

THE THOUGHT OF YOGA IN AUROBINDO

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I. *His Short Biography*

Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950) is considered to be one of the greatest thinkers in modern India. Concerning his spiritual and intellectual ability he is compared with Rāmakṛṣṇa (1836-1886), Vivekānanda (1863-1902), Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), his son, and a philosopher of different character from them. He is a poet, a philosopher, a prophet, an experienced man of yoga, a patriot, and later on his patriotic sentiment has developed to the universal love for mankind.

Aurobindo Ghose was born in Calcutta on the 15th August, 1872, the third son of Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose and Srimati Swarnalata Devi.¹ His father, Krishnadhan, entranced into the University of Calcutta, and advanced more to the Medical College of Calcutta. Krishnadhan had a ardent love for India and was a leader of Brāhma-Samāj. He left Calcutta for England to undergo a course of advanced medical studies, and after he returned to India he worked as a surgeon. He wished to give his children a wholly European type of education, and accompanied them to England, when Aurobindo was seven years old. Aurobindo there learned English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature, and the history of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe. He had mastered Greek and Latin, English and French, when he was twenty years old. At his age of twenty one he left England for India. It was contrary to his father's expectation to westernize him. After he returned to India, he came up for the Indian Civil Service examination and passed it with credit, scoring record marks in Greek and Latin, and a young Englishman, Beechcroft, was the second on the list. Later on, when Aurobindo was prosecuted for the bomb-case and stood on the bar, Beechcroft was his judge. It was considered to depend on his fair justice that Aurobindo was found innocent. Though he passed the Civil Service examination, he did not dare to take the office, because he thought to serve for India from the free standpoint. After he returned to India, he learned for the first time Saṃskṛt, Bengali, his mother language and some other modern Indian languages, and read Veda, Upaniṣad, Bhagavad-Gītā, verses or poems of Bhartṛhari and Kālidāsa. About that time he tried to make poems and wrote "Urvasie", "Love and Death", "Perseus the Deliverer", "Vidula", "Baji Prabhou", "Ahana and Other Poems", etc. Bepin Chandra Pal had started just then a daily paper, *The Bandemataram*. Aurobindo took up the joint editorship of the paper, edited the paper during Bepin Pal's absence, and induced the Nationalist party to take it up as its organ and finance it. The Bengal National College was at that time founded, and he became its first principal. Presently, however, he left the organization of the college, and

¹ Concerning his biography, cf. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Sri Aurobindo*, 1945. Anilbaran Roy, "Sri Aurobindo, A Life-sketch", *Indo-Asian Culture*, Vol. I, No. 2, etc.

plunged fully into politics and was the brain of the Nationalist party in Bengal.

While in Baroda, he consulted Vishnu Bhaskar Lele for some needed guidance in Yoga. Yogi Lele advised him to strive to empty his mind of all mere mental stuff and to make his mind a sheet of white paper to receive a piece of Divine calligraphy. He went to Poona with Lele; and after the visit to Bombay, he went to Calcutta. He stopped on the way for a day or two, he spoke in public and tried to raise the current of the political issues to a moral, religious and spiritual plane. Barindra Kumar Ghose, his brother, was supposed to be the chief brain of the revolutionary organization, so he was also suspected that he was connected with the organization and the bomb-factory. On May 1908 he was arrested and sent to Alipur prison. In the prison he confessed his state of mind as follows:²

“When I was arrested and hurried to the Lal Bazar Hajat, I was shaken in faith for a while, for I could not look into the heart of His intention. Therefore, I faltered for a moment and cried out in my heart to Him, ‘What is this that has happened to me? I believed that I had a mission to work for the people of my country and until that work was done, I should have Thy protection. Why then am I here and on such a charge?’ A day passed and a second day and a third, when a voice came to me from within, ‘Wait and see’. Then I grew calm and waited; I was taken from Lal Bazar to Alipur and was placed for one month in a solitary cell apart from other men. There I waited day and night for the voice of God within me, to know what He had to say to me, to learn what I had to do. In this seclusion the earliest realization, the first lesson came to me. I remembered then that a month or more before my arrest, a call had come to me to put aside all activity, to go into seclusion and to look into myself, so that I might enter into closer communion with Him.”

