

Integral approach to knowledge in Vedanta. Part 1

Presentation by Vladimir and discussion with the UHU team.

Since many of you were not present during our discussions with Rod and Rudy, it would be interesting for me and for us, I suppose, to see how far we can understand this concept Vedantic paradigm and develop it in some way in order to discover the major platform for our University.

On the other hand if we are only presenting the bits of knowledge and experiences, which is also very nice in itself, then, as I think, it cannot serve the purpose of our seminars to discover the integral paradigm of knowledge.

So before we go into discussion I would like first to present to you the concept of integral paradigm as it was seen in Vedanta. This concept is a starting point for us and not the final thing. Of course, it has its own finality and its own perfection already, because it is based on Vedic vision, which is more or less integral. It is an interesting view, for it has another perception of consciousness. The faculties of consciousness are treated here differently than in the later Sankhya and Yoga schemes of knowledge. The Epistemology of Vedanta maintains that every faculty of consciousness: sight, hearing, speech, mind, body and prana (breathing in and out), have their own universal and even transcendental domains. So, if in a later Sankhya we see these faculties treated as senses, as the doors for the information to flow into the mind, called 'manas', treating the mind as the synthesizer of this information, then in Vedanta it was seen quite differently.

The Sankhya's paradigm has developed later (appr. 500 BC) when the rational mind and structure of consciousness was finally formed and dominated the previous developmental stage of consciousness, appearing for the first time on the historical arena. This shift of paradigm which happened several times in the history of mankind was clearly defined by Sri Aurobindo as a shift from the Vedic to the Vedantic and from the Vedantic to the Sankhyaic paradigm. And it is in Sankhyaic paradigm that we all live and think even now, where mind is seen as the one which dominates and treats all the faculties of consciousness as its own senses. We believe that the mind is the only leader of our life, and all the other sense are only feeding it with information, giving it access to the outer or inner reality.

But in the Vedantic paradigm, which was a sort of transition from the Vedic to the Sankhyaic, these faculties were seen differently, they were having their own domains, so to say. Seeing and Hearing and Speech were treated in an equal way with the Mind. Mind was not

dominating them yet. Mind was a part of this process of cognition, or one of the streams of consciousness.

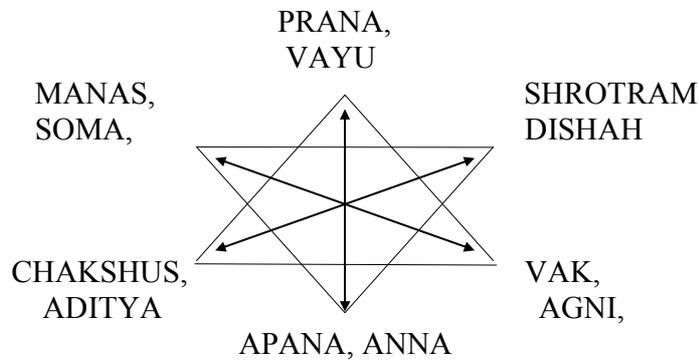
So, if we look through the eyes of Vedanta, we will find another view on Man and Universe. These faculties are always mentioned in dvandvas, pairs, and I will write them on the board in Sanskrit terms, but will translate them to you:

So we have:

CHAKSHUS and SHROTRAM, Seeing and Hearing;

MANAS and VAC, Mind and Speech;

PRANA and APANA or ANNA, Breathing in and out, or Life-force and Body.



(pict.1)

When Bhṛigu approaches his father Varuṇa and asks him: "Teach me about Brahman", adhīhi bhagavo brahmeti, he hears the answer: annam, prāṇam, cakṣuḥ, śrotram, mano vācam iti. These six faculties are the definition of Brahman. It is a very interesting view, for Brahman, and you can see it for yourself, is not something which is abstract and present only beyond, it is also presented here as consciousness and as these six faculties.

All of them have their representation not only in the individual frame but also in all domains in the Universal and even in the transcendental plain. For instance, if we take the Word, there are four levels of speech as I mentioned it before:

- 1) Transcendental, Parā Vāk,
- 2) Paśyantī, Intentional-Cognitive,
- 3) Madhyamā, Cognitive-Formative
- 4) Vaikharī, Expressive

Dominique: Can you redefine prana and apana?

Vladimir: yes, Prana is breathing in, and the Apana is breathing out. And Annam is matter.

I will have to build it from the beginning, I guess, for otherwise the whole concept will not become clear. So if we review these six we will see that there are not yet the five senses of the Sankhya system, which comes later. There is no taste and smell incorporated into the system, there are only: seeing, hearing, and touch of the Sankhya.

