

Reason and Responsibility in Yoga

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Isn't it a wonderful thing, or at least extremely interesting, that we 'mental beings' can conceive of Universals? Life and death, growth and decay, time and space, proportionality, mutuality, similarity, difference, finitude, infinity. And yet none of these aspects of things can be grasped concretely, as such. They are concepts of the mind, abstractions, ideas, derived from experience by reasoning, from our observations and interactions with things, patterns, processes, quite spontaneously. The thrust of the energy of Life, survival, reproduction, growth, enjoyment, progress ARE THINGS WE KNOW. These are the inherent principles of the physical, vital, mental world in which we exist, which WE ARE, and yet it is only by reasoning that we understand them. By reasoning we can determine the extent to which, for example, competition is embedded in mutuality, or virtue in vice, death in life. By the faculty of reason we can harness the energies of life and mind, and apply them towards realizing their potentials. As the philosopher of Enlightenment said, "nihil sine ratione est". Nothing is without reason. But this implies more than a mental process that we enact by gathering impressions, making inferences, drawing conclusions about the causes and purposes of things, and applying our will to controlling the means and ends of existence. Reason is not just in our mind; it is what makes everything be and become what it is. It is the principle of principles. As Aristotle put it, "Nature does everything for a purpose". Reason is inherent in things. This is the real meaning of reason, which we try to reproduce when we think; we try to find the reason in things. When we are successful then we have understanding. For example, take a relevant issue in international relations: isn't the presence of competition in mutuality there in the things, in trade relations between countries; and isn't the similarity between "barbaros" in Greek social thinking and "immigrant invaders" in contemporary propaganda a real similarity, yet different, something there in things, as well as in some people's minds, however they may distort the thing itself? These qualities of existence which we said earlier were something derived from our experience of patterns turn out to be actually there in the patterns we experience. And *therefore* we can apply such knowledge to the manipulation of things, the organization of causes and effects, and the achievement of goals, BECAUSE REASON IS AN INNATE PRINCIPLE OF BEING, and not just a faculty of knowledge. But of course we aren't always successful in finding it. Sometimes the 'differences' are greater than our ability to understand and control them; there are gaps, THERE ARE DISPARITIES, and life gets away from us. Sri Aurobindo states the problem like this:

"... because of its own inherent limitations, (the reason) is unable to deal with life in its complexity or in its integral movements; it is compelled to break it up into parts, to make more or less artificial classifications, to build systems with limited data which are contradicted, upset or have to be continually modified by other data, to work out a selection of regulated potentialities which is broken down by the bursting of a new wave of yet unregulated potentialities. It would almost appear even that there are two worlds, the world of ideas proper to the intellect and the world of life which escapes from the full control of the reason, and that to bridge adequately the gulf between these two domains is beyond the power and province of the reason and the intelligent will. It would seem that these can only create either a series of more or less empirical compromises or else a series of arbitrary and practically inapplicable or only partially applicable systems. The reason of man struggling with life becomes either an empiric or a doctrinaire" (THC, 101).

But here he is considering "reason" as a faculty and not as a principle in things. And there are so many descriptions of the limitations of reason as a faculty in *The Human Cycle* by Sri Aurobindo (c. 1920), that it might almost be titled 'a critique of reason'. So, has our rationalistic pride been deflated? But there is more: it seems that the principle of Reason, which has been described by philosophers everywhere as the right order of things, the inherent meaning of things, the *logos*, is itself inadequate to create in life its ideals of order, right, justice, and the good. The principle of Reason which has been

thought to govern existence, as well as thinking, since philosophy began in Greek thought, is itself only a derivation from a higher principle. The Reason in things turns out not to be the origin and end of things, in addition to not being an adequate faculty of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo's comment that ends the chapter titled *The Reason as Governor of Life*, for example, suggests that there is an Other-than-Reason:

“... at the very basis of all our life and existence, internal and external, there is something on which the intellect can never lay a controlling hold, the Absolute, the Infinite. Behind everything in life there is an Absolute, which that thing is seeking after in its own way; everything finite is striving to express an infinite which it feels to be its real truth. ... Thus there is not only an Absolute, an Infinite in itself which governs its own expression in many forms and tendencies, but there is also a principle of infinite potentiality and variation quite baffling to the reasoning intelligence; for the reason deals successfully only with the settled and the finite” (103).

