonder of the divine Artist’s make
Carved like a nectar-cup for thirsty gods,
This **breathing Scripture** of the Eternal’s joy,
This net of sweetness woven of aureate fire.

Savitri-372

The whole effort of the Nature through Philosophy, Religion, Science, Spiritual and Occult Science attempts to get at the right data upon which it will be possible to resolve the all problems of existence as satisfactorily as the best available knowledge. Integral Yoga excludes none of them but rather uncovers their central truth, central purpose, central faith and welds them strongly to the harmony of their eternal Source.

Integral Yoga accepts and recommends the practice of the traditional Shastra wholly to experience the basic Divine realization till integral Shastra and integral methods are evolved to experience comprehensive, all-inclusive and all the revelatory aspect of Divine realizations.

The advantages of traditional *Shastra* are; firstly, the traditional teachings are supposed to be fixed, gives the name of the high roads of destination and the already explored directions and expresses the knowledge and experiences of many centuries systematized, organized, made attainable to the beginner; secondly, the ancient wisdoms of the East are all the right means of the basic truths of all existence which ought to be the guiding principle of all time; thirdly, the character of the higher states of the soul and their greater worlds of spiritual Nature are shadowed in the Gita, the Upanishad and the Veda in figures, hints and symbols and these can be utilized towards the ascension of the soul from physical into vital, from the vital into the mental Purusha, from mental into Knowledge-Soul and from that Self of Knowledge into the bliss Purusha, thus completing the Soul's ascension; fourthly the Gita declares that the Yogin in his progress must pass beyond the written truth, *sabdabrahmativartate*, beyond all that he has heard and all that he has yet to hear, *srotavyasya srutasya ca*; fifthly, Indian spiritual writings lay stress upon the quality of the four-fold soul force from which the action flows, upon its truth, fearlessness, purity, love, compassion, benevolence, absence of will to hurt and upon the actions of their out flowing; sixthly, a sadhaka of integral Yoga can include a good part of his development a richly varied experience of the truths of many Scriptures and make the future opulent with all that **is best in the past**; lastly, he will accept all the ancient disciplines as they rest upon eternal truths and he will give them an **orientation** in conformity with his integral aim.

The disadvantage of traditional *Shastra* is that, firstly, if we turn always to few distinct truths, symbols or particular discipline into hard and fast dogmas then our spirituality is arrested in infancy and deprives itself from entry into the science of Infinite; secondly, a sadhaka of integral Yoga will use but cannot bind himself to any written truth as all written truth is a partial manifestation of the Infinite knowledge and he organizes it anew for the present and future and the same problem is approached from a new starting point; thirdly, in traditional teaching all the lines of Yoga oppose and object against a new practice, the new Yogic teaching, the adoption of a new formula as it is not consistent with the fixed norms

of *Shastra*; so a sadhaka of Integral Yoga must be fully aware of the compelling cause of refusal of so many other schools of self-discipline to regard even the possibility of realizing the object of Integral Yoga wholly; fourthly, there are certain traditional teachings in which Yoga can be used for self-indulgence and hurting others instead of self-conquest and doing of good of all creatures.