Now we could see an interesting relation between these six faculties. If Vāc is an expression of śrotram, and it is quite interesting, for śrotram is a perceptive faculty, and we dealt with it, last time in Aurelio's presentation, when he led us through hearing from within the womb to the outside, and when we have opened our eyes finally then we could see the difference between the seeing and the hearing, because hearing together with seeing is something different altogether. There is a domination of the seeing faculty over the hearing, though the hearing faculty always stays at the background, so to say.

Thus Vac as the vibration of consciousness was seen as an expression of this all pervading space of Hearing, because Hearing is the faculty of sustaining the whole multitude of things in oneness. Now, once in this oneness, in this space of oneness, which is known to us as space, there is a vibration, this vibration is the expression of it: Vac, Speech or Sound, which later takes Form in manifestation. Here we have another view: if śrotram is perceptive then vāc is active presentation of this perception. Sri Aurobindo also defines speech as an active representation of this all-pervading hearing-perception. Is it clear? Hearing is like a layout or like a substance within which, when it is vibrating, we perceive the sound.

Next is another pair. So cakṣus, seeing is perceptive. We have two perceptive faculties: seeing and hearing and nothing else. Think about it. So to be perceptive they have to be passive, in order to absorb or to take in. Everything is being calm down when we want to hear, we are shutting down our activities, we are becoming passive and then perceptive. So the active part of Hearing is the Word, and of Seeing is the Thought. And here we are dealing with another concept of thinking, which we are not used to. But if we look at it from the Vedic or Vedantic point of view we will find that the Mind has a particular quality or characteristic: to dwell on the image of things, to hold them, to fix them in consciousness. And the concentration of the power of the mind to hold it in order to give it an expression, Vac, that expression of Vac is compared with Agni, whereas Manas is compared to Soma, and the oblation of Soma into Agni nourishes the flame of Agni, the expression. I cannot go now into the details of this profound psychological imagery, which we study in IPI in our sessions.

Neeltje: I still have a question, a little before. If seeing and hearing were the first expressions of Brahman, they have only the perceptive quality and not other, because it goes out?

Vladimir: They don't have only the perceptive qualities, they have also active qualities. Seeing-Thinking; Hearing-Speaking;

Neeltje: Ah, you take them as one: seeing-thinking, etc.?

Vladimir: They are one. And they are not one, because when you are active, when the process of seeing becomes active, you hold the object or the image of thing in front of your consciousness. How do you hold it, by what power? By the power of the mind! The Power of the mind has this capacity to hold, to fix things within the consciousness and thus to observe and to see them. Now to observe you have to hold, and to hold you have to use the power of thought, thinking. Thinking for us has become something else altogether. In Sankhyaic paradigm it is completely different already, about which we have hardly any idea, what it actually does, and how it does it. It is a process of some kind of logic and so on, if we go to Greeks we will find another view on thinking, which finally resulted in what is known to us as "I think that's why I exist"- is our modern paradigm. But in Upanishads we will find that thinking and speaking are always together, where the speech is an expression of something which is already there, fixed by the mind. So to express something which is there, to express it in speech, and speech is an expression of that holding or dwelling of consciousness on the image of things. – That is Vedic paradigm. We are talking about something which is beyond our rational structure of consciousness.

Neeltje: Sorry, but our human instrument is... our seeing goes through the eyes, afterwards eyes were created, you would say, something like that, and the mind was created, etc. I feel that the first faculty of seeing is the original faculty, from where we have this word 'seer', from which other faculties were created later.

Vladimir: Yes, it is a universal faculty. And they were recognized as the universal faculties. Every creature in the world has all these faculties. Every creature sees, hears, etc. If seeing can be described as a direct evidence of the truth, direct in a sense, as the Russian proverb says: 'better to see once than to hear 100 times'. To see once means that it is there, it is surely there, you have already touched it, as it were, even though it can be a miraculous thing, a mirage, which is not there, an illusion. But in a way seeing was seen in the Vedic tradition as the major faculty of revelation, Drishti. Revelation of the Truth. Sri Aurobindo says in Savitri: 'But who had seen the body of the King?' And that is exactly that, that nobody saw His Body, of the King, of the Lord. Have we seen his body? Who has come to the final revelation or manifestation of the Divine,

which will be only then when we could see him? It is not that we would hear about him as usually do. We hear about him all the time but we don't really see him, we don't come into concrete touch with him in his manifested form.

So if Seeing is a direct evidence of the truth, then śrotram can be defined as indirect. Indirect in a sense that you can hear about it but you don't see it, it is not there yet in its form. So everything which is not there yet manifest, but has an intention to be manifested, has a will, and this will is Vac, it is Vac which brings something which wants to be manifested out of Unmanifest. It is the Will of the Lord.

