

On Sri Aurobindo (A Fragment)

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There is in the field of yoga a differentiation between two opposed methods. One is the method that tends towards the inclusion of everything. It is called the *iti-iti* form. But opposed to this is the method that is known as the *neti-neti* form, which proceeds by the process of cutting away and cutting away until one finally arrives at the central core which cannot be denied. The first method is characteristic of *bhakti* yoga and is in considerable measure present in *karma* yoga, but the *neti-neti* method is characteristic of *jnana* yoga. By the latter process, one, by the use of incisive concepts, cuts down as far as he can toward the central core and by reaching that attains a breakthrough; then there can be a rebuilding. This is the method characteristic of Shankara, and one which I know can be effective.

One wonders whether the yoga that emerged from Aurobindo could ever be followed without an aid of the *guru*. The Shankara method, I know, can be successful by the individual working alone. Both methods, without the least doubt, can be effective, but they reflect different approaches toward ultimate Realization. Aurobindo's method is the method of universal inclusion, and it is entirely reasonable that he should have evolved the conception of a synthesis of yoga.

Dr. Price deserves to be highly commended for having produced an abstract of the Aurobindian contribution within the compass of less than 200 pages which gives a fair review.¹ This is an abstract from something more than 4000 pages. It gives an initial appreciation and understanding of this Sage's contribution. But to achieve a really deep understanding of Aurobindo's work requires something like ten years of devoted application, both in reading, reflection, and meditation; and all of that upon the background of a fair knowledge of both Eastern and Western philosophy. But it is well worth this effort.

¹ Joan Price, *An Introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1977).