Chapter - V

The Integral Yoga

This chapter deals with Sri Aurobindo's view of Integral Yoga and shows the development of human consciousness to the highest level through Integral Yoga. From the foregoing analysis of Sri Aurobindo's views on different aspects of Consciousness we have understood that he is an Absolutist and tries to attain the Supreme Truth by accepting both finite and the Infinite or giving importance to both. He thinks that a total transformation of human beings is possible in their life through Integral Yoga, which is the most important methodised effort for self-realisation.

From the very ancient times, Yoga was regarded as the heart of spirituality. Besides the Integral Yoga there are other spiritual ways and methods which have an indispensable place and utility in spiritual life and without them no spiritual progress is possible, i.e., in order to have any substantial change of human consciousness and being, other methods must be embodied in Yoga.
Sri Aurobindo says, All life is Yoga either consciously or subconsciously, on the basis of his own spiritual experience or realisation, by which human beings are able to understand the levels of consciousness, beginning from the lower mâyâ or Mind associated with the material world to the higher mâyâ or Supermind. Yoga is the means or methodised effort of self-realisation of human beings by revealing all the potentialities which are in human beings and also a unification among transcendent, universal and individual soul. Sri Aurobindo says, 'All life, when we look behind its appearances is a vast Yoga of Nature attempting to realise her perfection in an ever increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality.'

Yoga is union or link. It means the linking of human consciousness with something higher, something transcendent, something universal, Divine and eternal, not with any supra-physical beings and forces. But man is limited by his ignorance which cuts him off from his transcendent source and sustenance which enable him to consider himself as a separate being and thing. This self-ignorance of the individual from the eternity of the ultimate and unity of the universe constitutes his essential ignorance. There can be no way of recovery by the individual of his own infinite and immortal

self, his freedom and spiritual knowledge, so long his egoistic separation continues firmly, for ignorance wraps the consciousness of human beings. We have already given a reflective discussion of sevenfold ignorances, their causes of appearances and the way of their recovery.

These ignorances arise due to the estrangement of the individual consciousness from the universal eternal consciousness and it can be abolished by annihilating the division through Yoga. It is the only effective spiritual means which completely heals this division by relating the individual consciousness with supreme reality. Such healing is possible only by self-transcendence.

The synthesis of Yoga will remain unfulfilled if it does not reunite God and Nature in a perfected human life because man is the symbol of higher Existence that descended in the material world of objects. The Yoga in man must be like the conscious Yoga in Nature. Nature is also an evolution of an eternal and secret existence using through successive forms, her three steps of ascent—the bodily-life, the mental existence and the veiled spiritual being. It is the cause of involution in other entities and also results in their evolution. So like the aim of Nature, we should also unveil the reality inherent in body and Mind. The truth of individuality lies not in himself, but in collectivity and
liberation of the individual should include the liberation of others and of mankind.

We know that in the universe everything is separated from its own true self, origin and universality and Yoga is the means through which the union of the separate things is possible. This may be effected in different ways, i.e., in the vital through our nervous being; in the mind through the mentality, in the physical through the body. It may be accompanied by changing our central ego through awakening to the transcendent truth and Bliss. Apart from this, we should have a clear conception of God, Nature and individual soul or it may be described in abstract language – the transcendent, the universal and the individual.

Now we should turn our attention to the principles of different schools of Yoga which are prevalent in India. There are different types of Yoga – Hathayoga selects the gross body and vital functionings as the instruments of perfection, Rājyoga accepts mental being and its different parts and also the subtle body. Work, Love and Knowledge, the triple path, use will, heart and intellect as the starting point and ultimately changing them, tries to attain the Truth, Beautitude and Infinity. It is a method of direct commerce between the human Purusha in the individual soul and the divine Purusha that dwells in the transcendental soul.
Now we have to discuss these different types of Yoga and ultimately see what type of Yoga actually helps us in enjoying Divine life on this earth.