Meanwhile he was permitted by the authorities to send for books, he read Bhagavad-Gītā over and over again. Mr. Beechcroft tried the case, and Chittaranjan Das, one of his fellows in the Nationalist party, dedicated himself for six months to the task of defending Aurobindo. Aurobindo spent one whole year in jail, his spiritual state had been altered and the outward world had changed; the Nationalist party in Bengal had all but disintegrated, his fellows had been scattered. He started publishing two weekly papers, the *Karmayogin* in English and the *Dharma* in Bengali. But his aim now was no more party politics; it was rather the dissemination of the principles of Sanātana Dharma (Eternal Truth). In the *Karmayogin* he translated the *Īsha*, *Kena* and *Katha Upanishads* into English and tried to make poems. Towards the close of February 1910, he took the final decision to retire from Calcutta to the neighbouring French territory of Chandernagore. For about a month he stayed there, then he sought a more quiet spot and reached Pondicherry on April, when he was 38 years old. Thus he retired from the politics and decided to take the way of thought life. The first four years of his retirement in Pondicherry was a period of “silent Yoga”. It is not known what happened to him in this period. After four years of silent Yoga, he was brought into contact with a Frenchman Paul Richard and a French lady who is now known as the Mother. They have been in Japan, and P. Richard said to a Japanese audience:³

² *Op. cit.*, *Sri Aurobindo*, p. 157; *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose*, pp. 88-9.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 200, from ‘*Dawn over Asia*’.

“All my life I have sought for the great men across the world, I have felt they must exist somewhere in the world, that this world would die if they did not live. For they are its light, its heat, its life. It is in Asia that I found the greatest them—the leader, the hero of tomorrow. He is a Hindu. His name is Aurobindo Ghose.”

After four years of Yoga he published the philosophical journal *Ārya* with them. The aim of *Ārya* is in the following two subjects: (1) A systematic study of the highest problems of existence; (2) The formation of a vast synthesis of knowledge, harmonizing the divers religious traditions of humanity, occidental as well as oriental, and its method will be that of a realism, at once rational and transcendental. The main theses in *Ārya* were, *The Life Divine*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *Essays on the Gītā*, *The Psychology of Social Development*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Future Poetry*, *A Defence of Indian Culture*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, and some of them are now available in book form. And the minor theses are, *commentaries on Isha and Kena Upanishads*, *The Hymns of the Atrīs*, and *Heraclitus*, *The Renaissance in India*, *A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture*, and *Is India Civilized?* India declared independence on 15, August 1947 at his seventy-fifth birthday, and he ended his life of seventy-nine years at the Ashram in Pondicherry in December 1950. It is said that the people of the Ashram were not aware of his illness.

II. *The Instruments in Yoga*

The thought of Aurobindo is not so systematic as in Western philosophy. But he deeply experienced yoga, and based on it he continued to philosophize. So from this standpoint it is not so difficult to find a certain system in his philosophical speculation. P. T. Raju says that Aurobindo is the only one who experiences yoga and is notorious as a philosopher.⁴ He wrote many books and of them “*The Life Divine*” is the largest work of his main philosophical thought. Besides there are such books as ‘*Essays on Gītā*’, ‘*Ideals and Progress*’, ‘*The Yoga and Its Objects*’, ‘*Synthesis of Yoga*’, ‘*Lights on Yoga*’, ‘*The Mind of Light*’, ‘*The Riddle of This World*’, ‘*The Human Cycle*’, ‘*The Ideal of Human Unity*’, which are all based on yoga, except on literature or politics.

His philosophical standpoint in India is firstly to belong to the school of Bhagavad-Gītā. The Gītā which is contained in Mahābhārata has the philosophical thought of Upaniṣad, Sāṃkhya or Yoga. So in his philosophical thought we can find out the technical terms of Sāṃkhya, for instance, puruṣa and prakṛti, or triguṇa, sattva, rajas and tamas. His principal thought, however, is not such a Dualism as Sāṃkhya, but is penetrated by the orthodox Brahmanism, all things are essentially spiritual. From the tradition of his religious belief, he is considered to belong to Śaiva and to be a worshipper of Śākta.