Matthijs: Vladimir, how is then these Prana and Apana, if we follow this logic?

Vladimir: Here, when Prana and Apana appears, the manifestation comes into being. These four: cakṣus-śrotram, manas and vāc, are considered to be Brahma chatuspād, Brahman on the four legs. It is through these four that the Spirit gets manifested in the world as Prana and Apana. There was a separation between Heaven and Earth. These were seen as heaven and earth, this (manas) is our father, and this (vāc) is our mother, earth. This is meaning (artha) in linguistic terms, and this is speech (vāc) or the sound of speech. The meaning and sound were one at the beginning but then they got separated. By what they got separated? By Prana. And Prana manifested itself in matter as Apana. For those who study with us Upanishads it says a lot, especially regarding the view on Death in the Aitareya Upanishad, where matter was caught by the Spirit, by the means of Death, by the means of Apana. Apana is a breathing out, as bringing spirit into matter. What is annam, matter? In Sanskrit it lit. means 'eatable', it is from root **ad**, to eat, ppp. "Eatable", carrying within the spirit.

Now, this is Brahman in manifestation, as Prana and Apana. Does it make sense? These are the fundamentals and they take time to settle down in our understanding. So if you have questions, you are most welcome, before we proceed, because I want to show how these develop later and especially how they can lead us to the conception of integral learning.

Bhavana: You said that it was a part of the evolving or devolving series in the middle. Can you explain why would we go back for this kind of vision?

Vladimir: It is an interesting question. Why should we at all go back? Can't we simply go forward without looking back? (22.09)

Well there is a good answer to this question. Why should Hegel or Derrida study Aristotle? What is the point? If we are advanced so much why should we at all look back and study Plato and before Plato? What IS our consciousness and how it can be perceived? Why do we need those beginnings? We need them for some reason. And of course there is an answer given by Gebser: we have to integrate all the structures of consciousness, for they all are present within us. We are not only rational beings, we are also mythical, magical and even archaic beings. In

our embryo life we have an archaic consciousness, which is still waiting to be integrated into this final integral stage.

Now if we look back to these developmental changes: shifts of paradigms, we find ourselves understanding our own consciousness deeper. We are adding to our consciousness other structures, we are widening our possibilities, getting a historical depth within our own individual consciousness, as it were. It sounds very reasonable and it is true, it has its own effect which is beyond reason. That is why we are attracted to those beginnings. Why do we need to study Vedas? It is so profound! this archaic structure, this luminous beginning. It gives us all the keys to understand what happened later in the next shift and the next and so on.

You asked me what is the difference between Vedic and Vedantic paradigm, and why we are dealing with the Vedantic and not the Vedic one? I can only say that the Vedic is not reachable for us yet. The Veda is to be still discovered. And in the Vedas we cannot find any such interest in building up any educational system. Veda had different approach to knowledge, as Sri Aurobindo says: 'Veda is not logical. It does not confute anything.' It is not interested to build up a system in which we will educate ourselves. It puts experiences next to each other even though they may contradict in logic terms to each other. So these seemingly contradicting experiences are adding to the perception of a higher consciousness a new dimension in the Vedic epistemology. So every time when they seem to contradict to each other, though they are true in themselves, they are building up or widening understanding of that profound consciousness of Brahman. That was the method of the Veda. We cannot go into it in details without spending much time. But in Vedanta these intuitions of the Veda were put into structure. That intuitive knowledge was deconstructed and put into the language which is more suiting for our understanding. These faculties, for example, were described as devatas, deities. They are not senses yet in Sankhyaic terms, but deities, the universal representatives of Purusha.

Purusha, according to Aitareya, was brought forth by the Atman for the sake of manifestation, who concentrated on him his power of consciousness: Tapas. Purusha was heated up with this energy, his faculties one after another broke forth.

His mouth broke forth and from the mouth Speech and from the Speech - Fire.

His nostrils broke forth and from the nostrils Breath and from the Breath Wind, Vayu, Cosmic Vital Energy.

His eyes broke forth and from his eyes Sight, cakṣus, and from the Sight Sun.

His ears broke forth and from the ears Hearing, śrotram, and from the Hearing Space. Etc. etc.

Now you can see the beauty of this paradigm. It is that all the manifestation came into being because the faculties were already there. The light of the Sun appeared not because of some big bang and then later we developed our sight but because there was a sight, a need to see, that is why the Sun, all the suns, appeared to support this faculty of His Sight, which later will be recreated in the

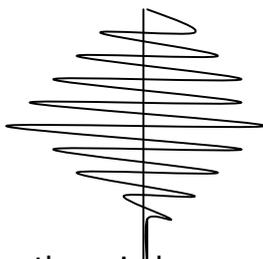
individual frame. Or the Hearing which created Space from which we already can hear, because the Space is the foundation of hearing.

