



Introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Life & Teachings

by Sri Karmayogi

w/MSS and Roy Posner

HIS LIFE	2
Early Years	2
Bringing Down the Truth Consciousness	3
Ascending the Planes of Consciousness, The Mother	4
The Ashram	7
Auroville	8
Consecration to Mother	9
HIS TEACHINGS	9
His Writings	9
The Life Divine	9
His Theory of Creation	10
Involution.....	10
Evolution.....	11
His Yoga	12
Social Evolution	13

Sri Aurobindo is the sage and seer who, along with his partner The Mother, dedicated their lives to bringing about the next stage of evolution of life on earth. Throughout his life Sri Aurobindo worked outwardly on his massive body of writings, and inwardly to connect to the divine consciousness, to bring down its properties into the world. The Mother followed a similar path, focusing on the transformation of her own physical body in order to become the forerunner of a new type of human being, what Sri Aurobindo calls the supramental being. The Mother also served as a conduit, an intermediary between the new evolutionary spiritual force that Sri Aurobindo had spent his life uncovering and their followers who were trying to open themselves to this new consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo's vision begins with the assertion that humans may not be the final rung on the evolutionary scale. That we might witness the emergence of a new species, one that is above and beyond the present human race as we know it. Or, perhaps we could say that it is perhaps the same human species, but that is evolving to a new level that appears very different in

functioning, inwardly and outwardly, from the current humanity. Different, emotionally, mentally, spiritually -- even one day physically!

Sri Aurobindo gave us a vision of what a future society could be like if we transcended the limited thinking of the old religions, the old superstitions, of both East and the West; if we saw beyond our physical/material view of the world; if we went beyond an analysis of existence based solely only on a scientific method that did not include the realm of consciousness and spirit. Sri Aurobindo invites us to walk through the doors that he has opened, and journey into a new frontier of understanding and experience; into a new future of infinite, never thought of possibilities.

Sri Aurobindo believed that there is a future before us so utterly different than what we might expect, that there are forces and possibilities so staggering, that we must reevaluate our entire belief system, dismantle much of our intellectual underpinnings, and relearn a new vocabulary of life so we can understand this new future.

What follows is an overview of Sri Aurobindo's life and teachings.

HIS LIFE

Early Years

Born in Calcutta in 1872 and educated in England, Sri Aurobindo came back to India with only one aim: liberating India from the foreign yoke of England. His father was a doctor who never wanted his three sons to inherit anything of the Indian culture, including their mother tongue Bengali. He admitted all his sons into an English school in Darjeeling. Darjeeling and its British atmosphere were not a source of pride for Sri Aurobindo. While there, he had a vision of a dark force entering him, which remained until he returned to India about 20 years later.



From Darjeeling they were taken to England and put in St. Paul's and later Cambridge. He then returned to India. Back in India, he was supposed to enter the Indian Civil Service, but his anti-British feeling did not allow him to serve the British masters. By making himself absent from the compulsory horse-riding test, Sri Aurobindo disqualified himself from the ICS.

Thereafter the Maharaja of Baroda was looking for an administrator for his state and spotted in Sri Aurobindo a suitable candidate. And so Sri Aurobindo landed in Baroda, served the state, taught in the college, and returned to Bengal.

India was at the time of great ferment. To that end Sri Aurobindo organised the youth under the Congress party, and voiced radical ideas from the several journals he contributed to. Their nationalist activities led to a journal Vandemataram, the founding of a National College, the worshipping of the god Kali, and experimenting with several ideas, including the procuring of chemicals with which bombs were made. Still Sri Aurobindo did not believe in terrorism, even though he was a radical to the core. The British police arrested him and clapped him in Alipore jail, implicating him in a bomb throwing case.



When his brother came down with a severe fever, Sri Aurobindo watched as a Sanyasi chanted a mantra, crossed a cup of water with a knife, and gave it to his brother. The fever suddenly

vanished. Suddenly Sri Aurobindo became interested in acquiring such a power to liberate India from the British domination. In pursuit of this goal, he approached several yogis for help. What he got in return was silence in his mind, the realization of oneness, and the vision of the Cosmic divine.