HATHAYOGA

Hathayoga is based on the truth that human body is not only a physical object but also a mystic link between spiritual reality and physical being. The purpose of this Yoga is to conquer life and body and their combination in the food sheath. The vital force constitutes the gross body and its equilibrium is the foundation of the working of nature in the human being. The main processes of Hathayoga are Asana and Prānāyāma which cure body and give extraordinary health, force and tries to liberate it from the habits for which it is subjected to ordinary physical nature and remains within limited boundaries of its ordinary operations. This Yoga also protects the body from all impurities and maintains the respiration and keeps it free from all obstacles. These are called Prānāyāmas which mean control of the vital force, or breath is maintained. It is one of the most important physical functioning of the vital forces.

3. Ibid., p. 28.
This discussion no doubt flashes the power of Hathayoga but at the same time it is burdensome, for its principles of action are mainly dependent on a close connection between the body and the soul. This Yoga considers the body as its key, which is the secret of bondage of release of divine power and of weakness, of depth and of immortality. This body is not only a mere living matter but at the same time a bridge between the spiritual and physical being.

Hathayoga is a system of knowledge related to the Psycho-physical but the actual Yoga of knowledge is a psychological process which tries to apply spiritual practice. The processes of Hathayoga are very difficult and troublesome. It requires hard labour. So the utilisation of its results, for the life of the world becomes extraordinarily restricted and impracticable.

**RĀJAYOGA**

Hathayoga starts with body and life-force but Rājayoga with mind. It aims at the liberation and perfection of mental being by fixing its eyes on the citta in which

5. Ibid., p. 21
6. Ibid.
the emotional sensational life arises. The preliminary movements of Rājayoga start with careful self-discipline, by which lawless movements are controlled, that guide the lower nervous being. It is only by practice of truth, by deep meditation and an inner urge to realise the Purusha, a clear state of mind and heart is established.

Rājayoga adopts very simple and effective processes in order to awaken internal dynamism or a supernormal facility or which may be expressed in Yogic terminology as kundalini, i.e., the latent serpent of energy which is within the human being. This ultimately leads to the state of samādhi, which helps the mind to acquire the power of withdrawing its limited activities to higher states of consciousness. For in this Yoga, mental action becomes free from confusions of outer consciousness and passes to the higher state on which the individual soul enters into spiritual Existence. And it ultimately helps to acquire the highest supra-cosmic knowledge.

But Rājayoga is not free from blemishes. Its weaknesses lie in its reliance on the state of trance. This state shows aloofness, free from the physical world which is our foundation. It is the sphere, where we have to

7. Ibid., p. 32.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp. 33-34.
10. Ibid.
bring our mental and spiritual gains. Our aim must be to make our spiritual experiences active, utilisable in our waking state.

TRIPLE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE, DEVOTION & ACTION

The unoccupied areas of Rājayoga have been occupied by the triple path of Knowledge, Devotion and Work corresponding to the three principal powers of human being — will, knowledge and love. It differs from Rājayoga in different points. Triple path of Yoga concentrates on the Divine by turning away these mental actions, i.e., central principles of mind — the intellect, heart and will from the ordinary and external preoccupations.

"The path of Knowledge uses the viveka and vicāra. It observes and distinguishes different elements of phenomenal being and considers them as the creation of Māyā." 11 So rejecting the phenomenal world from the consciousness, as illusion, it tries to arrive at its right identification with the pure and unique self which is imperishable. 12

But this exclusive completion or perfection is not the ultimate result of the path of Knowledge. On the other

11. Ibid., pp. 42-43.
12. Ibid.
hand, the method of Knowledge may help us to realise the cosmic-existence. This means, the realisation of supreme self not only in one's own being but also in all beings and ultimately one is able to realise that the world is the play of Divine Consciousness. This method lifts up the whole range of human intellect and attitude to the divine level. In the path of Devotion, the love or the heart of man is the principal means of perfection. This path aims at the enjoyment of the supreme lord. Naturally, the world is the play of the lord which is pursued through self-concealment and self-revelation and does not care for reasoning or reflection of the mind. This path uses devotion and worship to increase the intensity of divine relation and thus there is the realisation of the divine object of love in all beings, not only in human beings but also in animal. But larger application of the Yoga of Devotion elevates the whole range of human emotion, sensation to the divine level, the cosmic labour towards divine love and joy in our humanity.