How does he think on his experienced yoga? Discriminated from the usual yoga he names his one ‘Supramental Yoga’, ‘Pūrṇa (filled) Yoga’ or ‘Integral Yoga’. He says on the yoga as follows:⁵

“The principle of Yoga is the turning of all powers of our human existence into a means of reaching the divine Being. In an ordinary Yoga one main power of being or

⁴ P.T. Raju: *Idealistic Thought of India*.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, ‘*Sri Aurobindo*’, p. 326; *Ārya*, Vol. V, p. 283.

one group of its powers is made the means, vehicle, path. In a synthetic Yoga, all powers will be combined and included in the transmuting instrumentation.”

The Yoga is not to develop our specific ability, but should be related with all spheres of self-being. It is the Yoga of Aurobindo to combine all powers in all the spheres. So his motto is that *all life is Yoga*.⁶ K.R.S. Iyengar compares Aurobindo's Yoga with an all-out attack⁷—an attack involving the use of the army, the navy and the air force—in the language of modern military strategy.

The more important of his Yoga is not only to combine all powers of self-being and turn them into the divine Being, but also to experience the Being in our minds and transform all our beings. He explains his Yoga compared with Bhagavad-Gītā as follows:⁸

“The Gītā's Yoga consists in the offering of one's work as a sacrifice to the Divine, the conquest of desire, egoless and desireless action, bhakti for the Divine, an entering into the cosmic consciousness, the sense of unity with all creatures, oneness with the Divine. This Yoga adds the bringing down of the supramental Light and Force (its ultimate aim) and the transformation of the nature.”

The characters of his Yoga, supramental, pūrṇa (filled) and integral as above mentioned consist in the transformation of all beings based on the experience of the Absolute. While his Yoga aims at the turning of all powers into the Absolute or the Transcendent, it does to convert all one's being and transform it. His philosophical thought is based on such an idea of Yoga as above stated, and has developed the various directions and contents of his speculation.

He asserts the four great instruments⁹ in order to complete the integral Yoga, i.e. (1) śāstra, (2) guru, (3) utsāha, (4) kāla. By the combined working of the four instruments the yoga-siddhi (accomplishment of yoga) can be best attained.

(1) śāstra, instruction

There will be the various instructions to complete Yoga. Aurobindo takes the śāstra (instruction) for the knowledge of the truths, principles, powers and processes that govern the realisation. Therefore the instruction will be divided into the spiritual and bodily, or it will be conceived that there are the innumerable instructions according to the instantaneous spiritual and bodily situations. But what he intends to make clear is not the actual rules of the instruction, but the pattern of it, as it were, which lies in background of them, or the source of it, as it were, which realizes them. Such a pattern or source of the instruction is considered to be in the inner root of self-being.

Aurobindo mentions such a character of the instruction the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every thinking and living being and he compares it with a bud of the lotus; the instruction means a bud closed and folded up within us, which is the eternal knowledge and perfection, and “it opens swiftly or gradually, petal by petal, through successive realizations, once the mind of man begins to turn towards the Eternal, once his heart, no longer compressed and confined by attachment to finite appearances, becomes enamoured, in

⁶ *Op. cit.*, *Sri Aurobindo*, p. 325; *Ārya*, Vol. I, August 1914.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 326.

⁸ *'Lights on Yoga'*, 1935, p. 74.

⁹ *Synthesis of Yoga*, 1950, pp. 1-19.

whatever degree, of the Infinite.” According to his opinion we know the Divine and become the Divine, because we are That already in our secret nature. All teaching is a revealing, all becoming is an unfolding. The instruction which he refers to is not the objectified or external rule, but the inmate essence discovered by ourselves in our own beings. It is considered to include the double characters of the instruction, firstly the pattern of the instruction exists in our inner beings as the Divine in our nature, secondly based on such an instruction the Divine unfolds. Therefore, the idea of the guru (teacher) as follows is deeply related with the second character of the instruction.