So the Vedantic paradigm puts into another order all the Knowledge which was there in the Veda, and of course the Vedanta refers to the Veda as the highest authority of Knowledge.

What is surprising most is that Vedanta is highly appreciated in the West as philosophical in its nature, whereas the Veda is treated as barbaric.

Arun: When Bhavana raised her question, two images rose in my mind almost instantaneously. When you think of past and present, it is like a time unidirectional arrow. And another imaged has flashed what the Mother has said about Yoga, the point at the bottom and the point at the top and the spiral inbetween. So if you think in the spiral mode and relate with the time as unidirectional, one part of the spiral can be considered as past and present, and yet the direction is explained by the line going from bottom to top in the process of incorporating things of past. It is just the image which I am sharing, not that I am adding anything new.

Vladimir: It is a very interesting image, it is not only the dot on the line which is moving to the goal, but the whole line is Yoga. That is what Arun suggests.



So we can go the spiral way, as Universe is going on. And Yoga is this direct line. This is altogether our consciousness. It is spread and has to be gathered back within our own individual frame. We have to become universal in our perception: individuals with the universal depth of consciousness, then the integral paradigm will be possible.

Thus if we take a closer look on these six faculties we will find that everyone of us have one of them developed, through which we access the reality.

Modern Psychology defines the major three accesses to reality through sight, hearing and touch. Even Sri Aurobindo mentions this. There are only three accesses, and no more. So every individual has a particular access either through hearing and then recreating all other faculties or through the sight first and then recreating hearing and touch or through the touch. In the modern Pedagogy it is a well-known phenomenon that children have these three different entries or ways of learning. And if we have to educate them effectively we have to take into account these differences.

Everyone of us has different perception. I am active more through the word and hearing. Some are accessing reality through seeing, and they will see differently than me etc.

So, what I thought was, if all these would be well developed and balanced within one individual frame of consciousness, then there would be another possibility of perception. It is a strange idea and most probably it is not easily workable, but for building up a structure of education it may work because it is up to the individual will to decide what part is to be developed. My idea was simple at the beginning, for instance, if I am a person who has an access to reality through hearing, then I have to develop the faculty of sight and touch, which includes the faculties of thought and artistic and scientific approaches. So if I am a conscious being I will have to work on these faculties separately, to balance them with my own already well established faculty of hearing. So, instead of continuing to develop myself through hearing I will have to consciously choose to develop my undeveloped parts and balance them within my already emerging integral perception.

How could we then propose it to a person? It is only if he is a self-learner, who wants to educate himself. I believe that a new time is nearing when individual will be engaged in the self-learning process more and more. How can we then help an individual to learn himself? How can we give him a structure where he could find what he needs for his own self development, an easy structure, where he could navigate and find exactly what he needs? How can we build this hierarchy of knowledge which will be easily accessible to him, by which he will understand his own structure of consciousness? Can it be done in such a way that by navigating in the depth of this structure that he could see exactly what his consciousness is built of? And find exactly what he needs to add to his holistic development? Can we at all envision this? Maybe it is a vain idea altogether?

Peter: I remember suddenly the experience I had. It was very strong, where I realized that by perceiving something, an object, trying to formulate, to give it a name, to fix it with the mind, it was evading. And in that sense as you were describing now, I should turn my intention, and should enter it and becoming the thing, which I see and then knowing it much better as the Mother says the true knowledge is only by identity. So that is what is coming to my mind, is not to identify it with my mind, but to enter it and then knowing it from inside.

Vladimir: it is very true, it is the only way how mind can know. What is happening within ourselves when we think 'we think', when we try to dwell on thought and we can't, for it moves away, it escapes, as it were? Our mind is always fluctuating. And this fluctuation within is considered and registered by us as thinking. But what we are trying to do is actually to hold, to concentrate on that we want to know. And once we hold onto it, the knowledge somehow follows. Cit follows the Sat, because the power of the Self of the Mind is able to

dwell on the image of things, to hold it within the consciousness and the consciousness is automatically bringing the light of knowledge, as it were. So this is how the process of thinking happens. But since it is fluctuating all the time, like a butterfly flying from flower to flower, and we cannot really hold it, for we don't have a power of concentration, we consider it to be the process of thinking.

Vivekananda said if he would know that the only subject he had to learn was a concentration of the mind he would not waste all his time learning other subjects. And that is quite an unusual statement, very strong, but it really says what I want to point out about the mind. The concentration of the mind is the only way how we can come to the expression of knowledge in ourselves. And that is what our Psychology is to discover about.

