

CHAPTER FIVE: AUROBINDO'S UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT VEDANTAS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

The Vedas sheds light on many of the obscure passages and ideas of the Upanishads and gives a new and profound sense to much in the Puranas, provided that the Vedas are followed in the right spirits. They have been purposely written in an enigmatic manner so that the essence of it remains safe in the worthy's hands. And for the unworthy the outer rituals are always there. So we can say the symbolic construction of the Vedas is intentional.

“One of the leading principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge and the true knowledge of the Gods. This wisdom was, they thought, unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary human mind or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits. Hence they favoured the existence of an outer worship, effective but imperfect, for the profane, an inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language in words and images which had, equally, a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers. The Vedic hymns were conceived and constructed on this principle. Their formulas and ceremonies are, overtly, the details of an outward ritual devised for the Pantheistic Nature- Worship which was then the common religion, covertly the sacred words, the effective symbols of a spiritual experience and knowledge and a psychological discipline of self-culture which were then the highest achievement of the human race.” (1)

While talking about Sri Aurobindo's implications on the Vedanta one cannot overlook the aspects about Tantra and Sri Aurobindo's perspective on it. Thus it is the union of the divine energy Shakti with that of Brahman, the ultimate reality. Thus, the integral yoga was not the first to make a synthesis of all the yogas but we can see the same in Tantra.

Let us look at Tantra in the following manner too. We have many techniques of transcendence for one to choose for oneself. What is common to all techniques except the Tantra technique is control and mastery of the same organs. For Tantra, it is letting the

indriyas loose for them to realise the emptiness of the mundane. This actually becomes a short cut to transcendence like the principle of Reduction in logic (Reductio-ad-absurdum).

“The word Brahman that became current in later day Indian thought is connected with the “Vast” “Brihat”-in its original root. The “Satyam”, “Ritam”. “Brihat” of the Veda came to be expressed by the word “Brahman”- the “infinite”- the vast. It also was expressed by “Sat” & “Chit” & the vast was replaced by Ananda- the essential delight of existence.” (2)

The main purpose of Tantra is to commune with sources of light. Thus understanding of the Tantra comes from a different realm. It deals mainly with knowledge, utilization of that knowledge, yoga, kriya, mantras, japa and like. It is through tantras that one can open channels to infinite powers through finite realms.

In tantra the sky is the limit, thus there are no barriers between the society and spiritualism. Everything can be turned into a spiritual practice. That is the beauty of tantra, no rigidity. Even when we invoke or call upon certain deities, these deities are the power which is already dormant in us. We just make them come alive through certain Kriyas. Thus even Sri Aurobindo describes while doing the Japa, there has to be an emotional connection with the name of the deity or mantra only then it can work.

Tantra acknowledges different temperaments and personality types. Therefore have room and potential to spiritualize everybeing depending on its personality type. This too cannot be done without the help of a Guru. Thus here every natural element can have something to teach us. But it is ultimately the sad-guru that knows what's best for his disciple. Even Sri Aurobindo could reach such heights only with the help of a fully qualified Guru. And when the disciple is ready the Guru will show himself, though it is very difficult to receive the grace of a Guru.

“Sri Aurobindo & Mother’s comments in this context are eminently practical. The real teacher for everyone is within oneself. An external teacher is necessary so long as she cannot understand or feel the inner teacher. Secondly, he who chooses the Divine is chosen by the Divine. The Divine always creates the appropriate opportunities for a sincere aspirant; sincerity meaning transparency. If a student has full faith in the teacher, then the Divine

guarantees that whatever teaching comes out of the teacher is appropriate to the student, even though the teacher may not be a fully realized person. The Divine uses the teacher as its channel for showing the path.” (3)

In tantra the outer rituals should be done with the sense of inner dwellings only then it works. Only then the animate objects can be turned into inanimate objects. That is the alchemist’s way.

What Sri Aurobindo found out in Vedanta was exactly what he wanted for Bharat. That is service of Humanity, to find the God in others. He never considered himself a philosopher, but a poet. Thus we understand his philosophy through his writings and poetry. Thus referring to the Bharat, he always considered Bharat as Bharat Mata. Thus his political ideas are again an influence from Vedanta.