It could be that there is a reason why things do not always conform to Reason, either in themselves or in our understanding of them. Perhaps this is what the philosopher Kant was getting at when he decided that the rational mind only knows things in terms of its own categories of understanding, which may not be getting at the real truth of things themselves. This evidently is the thrust of Sri Aurobindo's view in *The Human Cycle*. For another example, he writes:

“The intellectual reason is not man's only means of knowledge. All action, all perception, all aesthesis and sensation, all impulse and will, all imagination and creation imply a universal, many-sided force of knowledge at work and each form or power of this knowledge has its own distinct nature and law, its own principle of order and arrangement, its logic proper to itself, and need not follow, still less be identical with the law of nature, order and arrangement which the intellectual reason would assign to it or itself follow if it had control of all these movements (103).

The human mind is beginning to perceive that it has left the heart of almost every problem untouched and illumined only outsides and a certain range of processes. There has been a great and ordered classification and mechanisation, a great discovery and practical result of increasing knowledge, but only on the physical surface of things. Vast abysses of Truth lie below in which are concealed the real springs, the mysterious powers and secretly decisive influences of existence. It is a question whether the intellectual reason will ever be able to give us an adequate account of these deeper and greater things...(109).

The solution lies not in the reason, but in the soul of man, in its spiritual tendencies. It is a spiritual, an inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. It is a spiritual, a greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature of man and impose harmony on its self-seekings, antagonisms and discords. ...This is a solution to which it may be objected that it puts off the consummation of a better human society to a far-off date in the future evolution of the race. For it means that no machinery invented by the reason can perfect either the individual or the collective man; an inner change is needed in human nature, a change too difficult to be ever effected except by the few. This is not certain; but in any case, if this is not the solution, then there is no solution, if this is not the way, then there is no way for the human kind” (220).

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There is an Infinite, a principle of Self-existence, a Being which is already complete at every moment, from which the forms and forces of nature are produced. This is one of those universal concepts, principles, or ideas that the intellectual reason can frame but cannot easily grasp. Let's consider for a moment this Infinity, or this Infinite, which seems to belong to that other Reason, beyond reason. Perhaps we might begin by imagining the apparently infinite variety of life forms in nature, or the incomparable vastness of the physical universe. We are continually amazed by the creativity of the human mind. But these things are beyond our ability to quantify or even to qualify in any adequate way. Yet somehow we know that these limitless diversities, similarities and differences, these enormous and infinitesimal magnitudes actually exist, beyond our ability to measure or quantify them. And we designate their vastnesses with this simple word, adjective or noun: The Infinite. Infinity. Life

is infinite. Space is infinite. The number of molecules in the universe is infinite. Creativity is infinite. Everything is what it is and what it has to become in relation to everything else, according to Reason, embodying its purpose and meaning, wonderful in That Vastness, which is also itself something – a something of infinite beauty and power and diversity, which is at the same time none of the finite things and powers that populate it. As the postmodern thinker Deleuze says in *What is Philosophy* (1991), “Philosophy posits as prephilosophical, or even as nonphilosophical, the power of a One-All like a moving desert that concepts come to populate. ...The problem of philosophy is to acquire a consistency without losing the infinite into which thought plunges (in this respect chaos has as much a mental as a physical existence)” (p. 42). And which aspect of this Infinite is more amazing, or more true – that it IS all of this infinite diversity, or that it is not at all any finite thing but rather its opposite, an Absolute, of which all that exists is only a transitory image? In either case, let us note, it is a negation of the world of particulars. This is negative reasoning, in both the Hegelian and Buddhist sense. Either everything is a relative formation of some universal, such as Freedom, for example, and no individual or state can ever actually achieve it; or it is already Absolute Freedom, and everything is only its relative expression, however free or unfree anything may appear.