Larry: 38.21

I have a kind of general comment how this might apply to education. I can kind of see this as useful in providing kind of an integral framework we should develop these different faculties. I find it kind of antique view of existence and maybe as the basis of an education, it is OK, this view can be useful, but primarily from the point of view of "OK we should develop these different faculties look at education in a more integral way." From that point of view I think this is good, I don't know whether everybody has to understand the deeper significance of all these concepts, in order to participate in the University. I don't know whether it is really possible.

Vladimir: I did not say it, but, yes, I really mean it. Yes. And I mean it in a sense like..., if this understanding is possible of how these faculties coexist in one individual frame then this IS education. It is the only education we could have, as I see it. If we could only clearly see the difference between them within our perception and action and how they are related in building up all the different approaches reflected in the subjects of the Humanities, we would see them represented everywhere. Tracing them back subjectively within one's own action would help us to really understand how consciousness works, and not only within ourselves, but in others and even in the community. We could communicate easier.

Larry: I think it is valuable, but there are many things that are valuable. So we could look at existence in many different ways, you know, and all these different ways could be valuable. So I think that is true, I mean, I think in terms of what people have said about integral education there are many different ideas and concepts that go outside this kind of formula that are also very useful that we can bring in. And we can bring ideas from different fields that may be ...

Vladimir: Yes, I did not say that we should not bring other ideas, I was presented only one view on integral knowledge which was used in the past, which may help us to understand where we have to go and what we have to do. But I don't say that this is the answer or the final answer, and there is no other system. There are other systems of knowledge which are also valuable, and we can and should study them in same way in depth and see how they can help us in understanding ourselves.

Neeltje: I thought may you can clarify that there so many different levels of knowledge. So we have the level of knowledge just in school where you want to develop brain or the mind etc. And when we talk about integral knowledge in its highest sense we are going to the world which is not normally reachable, you have to go to a consciousness beyond the mind. And yet the mind is what at the end gives expression. I feel it is very important to realize that. I felt while we were talking we went from one level to another and back, which makes it less clear what we are actually talking about. Normally in the University we are going to the ordinary content and ordinary reasoning etc. with our brain. Now to go to these other levels requires the decision and some people may like to do it and others may not.

Vladimir: But I have only started and did not go anywhere yet.

Dhanya: I actually enjoyed what you have put up there, some of it with a depth, I appreciate it and the expression of this. And for me this is an ideal where you look at evolution of learning, the evolution of consciousness or the evolution of the faculties of perception. And we could look at it from the historical perspective what happened in the Vedic times, what happened in other cultures, what is happening still today in the tribal cultures, that have supposedly not evolved into that separation of faculties, how are they learning?, how does it impact their inner being, maybe they have an access to the inner being because the separation is not yet so thick. There is a lot of that, there is an educational psychology, there is developmental psychology, all those fields feed into one another, I would say. But you could bring it in a general course that looks specifically of how perception of learning develops in different times in different cultures, and where all that comes together at present.

Matthijs (45): you brought in somewhere, causally, that education maybe moving more and more towards internet, kind of distance learning, and I think we have to create here just the opposite. I don't know but for me the high light of such meetings or of our discussion in IPI or meetings I have with students is that when you are sitting together very often you can suddenly feel kind of consciousness, almost the stuff that exists between you, and you can feel when it goes higher or deeper. And you can feel that your voice was floating on another level of communication, that is not an exchange of our ordinary thoughts

and idea. And I am not sure how far that exchange is possible through the net with that kind of depth, you can talk to someone through the phone or skype and see the other person and have kind of an exchange of consciousness. But definitely something else happening when you meet physically. And I don't know how this relates to the long term development. We normally use language in a very cheap way, as intellectual renderings of the abstract ideas, and we live totally in the abstraction when we talk about thought we don't know what it means maybe it is just a processing in brain or something else, it is very abstract. But for these Vedic people thoughts were people or gods rather. They did not think but they invited gods, they called from their aspiration, agni, person, fire, something concrete in front of them, to invite Indra, the god, to bring the illumined mind in their being and then increase it. It was very tangible, it was tactile almost, but in a certain way concrete, like from that moment to the Sankhya... Now people spend all their life in front of the computer and have all their social life over the internet and god knows what, so somehow we have become more and more abstract. And I wonder whether that is a good development or it is something that it has gone over the edge, and now we have to go back and just being together and then use language just to denote something which is beyond language. Something strange has happened for this people language was a power creating something concrete, you talked about fire there was the fire, and for us it is something floating and kind of cheap and we live more and more in that junk reality; which makes it much more flexible and more open to change and fluid, but also in a way we loose the touch with what IS. I have no idea whether it is good or bad but it is a very big change that it is taking place, we became mental beings, bodiless, because we are everywhere at the same time.