“The doctrine of Vedantism is that man is not dissociated from God: that is to say, if you want to realize yourself you must look for the God within you. It is within your heart and within your soul, that you will find that God dwells and as no man can attain his own salvation without reaching to that God that is within you; so also in the case of nations: without any national question arising-no nation can attain this unless it realises the highest and noblest and the best of that nation. As in the case of individuals you cannot reach your God with extraneous aid, but you must make an effort-that supreme effort yourself before you can realise the God within you; so also with a nation. It is by itself that a nation must grow; a nation must attain its salvation by its unaided effort. No foreigner can give you that salvation. It is within your own hands to revive that spirit of nationality. That is the doctrine of nationality which Aurobindo has preached throughout and that was to be done not by methods which are against the traditions of the country. I ask your particular attention to that....According we find Aurobindo preaching you are not cowards, you are not a set of incapable men, because you have got divinity. Have faith in yourself and in that faith go on towards that goal and become a self-developed nation.”(4)

Sri Aurobindo believes in the Gita's notion of self that is each individual is the manifestation of the divinity. So at a deeper level each individual is the essence of divine. Thus fails to recognize oneself due to ego because one starts identifying oneself with the ego and thus goes through suffering. Minus the ego one's nature is of pure bliss.

Both Bhagwad Gita and Brahmasutra of Badarayana try to interpret the ultimate reality in their own way. Different types of texts are available for different kind of temperaments. These texts work in harmony in spite of their minor differences.

There are few things in Bharatiya knowledge tradition which nobody changes, one and such is Brahmasutra. Nobody goes against the Brahmasutra of Badarayana. But the Brahmasutra Bhashya of Shankaracharya is popular. But there is hardly any work done on Badarayana Brahmasutra and that remains as a postulate. Even in our mythological concept of Dashavataras there are alterations. After the ten avataras Buddha is included as one avatara and some avatara is removed- such flexibility we see in our tradition. But when it comes to Badarayana that rigidity is because mostly it is so fool proof and also possibly no one has made any alterations. The question is to search for what is reality? What is reality with one and what reality with the entire cosmos is that is what one is searching. Everything is based on Upanishads. Shankara says there is only one reality. That reality is discussed in the Upanishads as the Brahman. That is clear in all interpretations of the Vedanta. Now the question is how to understand Brahman? How to understand oneself as Atman? At this question there are different kinds of variation among different schools of thought. Shankaracharya's understanding of Brahman is through Advaita Vedanta or unqualified monism which is also otherwise called as Jnanamarga, because it is a path of knowledge. One must always keep in mind that our ultimate objective is to liberate oneself. The ultimate objective for everything a human do is Moksha. Now what is the nature of Moksha? There is hardly any difference; the difference is among these Vedantins. The nature of Moksha is to become one with the Brahman. There is also hardly any difference that one is Brahman. One may call it as Atman or chetna within oneself. All these points are commonly created.

We see more importance is given to Karmayoga than of Jnanayoga for the attainment of Moksha. Both these paths cannot be practiced together as they are meant for different

temperaments of people. Jnanayoga is not enough for some and Karmayoga is enough for some other. Even Shri Krishna mentions different paths; these paths are successive and preparatory paths.

“Hinduism also believes that the ego is a temporary construction of Nature and that a person can get release from its grip by appropriate spiritual practice. Further, when a person is able to loosen the grip of ego, he can find his true essence or self, and then he gains a different outlook and sees that there is a universal self-connecting all individuals. This realization is an essential step toward gaining spiritual liberation.”(5)

“Sri Aurobindo did not accept Shankara’s interpretation of Maya as the power that creates illusion. He also rejected Shankara’s view that the world and individual selves are not truly real. His concept of nondualism (monism) accepts both the reality of Brahman and the reality of the world.”(6)

Vallabhacharya is the propounder of pure non-dualism. There is a difference between pure dualism and non-dualism. For him Brahman alone is real and world is caused by Maya therefore unreal. Brahman is distinct from Maya.

