



Research Paper

Process of Yoga: In light of Aurobindo

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ABSTRACT:

This paper delves into the intricate process of Yoga as elucidated by Sri Aurobindo, a pioneering Indian philosopher, yogi, and spiritual luminary of the 20th century. Drawing upon Aurobindo's profound insights and teachings, the study navigates through the multifaceted dimensions of Yoga, aiming to unravel its transformative journey towards self-realization and spiritual evolution. Aurobindo's integral Yoga philosophy emphasizes the harmonious synthesis of various yogic paths, including Karma Yoga (the yoga of action), Bhakti Yoga (the yoga of devotion), Jnana Yoga (the yoga of knowledge), and Raja Yoga (the yoga of meditation). Through a meticulous exploration of Aurobindo's writings and practices, this paper elucidates the stages of psychic and spiritual development in the practitioner, emphasizing the progressive integration of the individual consciousness with the divine consciousness. Furthermore, it examines Aurobindo's concept of the "Supramental Transformation," wherein human consciousness evolves beyond its present limitations to embody a higher divine consciousness. By elucidating the integral process of Yoga through the lens of Aurobindo's teachings, this study seeks to offer profound insights into the transformative potential of Yoga in the modern world, inspiring seekers on their quest for inner awakening and spiritual fulfillment.

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Synthesis, Supramental Transformation, Evolution, Involution

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The very first question is, from where we came to exist? Who am I? And who made me? To answer these questions many thinkers have given their own view. Maybe they have dissension regarding their views but in maximum case they admit a supreme power behind all these. Sri Aurobindo merges East and West in this regard. His theory of spiritual integrity has two negative sides-

- i) Materialistic denial
- ii) Denial of extreme idealism and extreme materialism.

His theory is based on evolution and involution. He compiles infinite and finite. In one word journey from matter to spirit is called evolution and in same way reaching matter from spirit is called involution. Aurobindo's vision is not mere individual liberation. What is required is the emergence of divine life on earth. In such a life there will be self-aware existence and complete self-position. This view is same like the view of Bijyanbadin or Yogachar Buddhism.

The full delight of being is another feature of divine life where the supreme man transcends not only their individual existence but also the universe. The individual can find his true existence by living inwardness. There will be intimate consciousness of others and he will be performing his actions with such awareness. Life becomes a life of supreme consciousness and joy. Gnostic beings lives for divine and Sri Aurobindo's social and political philosophy is based on this fundamental essence of all existence. Both man and nature aim at divine. His speculations about the future destiny of man are consistent with his integral philosophy. Unity and harmony of the society can be attained through inner individual transcendental principle. When a spirit of individual develops, he becomes more and more free. But it is the point to be notified that individual freedom is not contrary to universal interest. His aim is to be a perfect man instead of just be a physical, mental and vital being by transcending towards higher value. He focused on that spirituality alone can solve our individual and social problems.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is noted for its integral approach in linking matter and spirit. There is materialization of spirit and spiritualization of matter. He emphasizes the whole man, the man together with the nature and spirit which equally manifest in man, world and God. There is nothing outside the absolute. Man is as much real as God. Spiritual experience is the life breath of all the true philosophy and also its culmination.

Sri Aurobindo's yoga synthesizes all types of yoga and arrives at a complete technique to realize reality in its integrity. There will be revelation of true nature of spirituality. Through his spiritual evolution Sri Aurobindo finds a harmonious synthesis of individual and society. His philosophy is the need of the time it is an integral synthesis of old and new, East and West, realism and idealism, pragmatism and spiritualism. Sri Aurobindo's yoga is the total transformation of every aspect of being. That is why it is called integral; which transforms physical, mental and vital aspects. The divine life that is the principle of Sat, Chit, Ananda is the ultimate destiny and it is the Goal of evolution. This according to him can be accomplished through yoga. He discerns three types of being: the outer being, the Inner being, and the Psychic Being. Yoga is a rapid and concentrated evolution of being, which take effect in one life-time, or it may take many centuries or many births. Sri Aurobindo wrote in his letter to Motilal Roy – "Remember also that we derive from Ramakrishna who personally came and first turned me to this Yoga. Vivekananda in the Alipore jail (again, not physically but in the occult plane) gave me the foundations of that knowledge which is the basis of our sadhana."