In the philosophy of religion, That Other Reason – the Infinite, the Absolute – may be seen as an infinite Emptiness, Nihil, or an infinite fullness, Pleroma. So, with the help of Sri Aurobindo, and using our powers of reason, with which we formulate all of this, we may have begun to conceive of an infinite and eternal which is **in** all this and yet stands **behind or beyond** all this, - Tad Brahman - as the Upanishad says, “That is all this, and That also is outside all this”. The Reason beyond reason. And this way of thinking is not new. As well as being the subject of the Upanishads, Leibnitz and Spinoza, before Hegel, were especially known for this way of thinking in the 17th century, which is why Sri Aurobindo is sometimes labeled an Enlightenment thinker. Spinoza, to make a specific reference, may be recognized for his description in the *Ethics* (1677) of three types of thought, which closely parallel Sri Aurobindo's mental levels – infrarational/ rational/ suprarational, which Spinoza defines as – 1) that which is confused and influenced by passions, 2) that which is clear and distinct, and 3) that which knows everything to be necessary in the mind of God as the cause. Let me quote Spinoza, with due respect and at some length, from Part V of his treatise:

PROP. XXVIII. The endeavour or desire to know things by the third kind of knowledge cannot arise from the first, but from the second kind of knowledge. Proof.— This proposition is self— evident. For whatsoever we understand clearly and distinctly, we understand either through itself, or through that which is conceived through itself; that is, ideas which are clear and distinct in us, or which are referred to the third kind of knowledge cannot follow from ideas that are fragmentary and confused, referred to as knowledge of the first kind, but must follow from adequate ideas, or ideas of the second and third kind of knowledge; therefore the desire of knowing things by the third kind of knowledge cannot arise from the first, but from the second kind. PROP. XXIX. Whatsoever the mind understands under the form of eternity, it does not understand by virtue of conceiving the present actual existence of the body, but by virtue of conceiving the essence of the body under the form of eternity. Proof.— In so far as the mind conceives the present existence of its body, it to that extent conceives duration which can be determined by time, and to that extent only has it the power of conceiving things in relation to time. But eternity cannot be explained in terms of duration. Therefore to this extent the mind has not the power of conceiving things under that power, because it is of the nature of reason to conceive things under the form of eternity, and also because it is of the nature of the mind to conceive the essence of the body under the form of eternity, for besides these two there is nothing which belongs to the essence of mind. Therefore this power of conceiving things under the form of eternity only belongs to the mind in virtue of the mind's conceiving the essence of the body under the form of eternity. Note.— Things are conceived by us as actual in two ways; either as existing in relation to a given time and place, or as contained in God and following from the necessity of the divine nature. Whatsoever we conceive in this second way as true or real, we conceive under the form of eternity, and their ideas involve the eternal and infinite essence of God. PROP. XXX. Our mind, in so far as it knows itself and the body under the form of eternity, has to that extent necessarily a knowledge of God,

and knows that it is in God, and is conceived through God. Proof.— Eternity is the very essence of God, in so far as this involves necessary existence.

And the conclusion he reaches through his power of reasoning is this:

PROP. XXXII. Whatsoever we understand by the third kind of knowledge, we take delight in, and our delight is accompanied by the idea of God as cause. Proof.— From this kind of knowledge arises the highest possible mental acquiescence, that is, pleasure, and this acquiescence is accompanied by the idea of the mind itself, and consequently the idea also of God as cause. Corollary.— From the third kind of knowledge necessarily arises the intellectual love of God. From this kind of knowledge arises pleasure accompanied by the idea of God as cause, that is, the love of God; not in so far as we imagine him as present, but in so far as we understand him to be eternal; this is what I call the intellectual love of God. (*Spinoza, Baruch. Ethics (Complete Edition) (Kindle Locations 3502-3508). Musaicum Books. Kindle Edition.*)