(2) guru, teacher

While Aurobindo stayed in Baroda he practised Yoga under Yogi Lele. As the Yogi could not, however, stay with him long time Aurobindo asked him how he was to get instructions for the realization of Yoga in his absence. After a little thought Lele asked him whether he could surrender himself entirely to inner Guide within him, and move as it moved him; if so, Aurobindo needed no instructions from Lele or anybody else. Aurobindo accepted this and made it his rule of Yoga and of life. So the teacher who is here referred to is not the outward one, but the essence of the teacher discovered in one's inner being. This is most important to complete the Integral Yoga. Aurobindo expresses the teacher by the other names than the inner Guide as follows:

“The inmost soul in us, the secret and universal Teacher who is seated in the hearts of all,”¹⁰ Master of the Yoga,¹¹ the Guide in the conscious being, caitya guru, antaryāmin, the Absolute of the thinker, the Unknowable of the Agnostic, the universal Force of the materialist, the supreme Soul and the supreme śakti.”¹²

From the above-mentioned, the teacher is the highest soul, power, Absolute, Unknowable or antaryāmin (regulator of inner feelings) who instructs and leads oneself. So the teacher will be considered to be the personified power of the instruction above-mentioned, and in reality of Yoga both instruction and teacher will be in the same origin which emerges sometimes as ‘āstra; sometimes as guru.

In the early stage of Yoga one should never forget the aids of the external teacher, Kṛṣṇa, Christ or Buddha, or the living one. In that case he points to the important three instruments of the teacher,—teaching, example, influence.¹³

(i) Teaching

Aurobindo refers to the teaching as follows: “The wise teacher will seek to awaken much more than to instruct.” The teacher will throw in only what is necessary for making the bud of truth sprout, and awaken the divine light and set working the divine force. He will never compel to accept his own opinion.

(ii) Example

The example is more powerful than the instruction. It is not the example of the outward acts nor that of the personal character, but the fact of truth realization in his inner heart which governs his whole life, inner state and all his activities. This is only what will most stimulate the aspiration of truth pursuit, and is the universal and essential element of the

¹⁰ ‘*Synthesis of Yoga*’, p. 2.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

teacher; the rest belongs to his individual person and circumstance.

(iii) Influence

The influence is more important than the example. It is not the outward authority of the teacher over his disciple, but the communication between the teacher and others which belongs to the more inward and essential problem, based on the example. What the teacher throws himself into others in the power of his activity, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another.

The teacher who has completely these three elements above-mentioned can be hardly found. When Aurobindo began practising Yoga, he did so by himself without a teacher, getting the rule from his friend. Later on he wanted to find a teacher in vain, but for a short time he looked up to Lele as his teacher, and at parting Lele advised him to obey the inner Guide. Therefore the three elements of the teacher show the ideal type of teacher, which would be hardly in reality actualized. Even if it is possible to obtain the teacher near to the ideal type, he is only a means and an aid, a body or a channel to draw out the inner Divine from others. What makes one go forward to the unknowable absolute world is nothing else the Divine discovered in one's own inner being, which will sometimes become the person of example, sometimes influence himself. Therefore the three elements will be in the long run included in the ideal teacher.

(3) utsāha, exertion

He refers to the exertion as the zeal for the Lord, or vyākulatā, (the intent occupation) or the heart's eagerness for the attainment of the Divine. The original meaning of utsāha points to the energy or effort, so it is not only the sentimental eagerness, but also practical exertion to realize the Divine. Concerning the utsāha he refers to śraddhā (faith) as a great and wide spiritual and intelligent faith. But this is the ultimate condition of śraddhā, on the contrary, during the process of Yoga it is not always so. He rather insists on the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind.¹⁴

It is very difficult and takes a long time to complete the integral Yoga, and it is necessary for the purpose of its completion to have the integral faith and unshakable patience. Without them the training of Yoga may end in failure. The faith is especially important, and it is very difficult to hold fast to it, because the human mind has the triguṇa, sattva, rajas, tamas, and out of them the rajas includes the quality of motion, so the resolution is likely to be disturbed. Even the people who have trained Yoga for a long time make no progress owing to the faltering or overclouding of their wills, not to speak of the beginners. So we should keep in mind that the process of Yoga is very difficult, and should have a firm faith in order to conquer the difficulty. This faith is considered, so to speak, to be 'a support from above', 'the brilliant shadow, thrown by a secret light that exceeds, the intellect and its data', or 'the heart of a hidden knowledge'. Observed from the standpoint of such his opinion, his faith is not blind, but rather intends to dig out the hidden knowledge. Accordingly the faith in the process of Yoga is said at least to change into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge.