The *Shastra* of Integral Yoga recommends that ‘each man in this path has his own method of Yoga’ or ‘each man is able to follow his own path of Yoga’; secondly, there are certain broad catholic norms common for all sadhakas which enable us to construct a scientific method of synthetic Yoga and these must take as much as possible the form of general truths, general statements of principle, the most powerful broad directions of effort and development rather than a fixed system which has to be followed as a routine; thirdly, it provides further guideline that all written truth and practices cannot be too strictly formulated and it must be constantly renovated and revived by fresh in streaming of spiritual experience and descended knowledge; fourthly Integral Yoga authorizes absolute freedom to each sadhaka to restate knowledge in new terms and new combinations and since it not only seeks the Divine but also call upon the Divine to unfold in human life so the *Shastra* of Integral Yoga must provide for an infinite liberty in the receptive human soul to extend his unending spiritual experience; fifthly, this *Shastra* ‘will not lend itself either to any predilection or distaste for any particular idea or truth, and refuse to be attached even to those ideas of which it is most certain or to lay on them such an undue stress as is likely to disturb the balance of truth and depreciate the values of other elements of a complete and perfect knowledge’; sixthly, all editing work of books intended to pursue Integral Yoga must confirm its norm that emphasizes, “We must hate none, despise none, be repelled by none; for in all we have to see the One disguised or manifested at his pleasure. He is little revealed in one or more revealed in another or concealed and wholly distorted in others according to His will and His knowledge of what is best for that which He intends to become in form in them and to do in works in their nature.”; seventhly, the *Shastra* of Integral Yoga will integrate our fragmentary personality and fragmentary knowledge and discover unity and univesalisation of all Deity, *Guru, Avataras, Shastra* and Teachings by uncovering their central truth, central faith and central dynamic force; it does not cut the roots of the Sciences, the Arts and the Life but to lift them out of their limitations, supply a new source of creative Spiritual power and illumination by which they can be carried more swiftly and profoundly towards their absolute light in knowledge and their yet undreamed possibilities and most dynamic energy of content and form and practice; eighthly, it reminds us that the Spirit’s unending riches, opulences and splendours cannot be exhausted by all the inspired narrations, exulted writings of Seers and Saints of all Time and all the mental formulations of truth born out of exclusive concentration and higher formulations can break down under the test of new suggestions from the Infinite; ninthly the *Shastra* of an Integral Yoga

recommends that during this endeavour and *tapasya* the Integral Yogi will transcend all effort, all self-discipline, all set method and it will be replaced by 'natural, simple, powerful and happy disclosing of the flower of the Divine out of the bud of a purified and perfected nature'; he will also transcend all set goal because the progress, the growth and expansion are identified as infinite and lastly in the final journey of the Soul's infinity and freedom all outward standards are replaced or laid aside and there is left only a spontaneous and integral obedience to the Divine with whom he is in conscious union and a spontaneous action fulfilling the integral spiritual truth of his Being and Nature.

The Law of Renunciation or The Law of *Tapasya* -2:

A matted forest head invaded heaven
As if a **blue-throated ascetic peered**
From the stone fastness of his mountain cell
Regarding the brief gladness of the days;
His vast extended spirit couched behind.

Savitri-391

The strong **king-sages** from their labour done,
Freed from the warrior tension of their task,
Came to her serene sessions in these wilds;
The strife was over, the respite lay in front.
Happy they lived with birds and beasts and flowers
And sunlight and the rustle of the leaves,
And heard the wild winds wandering in the night,
Mused with the stars in their mute constant ranks,
And lodged in the mornings as in azure tents,
And with the glory of the noons were one.

Savitri-381

I sat with the **forest sages** in their trance:
There poured awakening streams of diamond light,
I glimpsed the presence of the One in all.
But still there lacked the last transcendent power
And Matter still slept empty of its Lord.

Savitri-405

All traditional Yoga aims at escape into higher Nature by rejection of lower Nature. Integral Yoga aims at transformation of lower Nature and its elevation into higher Nature. Lower Nature is that which acts through limitation and division and is of the nature of Ignorance and culminates in the life of ego. Higher nature is that which acts by unification and transcendence of limitation and is of the nature of Knowledge and culminates in the Life Divine.

All traditional Yoga aims at individual liberation and perfection through great Solitaries and after attaining it we have the great spiritual Teachers who have

liberated others. Integral Yoga aims at universalisation of above realization through great dynamic Souls who feel themselves stronger in the might of the Spirit than all the forces of material life and have thrown themselves upon the world, grappled with it in loving wrestle and striven to compel its consent to its own transfiguration. The condition in which all traditional Yoga proceeds is seclusion from ordinary activities, isolation from the mass through the garb of Sannyasin; the condition in which Integral Yoga proceeds by accepting and embracing this garb of the world, its problems and its difficulties and its complexities entirely where seclusion and isolation are provisional necessity. The former culminates in renunciation of life because the ordinary mentalised human-animal life is either demoniac or Divine and undivine mixed whereas the latter culminates in the fulfillment of life, a life released, transformed and uplifted. The difficult and unavoidable task of Integral Yoga differs from other world-shunning or heaven seeking disciplines in the sense that it cannot afford to leave unsolved the problem of outward works of Life and ally it firmly to the divinities of Love and Knowledge.