He sought the help of Vishnu Lele, a yogi. The yogi accepted Sri Aurobindo and offered to initiate him into silence. "Sit down, close your eyes. You will see thoughts entering your mind from outside. Refuse them entry," he said to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo did so and found Lele's words to be true. He could, after considerable effort, reject the thoughts. In three days, Sri Aurobindo succeeded in establishing silence in his mind. To Lele this was unbelievable, since success in such an experiment would normally be achieved only after a number of years. However since Sri Aurobindo was an avatar [a being who has come to enable a new stage in human evolution], such a great yogic realization came to him in a few days.

In addition, later Sri Aurobindo attained the state of Nirvana, the hallmark of a great avatar.



While in Alipore Jail, Sri Aurobindo used to be visited by the renowned Swami Vivekananda in his meditation. The swami guided Sri Aurobindo's yoga [the discipline to attain union with the Divine] and helped him to scale great heights. It was there Sri Aurobindo saw the convicts, jailers, policemen, the prison bars, the trees, the judge, the lawyer etc., in the experience and realization of Narayana -- that all is Divine in essence. Sri Aurobindo was even able to see compassion, honesty and charity in the hearts of murderers.

During the trial, Sri Aurobindo was prompted to help the lawyer with facts, opinions, etc., but his inner voice advised him to desist from giving advice to the lawyer. "The case is in my hands, do not interfere, keep quiet" was the dictum that was whispering from inside.

After Sri Aurobindo was found innocent in the trial, his inner voice instructed him to go to Chandranagore, a French territory. His heart was burning with one passion, the freedom movement and the release of Mother India. The Divine voice within instructed him that Indian freedom was assured and accomplished in the subtle (i.e. non-material) plane. The Divine had another work in store for Sri Aurobindo. To accomplish that work on earth, Sri Aurobindo was told by that same inner voice to go to Pondicherry located in the South Indian state of Tamilnadu.



Sri Aurobindo arrived in Pondicherry in 1910, and was followed there by several associates. Sri Aurobindo there examined his Divine mission, and contemplated the best possible course to follow. With the Inner Guide silently leading, Sri Aurobindo mapped out his yogic course, and then fixed its landmarks.

Bringing Down the Truth Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo had earlier had the experience of spiritual liberation (moksha) but he did not accept that as his final course or goal. The Divine's intention for him lie elsewhere. It intended Sri Aurobindo to become a pure instrument that would hasten the descent of the Divine consciousness into earthly life to enable a divine life on earth.

The yoga -- i.e. the method of spiritual progress -- of Sri Aurobindo can be summed up as follows:

When the spiritual experience of liberation (moksha) is accepted as the goal, the yogi normally goes within to find the divine spirit, and remain there -- no longer relating to or participating

in the unfoldings, problems, and issues of the world. However if one wants to bring the Divine attributes, powers, and consciousness into one's life, the yoga cannot be a partial one of liberation. Instead, it has to be an integral realization of perfection and spiritual realization in life.

It is in this way not the Divine intention for the embodied soul (i.e. the individual human) to seek release from the cycle of birth and death; instead one should seek total release from the falsehood and ego of the parts of the being; and, rising to the spiritual heights, bring down the spiritual Force and truth into life, so that death, suffering and disease can be abolished forever. It is the difference between liberation into the spirit, and ascent to the spirit and its descent in order to bring down its properties to enable the transformation of the individual being and all life around him.

In the context of Indian yogic tradition this is quite a departure; sometimes difficult for student of traditional Indian personal transformation to understand. Therefore, in order to make his yoga more accessible, Sri Aurobindo developed new terminology to explain the tenets of his radical new approach, which he called the "Integral Yoga".

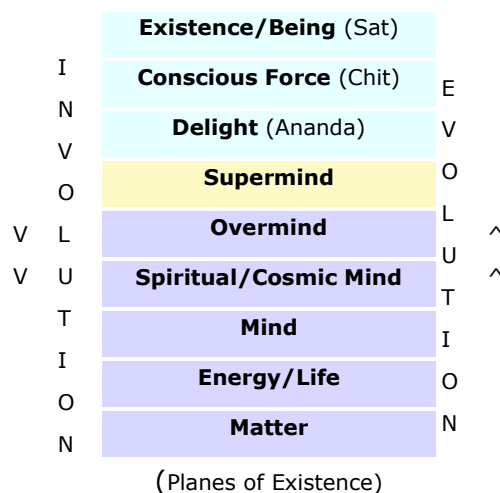
Ascending the Planes of Consciousness, The Mother



All of this acquired a special and full significance when The Mother [born Mira Alfassa, and his future spiritual partner] arrived in the 1920s. She was keen on a plan of action and had her own original ideas for redeeming the earth from falsehood, suffering, and pain. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo and Mother shared their individual approaches, and finally arrived at a future course of action.