In spite of our reason's limitations, we can hardly doubt that the infinity of Life, or the infinity of the One-All actually exists. It is not just an impression or notion of thought. The Infinite exists on several planes simultaneously – it exists physically in material structures, vitally in dynamic processes, mentally in feelings, thoughts, relative values, plans, actions, and cosmically in the principles and powers of existence. It is Life itself, and it entails numberless finite forms and processes of itself, including death. It is Mind itself, and not merely its concepts. It is the Everlasting's changing shapes, as Sri Aurobindo says. Life is a living infinite, beyond every form of manifestation and yet embodied in each and every living and dying thing, by the power of its enactment, as some phenomenologists would say. It is Mind itself in every infinitesimal iota of difference that gives meaning and identity to things.

Now if we add all that up, and multiply it by the molecules of matter that it contains, and by the energy that drives it, and by the mental attributes that it embodies – qualities, proportions, relationships, values, degrees of goodness and evil, all its reasons and purposes, then might we not say that we are approaching the concept of the Infinite itself! That is, the whole of existence, in and beyond time and space, life and death, good and evil – and mightn't this great immeasurable whole be termed “the Infinite”? We have found a meaning for the word. And mightn't such a vast and incomparable totality also be called the Divine, or the One, the Incommensurable, *Satyam-Ritam-Brhat*, which includes and yet exceeds every finite expression. If we should have the good fortune to grasp this wholeness in a somewhat concrete way, as an experience of consciousness, by Intuition rather than reason, we might be literally overwhelmed by it, while also 'knowing' it as something quite Other. We would presumably also necessarily be in an elevated state, in relation to our ordinary way of perceiving things. This seems to me to be what Sri Aurobindo is conveying in this vivid passage from *Savitri*, Bk 2, Cn 1 (1951/1996):

ALONE he moved watched by the infinity around him and the Unknowable above. All could be seen that shuns the mortal eye, All could be known the mind has never grasped; All could be done no mortal will can dare.

A limitless movement filled a limitless peace. In a profound existence beyond earth's, parent or kin to our ideas and dreams, where Space is a vast experiment of the soul, in an immaterial substance linked to ours ,

In a deep oneness of all things that are, the universe of the Unknown arose. A self-creation without end or pause revealed the grandeurs of the Infinite: It flung into the hazards of its play a million moods, a myriad energies, The world-shapes that are fancies of its Truth and the formulas of the freedom of its Force.

And it is such an experience that Satyavan testifies to when he encounters this magical embodiment of the New Consciousness named Savitri in the forest, though in a more 'down-to-earth' context:

Once were my days like days of other men:
To think and act was all, to enjoy and breathe;
This was the width and height of mortal hope:
Yet there came glimpses of a deeper self
That lives behind Life and makes her act its scene.
A truth was felt that screened its shape from mind,
A Greatness working towards a hidden end,
And vaguely through the forms of earth there looked
Something that life is not and yet must be. ...
I lived in the ray but faced not to the sun.
I looked upon the world and missed the Self,
And when I found the Self, I lost the world,
My other selves I lost and the body of God,
The link of the finite with the Infinite,
The bridge between the appearance and the Truth,
The mystic aim for which the world was made,
The human sense of Immortality.
But now the gold link comes to me with thy feet
And His gold sun has shone on me from thy face. (*Savitri*, 407-408)