The most effective method of Karmayoga is uncompromising rejection of desires and self-consecration in action. It aims at the dedication of human activity to the Divine Will. The self-denial of egoistic actions purifies human mind and will that enable us to realise that the Divine

13. Ibid., p. 44.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 45.
Energy is the doer of everything. The result of this Yoga is the perception of the divine in everything, in all activities, in all happenings. It also raises human will and activity to the divine level.

The above discussion shows that the triple path of Knowledge, Devotion and Action teach us to realise the Absolute knowledge, Love and service of the One in all beings, which indicate the One Reality. So the aim of this triple path is same, though it applies different means, to realise the same Truth.

Apart from these systems of Yoga, there still exists a remarkable Yoga, which is synthetical and begins from the central principle of Nature, the Tantra, a great dynamical force. This system accepts Prakriti as the Energy, the Will-in-power, responsible for different activities in the universe.16 But this Tantric Yoga ends ultimately only in a thing of formulae and loses its principle in its machinery due to the tendency of Prakriti.17

So the central conception of the Tantric system is Shakti or energy, the principal effective force for all attainment, whereas Vedantic conception admits Shakti as the power that produces illusion and our realisation of Purusha abolishes our deception or puzzlement raised by

16. Ibid., p. 51.
17. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
our active Energy. But our Integral knowledge is that Conscious - Soul is the Real and the Nature - Soul is Energy of the Real. Purusha is of the nature of Sat, the Infinite, Pure and Shakti or Prakriti is the power of the Purusha's self-existence. Naturally, there is a close relation between these two, Purusha and Prakriti.

But the final goal of earthly evolution is to release human beings from ignorance and bondage and also to awaken them to the supreme Reality so that they could merge into the supreme truth. But human beings have an aspiration for the mastery of Nature and transformation of Nature which is most important for the perfection of earthly existence integrally. There are three phases of this transformation.

The first phase of this transformation is that the soul must come forward in order to lead the whole being to spirituality. Our soul or psychic entity is an imperishable entity, luminous, ever-pure flame of ultimate reality. It contains all possibilities without being affected by them but remains veiled. It has to be unfolded in the opening step towards our spiritual change. We know that our mind is over-confident to work in its own light, power, will and knowledge but if it obeys the urge of the vital

18. Ibid., p. 52.
mind, there is a possibility of the soul controlling the
nature or manifesting the spiritual stuff at all levels.
To fulfill this purpose, the first natural evolution is
the development of body, life and Mind that must act togethe
in ill-assorted partnership in such a way that evolu
may grow. The soul assimilates the essence of Mind,
Life and Body for further evolution but this action is
concealed because in this stage of evolution, there is
indeed no consciousness but only psychic activity. For
the development of this evolution or to emerge success
fully, the human being moves towards supreme reality. The
soul uses three images, Truth, Beauty and Good or it may
be described through the ways of the intellect, emotion
or heart, action (all these images have been described
previously in this chapter). These three ways have powerful
effect or may open to the psychic light within us or the
spiritual reality, if they work together.

The second phase is spiritual, i.e., an opening to the
supreme reality above us, the Infinite Existence, the
infinity of Consciousness, the infinity of Bliss. The
psychic change must be completed by an opening to the
supreme spiritual status which is possible, if supreme
Consciousness ascends to the planes of Overmind and supra-
mental nature, where Soul and Spirit enjoy their true
nature. The attempt to diminish all the limitations of mind
helps us to open the vision to something above. But the mere ascension is not sufficient for the full spiritual transformation. It needs permanent ascension of the lower into the higher and descent of the higher into the lower. In this phase consciousness of the mental turns into the spiritual being.

The third phase is the supramental transformation which is necessary for the completion of spiritual change, as the psychic change requires spiritual to complete itself.

Thus we see, for the total transformation or radical change of human beings in their life, intervention of the supramental consciousness or power is necessary.

Sri Aurobindo says that our aim in Yoga must attain Integral knowledge where the self-fulfilment is possible by the elimination of the being which is ego. So the object of our spiritual knowledge is the Divine, the ultimate, the supreme that possesses an intimate relation with the individual and transcends both the universe and the soul. This Absolute is the object of our knowledge that dwells over all and in all and manifests itself in multitude objects. But ordinarily we understand by the Yogic knowledge the intellectual appreciation of Life, Matter, Mind and the principles that guide them. This intellectual appreciation
is an obstacle in the way of our integral knowledge for they are dependent on the senses. It accepts the notion that matter and body, senses, forces, emotions are reality and identify the soul with these notions. So we are totally ignorant of our real self. Naturally, it is necessary for us to abolish this obstacle by right thought and of all knowledge, the self-knowledge is the direct path to the knowledge of the self.