(4) kāla, time

He concentrates his delicate thinking on the problem of time. He takes the time in Yoga for 'the remaining aid needed for the effectivity of the process'. This may be the synthetic or conclusive definition of time, or the rational explanation of time which seems to

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

be adapted to the object of Yoga. Concerning the content or condition of time in Yoga, however, he refers to as follows: A field of circumstances and forces meeting and working out resultant progression whose course it measures. According to this opinion, the time is a field of the various circumstances and forces, meets the resultant progression, and at last becomes itself, at the same time it measures the course of progression.

Analyzed this short passage, it seems nearly to show as follows: The opinion that the time is taken for a field of the various circumstances and forces, seems to compare the time with the space which comprehends the circumstances or personality in Yoga. This is considered to be the startline in the observation of time. When the field of circumstances and forces meets the resultant progression and becomes itself, the time which is compared with the space displays its own nature, i.e. it can be seen that the quality of space changes into the quality of time by converting the extension of field into the current of progression. In real Yoga it is conceived that the circumstance or personality are converted into one united current of life. While the objective world of space changes into the subjective world of time, or the content of circumstance and personality is converted into the current of life, he tries to set the time as the epistemological subject in the background of such characters of time. This is considered to be a measurer of the course of progression.

Thus the time includes the three moments, the quality of space as the field, the quality of time as the progression and the epistemological subject as the measurer, and the third moment which is the epistemological subject will come into question. According to his opinion this subject will be divided into ego and the Divine. The ego is considered, so to speak, to be the distorted or bewildered of the epistemological subject, and the Divine is considered to be the real nature of the same one. Concerning the time, therefore, the ego and the Divine display the different status. He says:¹⁵

“To the ego Time is a tyrant or a resistance, to the Divine an instrument. Therefore, while our effort is personal, Time appears as a resistance, for it presents to us all the obstruction of the forces that conflict with our own.”

In proportion that the epistemological subject is the ego or the Divine, the time is the resistance or the instrument. But, on the other hand, he says that the time is always in fact the instrument of the soul. So he is considered to be convinced that, observed from the viewpoint of the integral Yoga, the time is always flowing into the right direction, however difficult and troublesome the training of Yoga may be by the various transformation of ego. When this opinion is realized in his actual consciousness of Yoga, he says:¹⁶

“When the divine working and the personal are combined in our consciousness, it appears as a medium and condition. When the two become one, it appears as a servant and instrument.”

III. *The Stages in Yoga*

The aim of Yoga is to get away from the sphere of the conscious self, to reach the trans-conscious Absolute or the ground of the conscious self and to convert the whole self-

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

being. So there will be the various stages in the process of Yoga. He points to the three stages in the integral Yoga as follows:¹⁷ (1) the effort towards at least an initial and enabling self-transcendence and contact with the Divine, (2) the reception of that which transcends, that with which we have gained communion, into ourselves for the transformation of our whole conscious being, (3) the utilisation of our transformed humanity as a divine centre in the world. Compared these stages with Buddhism, (1) and (2) may be the benefiting self (*svārtha*), and (3) may be the benefiting others (*parārtha*). In the actual Yoga, however, these stages will not always plainly discriminated. Observed from his motto that all life is Yoga, as above-mentioned, the benefitings of self and others will be deeply related with each other. So that which seems to be the benefiting self must be closely connected with the benefiting others. As Yoga has the close connection with all life, the process of Yoga is very difficult and complicated, and it is not easily completed. He says: "What Yoga searches after is not truth of thought alone or truth of mind alone, but the dynamic truth of a living and revealing spiritual experience." As above-mentioned, when it is the purpose of Yoga to search after the dynamic truth of a living experience, there will be immeasurable stages in the pursuit of truth as well as the experience of life is immeasurable.