These are examples, or a kind of demonstration, of how we, perhaps, can use our faculty of reason to rise above our sense mind, first by reasoning beyond particulars to Universals, - experiencing and knowing things as the Universals of which they are a manifestation - and then by rising beyond reason to a direct experience of the Infinite, and perhaps even into a kind of Universal Truth-Consciousness, a consciousness of the transcendent One in All and the All in One. And of course the teaching of Sri Aurobindo is that this is exactly what we must do. It is the aim of Yoga. And in response to the effort, the power of that larger vision, which is also a FORCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, descends and begins to transform the reasoning mind into a seeing mind, or what he calls the higher Intuition. It then becomes another way of Knowing and Being That, necessary precisely because the Reason itself is incapable of realizing the Ideals that it conceives and must become. Its greatest value is in its ability to tell us that we *need* to do this. When it has this Intuition, it can help us turn away from the inadequacies of the sense mind and from the intellectual reason towards the Divine Mind. Spinoza also said this. Hegel said this. Every Buddhist teacher in the world says this. And Sri Aurobindo prescribes a practice for achieving it. He says that we start with the Idea. And then we elevate our thinking above the sense mind and the rational mind by an act of will. By a persistent rejection of those lower principles, purifying the vital desires and attachments, silencing the mind, *citta vritti nirodha*, and aspiring upward, we connect with the higher principle. In response to that movement the higher force of consciousness begins to descend. We are energized and liberated by it, into a greater intensity

of being. As Sri Aurobindo describes the change in *Savitri*:

Strange energies wrought and screened tremendous hands
Unwound the triple cord of mind and freed
The heavenly wideness of a Godhead's gaze.
As through a dress the wearer's shape is seen,
There reached through forms to the hidden absolute
A cosmic feeling and transcendent sight.
Increased and heightened were the instruments.
Illusion lost her aggrandising lens;
As from her failing hand the measures fell,
Atomic looked the things that loomed so large.
The little ego's ring could join no more;
In the enormous spaces of the self
The body now seemed only a wandering shell,
His mind the many-frescoed outer court
Of an imperishable Inhabitant:
His spirit breathed a superhuman air.

In the *Synthesis of Yoga*, he describes the process this way, along with some of the difficulties and potentials it entails:

“In order to strengthen the higher knowledge-faculty in us we have to effect the same separation between the intuitive and intellectual elements of our thought as we have already effected between the understanding and the sense-mind; and this is no easy task, for not only do our intuitions come to us incrusting in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty. The remedy is to train first the intellect to recognise the true intuition, to distinguish it from the false and then to accustom it, when it arrives at an intellectual perception or conclusion, to attach no final value to it, but rather look upward, refer all to the divine principle and wait in as complete a silence as it can command for the light from above. ... But for the knowledge of the Self it is necessary to have the power of a complete intellectual passivity, the power of dismissing all thought, the power of the mind to think not at all which the Gita in one passage enjoins. This is a hard saying for the occidental mind to which thought is the highest thing and which will be apt to mistake the power of the mind not to think, its complete silence for the incapacity of thought. But this power of silence is a capacity and not an incapacity, a power and not a weakness. It is a profound and pregnant stillness. Only when the mind is thus entirely still, like clear, motionless and level water, in a perfect purity and peace of the whole being and the soul transcends thought, can the Self which exceeds and originates all activities and becomings, the Silence from which all words are born, the Absolute of which all relativities are partial reflections manifest itself in the pure essence of our being” (316). ...

“Truth proceeds by a correction of the values our mind and senses give us, and first by the action of a higher intelligence that enlightens and sets right as far as may be the conclusions of the ignorant sense-mind and limited physical intelligence; that is the method of all human knowledge and science. But beyond it there is a knowledge, a Truth-consciousness, that exceeds our intellect and brings us into the true light of which it is a refracted ray. There the abstract terms of the pure reason and the constructions of the mind disappear or are converted into concrete soul-vision and the tremendous actuality of spiritual experience. ... we find that the ignorance of the mind and the senses and all the apparent futilities of human life were not a useless excursion of the conscious being, an otiose blunder. Here they were planned as a rough ground for the self-expression of the Soul that comes from the Infinite, a material foundation for its self-unfolding and self-possessing in the terms of

the universe. *It is true that in themselves they and all that is here have no significance and to build separate significances for them is to live in an illusion, Maya; but they have a supreme significance in the Supreme, an absolute Power in the Absolute and it is that that assigns to them and refers to that Truth their present relative values*" (294).