In the systems of Yoga, the principal view is self-surrender. Human beings surrender themselves to the being, consciousness, delight of the ultimate. We should regard the Spirit in man not only as individual but also universal being capable of oneness with the Divine and present in all souls and in all Nature. There are three objects of Yoga. First object of Yoga is individual's liberation and enjoyment of the union with the divine in spiritual consciousness. The second object is the enjoyment of the cosmic unity with the divine. The third is the unity of divine with all being. These three objects of Yoga give us the idea that the individual Yoga becomes the collective Yoga. Apart from these objects of Yoga, perfection of human beings is necessary to elevate the mental into the full spiritual and supra-mental Nature. Thus the Integral Yoga of Knowledge, Love

20. Indra Sen (Eds.), op.cit., p. 71.
and Devotion extends into a Yoga of spiritual and gnostic self-perfection.21

Sri Aurobindo says that divine Shakti acts to raise the human beings above, i.e., elevates the human beings from the lower consciousness which is within the control of vital and material Nature. Now the question is, through what medium does the divine Shakti act? This cannot be Mind because the Mind is spiritualised, purified and perfected within its own limits, it cannot act in the unified consciousness of the divine Knowledge, Will and Ñananda because its tendency is to deal with the divisions. So we may ask: How far can the perfected human being raise himself to the level of Supermind where the divine Shakti acts directly?

The fundamental nature of Supermind is that all its knowledge is knowledge by identity and though it makes apparent appearances of numberless divisions yet it is guided by the perfect knowledge of identity.22 The spirit is present everywhere; so whenever it knows any thing it knows all things as itself and in itself. As Supermind gives us total knowledge, its knowledge is also real. It has a transcendental vision and sees the universe in its relation with the Absolute and supreme reality from which it proceeds, because it knows the Absolute.23

21. Ibid., p. 72.
23. Ibid.
On the contrary, the Mind is limited and unable to move in these directions. Mind can never reach the identity with the Absolute but can arrive at some idea of universal through the combination of apparently separate things.\textsuperscript{24} The Mind cannot know truly the individual but its tendency is to proceed by an analysis of parts and constituents and is unable to stay constantly in the essential knowledge.

The Supermind is eternally present in all levels of existence, even secretly in mental and material beings. It governs the processes of Mind because every \textit{theory} of Mind is derived from the Supermind. From this we must not conclude that all mental is unreal. On the other hand, the supramental is potentially inherent in mental. So all mental is the imperfect suppressed figure of the supramental truth. In the evolutionary processes of Mind, we have first a vital feeling, then a vital mind having sensation and out of it a mind emerges possessing emotion, desire, a conscious will and intelligence and each is a manifestation of the Spirit.

Although the processes are spiritual and supramental in their secret government, in overt processes they are mental, vital and physical. These physical, vital, emotional dynamic instincts and intuitions are present in the being.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 758.
of man, but human beings do not rely on these instincts like animals because they are capable of greater action. By these intuitions he identifies himself with the greatest and the real self. The first instrument for this transition is the reason and the will of rational intelligence, though reason cannot guide human being perfectly because the self is a larger thing than reason and if reason and intelligence govern him, the self-realisation, self-expression, Ānanda will be incomplete. So reason and intelligence are only partial representative of the supramental logos and its complete and integral order can only be founded by the spiritual Supermind.

The development of intuition, the lower form of the Supermind, indicates our primary progress towards spontaneous supramental knowledge and this development of intuitive mind discovers what the physical, vital, emotional psychic nature of man seek and help them to proceed towards the perfection of self-expression. But the intuitive intelligence is not sufficient or complete in the present mind of man because it is associated with the stuff of mentality, but its remedy is possible, if we make it a transitional means for bringing the real nature of secret Supermind itself of which it is only a mental form.
So the original nature of Supermind is self-consciousness of the Infinite, of the Spirit, of the Absolute. The gnosis of the Spirit knows itself as it knows all things, for the Absolute reveals Itself in multitude objects. To know this truth our sensemind, intelligence and reason are not sufficient; moreover, the transition of the lower nature is necessary and this transition, to the higher principle, is in a sense reversal of the methods, not conversion of the whole Mind, reason, intelligence. In fact, change is possible, if the Mind is aware of the greater self within and possesses the confidence of the presence and guidance of the divine and the Shakti.