Even if *svārtha* (benefiting self) is closely connected with *parārtha* (benefiting other), the latter which is especially distinguished from the former is referred to in his ethical, educational, national and world-wide opinions. Therefore, the Yoga in a narrow sense which is different from them is observed concerning *svārtha*. Put together (1) and (2) above-mentioned, he opens in particular the three stages as follows:¹⁸ (1) The personal will is occasionally or frequently enlightened or moved by a supreme Will or conscious Force beyond it, (2) the personal will is constantly replaced by a supreme Will, (3) the personal will is identified and merged in that divine Power-action. The first is the stage when we are still governed by the intellect, heart and senses; we have to seek or wait for the divine inspiration and guidance and do not always find or receive it. The second is the stage when human intelligence is more and more replaced by a high illumined or intuitive spiritualized mind, the external human heart by the inner psychic heart, the senses by a purified and selfless vital force. The third is the stage when we rise even above spiritualized mind to the supramental levels. In proportion to the three stages he points to the following stages chiefly from the negative standpoint;¹⁹ (1) to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world, (2) to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works—the only fruit of sacrifice is the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us—, (3) to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. The first stage is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second stage is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the first. The third stage is the most difficult transformation of all and cannot be perfectly done if the other two steps have not been taken.

Out of the two kinds of three stages above-mentioned, the former group is observed from the positive standpoint, the latter group from the negative standpoint, and both groups are

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 236.

considered to be nearly proportionate.²⁰ They develop stage by stage from shallow to deep, from easy to difficult. The three stages, however, are not always clearly discriminated in proportion to the progress of Yoga, or they are not necessarily to be taken step after step. He plainly holds that the third stage cannot be perfectly done if the first two stages have not been taken and this first stage too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement. Observed from this point, even if the course of Yoga can be traced from shallow to deep, on the other hand all the stages makes one integral Yoga.

IV. *The Ego in Yoga*

The important subject is the problem of ego in such a process of Yoga. This is to be inferred from that the elimination of ego-sense is the last subject in the negative standpoint of the three stages. Now what does he think about the ego-sense? Contrasted ego-sense with memory, he states in his important work "The Life Divine" as follows:²¹

"The ego-sense is not a result of memory or built by memory, but already and always there as a point of reference or as something in which the mind-sense concentrates itself so as to have a co-ordinant centre instead of sprawling incoherently all over the field of experience; ego-memory reinforces this concentration. So the conscious mind-substance is always that of one and the same conscious person; he is persistently the same behind all changes of his becoming or his personality, this formulation of self-consciousness and self-experience is higher than the memory-ego and sense-ego of the animal."

The ego-sense is the sense of one and the same self, and it is higher than memory-ego or ego-sense of animal. So he defines it as a first basis for the development of real self-knowledge in the mental being;²² he expects that he is able to reach the ultimate, real self-knowledge through ego-sense. The ego-sense, however, is not always the ultimate self-knowledge, but it has various stages of self-consciousness. According to his opinion, the "I" is sometimes identified with the conscious becoming, sometimes regarded as something different from the becoming and superior to it, even perhaps eternal and unchanging, sometimes it may fix its self-experience on the becoming only, on the constantly changing self and reject the idea of something other than it as a fiction of mind. Concerning his opinion it can be indicated that there is a contradiction of ego-sense; the first is the absorption in direct self-consciousness to the apparent exclusion of all becoming, the second is the absorption in the becoming to the apparent exclusion of all stable self-consciousness. The absorption or concentration are considered to be the common characteristic between such beings of ego-sense, and he defines the ego-sense as a mental form of thought-centralization in the perceiving and discriminating mind, a vital form of the centralization of feeling and sensation in our parts of life, a form

²⁰ In another place (*Op. cit.*, p. 75) he explains sacrifice and divides it into two stages; (1) the growth in our nature of something that brings us nearer to the Divine Nature, (2) an experience of the Divine, his presence, his manifestation to us, an increasing closeness and union with that Presence. From this point the first two stages in the negative standpoint are closely related with each other. When both the positive and the negative standpoints are contrasted with, the first stage of sacrifice above-mentioned is considered to correspond to the first stage in the positive standpoint.

²¹ *The Life Divine*, pp. 464-465.

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 466.

of physical conscious reception centralizing substance and function of substance in our bodies, etc.²³ Therefore, the ego-sense is necessarily separated from the integral viewpoint, because it absorbs or concentrates itself in something. This is called the Ignorance.²⁴ It confounds the individual Self or *jīvātman* with the mental ego and disturbs the progress of Yoga. He refers to the faults of ego-sense as follows:²⁵ (1) It is a knowledge of our superficial mental activity and its experiences, and with regard to all the large rest of our becoming that is behind, it is an Ignorance, (2) it is a knowledge only of being and becoming as limited to the individual self and its experiences; all the rest of the world is to it not-self, (3) the true relation between the being and the becoming is not worked out on the basis of perfect self-knowledge, but rather by the Ignorance, by a partial knowledge. So it is necessary for the purpose of accomplishment of Yoga to destroy completely ego-sense.