“The Veda while admitting Maya, as a positive power does not accept the idea of illusion or unreality in the word. It lays down that the false and dark formations and creations of Maya, of the undivine forces should be destroyed and replaced by the right and illumined formations of the divine power, the Devas. There is no question of renouncing nature or life in the Veda. The question is of the destruction and replacing of the ignorant and harmful formations of undivine Maya.”(7)

“Sri Aurobindo believed that the differences in the views of Shankara, Ramanuja, & Madhva as to the nature of Ultimate Reality & also of the reality of individual selves can be reconciled. From his own spiritual experience he found that there is a truth behind the different views of Shankara, Ramanuja, & Madhva. He attributed the differences in their

views to the spiritual experience of each, which focused on a specific aspect of Reality & missed the more comprehensive experience.”(8)

The beauty of Vedas, Upanishads and Indian knowledge system is that they are not in opposition to each other. There can always be a difference of opinion or misunderstanding but they all lead to the same goal.

Bharat is a sacred land because Bharat is essentially a spiritual land. But this spiritual vibrancy of Bharat had been seriously arrested through different kinds of inversions for more than a thousand years.

For a spiritual restoration of Bharat, political freedom of Bharat is a pre-requisite and that is where Sri Aurobindo becomes political. But like most people in old times. Sri Aurobindo also believed that through political independence India could become Bharat.

But then the alien rule had also resulted in making many of us copies of the aliens who fails to understand the essence of Bharat because of centuries of brain washing and hegemony from the aliens.

Slowly, such stock of people became the aliens within after political independence. Thus, our present day task has to be struggling against the aliens from within Bharat who shall keep creating hurdles from making Bharat out of India.

It was through his articles in Bande Mataram that Sri Aurobindo put forward his ideals from Vedanta which also formed his political ideas.

“It is indeed a matter for great admiration to have politics transformed into an effective vehicle of the teachings of the Vedanta. The political thinkers of the present-day-world are still sceptic of it. Yet it is on this doctrine of political vedantism that the regeneration of the entire human race rests.”(9)

“Sri Aurobindo agreed with the general concepts of Vedanta regarding the statuses of self, which are supreme self (Paramatman), universal self (Atman) & individual self (jivatman). However, he disagreed with the views of certain schools of Vedanta, which do not accept individual selves as eternal form of Advaita Vedanta known as Mayavada, which believes that the manifested world & its inhabitants are illusory. His philosophy goes beyond traditional Vedantic thought as it affirms an evolution of consciousness & a recovery of self-awareness in which an individual self, or soul, plays a very important role.” (10)

When we talk about Vedanta through it literally means end of the Vedas, it does not really mean end of the Vedas. At the end of the Vedas there are Upanishads it simply means after knowing understanding Vedas if your thirst or longing for knowing is not satisfied. In Bharatiya knowledge tradition what drives you is a longing for knowledge and ultimately knowing what you are that comes last. So your thirst for knowing is not quenched then one will go to the Vedanta which is the Upanishads. There are 108 Upanishads which are generally recognized because 108 is a very sensible number to the Vedic people that is to our ancestors. Rudraksha also has 108 beads, 108 coconuts to Vinayaka, 108 is very auspicious. If we go into the details of 108, we will come across the radius of moon is 108 times that of earth. Radius of earth is 108 that of moon. The distance between moon and earth they are all connected to this 108. We will be shocked to see how this 108 is connecting us.

Vedanta is the ultimate, the end knowledge beyond that there is no knowing because knowing Vedanta gives you the realization about which you really are and fundamentally who you really are is the ultimate reality. We don't know because we are incapable of realizing the ultimate reality and to know what we are is to become the ultimate reality, unexplainable in mundane expressions or words.

There are different types of Vedanta; popularly we are more attracted to is Shankara Vedanta which is Advaita Vedanta, then Dvaita Madhvacharya's then Vishishtadvaita. These are the two prominent schools which become popular, one is Ramanujacharya's vishista advaita which is basically Bhakti movement and Shankaracharya's advaita is basically Jnanamarga that is path of knowledge and path of Bhakti. Then there are many others Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka and Chinmaya Mahaprabhu's Achinta Bheda Abheda. One cannot think, of Bheda

and Abhedha. Now we have the new type of Veda Aksharapurushotam Vedanta of Sadhu Bhadrash Das through his Sanskrit text “*Swaminarayana-Siddhanta-Sudha*”. Akshara Brahma is a different kind of Vedanta. We have scope to build yet another kind of Vedanta, the scope is always open. Maharishi Aurobindo too interpreted several Upanishads.