Hathayoga aims at the conquest of the life and the body by combining the food sheath and the vital sheath whose equilibrium is the foundation of all Nature's workings in the human being. It aims at the supernormal perfection of the physical life and its capacities and goes beyond it into the domain of the mental life. The whole aim of the Hathayoga is the fixed scientific processes to give to the soul in the physical body the power, the light, the purity, the freedom, the ascending scales of spiritual experience which would naturally be open to it, if it dwelt here in the subtle and the developed causal vehicle. The object of the *Asana* is to get rid of the restlessness imposed on the body and to force it to hold the Pranic energy instead of dissipating and squandering it. The object of *Pranayama* is to purify the nervous system, to circulate the life-energy through all the nerves without obstruction, disorder or irregularity, and to acquire a complete control of its functioning, so that the mind and will of the soul inhabiting the body may be no longer subject to the body or life or their combined limitations. *Rajayoga* aims at the liberation and perfection of the mental being, the control of emotional and sensational life, the mastery of the whole apparatus of thought and consciousness. It aims at a supernormal perfection and enlargement of the capacities of the mental life and goes beyond it into the spiritual existence which withdraws into a subliminal plane at the back of our normal experiences without descending and possessing our whole outer existence. The object of *Rajayoga* is also to draw away the mind from the outward and the mental world into silent communion of soul and unity with the Divine and it some times deviates from the main purpose to the practice and use of occult powers, *siddhis*. The object of self-discipline *Yama* of *Rajayoga* is to create a moral calm, a void of the passions, and so prepare for the death of rajasic egoism and conquest of passions and desires in the human being. The object of self-discipline *Niyamas* of *Rajayoga* are equally a discipline of the

mind by regular practices of which the highest is meditation on the Divine Being, and to create a *sattwic* calm, purity and preparation for concentration upon which the secure pursuance of the rest of the Yoga can be founded. The *Karmayoga* aims at the dedication of every human activity to the Supreme Will. It begins by the renunciation of all egoistic aim for our works, all pursuit of action for an interested aim or for the sake of a worldly result. By this renunciation it so purifies the mind and the will that we become easily conscious of the great Universal Energy as the true doer of all our actions and the Lord of that Energy as their ruler and director with the individual as only a mask, an excuse, an instrument or, more positively, a conscious centre of action and phenomenal relation. The choice and direction of the act is more and more consciously left to the supreme Will and this universal Energy. To That our works as well as the results of our works are finally abandoned. The object is the release of the Soul from its bondage to appearances and to the reaction of phenomenal activities. The traditional *Jnana Yoga* leads to the rejection of phenomenal worlds from the consciousness as creation of *Maya*, an illusion and the final immergence without return of the individual Soul in the Supreme. This Yoga begins by the method of intellectual reflection, *vicara*, to arrive at right discrimination, *viveka*. The path of Integral *Jnana Yoga* aims at realization and identification with the pure, unique, immutable and imperishable Supreme Self, not only in one's own being but in all beings and, finally, the realization of even the phenomenal aspects of the world as a play of the Divine consciousness and not something entirely alien to its true nature. The *Bhaktiyoga*, Path of Devotion aims at the enjoyment of the supreme Love and Bliss and utilizes normally the conception of the Supreme Lord in His personality as the Divine Lover and Enjoyer of the universe. The world is then realized as a play of the Lord, with our human life as its final stage, pursued through the different phases of self-concealment and self-revelation. This path, too, as ordinarily practiced, leads away from world-existence to absorption of another kind than the Monist's in the Transcendent and Supra-cosmic. The *Tantric* system aims liberation, full perfection and enjoyment of the Spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence, and experience in which liberation and cosmic action and enjoyment are unified in a final overcoming of all oppositions and dissonances. The aim of Integral Yoga is to make the Spiritual life and its Spiritual experiences fully active and utilizable in waking state extending over all the function of normal life. The perfection of the body, the highest results of *Hathayoga* and the perfection of the mind, the highest achievement of *Rajayoga* and the development of general physical and mental faculties and experiences attainable by humanity are also included in the scope of Integral Yoga.