There are two words used in English to express the Indian idea of dhyāna, "meditation" and "contemplation". Meditation means properly the concentration of the mind on a single train of ideas which work out a single subject. Contemplation means regarding mentally a single object, image, idea so that the knowledge about the object, image or idea may arise naturally in the mind by force of the concentration. Both these things are forms of dhyāna, for the principle of dhyāna is mental concentration whether in thought, vision or knowledge.

There are other forms of dhyāna. There is a passage in which Vivekananda advises you to stand back from your thoughts, let them occur in your mind as they will and simply observe them and see what they are. This may be called concentration in self-observation.

This form leads to another, the emptying of all thought out of the mind so as to leave it a sort of pure vigilant blank on which the divine knowledge may come and imprint itself, undisturbed by the inferior thoughts of the ordinary human mind and with the clearness of writing in white chalk on a blackboard. You will find that the Gita speaks of this rejection of all mental thought as one of the methods of yoga and even the method it seems to prefer. This may be called the dhyāna of liberation, as it frees the mind from slavery to the mechanical process of thinking and allows it to think or not to think, as it pleases and when it pleases, or to choose its own thoughts or else to go beyond thought to the pure perception of Truth called in our philosophy vijñāna.

Meditation is the easiest process for the human mind, but the narrowest in its results; contemplation more difficult, but greater; self-observation and liberation from the chains of Thought the most difficult of all, but the widest and greatest in its fruits. One can choose any of them according to one's bent and capacity. The perfect method is to use them all, each in its own place and for its own object; but this would need a fixed faith and firm patience and a great energy of Will in the self-application to the yoga.

The best object for meditation or contemplation according to Aurobindo is nothing but Brahman and the idea on which the mind should fix is that of God in all, all in God and all as God. It does not matter essentially whether it is the Impersonal or the Personal God, or subjectively, the One Self. From Aurobindo's perspective Brahman is the highest entity and embraces all other truths on Him, whether truths of this world or of the other worlds or beyond all phenomenal existence, – "All this is the Brahman".

The perfection that comes from the practice of Yoga, can be attained by the combined working of four great instruments. **First**, there is the knowledge of truth, principles, power and processes that one gets from the realization of *sastra*. The supreme Shastra of the integral Yoga is the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every thinking and living being. The lotus of the eternal knowledge and the eternal perfection is a bud closed and folded up within us. It opens swiftly or gradually, petal by petal, through successive realizations, once the mind of man begins to turn towards the Eternal, once his heart, no longer compressed and confined by attachment to finite appearances, becomes enamored, in whatever degree, of the Infinite. He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite. All perfections of which the outer man is capable, is nothing but the realization of the eternal perfection of the spirit, which already is within him. We know the Divine and become the Divine, because we are That already in our secret nature. All teaching is a revealing, all becoming is an unfolding. Self-attainment is the secret; self-knowledge and an increasing consciousness are the means and the process.

Next there comes a patient and persistent action on the lines laid down by this knowledge, the force of our personal effort- *utshaha*. It is vyakulata, the heart's eagerness for the attainment of the Divine- that devours the ego and breaks up the limitations of its petty and narrow mould for the full and wide reception of that which it seeks, that which, being universal, exceeds and, being transcendent, surpasses even the largest and highest individual self and nature. But this is only one side of the force that works for perfection. The process of the integral Yoga has three stages, not indeed sharply distinguished or separate, but in a certain measure successive. There must be, first, the effort towards at least an initial and enabling self-transcendence and contact with the Divine; next, the reception of that which transcends, that with which we have gained communion, into ourselves for the transformation of our whole conscious being; last, the utilisation of our transformed humanity as a divine centre in the world. So long as the contact with the Divine is not in some considerable degree established, so