Kirti: Just to go back to the distance learning thing. I have a story about a state school conference in Colorado. One of the political guys was saying that one of these days all the schools will have TVs and that they will be able to learn from the TV, and there will be a teacher on screen. And I raised my hand and I said that is not going to work, not at the level that I teach, I teach very young children, and the physical contact and what I bring to them and their relationship to me, will not happen no matter how many TVs you have, and everybody knows who has kind that physical contact creates so much emotional stability etc., how is TV going to replace that? I said: 'My job will no be soon replaced by a television. No matter what.'

Matthijs: And it is not only for kids, I mean, the people in their fourties and fifties in IPI are in need of a contact, because something else happens. That is not just those words with the abstract meanings and pictures and all that kind of stuff. So how that would come out, because it is the essence of what we want. So how we can make that more concrete?

Vladimir: I agree with everything what you just said. There are two movements which have to be simultaneously there. One is that we have to meet regularly in order to tune ourselves, and to allow this other (higher) consciousness, which otherwise maybe cannot manifest, to vibrate through our 'being together'. I am speaking about higher education where there is already a choice, where man becomes conscious to choose. I am not speaking about children.

Matthijs: Forget about children, I am speaking how to teach psychology to the adults?

Vladimir: But you are right this separation on children and adults is absolutely unnecessary for the same scheme should be for both, for all have to develop their sight, hearing, word, mind on all the levels. And if we deal with these faculties directly it can be much more efficient, I think, if there would be a class on Hearing, for instance, or the class on the Word, how to use the word, how to speak; by the way, we were never taught how to speak neither in the school nor in the University, everybody is so handicap in this matter. All of these faculties have to be educated starting from the embryo level, even there hearing and seeing are important because the child already could hear what the mother speaks and how she does it. Such a view on our education is fundamental because it involves the whole being. It is not an abstract thinking. It is here now. I am hearing now and I am speaking now, I am thinking now, I am seeing now, I am breathing now, and I am in the body NOW. Six of them are now simultaneously present. Spirit is here now, looking out through all these faculties and wondering about this manifestation. It is not an abstract thinking, it is not a building up a system of a kind of "let us try to understand what that concept means", it has nothing to do with that. This is our basic ground.

When we had this beautiful presentation of Aurelio, we all could benefit from it because it was in itself a basic thing, where we could become something true. We are so much already in the air. But regarding 'growing together' (referring to the comment of Matthijs) it is wonderful, and I think it is valid and it will be like this, especially here in the University of Human Unity, but it does not exclude that there will be a self-education, work on oneself. That the person will be able to become conscious enough to choose and find his own direction, and that is something I am looking for. The website can give you a layout, in a sense that you can find information, methods, people etc., which are necessary for you own development and interests; and of course it is for conscious people only. I don't know how many of them are there now in this world, maybe five percent or maybe one, but it is for them. It is not for everybody. Everybody has something else to do. But this will grow and when man will become conscious enough to find his way and to build up his own consciousness, then he will find these interactions interesting, otherwise these interactions will be of no use. We know it. (54.25)

We already saw it many times when people came together with no reason and wanted to look into something which was unsubstantial, it went nowhere, it went into bla-bla-bla and a waste of time. We experienced it many times in Auroville and know already how it does not work. Therefore there have to be both: self-educational process, where man is consciously choosing where to go and how to educate himself, with the help of a holistic overview where he can really find a proper hierarchical structure from the basics of his faculties to their extensions and applications in all the subjects of the Humanities and at the same time there has to be a process of tuning, 'growing together', exchanging.

I thought even about such an institution when I came first to India in 1991; then I went straight to Luigi with my project of Sri Aurobindo Oriental Research Institute, and put this layout in front of him. I said we have to have six departments, which will be built in such a way that they will be all close to each other, but in the center there will be a platform, where all the departments of Psychology, Philosophy, Linguistics, Sociology, Art and Science will meet and make their presentations, with a tribune in the center. And all of the scholars representing a particular approach to knowledge will sit there and listen to each other discoveries. Why? Because they need to share their knowledge and thus to grow; that was an idealistic view I had once, but it is still within me, it wants to express itself and that led me through my studies all these years.