There is Advaita Vedanta and Vishishtadvaita Vedanta. These two things are most important. Advaita in English is translated as unqualified monism and Ramanujacharya’s monism is called qualified monism. The difference is that everybody had violated that text including Maharishi Charvaka, though he has not gone into that. That is Badarayana’s Brahma Sutra and nobody had violated that interpretation of the Upanishads. So everyone agrees on ultimate reality being Brahman, which Upanishads very categorically states in indubitable terms. Now how to understand Brahman, there are various differences in this. This makes different kinds of Vedantas and Shankaracharya’s advaita vedanta is monism basically. Unqualified monism says that there is no difference between Brahman and Atman. Brahman and Atman they are one and the same. We do not know that Atman and Brahman are one of the same because of Advitya or ignorance. Ignorance of what? Ignorance of what we are, our true self, the Atman. Advitya hangs like a curtain between oneself and the ultimate reality that is Brahman. The point is if we remove that curtain we know Brahman and to know Brahman is to become Brahman.

“We see that Vedic Philosophy as propounded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Advaita as propounded by Acharya Shankar, both point towards the same concepts from different approaches.” (11)

One can always open new paths towards Moksha. The Vedic knowledge tradition which is the Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition. For everything depends on the Vedas, it means everything begins with the Vedas and everything is directed towards Moksha, the end desideratum is Moksha. Whatever we do is moving towards Moksha, whatever path is convenient to one. If one methodology prescribed by the acharyas is suitable to one, one should go for that. If one is a very knowledgeable person one makes one own path just like Buddha makes his own path towards Moksha what he calls it as Nirvana. It is a different kind of Moksha from what we understand in the Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition. In the

Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition one becomes one with the ultimate reality, one is not what one thinks we are. We can beautifully look at it from the laws of physics. Physics speaks about two things one is law of conservation of energy and the other one is law of conservation of matter. It simply says that total quantum of energy and matter they are always constant but they never have one form as permanent form. It means every form is temporary and both energy and matter keeps changing forms and in each change no energy is gained and no energy is lost. That is why it remains constant.

This world is a mixture of spirit and matter which makes the lower and higher reality. But its end is in spirit only. Because of this spiritual-self matter is there. We can view the universe as an expression of the same reality. Our body helps us reach that spiritual union. We are also combination of both spirit and matter. This philosophy is best explained in Sankhya school of thought. The merging of consciousness into this cosmic consciousness is something reason cannot grasp.

One can become one with the supreme reality without losing one's individuality. That is what Gautama Buddha experienced.

We have a tradition of Rishikas and Rishis. The existence of Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition is coexistence of the multiple and plural. That is how we look at the nature of the cosmos. The epistemology of the Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition is coexistence of the multiple and plural. That is how we look at the nature of the cosmos. All particulars in the cosmos we understand variations of the one ultimate reality. There is no contradiction principle in Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition. We have a knowledge tradition and on the basis of knowledge tradition the sanskriti evolves. Sanskriti cannot be translated into English as culture, because sanskriti is more than culture. Culture if we try to define, culture is refined human existence. But Sanskriti is refined human existence with an inbuilt longing towards the transcendental. On the basis of Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition there evolves a sanskriti. And from that sanskriti the longing towards the transcendental and from that transcendental comes the Vedic Dharma and all-embracing Vedic dharma.

The entire thinking system of the Vedic world lays in between two points, everything begins with Veda and everything ends with Moksha. Whatever one strives, the ultimate objective is Moksha. These two points are constant one begins with Veda and one proceeds with Moksha. And Moksha is becoming one with the Brahman.

What is Brahman? Shankara says it very clearly that it is nirakara, it doesn't have a form, why shankara calls everything as maya because nothing is permanent, and everything is in continuous and constant flux. Shankaracharya says that everything is Maya because nothing is permanent. We are here now, we were not there yesterday, and we will not be here tomorrow. This is a simple law of nature that is how we understand maya. Sri Aurobindo in his integral yoga says yoga doesn't stop at union with transcendental.

We see how the tradition goes, Shankaracharya has identified the ten principle Upanishads. But that is not how they were meant to be. All the hierarchies have come up with the tradition. It is not true that only the Upanishads are the books of knowledge and Vedas are for ritualism is a myth which also has come along through tradition.