Let's next consider Sri Aurobindo's understanding and experience of the Divine Reality, and the process by which the universe emerged from it.

Sri Aurobindo suggests that when we consider the creation as a whole, the lower part consists of matter, life, and mind, while the higher part consists of Spirit. In the lower 'hemisphere' energy formulates into matter, evolves to life, and further evolves to mind. Mind itself is also capable of rising to spiritual mind -- where e.g. knowledge enters the mind through sudden descents of knowledge without the need for thought -- and then further to overmind, the highest state of this lower hemisphere where division of the Spiritual consciousness first takes shape.



In the upper hemisphere is the pure Spiritual Reality taking shape in three forms of Existence, Conscious- Force, and Delight -- otherwise known as Sat-Chit-Ananda. Together, they can be called (in western terms) the Absolute, or (in Indian terms) Brahman.

Between the lower hemisphere's highest reach -- overmind -- and the spiritual worlds of the Absolute lies a zone which was known to the ancient spiritual seekers called rishis, and which Sri Aurobindo called "Truth Consciousness;" or to use his own phraseology, the plane of "Supermind."

The Mother was of the opinion that the power of the overmental world would serve the aim of their yoga -- namely the abolition of falsehood, suffering, and death in life. Sri Aurobindo explained to her that in the overmental world Truth was not self-existent; i.e. it had the beginnings of the negative side. Thus, overmind could build a partial world of truth uniting all available truths, but would not include overcoming the ignorance. Should the power of this world descend on earth, a great transformation would occur, but it would still leave a base of ignorance -- which means the body and life of Man would still be left untouched. In Supermind however, Truth is self-existent. The Truth of Supermind can also penetrate ignorance and reach its basis of truth and unite all such truths and build upon them.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother saw that the body and its inconscient base would not yield to the overmental force, but could not resist the onslaught of the supramental Force and truth. The Mother saw the profundity of Sri Aurobindo's experience and gave up her preference.

In 1926, the overmental force descended into the mind, vital and very physical depths of Sri Aurobindo. After that momentous victory, he retired to make further gains in his yogic adventure -- which was to rise and bring down the supramental truth consciousness into the earthly realm.

From 1926 to 1950 Sri Aurobindo lived in complete retirement and total silence, constantly raising himself to the level of the Truth Consciousness, i.e. Supermind. Even his experience while in Alipore jail, of feeling Narayana for everyone, was a supramental experience according to The Mother.

According to Sri Aurobindo, each level of the ascent of consciousness is followed by the descent of forces of that level into the being. In his case, he first raised himself to the level of higher (silent) mind, and waited for the force of that level to descend into him, saturating his nerves and mind, and even reaching down to the very physical body.

Beyond higher mind, the first level of spiritualized mind, lays the realm experienced by the rishi where one is endowed with vision and experiences knowledge as a descent of light, which Sri Aurobindo's describes as illumined mind. The yogi can even go beyond this state and receive the divine intuition directly without the aid of vision, where knowledge just appears in the mind without thought. This is the realm of intuitive mind. The overmental world of the gods is then beyond that, a level where the Absolute, the Omnipresent reality divides into its unique aspects so each entity can have their own personal experience the spirit. At this plane one can have universal consciousness; a simultaneous knowledge of any and all things, though not quite in their perfect integral relation and wholeness.

These levels of the physical, the vital, the body, mind, higher mind, illumined mind, and intuitive mind, together with the overmind make up the lower hemisphere; it is essentially what exists in creation. The Supramental Truth Consciousness is the bridge and ordering mechanism between this lower hemisphere and the higher hemisphere of the unmanifest Absolute, of Brahman. Supermind is the entity that rendered creation from out of the Divine Source, formulating Its inherent Ideas it wished to establish in the universe as forces and forms.

Supermind is also the plane one can open to in our own lives to set right the conditions of life and manifest positive results from seemingly out of nowhere. It is a realm where knowledge and will is fused. Where the integral knowledge is known, and where that knowledge is also willed into material existence. Sri Aurobindo worked to bring this realm of consciousness into the earthly sphere to enable a new type of existence on earth.

