

“BEING” UNDERSTOOD: *The Path of Inspiration*

By Margaret Astrid Phanes

Focusing consciousness or awareness is one of the many processes used in meditation. I have found something else useful for meditation and that is inspiration or inspired vision. The works of Sri Aurobindo are energetic and evoke an expansive consciousness that integrates the experience of time and eternity. In his words there is a profound vision of oneness, soul, transformation, and spiritual evolution. When one is offered a deep understanding of the soul, it is easier to find a path for the soul's expression. This can produce a profound level of creative expression. Since I am a digital artist, I have used this meditation process as a continuous stream of inspiration.

Sri Aurobindo lived from 1872 - 1950 and was educated at Cambridge. He was a founder, pre Ghandi, of the Indian Independence Movement. He was also a master of languages, which allowed him to bring together Sanskrit and English for the power and accessibility of both. I would like to clarify that Yoga means union in Sanskrit and not just asanas or yoga postures. Sri Aurobindo is the founder of the Integral perspective and Integral Yoga. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1951.

When you begin to read Sri Aurobindo, the sentences are so long that the mind buckles. This is a good thing. The works are meant to inspire experiences that can only be reached beyond mind. Once past the mind's limitation of understanding, which can take a while depending on your temperament, there is nothing to compare to the power and scope of the material. The other surprising phenomenon is that no matter how many times I read the works, underlining and starring as I go, I retain so little. This would be extremely disconcerting, except that what I retain are innovative jewels of thought and concept I have found nowhere else.

Here is an example of a short poem from *Sri Aurobindo Collected Poems*.

Ocean Oneness

Silence is round me, wideness ineffable;
White birds on the ocean diving and wandering;
A soundless sea on a voiceless heaven,
Azure on azure, is mutely gazing.

Identified with silence and boundlessness
My spirit widens clasping the universe
Till all that seemed becomes the Real,
One in a mighty and single vastness.

Someone broods, there nameless and bodiless,
Conscious and lonely, deathless and infinite,
And, sole in a still eternal rapture,
Gathers all things to his heart for ever.

It is this combination of the mystic and the poet that brings me back to study and meditation. Recently, I spent a few days amidst untold pages. I wanted to choose a

sample that suggested the depth of thought and the unification of opposites. The passage I found seemed related to Einstein's unified field theory.

"For, beyond the division and contradictions of the intellect there is another light and there the vision of truth reveals itself which we may thus try to express to ourselves intellectually. There all is one truth of all these truths; for there each is present and justified in all the rest. In that light our spiritual experience becomes united and integralised; no least hair's breadth of real division is left, no shade of superiority and inferiority remains between the seeking of the Impersonal and the adoration of the divine Personality, between the way of knowledge and the way of devotion."

I am no scholar. I have no background in philosophy. I am an artist and what inspires me is a vision beyond normal boundaries and categories of spiritual experience. "The new power of consciousness does not reject, but uplifts, enlarges and transfigures the operations of soul, mind and life." "And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is not so much the intellect, the heart or the life mind, but the inner soul which better knows its own destiny and mission."