In this connection, Sri Aurobindo speaks of four movements: (1) Silence and absolute tranquility of the Mind, i.e., the Mind must remain free from any disturbances and must allow thought and will to happen when Shakti wills it for divine purpose. But this method does not immediately replace the lower mind and reflective reason. (2) The second movement is possible through the way of Bhakti. In this movement human beings neglect the intellect and its actions and obey only the idea and will of the lord within them, the Divine self and Purusha seated in the heart and in every centre of the being - the physical, the nervous,

25. Ibid., p. 772.
26. Ibid., p. 773.
the emotional etc. This ever present Divine within us helps to transform these inferior thoughts and actions into the supramental or to attain the spiritualised character. This method is incomplete for the heart is not the ultimate centre of our beings. (3) The supreme mental centre has been accepted as the highest organised centre of embodied being and action and possesses a direct relation with the supramental levels. So, we may use a direct method to find out the potential truth of the divinity which is not on the level of Mind and to receive all by descending from above, where we are not only spiritually conscious but also physically conscious. This movement will obtain success, if we are able to elevate our thought and action above the physical brain and occupy the subtle body, i.e., our release from the limitations of the physical mind is necessary. But this change is impossible at once. Because the subtle body is not supramental. And this movement helps us to have keen perception of the higher planes of the true supramental being. It applies these powers to bring transformation in the way that it may reject, purify the right material for the Truth that is to be organised within us. This movement opens a way towards higher levels and higher planes. (4) The fourth movement develops our intellect

27. Ibid., pp. 773-74.
28. Ibid., pp. 774-75.
29. Ibid., p. 775.
30. Ibid.
and heightens the capacity, degree and force of the will, until it reaches the line that transforms it into the higher conscious action. This movement proceeds towards self-perfection for it is based on the truth of our nature. It takes into account the reason, intelligence, will, buddhi as the powerful instrument, capable of aiding the development of human being, and ordinary activities of our nature.

The Shakti, in Yoga, has taken the intellectual being to raise to the fullest powers of intellect. All thought and action are deduced from the Supermind, which naturally possesses truth to some extent, although the lower action of intelligence alters them. But the subsequent transformation of intelligence is possible by the elimination of disturbing elements. For this an intervention of supramental energy is needed. This intervention of the supramental energy will be incomplete, if the supramental plane is not manifested. All the methods are reconciled by the natural action of the Shakti that opens supramental levels. The progress takes place from the lower nature proceeding by an action from above and an action of the lower to the upwards. It changes and develops intelligence and will freely as the nature demands. This development or progress ultimately develops intuitive mentality. The most remarkable progress of the

31. Ibid., p. 776.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 777.
movement is the transmutation of thought that is replete with light, power and joy - the criterion of true intuitive thinking. This will change into this intuitive character and this develops with light, power. The feelings will also be intuitive and all other mental-movements, sense-movements and life-movements are similarly enlightened. Even there are some other movements which are not dependent on the outer sense. For the development of these different movements, intuitive mentality should be powerful and the capacity of its performance must be extensive in its scope, than that of the ordinary mind.

But from this we must not conclude that intuitive mentality is ultimate, complete and perfect. It cannot enjoy this position unless we open the power of the Supermind. Intuitive mind is half knowledge and indirect knowledge. So it is not gnosis, but Mind and all its defects can be diminished, if it is enlightened into the full light of the supramental being. The Integral perfection is possible only by a total transformation of our mentality and of our nature. But attainment of such perfection is impossible by intuitive mentality because it is a secondary and inferior movement and waiting for the greater power. This is possible when we progress or as we grow into more luminous and dynamic union with that Spirit or Purusha, a greater action of knowledge and will and spiritual feeling manifests and

35. Ibid., p. 778.
seems to organise itself above the Mind and this we recognise as the true Supermind and the real native play of the infinite knowledge, will and Ananda.\(^{36}\) So there are double actions on the planes of our being, which firstly strengthen our intuitive mentality. Secondly, transform this intuitive mentality into the Supermind. This mentality must accept the Divine reason, where intuitive mind starts its action. It is in the Supermind the greater, the direct action of the Ishwara is revealed. In this Supermind, the individual is one with the universal and the transcendent Spirit.