Grace: I want to address this whole issue about internet of what Matthijs said because, as Vladimir mentioned, I have been working on this website almost a year, I have the same reservation about learning on the internet, and communicating on the internet, and the reason I have started building it had nothing to do with what I thought. On the mental level it would be a good idea but more the inspiration and intuition came to me to create a platform to connect all the integral yogins all around the world. Personally I don't like blogging, forums and spending time in this types of communication formats, I do use e-mails, because I can easily connect with my family and friends around the world, and I use also internet to search for information. In that way I really enjoy the internet. So, as I started building this platform, from the beginning and even still today, I am asking myself still the same question, how could be build some kind of format on line where you are trying to connect people at distance, and create some kind of community, and some kind of energy and some kind of consciousness like what we create in this room, because I value the force and energy in this room when we meet. And it is not easy to manifest that when you sit down in front of the computer. But I have been really surprised what I have really found this last year, and all the time I have been on line, and that is, I have been working with a particular community on line, in open source community, who has build and is continuing to build this program called Drupal, is a content management system, which I am using to create this platform for interaction. And I have found myself sometime sitting in front of the computer

with tears of joy because of the strong community and the energy that is formed within this group of people all around the world, thousands of them who do not know each other, who have come together, because they have a similar goal and purpose, and even if it may not be spiritual, they work together in such a way that is so incredibly organized, hmm, for me it is such a beautiful example how community could function, without, there is no boss, the man who developed it was very young when he started it, he developed this program when he was in college, as the way to connect to the people outside the campus. And it grew from there. You can see from the interactions on line there is no hierarchy whatsoever. Everyone is equal, everyone's contribution is appreciated, and I had seen an interview with this man, speaking about his project, and he was so completely down to earth and so humble that ..., it is a huge program he has built one of the five top programs of content management, used by big corporations, and he had absolutely no ego around him and when he was asked where he saw his program heading, he said that he actually does not know and even does not care about it and that the only thing that matters for him is the community, the community is the most important thing, and that is what keeps him going; you know, all this people who spend their free time, nobody is being paid to create this program. You know, recently he with his wife had a baby, and they posted photos of baby on line with the donation box on the side, because of all this hard work done for free, and I really almost started crying when I saw this because the energy around it was so strong that I felt this was my family. And this baby somehow, I did not know this man, ... I think its.. It is somehow initially difficult to see how that type of energy can be created by people you don't know and people you can't see. I think that can happen. And the other thing I want to say quickly here, I noticed that when people have a place to share their deepest feelings they can do it, and I have seen it happening on line. Though I am not a blogger and I said I will not have blogging on my site, but I will, because people are using it as a tool for their expression. Also over e-mail I have become closer with some of my family, which otherwise was kind of difficult.

Rudy: I can feel that through internet or through the program you are developing we might can create and expand this kind of family, Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's family all over the world and link to our University.

When I studied the problem was how to get information and where, one had to spend a lot of time for libraries, but today you can find anything on the internet and know anything now. Our problem now is not so much to get information but today the problem is how you can integrate all this stuff, where you can put all this stuff together. One of the main intuitions was that here, Auroville can be a place of this integration. And this UHU can serve from various levels and from various perspectives as a place, as a sacred space of all these things that we vaguely know, it is not so much that we need or lack information it is about how to live up to something. And coming back to your words, Vladimir, is it linked to

finding out something, for instance, I am a Vac-type, and this way of learning is natural for me, but I am not so much in this Chakshus, or in Art or plastic, so I would find this place as a wonderful opportunity for integral development of myself. So I would choose to learn something I don't have to become integral.

Vladimir:

I think this was the purpose of Auroville: to develop and to have this infrastructure, where one could consciously develop oneself through activities. We need to develop faculties not only through abstract thinking and understanding how they work, we have to develop them also through skills, whatever they may be: pottery, carpentry, masonry, etc. We cannot develop our consciousness fully if we are not developed in other fields of life. We will always be deficient in some way or another. It is quite interesting because, as you know, neophytes were initiated into higher knowledge in this particular way: for many years they were learning skills, all kinds of skills, they had to be masters in carpentry, masonry, and architecture, in poetry and so on, it was like our secondary education program, and once they were ready, they were introduced to the higher knowledge of Mysterium of the Universe, the University level. But before their consciousness was ready and all the faculties were settled, as it were, and were discriminated and learnt through the skills and arts and the Humanities, this higher learning was not given, for it did not have much choice to be successful. In that sense to become fully integral, and Auroville can become such a platform, where we can consciously find what we need for our development; and Auroville should support us, which means that workshops in Auroville will have to have Masters, who could support our development, and the units will not be working only for the production, but they will be also open for the educational purpose. If we could integrate the productive units into educational thinking and make them partially educational, it will serve a good deal for our scheme. Auroville can then be integrated into a University project, with all its activities. Then it will be interesting to live here. It will be nor more a burden, nor more a survival, but acting because we are moved by our own interest to grow, and because we are actively engaged in different activities. All the products we produce on the way of educating ourselves will be simply belonging to the community. What can be better?