One understands things through qualities we don't understand a thing as it is. We understand things through sense organs and sense organ comes in contact with what you are trying to understand. Therefore Shankaracharya says Brahman cannot be qualified, Brahman doesn't have qualities. Brahman is beyond having qualities. The moment we try to attribute qualities to Brahman then we are reducing the qualities of Brahman which becomes reductionism. If we say Brahman has these qualities, it implies it doesn't have some qualities. It is beyond having shapes therefore Nirakara, Nirguna, Nishprapancha. It is beyond thoughts and one cannot intellectualize.

Why talk about Brahman? Because our finite mind cannot grasp it so all we can do is keep speculating about it. Sri Aurobindo provided the method of Integral Yoga in which we can develop different levels of Consciousness in which we attain the state of supermind able to experience Sat, Chit and Ananda. This kind of divine being is also what Sri Aurobindo calls as Gnostic Being.

“The absolute cannot be tapered into the finite terms of human knowledge. It is possible to know the Infinite in some measure but not the Absolute. The Absolute creates in its self-consciousness all things that are in existence or non-existence which are verily its symbols. It is through these symbols that it reveals itself; however even the knowledge of all the symbols does not truly give us the knowledge of the Absolute. “You can become Parabrahman;” says Sri Aurobindo but “you cannot know Parabrahman.” The individual is essentially Parabrahman; he is a symbol of Parabrahman. Purusha and Prakriti are the self-symbols of Para-brahman, it is through them that the individual upholds the universe of manifestation. The individual is a projection of That in self-consciousness into its cosmic symbols, Purusha and Prakriti. Any attempt of the individual to become Parabrahman by avoiding these symbols would imply that he would discontinue to be in the universe; in a sense he would be released out of the world and no longer remain released in the world. This does not necessitate the annihilation or absolution of the universe; it only means that only one movement of Parabrahman is withdrawn from the infinitude of its manifest consciousness.” (12)

“Human reason is incapable of comprehending these higher truths. A divine mutability is the final truth of existence, for the true individual is a conscious power of the eternal being always existing and enjoying immeasurably by unity capable of endless mutuality. It is this individual, in the light of Vedic perception who by self-knowledge enjoys perfect liberation and the peace and freedom of integral immortality. In a language of pure symbols this simultaneous supreme individualising and unifying experience would formulate itself as that “not only am I in the world and the world in me, but God is in me and I am in God; by which yet it is not meant that God depends for his existence on man, but that he manifests himself in that which he manifests within himself; the individual exists in the transcendent, but all the transcendent is there concealed in the individual. Further I am one with God in my being and yet I can have relations with him in my experience. I, the liberated individual, can enjoy the divine in his transcendence, unified with him, and enjoy at the same time the divine in other individuals and in his cosmic being.” (13)

In the Vedic hymns chariot is a symbol of human body which is a tool to reach immortality. Here chariot is used as an allegory. The same message is conveyed in the Upanishads in the

dialogues between Nachiketas and Yama. So we understand Vedas are the seeds, Upanishads are the trees.

“As regards the symbolism of the chariot involved in the Rgvedic hymn, it too is brought out in an eloquently elaborate form in the famous Upanisadic allegory of the chariot in which, exactly as per the provisions of the hymn, the human body is considered as a chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, manas as the rein, organs as horses, objects of sense as the path & Atman as the owner of the chariot. As the Upanisad tells us, it was only after Naciketas had reached the abode of Yama that with the exercise of discretion & restraint over his lesser desires he could find the final way out of mortality in the form of the highest footstep of Visnu, this what is called nirayana, the way out, in the Vedic hymn.” (14)

“When every desire that finds lodging in the heart of man, has been loosened from its moorings, then this mortal puts on immortality: even here he tastes God, in this human body.”(15)

What a sukta means to one may differ to other and the acharya that is teaching should be so capable of serving in plates as the plate's needs. Here we also see the concept of equity. We always talk about diversity. Here the acharyas acknowledges the different temperament of the disciples thus serves what is required for one's growth. So here equity is practised over equality. There is no point in telling one something which we don't want. When one sits to study Vedas, when one goes to a Gurukul in front of a teacher one goes with certain aspiration. The first problem with one is one doesn't know anything. One doesn't even know what one wants. One is going for some kind of thirst which needs to be quenched; here it is the thirst for truth. The acharya is supposed to understand what one's mental requirement is and give to that aspect of Veda. So a sukta shall mean different things to different people. That is why there are variations and differences. It makes Vedas more complicated. That is a fundamental problem; one cannot make an universal interpretation of the Vedas. What keeps it dynamic is its inbuilt dynamism.