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Now, it is in this larger, more holistic way, that I would like for us to consider the idea of Globalism – that is, as a form of the Infinite. It would be a supra-rational view if we could achieve it. But we would not, thereby, necessarily lose site of the rational view, which perhaps sees globalism as a gradual dissolution of nationalistic divisions on the way to a one-world culture and economy, or in the perhaps irrational but compelling view as the increasing exploitation of the poor by the rich, or the proliferation of a technological culture, or the growing dominance over life on earth by the power of Greed. Of course these are tendencies that can be observed today, but to take them as the whole truth of globalism and globalization would clearly be to accede to our habits of reason or unreason. As the positivists will be eager to point out, even the dark side of globalism has resulted in many positive developments. In its embodiment in the form of 'global warming' it may have the power to reverse most of those positive attributes. But the point is that Globalism is all of these things, positive and negative, and it is more. This perceived interconnectedness of everyone and everything on Earth in our age is a NEW ERA; it is a new form of the One manifesting in human societies, and as yet very difficult for the rational mind to comprehend.

My reason for approaching the topic in this way is to try to frame a discussion of the faculty of 'reason' itself and its serious limitations; and then to propose the Hegelian idea of its possible elevation into a superior principle of intuition and universality, and then, ultimately, a further elevation into Sri Aurobindo's idea of Truth-Consciousness, with respect to the idea of Globalism. This discussion should be something more than a negative critique, and also more than an apocalyptic prophecy. It should move in the direction of Practice, of Yoga. It is certainly true that our lives are dominated by reason; it is the pinnacle of human evolution. Our society and culture, economy, politics, science, technology, and even our household organization are dominated by this faculty, this *buddhi*. We probably think we could hardly live without it and we shouldn't even dare to try. We might suddenly be swallowed up by all the evil invaders waiting outside the walls. Not only do we probably fear that; we fervently believe that our continued survival, happiness, success, hope for the future, depend on the exercise of this most highly valued faculty of our mental nature – it is what we are as humans at the apex of evolution. And for most of us, it seems to have worked fairly well.

But then we have a teaching of Sri Aurobindo which we can't ignore, especially at moments like this, when we are so comfortably ensconced behind the bastions of Reason while there are at the same time so many signs of unreason and impending disaster. In India things are not so orderly and predictable, as we know. But is there another side to that disorder which allows a certain freedom for other qualities to be expressed? Isn't it possible that the extraordinary and unbelievable suicide rate among farmers there might awaken an urge to reform agricultural practices on a national scale? And what of Karachi, Pakistan, where everyone has to purchase water, yet there isn't enough for everyone, so the prices soar, many can't afford it, and the greedy prosper? In those countries things don't work as well as they do here in the West, and they aren't as well controlled by the faculty of reason, although all the same universal principles apply. But will those circumstances lead to a more universal spirit of caring, or to greater technological efficiency? Not necessarily. In other words, the faculty of reason may help us understand the contradictions in existence, but it doesn't necessarily lead to solutions and corrections when things go terribly wrong. It helps us understand things more holistically, but can it satisfy our urge to justify or rectify the causes of crisis? So what is our responsibility? What are we to do now, knowing the limitations of the faculty and principle of Reason, the limitations of our

“humanity”, because:

“In the first place we have seen that intellectual thought is in itself inadequate and is not the highest thinking; the highest is that which comes through the intuitive mind and from the supramental faculty. So long as we are dominated by the intellectual habit and by the lower workings, the intuitive mind can only send its messages to us subconsciously and subject to a distortion more or less entire before it reaches the conscious mind; ...”

Sri Aurobindo once wrote a letter in which he said that the term “global” had been suggested to him by someone regarding the style of his writing in the *Arya*, and he said he “took it up” as being a term that best expressed the massive-thinking of the Overmind. We might see a synonym in “holistic” or “all-inclusive”, and “integral”. When he speaks about rising above the rational mind into a more global intuition in *The Synthesis of Yoga* (c.1920), he indicates that it is not only a characteristic of consciousness but of being, it is a reality of which we must become aware through our determination and practice:

The mind is a thing that dwells in diffusion, in succession; it can only concentrate on one thing at a time and when not concentrated runs from one thing to another very much at random. Therefore it has to concentrate on a single idea, a single subject of meditation, a single object of contemplation, a single object of will in order to possess or master it, and this it must do to at least the temporary exclusion of all others. But that which is beyond the mind and into which we seek to rise is superior to the running process of the thought, superior to the division of ideas. The Divine is centred in itself and when it throws out ideas and activities does not divide itself or imprison itself in them, but holds them and their movement in its infinity; undivided, its whole self is behind each Idea and each movement and at the same time behind all of them together (p. 338).