Thus, after 1926 Sri Aurobindo was engaged in the yogic adventure of raising his being to the supramental world, and bringing the power of that world into the earth through the instrumentation of his own body. He accomplished this feat fully before his passing in 1950. His yoga in that sense was thus realized, as the highest aspect and realization of the Divine had been reached. Now the Truth Consciousness, the Supramental Force was ready to move from its origin, descend on earth, abolish death and suffering, transform life, and enable a new divine life on earth.

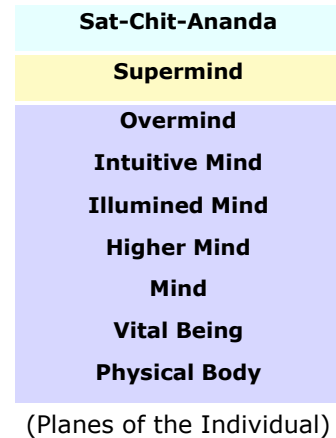
Sri Aurobindo saw at this point that the transformation of the earth presupposed one other condition. When he left the blue light of the overmind, he envisioned the Golden Light of the supramental world. If the Golden Light were to remain on earth forever after the descent, he saw that it would require about ten followers to fully have the Supramental Consciousness. In other words, even if the power of Supermind descended through Sri Aurobindo's efforts, that light could not remain on earth without others' collaboration. Unfortunately, no one was able to help him further in his attempt to bring down the Truth Consciousness.

He then spoke to The Mother and said one of them had to leave the earth and continue the yoga from the subtle [i.e. the non-material] plane to expedite the advent of the Supramental Consciousness and Force on earth. The Mother offered to leave her body. However, Sri Aurobindo showed her that the unique constitution of her body could enable her to accomplish the supramental transformation at the physical level; i.e. bring that Force and transform her own physical body into its supramental equivalent, ending physical suffering and death itself. Thereafter he decided to withdraw, and continue his work from the subtle plane.



In 1950, he had offered his own body to the descending supramental light as a fit receptacle. At the time he left his body, the Golden Light invaded it and remained there for three full days. All the other yogic powers he had gathered within, he deposited in The Mother before he withdrew from his body. In six years, Sri Aurobindo's work prepared the Earth Consciousness as a whole to receive the supramental force, power and light.

In 1956, Sri Aurobindo's work from the subtle plane bore fruit. During the meditation in the playground on February 29, 1956, The Mother saw Her subtle body enlarging to the size of the universe and becoming golden. Before her appeared a massive golden door, and beside her was an equally massive golden hammer. With one blow, The Mother smashed the door, breaking the curtain between earth and the golden supramental realms. Floods of living light of golden color poured down onto earth. Earth had thus realized the Supramental Truth Consciousness.



Instantaneous to the descent, the inertia of the earth rose up in equally great floods and swallowed up the descending Force and Grace.



Following this great event, Divine Love descended on earth in 1962, and in 1967 the Supramental Force advanced further by manifesting itself in the very consciousness of the earth. At that point, The Mother saw that the supramental truth consciousness was now available to anyone, including any of the governments of the world. On January 1st, 1969 there was another event involving the supramental Force, when an individual, supramentalized being appeared before The Mother.

The Mother

The Mother says that since its advent in 1956, when the Force first descended into the earthly sphere, It has effectively determined the course of earthly events. For example, the diffusion of the Cuban crisis, as well as the simultaneous inexplicable withdrawal of the Chinese from the Indian border when invasion was immanent were the results of the workings of the Force*. Finally, The Mother said that children born after 1962 have greater receptivity to this supramental Force and power.

*It is also believed that this Force later in the 1980s brought Gorbachev to power and influence that led to the dismantling the Soviet system, ending the Cold War and avoiding an immanent global nuclear war.

After attaining samadhi [i.e. spiritual liberation from the material world] in 1950, his body was laid on his bed. It was kept there for over four days. Over 100,000 people then had Darshan [i.e. passed in front for the purpose of spiritual connection] with the Master. The Golden Light slowly entered his body for three full days, and then gradually withdrew. During that time, The Mother said she 'saw' him sitting on his bed -- though the body was lying flat, and now fully supramentalized and golden.

The Ashram

When The Mother joined Sri Aurobindo in the 1920s, there were about a dozen or more people around him. Six years later in 1926, around the time he withdrew completely, she founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in his name. From the beginning of the century it was The Mother's dream that there should be a place on earth where humanity could devote all his energies to seek the Divine without having to work for food and shelter. In founding the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, she was trying to create such a place.