Anybody joining a Gurukul as a student he is first trained in yoga, if one develops the ability to do yoga, one becomes a master, and not all can develop. Sri Aurobindo did not try to develop Yogaj it happened with him eventually. When he was in Alipore people went to meet

him and before they asked a question. The question came to his mind and he starts answering. That is inadvertently he did it. How that ability developed in him nobody knows.

Sri Aurobindo as an interpreter of the Upanishads can have his own interpretation of the same. Even if they don't match with the former interpreters. Each person can have their own understanding of the Vedas and Upanishads depending on their own temperament.

Sri Aurobindo gave emphasis on the evolution of the consciousness which cannot be seen as we see the evolution of our physical body. But it can be felt & experienced, thus just like physical body consciousness too evolves. For this he has given the theory of evolution of the mind. Thus it is the consciousness which has the capability to attain the highest state of supermind. Thus the psychic being has the potentiality to become the Gnostic being which has been beautifully explained by Sri Aurobindo in his book 'The Life Divine'. Just like one can extract oil from seeds because it is present in it, in the same way one can extract truth consciousness from the Atman because it is present in it. What Rishis says about Atma is where the mind and senses stop there the Atma comes. Consciousness is only one it is a singular entity but it is present everywhere in different forms.

If we think we are normal beings we are not. We have an entity in us which is the divine, people call it by different names. For this Sri Aurobindo calls it as manifestation of the ultimate. Because of the ignorance we think Brahman to be external but with the knowledge of Brahman one understands that everything is Brahman.

“Sri Aurobindo points out that it is only by taking birth in a physical body, which provides a separative form that a soul can develop through the play of relations between an individual & other individuals. Eventually this progressive development leads to the recovery of unity of a soul with other souls & with God.” (16)

“According to tantra, physical strength comes from mental strength, and mental strength comes from sexual continence. Shiva, who withholds his seed for eons, has so much strength in his hair that it can contain water or restrain a river.” (17)

“The word ‘tantra’ which is sometimes derived from the root tan, to spread, means a system, a method, a discipline. It is a system of acts on the physical, vital, and mental planes by which a centre of being can render itself an apparatus efficient for the purpose of encompassing the twofold end of abhyudaya (progress or uplift) and nihsreyasa (the supreme good).”(18)

“The Vedas are also quoted as authorities; but as a whole it is the Upanishads that become the Book of Knowledge, the Veda being rather the Book of Works.”(19)

“Spiritual knowledge is the knowledge of the truth of the Infinite, of the one in an infinite diversity. The Vedic Rishis arrived at this knowledge through a direct intuition and not by ‘the mind’s reflective, speculative, logical thought’.”(20)

Truth lies within is what is mentioned in the Upanishads. That is why we have the importance of the inner fire, which is not outside but inside. The potentiality of the truth lies within us which we may not be aware of. The depths of this potentiality were explored by Sri Aurobindo. Therefore he could bring to us his experiences of it, be it discovery of the supermind or psychic being.

Each Veda has its own aranyaka for example aitareya is the aranyaka of the Rig Veda Samhita. We see some mantras of the Rig Veda are overlapping with the mantras in Taittiriya Samhita.

“There is the list of 108 upanishads compiled in the muktika upanishad. We are dealing here only with the famous thirteen Upanishads which are associated with a brahmana book or aranyaka book, typically constituting their ending chapter or chapters. They are famous because the great commentator on Upanishads, in his classic sutra book, “brahma sutras”.

They are:

Isha, kena, katha, prashna,

Mundaka, mandukya, aitareya, taittiriya,

Chandogya, brhadaranyaka, kaushitaki,

Shvetashvatara, mahanarayana.” (21)

“In the Upakosala-vidya a similar instruction is given to Upakosala. Having spent a long term in the house of his teacher, Satyakama, without receiving any formal instruction, Upakosala goes on a fast, when the Sacred fires, which he has tended with diligence and care, take pity on him and undertake to teach him. He is told first that ‘Breath is Brahman, ka (pleasure) is Brahman, kha (ether) is Brahman’, and then Brahman is identified with earth, fire, food, and the sun; water, the quarters, stars, and the moon; and breath, ether, heaven, and lightning. The teacher, Satyakama, on learning about what the fires had taught Upakosala, characterizes the teaching as but partial and as concerning the worlds, and proceeds to impart to his pupil the true doctrine by knowing which evil deed will not cling to one, as water does not stick to a lotus leaf. The final teaching is: ‘The person that is seen in the eye that is the self. This is the immortal, the fearless; this is Brahman.’ (22)

Riks of the Veda and that of Upanishads will definitely have similar meanings because Upanishads are end of the Vedas. They are extension of the Vedas. Sri Aurobindo is entirely trained in the European ways of knowing. His father really wanted him to be like the white masters, and he tried his best to make him a white master.