Neeltje: There is a lot of emphasis on widening the consciousness. Widening the faculties, which is very important, but I would like to bring again this forward that heightening the consciousness is as much the part of integrality, even it is the essence of integrality, according to me. And when I hear about being together then we are more focused on this heightening of the consciousness, finding new roads of being. And this has to be a part of the University as well.

Vladimir: sure, both.

Ingo 1.10: I feel as universities as we have done now, are still too much on the elite level. The university we are trying to create here in Auroville should be including all the people living here and the possibility of the low level access for those who want to come in and join the University. I think we can also win from that, because there it is a lot of knowledge on what we call lower levels which can be very helpful to us. And feel that in the Western society this type of communication between the higher and lower levels of hierarchy has never played the good role. It was always excluding or devaluing things for lower social classes. For me it is important that in this University of Auroville everybody who is around us and part of our community should have some profit or some advantage from our University. I feel very much that we should direct our mind to that. I am trying also to develop that in my own surrounding, and it is a very difficult task and it has never been done, in the present time, maybe in the ancient times it was there, but in our society we have never developed this part and I feel that we should go that way.

Vladimir: Actually the whole idea was to bring higher consciousness into the matter, and not the matter into the general studies as it is done now, by pretext that there is something there, for there is always something there, it takes such a long time and deviates from our heightening, as you mentioned. This heightening is essential. This height is to be brought down and it is important to learn about the tools or means to do it, for how can it be brought down, by what means? We have all the means with us, they are our faculties, they have to be educated and the light of that height has to enter them and to touch the surface. It has to come to the minute things, for instance, into the carpenters work, into the mason's work, into everything we do and are. Then it will become full of light. But there is no other way to bring this consciousness only through the faculties. How else? Through what? Do we have other means to bring it down?

Dhanya: You spoke from your angle what may be a foundation for the UHU. But since there were three of you who brainstorm for the whole year, I would love to hear from Rod and from Rudy, a bit how they have looked at that, that question and that aspiration also. It is through the year that you have been looking at one another and the process not only through the content, and to some extent you got a sense of the field, and you got something deep in this process and I would love to hear about that too. I would like to hear about it in the second part of it.

Kirti: Regarding Internet and connecting integral yogins, if it is only going to be people connected with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother then we are leaving out 99% of people, so where is HU? Is it going to be exclusively for devotees? This University has to present itself with a face which does not have to mention where our roots are. This is what I did when I was teaching in the school in America, on my way to work, I would be calling the Mother just the way I did in the Ashram School, this was my way to prepare, and I was there I was hoping

that I was radiating something of her energy. But I never mentioned it for anybody, I never spoke about where my roots were. Except when I found someone receptive and open then I would say by the way this is where I got my ideals. And in the school I did plays based on the stories of the Mother, and people asked – where did you get this from?, and I would say 'O I read it somewhere.' Of course it is a huge question and it will be debated at some point.

Vladimir: We were thinking not to hide behind..., of course one should not speak 'the sacred name' in vain, as it were, 'to hostile time', but what we were thinking is to deconstruct with the help of Sri Aurobindo's light all the branches of knowledge: Psychology, Philosophy, etc. To deconstruct it and to bring it to light that it will become visible and understood. It has to be demystified. This huge knowledge presents itself as if it is really there, but in reality there is indeed very little of it, nearly nothing. So, all those bits of knowledge which are truly there should be put into a right perspective. In that sense we speak of deconstruction, we want to bring a deeper understanding to our consciousness, and not to use it for the sake of building up another institution. We are looking for understanding. These subjects are the tools of understanding and the tools have to be deconstructed, have to be recreated, or created anew, in a new time, but we can use for this purpose every paradigm available to us: Vedic, Vedantic, Classical, Greek, every knowledge.

Dhanya: do you mean also deconstruct the Yoga?

Vladimir: In a way yes, we should.

Rudy: anyhow we are free people here, so we can deconstruct anything to the extent to live better. I mean, it is very funny, but it is what I feel, that is why we are together.

Vladimir: our work will not become valuable if we approach it religiously, as Kirti rightly said, will have only one percent of people, if at all. But if we start working with science, and different direction and branches of knowledge, such as Psychology, Philosophy, etc., studying and developing it, bringing it into the light of a higher understanding, then our work will become valuable for the whole world, and the world will learn about Sri Aurobindo, for sure, for they will recognize his light. I don't think, it's about building a Name and under the name to have nothing, to devote oneself and that's it. It is not enough anymore and we already know it.

So we shall have a tea break now.