long as there is not some measure of sustained identity, *sayujya*, the element of personal effort must normally predominate. But in proportion as this contact establishes itself, the sadhaka must become conscious that a force other than his own, a force transcending his egoistic endeavor and capacity, is at work in him and to this Power he learns progressively to submit himself and delivers up to it the charge of his Yoga. In the end his own will and force become one with the higher Power; he merges them in the divine Will and its transcendent and universal Force. He finds it thenceforward presiding over the necessary transformation of his mental, vital and physical being with an impartial wisdom and provident effectivity of which the eager and interested ego is not capable. It is when this identification and this self-merging are complete that the divine centre in the world is ready. Purified, liberated, plastic, illumined, it can begin to serve as a means for the direct action of a supreme Power in the larger Yoga of humanity or super humanity, of the earth's spiritual progression or its transformation.

There intervenes, **third**, uplifting our knowledge and effort into the domain of experience, the direct suggestion, example and influence of teacher- **guru**. There is needed an aid in one journey to the divine. In *Vedanta* philosophy it is said that only A Guru can give the great holy word- '*Tattamashi*.' It is said in the Upanishads of Krishna, son of Devaki, that he received a word of the Rishi Ghora and had the knowledge. So Ramakrishna, having attained by his own internal effort the central illumination, accepted several teachers in the different paths of Yoga, but always showed in the manner and swiftness of his realization that this acceptance was a concession to the general rule by which effective knowledge must be received as by a disciple from a Guru. But usually the representative influence occupies a much larger place in the life of the sadhaka. If the Yoga is guided by a received written Shastra,—some Word from the past which embodies the experience of former Yogins,—it may be practiced either by personal effort alone or with the aid of a Guru. The spiritual knowledge is then gained through meditation on the truths that are taught and it is made living and conscious by their realization in the personal experience; the Yoga proceeds by the results of prescribed methods taught in a Scripture or a tradition and reinforced and illumined by the instructions of the Master. This is a narrower practice, but safe and effective within its limits, because it follows a well-beaten track to a long familiar goal. **Last** there comes the instrumentality of Time- **kala**; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement. Time is the remaining aid needed for the effectivity of the process. Time presents itself to human effort as an enemy or a friend, as a resistance, a medium or an instrument. But always it is really the instrument of the soul. Time is a field of circumstances and forces meeting and working out a resultant progression whose course it measures. To the ego it is a tyrant or a resistance, to the Divine an instrument. Therefore, while our effort is personal, Time appears as a resistance, for it presents to us all the obstruction of the forces that conflict with our own. When the divine working and the personal are combined in our consciousness, it appears as a medium and a condition. When the two become one, it appears as a servant and instrument. The ideal attitude of the sadhaka towards Time is to have an endless patience as if he had all eternity for his fulfilment and yet to develop the energy that shall realise now and with an ever-increasing mastery and pressure of rapidity till it reaches the miraculous instantaneousness of the supreme divine Transformation.

Aurobindo says yoga is the double process of ascend and descend. One rises to a higher and higher level of consciousness but at the same time one brings down their not only into mind but even into body. Basically, yoga according to Aurobindo, means union or a divine transformation. The concept of integral yoga is also known as *purna yoga* or inner yoga which consists of three-fold process. For the total development of an individual, he stressed on integration among all the areas of yoga, not on any one. He formulated three main stages, a 'Triple transformation', in the progression of the Integral Yoga:

- i) Process of psychicisation.
- ii) Process of spiritualization.
- iii) Process of supramentalisation.

According to Aurobindo, the current status of human evolution is an intermediate stage in the evolution of being, which is on its way to the unfolding of the spirit, and the self-revelation of divinity in all things.