“These Upanishadic accounts go perfectly in confirmation of Sri Aurobindo’s above view of Indra in the Veda. The position of Indra being thus determined, it becomes relatively easier to trace the identity of the rest of the figures associated with the legend of Angirasas, including the latter themselves. Usas is also one of these figures. Her involvement in the legend is evident from two significant adjectives used for her. She, on the one hand, has been addressed as angirasatama & on the other as indratma. Both these adjectives once occur in one and the same mantra while angirasatama occurs once again in another mantra but that also having been seen by the same seer, namely Vasistha. Now the oneness of the seer in both the usages & oneness of the devata for whom both the adjectives have been used, can very

well be expected to serve as the key to the opening out of the lock of mystery associated with the legend.” (23)

It is amazing to see that in spite of all these Sri Aurobindo became a hard core Bhartiya and archetype Hindu.

However, the influence of his European education is evident throughout his writings. We can see him employing European categories and methods even in his approach to traditional Bhartiya texts. Where had to struggle hard to look for empirical patterns of providing explanations to others. This becomes one of his serious struggles but such struggles take him out of the accusation of conformism.

References:

1. Sri Aurobindo, 'The Secret of the Veda', Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956.p.8.
2. A.B.Purani. "Studies in Vedic Interpretation". The Chowkhamba Sanskrit series office, 1963.p.106.
3. R.L.Kashyap. "Essence of Tantra". Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, 2005.p.36-37.
4. Manoj Das. "Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Century".Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education,2003.p.53-57.
5. Arun Chatterjee. "Essays on Vedanta & Western Philosophies." Lotus Press, 2017.p.75.
6. Arun Chatterjee. "Essays on Vedanta & Western Philosophies." Lotus Press, 2017.p.15.
7. A.B.Purani. "Studies in Vedic Interpretation." The Chowkhamba Sanskrit series office, 1963.p.228.
8. Arun Chatterjee. "Essays on Vedanta & Western Philosophies." Lotus press, 2017.p.17.
9. Samar Basu. "Glimpses of Vedantism in Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought." Sri Mira Trust, 1998.p.41.
10. Arun Chatterjee. "Essays on Vedanta & Western Philosophies." Lotus press, 2017.p.25.
11. Sanjeev Newar. "Vedas source of every philosophy that makes sense".Rashtriya Jyoti, 2018.p.18.
12. V.Madhusudan Reddy. "The Vedic Epiphany, Volume three, The Vedic Fulfilment." Institute of Human Study, 1994.p.46.
13. V.Madhusudan Reddy. "The Vedic Epiphany, Volume three, The Vedic Fulfilment." Institute of Human Study, 1994.p.124
14. Prof. Satya Prakash Singh. "Vedic Symbolism Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, 2001.p.178.
15. Sri Aurobindo. "The Upanishads: Volume 12." Sri Aurobindo Ashram 1971.p.264.
16. Arun Chatterjee. "Essays on Vedanta & Western Philosophies". Lotus press, 2017.p.99.

17. Devdutt Pattanaik. "Shiva to Shankara". HarperCollins, 2006.p.132.
18. "The cultural heritage of India, volume IV". The Ramakrishna mission institute of culture Calcutta, 2001.p.240.
19. Sri Aurobindo, "The Secret of the Veda", Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956.p.16.
20. V.Madhusudan reddy. "The Vedic Epiphany, Volume three, The Vedic Fulfilment". Institute of Human Study, 1994.p.93.
21. Dr. R.L.Kashyap. "Unveiling the light in the Veda." Sri Satguru Publications, 2001, p.15.
22. The Cultural Heritage of India: Volume I, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2001.p.170-171.
23. Prof. Satya Prakash Singh. "Vedic Symbolism". Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, 2001.p.86.