The actual process that the ego-sense is eliminated is now to be observed. As above-mentioned, the elimination of this sense is never easy, but all difficulties have to be entirely experienced and entirely mastered. Firstly from the integral Yoga our whole being—soul, mind, sense, heart, will, life, body—must consecrate all its energies so entirely and in such a way that it shall become a fit vehicle for the Divine. This will be called the egoistic energy. Therefore, concerning the first step of Yoga he holds that the personal will of Yogi has to turn the egoistic energies towards the light and the right and has to train them to recognize that always, always to accept, always to follow that.²⁶ This will be perhaps the first attitude of Yoga against self-sense. The object of Yoga, however, lies in the elimination of ego-sense, never the training of it. The ego person in us cannot transform itself by its own force or will or knowledge or by any virtue of its own into the nature of the Divine. Therefore, secondly it is important to use the personal will, effort and energy as representatives of the divine Power. Moreover, thirdly the personal will, effort and energy become no longer personal and separate, but activities of that divine Power and Influence at work in the individual. But there is still a sort of distance between the divine Origin and the emerging human current. This last distance is removed by the progressive disappearance of egoism; all in the individual becomes the divine working.

In the process of removing ego-sense the two kinds of ego appear. The first is ego as a worker, and it is removed by knowing that we are only the instruments of the cosmic Force. The second is ego-sense as an instrument. For instance, a man becomes a leader of one group and feels himself full of a power that he knows to be beyond his own ego-force; he may be aware of a Fate acting through him or a Will mysterious and unfathomable. Even if men who have this destiny and these powers come easily to believe and declare themselves to be mere instruments in the hand of God or of Fate, it can be seen that they have an intenser and more exaggerated ego-sense than ordinary men. The God of which they speak is only a shadow of themselves. As long as they have the instrumental ego, they take the Divine for the instrument of their own purposes, notwithstanding that they pretend themselves to be the instruments of the Divine. By removing this instrumental ego-sense, they are able to become the pure instruments of the Divine and to be face to face with it.²⁷

²³ *Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 194.

²⁴ Concerning the problem of Ignorance, cf. *Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 196, 218. *The Life Divine*, pp. 505–509, 515–517, 519–522, 526–527.

²⁵ *The Life Divine*, pp. 466–467.

²⁶ *Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 10.

²⁷ Cf. *Op. cit.*, pp. 237–241.

Does the elimination of ego-sense end here? No, not always. He seeks for the problem after the instrumental ego has surrendered to the divine Power. He thinks that it is inadequate, imperfect only to know the divine Power one cosmic Power; the Divine is infinite, so it is necessary to be related with the various experiences about it. And at last there is one fundamental perception indispensable towards any integral knowledge or many-sided experience of this Infinite. It is to realize the Divine in its essential self and truth unaltered by forms and phenomena.

As above-mentioned, concerning the elimination of ego-sense it is important firstly to train the energy of ego and turn it to the Divine, secondly to be converted from ego to the Divine, being aware of that this energy is nothing else the activity of the Divine; observed from the viewpoint of ego, the ego-sense of the worker is converted into the instrumental ego, then the instrumental ego into the instrument of the Divine, so the ego-sense is merged in the Divine. Therefore, the problem of removing such an ego-sense should be searched in the complicated relations between the ego and the Divine. In actual Yoga the working of ego is also considered to be the working of the absolute Divine. Or even if we believe that we experience the only Divine and are united with it, it may be sometimes nothing else our own's shadow of ego. So the direct experiences of the Divine are never simple, as well as the content of ego is complicated. In proportion to infinite movements of ego, it is also infinite and innumerable to experience the Divine. On the other hand, these innumerable experiences are not separated from the simplicity of the Divine, so it is always demanded to realize its simplicity. Therefore, the whole experiences of Yoga from the elimination of ego to the absorption in the Divine is considered, from the viewpoint of ego, to be infinitely complicated, and from the viewpoint of the Divine, to be quite simple. So the complexity of Yoga experience is always reduced to its simplicity, while the simplicity is always developing into the complexity