This perception is undoubtedly the basis of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of the evolution of consciousness. And it is the product of both a rational judgment and a supra-rational intuition. The ideal that Sri Aurobindo indicates for us is a supra-rational globalism. And to achieve this he advocates two radical movements of our consciousness and will. One is to reject the rational mind and then to learn to perceive the whole of reality as one unified movement of manifestation. It is the Self in us and in all, and it is Divine.

Our responsibility is to allow that higher divine Self to channel its energies through us for an enlightened knowledge and action. This would be what he terms a supramental transformation of our minds, and eventually of our lives and bodies. And it would follow upon the realization that everything is already That. This means, of course, that both the rational and irrational minds and behaviors of our fellow humans in impoverished countries, as well as the asuric minds and behaviors of those who lead many developed countries today, and who have often dominated human civilization in particularly dramatic ways, even in the past century, are an integral part of that Whole. The whole global reality is an embodiment of the Infinite. We must realize this, not just theoretically, but in a dynamic, empowered, loving, all-inclusive way. We Are That.

But it is the changing, finite, process-form of That with which our perceptions and thoughts are usually preoccupied, and not the Infinite, Perfect, All-inclusive Self of That. In order to have this experience and make it the constant moving force of our minds and lives, we must elevate this rational mental being above its habitual preferred status. The way we Think about things, the way we Judge things, the way we Will our actions, our responses, our intentions, must Change. This is the process of Yoga. And it is part of the evolution of Globalism. Globalization means not only creating a new set of dilemmas for humanity and the world but moving beyond rationalism, moving beyond corporatism, moving beyond capitalism, moving beyond science and technology, and fascism and democracy – the schematics of Reason. But the rational mind involved in the vital human body simply does not have the vision and energy that is required to accomplish this self-exceeding. Even if it knows and is in a sense all of these things, and encompasses in its way, the past, the present, and the future of these things, and

is both their Good and their Evil, this is the very reason that it must deliberately sacrifice itself. It must Abdicate. From the fire of its self-immolation a new power of consciousness and force must arise.

In his Overmind vision, Sri Aurobindo sees the Overmind as a plane of Reality peopled by gods, divine principles and powers – no longer a subjective view of mythological beings – where everything that exists is a product of opposing cosmic forces: Power, Knowledge, Love, Beauty. Pain/Pleasure, Truth/Falsehood, Good/Evil, War/Peace, struggling to bring the cosmic manifestation from Nothingness into Harmonious Being. In *Savitri*, the Yogi sees all this in a state of illumined trance:

In the glow of the spirit's room of memories
He could recover the luminous marginal notes
Dotting with light the crabbed ambiguous scroll,
Rescue the preamble and the saving clause
Of the dark Agreement by which all is ruled
That rises from material Nature's sleep
To clothe the Everlasting in new shapes. ...
And recognise as a just necessity
Its hard conditions for the mighty work, —
Nature's impossible Herculean toil
Only her warlock-wisecraft could enforce,
Its law of the opposition of the gods,
Its list of inseparable contraries.
The dumb great Mother in her cosmic trance
Exploiting for creation's joy and pain
Infinity's sanction to the birth of form,
Accepts indomitably to execute
The will to know in an inconscient world,
The will to live under a reign of death,
The thirst for rapture in a heart of flesh,
And works out through the appearance of a soul
By a miraculous birth in plasm and gas
The mystery of God's covenant with the Night. (75)

