

## *Foreword*

In this book, Klaus J. Bracker has undertaken a monumental task. He has attempted a comparison, for the purpose of mutual illumination, of two esoteric traditions as presented by two authentic seers and representatives of those traditions—Rudolf Steiner and Sri Aurobindo, apparently as far removed from each other in terms of language and culture as West and East. Such an undertaking is without doubt both extraordinarily ambitious and courageous, since esoteric traditions, by definition, deny understanding and admittance into their mysteries to all but those most devout and capable of meeting their rigorous criteria, but more especially because, in our culture of materialistic and rationalistic science and technology, we are not likely to acknowledge the value of either the ambition or the courage that are implied.

Only the most advanced spiritual seekers, and perhaps a few of the most erudite philosophers, would even attempt to elaborate the meaning of the terms *Veda* and *Logos*, as they have come down to us veiled in the obscurity of ancient languages and cultures, much less attempt to enter meaningfully into their innermost sanctuaries of mystery and significance. Yet Steiner and Sri Aurobindo did exactly this in the early twentieth century. And because they did so, we actually have authoritative texts, written in the languages and under the circumstances of our time, through which those mysteries may be accessed. Nonetheless, even in the presence of initiates and seers, such access is confined to the elect who rise to the heights of devotion that such traditions have always demanded. Therefore, even to begin such a pursuit requires extraordinary determination.

It should not seem too startling, therefore, if the reader of this text of Klaus J. Bracker finds it challenging, for this knowledge

has never been readily accessible to intellectual and rationalistic thought. In fact, the traditions that have been the purveyors of such knowledge have generally required the renunciation of such thinking by those who sincerely seek to enter the luminous realms to which these roads lead. As Sri Aurobindo once noted, no age has been further removed than ours from the ability to hear the truths conveyed by the speech of these esoteric traditions. There has been progress, however, since he wrote those words, as he himself acknowledged. By mid-century, as he predicted, the tides of Eastern wisdom had begun to break on Western shores, and since that time Hinduism and Buddhism in particular have become almost as prevalent in Western culture as its own religious traditions, and perhaps even more prevalent in the sense that they have inspired new study and research into the subjects of spiritual psychology and metaphysics, which had receded in relevance in the West since the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the advent of modern science.

It is still helpful, however, for the pathfinders who have found a way to help us bridge the gap between our conventional ways of thinking and those that might still seem remote and mysterious. And Bracker's intention is clearly to provide such guidance and to bring somewhat closer to our range an awareness of that esoteric form of speech, and the luminous knowledge that it conveys. The words *Veda*, in Sanskrit, and *Logos*, in Greek, both mean "Truth." But by this is meant the highest truth of existence, which is not a concept with which we are likely to resonate in this age of multi-media stimulation, even if we find it seriously lacking in anything like "truth." The traditions of Veda and Logos, however, speak of the divine origin and meaning of our existence, and indicate that this can be known and experienced directly by an inspired and illumined mind. Such a mind—at one with that divine origin and truth—can also sometimes become the vehicle of its transmission through a revelatory power of speech. And because of this, it has been possible for such minds to convey this truth of experience in

such a way that it is seen and felt by others. It is embodied in a form that reveals its substance to the soul that can hear.

As Sri Aurobindo put it in a volume on the form of sacred speech known as *mantra*, “The Mantra is a direct and most heightened, intense, and divinely burdened rhythmic word that embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things.” The “things” to which he refers here are spiritual things, beings, and states of inner experience. These are the realities that he wishes to be seen and known through the power of *mantra*, which he attributes to the goddess of illumined speech in Vedic literature, named *Savitri*.

In the thinking of the seers of Veda and Logos, the seeing and the power of speech that enables it are elevated by the understanding of this revelation to a mythological, cosmological, and psychological event in which the Seer, the Seen, and the Word that mediates them are a Unity—which is also a divine Trinity—the Absolute, its Force of creative expression, and its Embodiment in the luminous manifold forms of body, life, mind, and soul are experienced as one truth of being in the mind that is illumined by its presence. Thus there evolve, through the experience and understanding of the seers of this mystery through the ages of a tradition, systems of knowledge in which the Truth, the Word, and the Light are known as one creative force of existence and the supreme truth. This inspired knowledge is the substance of the Veda and Logos that have come down to us through the mystery teachings of the ages, which this book aspires to bring alive for us through the writings of Steiner and Sri Aurobindo.

May those who have an ear, hear this word, and enjoy its illumination!

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## *Preface*

One of today's most vital tasks is to try to understand other cultures, and also their spirituality. Anyone who travels to another country can discover that our efforts to get inside the skin of what is "foreign" to us can at the same time lead to a deeper understanding of our own culture. In adolescence and youth it seems quite natural to find that the other reflects who we are back to us, gives us deeper insight into ourselves. In adulthood, this takes more conscious effort. The older we grow, the more fixed our point of view can become, and the more rooted we can become within it.

This book offers a wholesome remedy. After many years of study, the author, Klaus J. Bracker, who has been closely connected with Anthroposophy since the late 1970s, has brought together the approaches and ideas of two great questing minds—Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) and Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950)—to create a kind of conversation between them. Given Western readers' greater familiarity with their own culture, it is helpful that reflections on Indian thought occupy more space here, and aid our deeper understanding of a culture and tradition that may be alien to us.

The concept of evolution is central to the thinking of both Rudolf Steiner and Sri Aurobindo. For both, the evolution of human consciousness means complementing the path of thinking and philosophy with that of the will, first by describing but then also pursuing this path. The final chapter on the concept of God in the work of both gives us a glimpse into the sublime

heights that Sri Aurobindo was concerned with, and the dimensions that Steiner could likewise perceive. For Steiner, it was of outstanding importance to distinguish between different orders of spiritual being.

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