Each schools of Yoga select their own gate of escape by turning certain activities of lower Nature towards the Divine. Hathayoga selects the body and vital functioning, Rajayoga selects chitta, psychic prana, the triple path of Works, of Knowledge and of Love uses will, intellect and emotion as starting point and

seeks by its conversion to arrive at the liberating Truth. The Gita proposes rejection of four things that of desire, *kama*, ego, *ahamkara*, dualities *dwanda* and the three *gunas* as condition of attaining liberation, *mukti*. The Tantric Yogin, instead of rejecting the lower Nature confronts, seizes and conquers it. Integral Yoga in its preliminary state recommends renunciation of three things utterly, that of desire, ego and attachment.

Man in his effort at self-transcendence has to seize on some one spring or some powerful leverage in the complicated and complex instrument of his nature; this spring or lever he touches in preference to others and uses it to set the human machine in motion towards the end he has in view. In his choice it is always the Nature that should be his guide. The lever action of *Japa Yoga* is physical mind, Hathayoga depends on nervous system of vital mind, Rajayoga leans on purification of *chitta*, *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti Yoga* use will, intellect and emotion, Tantra disciplines desire as her most powerful leverage. The distinct character of man is that he is a mental being and not merely a vital creature and here Nature should turn at her highest and widest in him. Integral Yoga centres its consciousness on the Psychic being, the inner heart of deepest feeling and the Spiritual being, the highest mind of thought and light and will and uses either of it as our leverage to lift the nature wholly towards the Divine.

Each Schools of Yoga has its own method, processes of which *Hathayogic* is of psycho-physical science, *Rajayogic* is that of mental and psychic, its method is the stilling of the waves of consciousness, its manifold activities, *cittvrutti*, first, through a habitual replacing of the turbid *rajasic* activities by the quiet and luminous *sattwic*, then, by the stilling of all activities; the way of *Karma Yoga* is of spiritual and dynamic, the way of *Jnana Yoga* is that of spiritual and cognitive, the way of *Bhakti Yoga* is that of spiritual, aesthetic and emotional, the method of *Tantra* is to raise nature in man into manifest power of Spirit and apply the intimate secrets of the Will-in-Power; the way of *Tantric Dakshina marga* is Nature in man liberating itself by right discrimination in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities and the *Tantric Vama marga* is the Nature in man liberating itself by a joyous acceptance in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities; the method of *Sankhya* is that the Purusha learns not to identify himself with *Prakriti*. The Monist fixes his path on the exclusive knowledge; the Dualist or the partial Monist turns to the path of Devotion and directs us to shed the lower ego and material life. The method of Integral Yoga is Psychic, Spiritual and Supramental which is derived from the central principle of *Vedantic* school whose method are in knowledge; it is either knowledge through discernment or knowledge of the heart expressed in love and faith or a knowledge in the will working out through action.

The point of contact of the individual consciousness with the Divine decides the type of Yoga we practice. Yoga is the union of that which has become separated in the play of the universe with its own true self, origin and universality. This contact may take place at any point of the complex and intricately organized consciousness which we call our personality. It may be effected in the physical through the body; in the vital through the action of those functioning which determine the state and the experiences of our nervous being; through the mentality, whether by means of the emotional heart, the active will or the understanding mind, or more largely by a general conversion of the mental consciousness in all its activities. *Tantra* lays its hand firmly on many of the main springs of human quality, desire, action and it subjects them to an intensive discipline. Integral Yoga is accomplished through a direct awakening to the Universal or Transcendent Truth and Bliss by the conversion of the central ego in the mind. Its three progressive stages are that of (1) attempt of ego to enter contact with the Divine through personal effort, (2) laborious preparation and working of the Divine Force in the whole lower Nature to become higher Nature and (3) wholly blissful and rapid eventual transformation.