This development in our Yoga shows that the action of the Supermind organises the highest consciousness and acts in the individual being as the self-conscious, self-knowing spiritual being. Here we have Integral knowledge and total unity of knowledge, will, feelings and all these become a single movements which have started from opposite quarters. These unity and Integrality are necessary because knowledge is the very foundation of the Supermind. This knowledge is present in all aspects. At the highest stage, we have something greater than knowledge and we have essential self-awareness of the One Divine, Consciousness, Tapas, Ananda and everything is the movement One Existence.

This gradual development of human consciousness, i.e., the transition from Mind to Supermind is a way through

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 782.
which we pass from nature to supernature and this ascent is possible through four steps. 1. Higher mind, 2. Intuitive mind, 3. Illumined mind, 4. Overmind (already discussed in the fourth chapter in detail).

The superconscient cosmic mind is called by Sri Aurobindo Overmind, the link between Mind and Supermind which preserves its connection with the superior light and acts by its power. It sees intelligently co-existent co-relatives. What is seen as irreconcilable difference by Mind and what is contrary to the Mind is complementary to the Overmind. Thus we see Overmind plays an important role in linking Knowledge and Ignorance.

So we see that Overmind accepts the essential unity as the basis of everything but it is unable to realise its identity with secret reality. It reveals partial truth and leads to the highest level, the Supermind — superior in status to Mind and Overmind.

The emergence of the Supermind should not be taken as the ultimate point of evolutionary processes because there are still higher principles of Bliss, Consciousness-Force and Pure Being which emerge through our knowledge. As a result of such evolutionary progress or radical change, human beings will be transformed into gnostic beings or
beings which are illumined by right knowledge. The gnostic being is the consummation of the spiritual man, where the inconscient vanishes and becomes converted into superconscience.

In this stage, the disappearance of the ego implies the disappearance of walls that separate us from the truth. We learn also that there is no difference between the universe and the individual. The physical laws are controlled directly by the will of the spirit for all knowledge is self-knowledge of being, all action comes from the self-knowledge; the source of all delight is a universal delight of self-existence. Here the Supermind accepts the material nature instead of rejecting it which we, who are limited by ignorance, reject due to our inability of controlling it.

Thus we see that total transformation or supramental change is most important and a radical change in the physical Nature and terrestrial existence is very necessary. As Sri Aurobindo says that the emergence of the Divine life is possible on this earth. The foundation of this Divine life must be inward and not outward and we have to convert our whole surface being, thoughts, feelings and actions into a perfect instrument of that inner life. It is true that truth is inherent in human being because no expression of divinity is possible, unless there is no reality of an
eternal self and Spirit or no divinisation of the inner being. Out of nothing, nothing can emerge. Here a single consciousness-Force, of which we are all aware, harmonises everything. So harmony is not artificial and a natural consequence of unity in diversity is seen in everything. Gnostic life is a life of super reason, supernature, where harmony is achieved through spirituality of human being which is perfect and permanent.

In conclusion it can be said that it is through the Integral Yoga, described by Sri Aurobindo, an Integral and dynamic union with the Divine in all respects, in all states, modes of our being and His being is possible. The Absolute is not only Transcendent, impersonal, Infinite but also both Spirit and Nature, Time and Timeless, Space and Spaceless. Our aspiration for transformation, Integral surrender to the Divine power, The Mother, enables us to realise that annamaya purusha, pranamaya purusha, monomaya purusha and chaitya purusa which are the projections of one central purusha or Jivatman.

In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy material objects, Life, Mind and human beings find their full recognition. He says that human beings can attain divinity in his terrestrial life in his physical body. The most important theme of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is transformation of individual into Divine man and emergence of gnostic beings possessing Divine Life on this earth through Integral Yoga.