In Integral Yoga the goal is to move inward and discover the Psychic Being, which then can be Psychic is called Psychicisation a transformation of the outer nature. Now the question is why he proposed these three steps? It is because he believes that he ascent from mind to super mind will not happened all of a sudden; it will happen gradually by the help of these three steps. Under the first step the effort towards at least an initial and enabling self-transcendence and contact with the divine. This transformation of the outer being or ego by the Psychic is called Psychicisation; it is one of the three necessary stages in the realization of the Supramental consciousness. One can be learning self-discipline. So self-discipline will be dwelled in the person from whom one will realize that he grabs for the realization of that supreme reality which is true and noble in nature.

The next process is the process of reception. Yogan commemorate that which is transcends, that with which we have gained communion, into ourselves for the transformation of our whole conscious being. In this

process the mind will become repulsive to what is false or what is obscure or undivine in nature. As a result, in this state the individual become more elevative towards spiritual consciousness.

In the final process to the supra-mentalisation Aurobindo says that the realization of the supramental being or the supreme most being and the consciousness will be established a perfect harmony in all the states of the being. This will be happened when the lid between the lower and higher hemispheres of existence is removed and the Super mind instead of the Overmined becomes the governing power of the existence. The Supramental Transformation consists of:

- i) Ascent to the Super mind
- ii) Descent of the Supramental powers into the mental, vital and physical parts of the being

The action of the Supramental affects the function of the entire being:

- Memory is no longer the storing of past knowledge but an abiding presence of knowledge that can be brought forward or offers itself when it is needed.
- Reason becomes a luminous organizer of the subjective and objective knowledge.
- Thought operates with an abiding sense of underling unity with all objects.
- Sensory function operates independently of the sense organs and sense-mind, gaining awareness of all things on all planes.
- Vision opens to a direct knowledge of the past, the presence and the future.

The supreme reality according to Aurobindo is Brahman, the Divine. It is eternal, absolute and infinite. In itself it is absolute indeterminate, indefinable and free. It cannot be completely described either positively or negatively. Though it is indescribable in itself, yet it is not absolutely unknowable to us. For us the highest positive expression of Brahman is the Sacchidananda or Existence- consciousness-Bliss, all in one. It manifests itself as indeterminate as well as determinate, as *nirguna* as well as *saguṇa*, as one as well as many, as being as well as becoming and yet it transcends them all.

The Existence (*sat*) of Brahman appears to us as Atman, Ishvara and Purusa. The Consciousness (*chit*) of Brahman which is always a force (*shakti*) manifests itself as Maya, Shakti and Prakriti. Consciousness Force, the own nature of Divine, “measures the Immeasurable, informs the Formless and embodies the Spirit or The Bliss (ananda) of Brahman underlies all the manifestations and it is out of sheer bliss that the divine manifests Himself as this world. These three aspects and these powers embrace all reality and when taken as a whole, reconcile all apparent contradictions”.

Yoga is ancient. Philosophy and yoga are essential to humans next to basic needs. The modern developments are giving many physical comforts and the life is becoming easy but due to the stress and strain of everyday life internal restlessness is also increasing affecting the world peace. This causes various psychosomatic disorders that are harmful for the world. So, yoga makes life meaningful and gives answers to major problems of life. Sri Aurobindo gives a positive picture of the future of humanity and the present man is the middle term in the process of evolution. Aurobindo’s integral yoga may become a panacea for all problems and difficulties. Integral yoga has many philosophical and educational implications in many areas of life.

“Yoga is after all primarily a change of the inner consciousness. The object of sadhana can only be to live in the divine consciousness and to manifest it in life.”--- Sri Aurobindo

“To be a Yogi, a Sannyasi, a Tapaswi is not the object here. The object is transformation, and the transformation can only be done by a force infinitely greater than your own, it can only be done by being truly like a child in the hands of the divine Mother.”--- Sri Aurobindo

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