Integral knowledge unifies *Sachchidananda* in all the manifest planes whereas traditional knowledge admits this truth in theory but practically fails, as if oneness were not equal everywhere. It finds it in the unmanifest Absolute and rejects it in the manifestation; finds it purer in Impersonal than in Personal; complete in *Nirguna* and not so complete in *Saguna*; satisfyingly present in the silent and inactive *Brahman* and not so satisfyingly present in the active *Brahman*. The Integral Yoga of knowledge makes no such division. It finds (1) the same absolute oneness in the Unmanifest and the Manifest (2) in the Impersonal and the Personal, (3) in *Nirguna* and *Saguna*, (4) in the infinite depths of universal silence and the infinite largeness of the universal action, (5) in the *Purusha* and *Prakriti*; (6) in the Divine Presence and the works of the Divine Power and Knowledge; (7) in the eternal manifestness of the one *Purusha* and the constant manifestation of many *Purushas*; (8) in the inalienable unity of *Sachchidananda* keeping constantly real to itself its own manifold oneness and in the apparent divisions of mind, life and body in which oneness is constantly, if secretly real and constantly seeks to be realized; (9) to possess Him and be possessed by Him in ourselves and in all things in the term of self-mastery, *swarat* and all-empire, *samrat*; (10) to enjoy Him in all experience of passivity and activity, of peace and power, of unity and difference. (11) For it Personality and Impersonality are two wings of its Spiritual ascension. (12) All unity is to it an intense, pure and infinite realization, all difference an abundant, rich and boundless realisation of the same Divine and Eternal Being. (13) All that is mystic, true and Divine behind polytheism and monotheism falls within the scope of its seeking. (14) It accepts all jarring sects, religions, science and philosophies as one of the faces of the Eternal Reality and discovers the One Truth that binds them together.

All religions and Yogic schools in India use largely psycho-physical method or external self-discipline for inner development and depend more or less upon it for their practices. The secret power of *Mantra*, *Japa*, sacred syllable, name of the mystic formula is the central truth of all the complex psycho-physical science and practice of which *Rajayoga* and *Tantra* give us a comprehensive method. These are preparatory objects of thought concentration, forms, and verbal formulas of thought, significant names all of which have to be used by mind and transcended. The mystic formula AUM represents the Brahman in three status, the Waking Self, the Dream Self, the Sleep Self and the whole potent sound rises to the beyond three status, the fourth of *Turiya*, of which all these are derivations of relative experience. The methods of Integral Yoga 'must be mainly spiritual and dependence on fixed psychic or psycho-physical process on large scale would be the substitution of a lower for a higher action' (The Synthesis of Yoga-542).

All traditional Yoga proceeds in its method by three principles of practice; first, purification, that is to say, the removal of all aberrations, disorders, obstructions brought about by the mixed and irregular action of the energy of being in our physical, vital, moral, aesthetic, emotional, ethical and intellectual mind; secondly, concentration, that is to say, the bringing to its full intensity and the mastered and self-directed employment of that energy of being in us for a definite end; thirdly, liberation, that is to say, the release of our being from the narrow and painful knots of the individualized energy in a false and limited play, which at present are the law of our nature.