The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have said that they had been on earth since the beginning of creation, and at every critical juncture of the earth's evolution they have intervened and played a crucial role in the earth's development. Addressing the children of the Ashram school, The Mother once said that everyone in the ashram had been with her in previous lives, and in those past lives they had prayed to her that they could be with her at the time of Divine fulfillment of the earth. That was why they were there

in the Ashram.

Sri Aurobindo said that this is the "Hour of God" when the awakened soul can accomplish in a short time what would normally take centuries in other periods. This was the message to the ashramites who had gathered there.

The Ashram was founded in an atmosphere of such beliefs. The Mother also said that if anything new should take place on earth, it should first happen in the ashram.

In short, The Mother conceived of the ashram as a micro-unit of the world. It is her philosophy that earth is a micro unit of the universe. By extension, the Ashram is a representative pioneer of the future world.

If the Ashram represents the future achievements of the earth as a pioneer and as a microcosm, it also represents and embodies all the present difficulties of the universe. If those knots were to be loosened in the Ashram, humanity would be freed in those corresponding aspects.

In the later days after Sri Aurobindo's passing away, and particularly after her own retirement from the public, she did not encourage people to join the ashram. In fact, after 1970, she advised a foreigner to do her yoga from where she was. She explained that joining at that stage might actually cause the inner difficulties to surface in unmanageable ways.

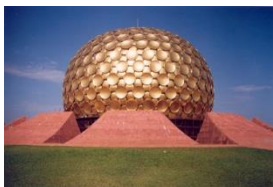


For anyone who has been to the ashram, they know that a spiritual peace permeates the atmosphere. It is not only there, but every article coming from the ashram carries that peace, be it a book or even a brick. For example, a business executive came to a rest house on one of the ashram farms and was struck by the peace that prevailed there. He could appreciate the peace in the rest house and exclaimed that if peace, which he had not found in the hundreds of temples he had visited, was there in the rest house, how much more pronounced would it be at the main ashram.

The atmosphere of the ashram is very pronounced; it cannot be missed or mistaken. Even walking on the roads adjoining it, one can feel it. Although it is full of peace, in truth the atmosphere also carries silence, joy, and delight. One feels a sudden elevation in the atmosphere there. Someone once said, "Blindfold me and take me to several places in Pondicherry. I shall tell you when I come to the precincts of the ashram."

Though the Ashram was established so that a dedicated group of individuals could gather focus their lives to make the decisive spiritual/supramental change, the Mother also conceived of another institution that would serve a wider purpose. That was Auroville.

Auroville



The Matramandir in Auroville

In 1968 The Mother founded Auroville, the international community of peace and spiritual growth. Its purpose is to be an experimental community where individuals can make the effort to evolve beyond their present limitations. Auroville has been established as an experiment in Human Unity where each individual is freed from bondage to moral and social conventions and the necessity of working for material possessions. There is no religion practiced there, nor is there ownership of property. The emphasis is on each person discovering his/her own inner center behind the social, moral, cultural and racial heredity and appearances, and actively living from that center, expressing it in outer work for the community. Auroville is a UN sponsored endeavor that attracts people worldwide because of its openness, new age lifestyle, and dedication to a vision of a new humanity.

One main reason The Mother had in mind in founding Auroville was that the city must be a symbol of human unity and thus prevent the next world war by its very presence on earth. She even declared that as long as Auroville existed, no war would break out.

Human tendencies of pugnacity, competition, spite, jealousy, and rivalry are bound to surface in such a cosmopolitan place where hundreds of men and women gather and live. Their daily lives offer thousands of occasions for human interactions. The Mother wanted those

innumerable occasions to become the anvil on which human nature would consent to be beaten into a divine shape. If in Auroville individuals shape themselves anew in the image of the Divine and endeavor to transform their own human nature into Divine nature, life on earth would gently turn to the Divine. This was The Mother's intention. She even said that Auroville was a field of experimentation, not an exhibition of already accomplished perfection.

Consecration to Mother

A central tenet of Sri Aurobindo is the surrender of the devotee or sadhak to the Mother. She stands as the instrument through which the divine shakti, the supramental power flows. Devotees are asked to open up to Her Power, or simply just to Mother when engaging in all facets of life. That will insure that the supramental force can enter their person and transmute all aspects of their existence, including their own nature as well as the unfoldings of life around them. By doing so, instantaneous miraculousness can occur.