In conclusion, I would like to suggest an exercise based on the arguments we have heard, which might help us shift our level and center of consciousness towards a higher plane and the larger global reality. We should start with the “idea”. If our faculty of reason must be surpassed, and for that to happen our intellect must become passive, then we should contemplate a particularly troublesome aspect of life with which we seem compelled to grapple, such as the activities on which our civilization depends but which are responsible for global warming, or the tendency of the wealthiest class of capitalists to control the decisions that drive the economies of the world today, often without regard for the needs or even the lives of the many who support it. Some problems stand out more poignantly in the world today, such as the immigration and struggle of people to find freedom in countries that are

less ravaged by war or tyranny than their own. We might list an array of particular examples of such dilemmas in order to discover the universal principles that determine each of them. We should make a list or a graph of the universals in which every particular reality participates in some way, both positive and negative. And these we might then elevate or reduce to one or more sets of battling higher powers/gods on the plane of Overmind. And then, in an act of deep surrender, we should offer this schema of understanding and vision to the highest levels of consciousness of which we are capable, to a higher Intuition, or to the Divine-in-All, or to the Absolute Spirit, in whatever form we prefer to envision the supreme truth of existence, and wait passively for an inspired understanding to present itself to our minds, a holistic grasp of the global situation, and perhaps the descent of a force of consciousness that can determine a will to act in the world from the position of Yoga and Truth. And for this we cannot be in a hurry, for the Silence in which we must allow our minds to dwell must be as profound and as total as possible. One of the biggest mistakes, and most regrettable short-comings, of conventional yoga practice today is that it is often forced to comply with the time-frames dictated by a materialistic life-style and a control centered mind.

By performing this exercise, we are enacting the fundamental tenets of many spiritual traditions. In particular, the formula of Integral Yoga that was prescribed by Sri Aurobindo consists of aspiration, rejection, and surrender. We aspire for a higher truth above the mind, we reject the lower movements of our mind's and life's preferences, we offer them to the fire of sacrifice in a very deliberate way, and we surrender to That from which all comes and to which all returns – the Infinite, the Eternal, the One, the Divine Fire. And above all there must be a firm ground of faith upon which such a movement rests. On the basis of these principles and assumptions, it is the responsibility of those who are called to Yoga to undertake such an effort to pass beyond the limits of Reason and become a living instrument of the Supramental Knowledge and Force. Otherwise...

Although what we call “responsibility” is likely to be merely our conventional responses to things within society's framework of accepted values, our true responsibility is to reject this small self, to embrace the Global Whole, and to enact That Self according to the potential and destiny of each individual soul-particle, each universal power and principle, and each wave of transcendent Divine Love. If this responsibility were assumed on a global scale, the escalating problem of immigration, for example, which is likely to rise into the range of hundreds of millions of displaced persons in this century, might be seen as the circumstance necessary to push humanity to evolve a higher consciousness of oneness, to open its heart and arms to all its members as one unified, global family, and to realize its destiny to become a living embodiment of strength, health, harmony, and delight on a global scale.

In performing this sacrifice we will perhaps have demonstrated our devotion to that Idea and Practice of which Sri Aurobindo was the Master Teacher:

It is through the Idea that the mental being rises beyond all expression to that which is expressed, to that of which the Idea itself is only the instrument. By concentration upon the Idea, the mental existence which at present we are breaks open the barrier of our mentality and arrives at the state of consciousness, the state of being, the state of power of conscious-being and bliss of conscious-being to which the Idea corresponds and of which it is the symbol, movement, and rhythm. ...Not merely a state withdrawn from all consciousness of the outward...but a settled existence in the One and Infinite, united and identified with it...whether we abide in the waking condition in which we are conscious of the forms of things or we withdraw into the inward activity which dwells in the play of the principles of things... (Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, II.iv 'Concentration', ca.1920)

Rod Hemsell (This essay was presented as a lecture at the AUM Conference in the USA, June 2019. It is also published along with other recent essays and poems at [https://visionwaves.blog/.](https://visionwaves.blog/))