Concentration has two necessities, the first is the one pointed concentration by fixing the will and thought on the Eternal and Real by turning the mind from dispersed movement of thought, running after many branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to the phenomena; secondly, the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind and will on its object and, once attained, to hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. *Rajayogic* concentration is divided into four stages; (1) it commences with the drawing both the mind and senses from outward things, (2) proceeds to the holding of the one object of concentration to the exclusion of all other ideas and mental activities, (3) then to the prolonged absorption of the mind in this object, finally, (4) to the complete ingoing of the consciousness by which it is lost to all outward mental activity in the oneness of Samadhi. The concentration of Integral Yoga is divided into three stages; firstly, with the help of concentration we can know the secret behind any thing or all things, but here we must use this power to know the one Thing-in itself, the Divine; secondly, by concentration the whole will can be gathered up for the acquisition of all that are still beyond us, this power in us can be sufficiently trained, single-minded, sufficiently sincere and faithful towards the acquisition of

the One object worthy of pursuit; thirdly by concentration the mass of weakness, fear, perversion can become strength, courage, a great purity or a single universal soul of Love; we can use this power to transcend above all things, above all attributes, and become the pure and absolute Being.

Recapitulation:

“This, the **final aim of the ascetic** Yoga which refuses life, is evidently **not our aim** (aim of Integral Yoga). By alternative choice we can have an activity perfect enough in outward appearance along with an entire inner passivity, peace, mental silence, indifference and cessation of the emotions, absence of choice in the will.” (The Synthesis of Yoga-403)

Sri Aurobindo

“India had three **fortress** of a communal life, the village community, the larger joint family and the order of the Sannyasins; all these are broken or breaking with the stride of egoistic conceptions of social life; but is not this after all only the breaking of these imperfect moulds on the way to a larger and diviner communism?”

Sri Aurobindo

If the humanity aspires to attain the highest state of Godhead, then he has to come across the rigorous training of The Mother’s intermediate station of Ascetics’ Retreat. Ascetics’ Fortress can rightly confront the compromise of insistent animalism of moderate living and give way for consecrated spirituality of the Divine Centre.

The importance of the Ascetics’ Fortress and its indispensability in the world has to be realized in its own realm of conquest of the Divine by renunciation of all lower and divided consciousness. Apart from the traditional ascetic’s recoil from physical life there is another exaggeration of belittling and degradation of both the individual and the universe and there is a natural consequence of cessation of both cosmos and individuality by attainment of the Transcendent. He is disgusted with the mud of the Matter, revolted by the animal grossness of Life, impatient of the self-imprisoned narrowness and downward vision of Mind. Integral Yoga of unity of Brahman avoids these divisions. Here an Integral Ascetic need not give up bodily and mental life to attain the spiritual experiences and preservation of individual activities are consistent with his comprehension of Cosmic Consciousness and his attainment of the Transcendent and Supracosmic reality. Similarly he has to exceed the traditional ascetic’s limitation (1) of saintly inactivity by dynamisation of Divine will and realise God as the Doer of all action who demands action from all; (2) the traditional ascetic’s realization of God’s bright shadow or brief illumination in sainthood’s brilliant cell is to be substituted by the direct contact with the Divine All; (3) the integral Ascetic will not reject the life of the world but attain the fullness of surrender by accepting, uplifting and transforming life his realization involves a complete and absolute recognition of

his unity with man; (4) and he regards the world not as an invention of the devil or a self-delusion of the soul, but as a partial manifestation of the Divine and he will realize the fullness of Divine Love by integrating the Personal and Impersonal aspect of the Divine.

The best and intense figure of sainthood clamped in rigid hieratic lines is not the ideal of an Integral Ascetic and he enters a larger psychic and emotional relation with World, Self and God, more deep and plastic in its essence, more wide and embracing in its movements, awakens himself towards streams of diamond light, glimpses the presence of the One and the extension of his liberty and its results in others and ultimately complete generalization in mankind would be the inevitable outcome as well as the broadest utility of his liberation and perfection.

But for the traditional Ascetic, the Matter still sleeps empty of its Lord. He saves his Spirit while the body is lost and mute; lives still with Death, ancient Ignorance and Inconscient base and he lives in a void that is his fate. Integral Ascetic's highest spiritual realisation, while moving towards the Supramental state is the entry into the total *Nirvana* of mentality and mental ego, which is a passage into the silence of the Spirit and in the Void he experiences the Omniscience Supreme.

OM TAT SAT

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