Since Mother has left her body, the action of Her Force seems to be growing, with an ever-increasing power and effectivity to transmute the targeted aspect of life; whether parts of our own nature – mental, vital, and physical -- or the life around us we engage in.

HIS TEACHINGS

His Writings

Several Nobel laureates have commented on Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus *The Life Divine*. Some critics have said he was the foremost thinker on earth. The London Times Literary Supplement said that Sri Aurobindo wrote as if he was "planted amid the stars."

His major works are (1) *The Life Divine*, a philosophical exposition of his ideal, the nature of creation, and the path to a Divine life on earth; (2) *The Synthesis of Yoga*, where he explains his yoga from the point of view of knowledge, works, love and self-perfection; (3) *The Ideal of Human Unity*, a treatise on the course of the world's historic currents; (4) *The Human Cycle*, his thoughts on the social evolution of humanity; (5) *Savitri*, an epic poem of 12 books, 20000+ lines containing the story of Satyavan and Savitri, two lovers who find the divinity in one another who open the doors to a spirit-based life on earth; (6) *The Future Poetry*, his explanation of the makeup, formulation, and expression of a new intuitive and spirit-influenced poetry; (7) *The Foundations of Indian Culture*; and other compositions that fill an additional 23 volumes.



A French writer commented that Sri Aurobindo was the only writer in the history of world literature who had started writing all of his five major works simultaneously and finished them within five years.

His writings embraced a staggering breadth of subjects, from the meaning of the composition of the atom down to the subject of cruelty to animals.

The Mother said that in his writings she saw intuition pouring down from above into his mind and saturating his thoughts and language.

The Life Divine

Sri Aurobindo most famous and important work is *The Life Divine*. He designed the work in two books -- the first containing 28 chapters, and the second consisting of two parts, each containing 14 chapters, for a total of 56.



Book I is essentially an examination of the nature of the omnipresent Reality, how the universe came to be from that Divine source, and how Man arrived in this process as a divided, ignorant being, preventing him from fulfilling his deepest aspirations in life. It is also an exposition of how Man can evolve in consciousness, shed his essential Ignorance, overcome his divided nature, and fulfill his spiritual destiny by bringing the spirit into life, ushering in a new stage of human evolution. Along the way, we are

introduced to Supermind, which he explains is the power that rendered a universe of forms from a Divine Source. It is also the means of our ascent so that we can fulfill our own and the Divine's evolutionary purpose.

In Book II Sri Aurobindo discusses the nature of our Ignorance born of creation and how Man can rise out of it by moving to a deeper consciousness within, culminating in the Psychic being, i.e. the evolving soul and true self. As a result of moving to the depths, we overcome our separative and exclusive consciousness of Ignorance, and develop a many-sided Integral knowledge, enabling us to perceive the oneness, unity, and integration of life beyond its dual, contradictory nature.

Also, as we connect to the Psychic entity, our mind expands to its spiritual planes, enabling descents of knowledge in the form of light, intuition, and revelation, as well as force to uplift and purify the mental, vital, and physical parts of our being. Beyond that, we can open to the supramental power to enable an ultimate transformation of our being, and therefore of life around us. When a number of such individuals develop, a new Divine Life will begin to appear on earth based on the powers of the spirit; of peace, harmony, wisdom, truth, goodness, love, delight, timelessness and infinity. It will be the culmination of our evolutionary destiny, fulfilling the intent of the Infinite consciousness when out of it arose a universe of forms.

His Theory of Creation

In *The Life Divine* and elsewhere Sri Aurobindo posits that man is not the final rung in the evolutionary scale, but will evolve beyond his current status and become the supramental being. This view is based on his understanding of how the universe came to be from a Divine source, and the logical projection of where Man is headed in the evolutionary process.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of two movements in the creation process: an involution of consciousness from a Divine Source rendering a universe of inconscient forms; and an evolution of consciousness from inconscient matter upward to life and then mind and then spirit.

Involution

The process by which the Energy of creation emerged from a timeless, spaceless, ineffable, immutable Reality, and became Matter, Sri Aurobindo called the "Involution." In that process the Supreme Consciousness first manifest as pure being (Sat) that was self-aware of its existence, because of which it emanated a Conscious Force (Chit), which it Delighted in (Ananda).

Through the action of a fourth dimension, Supermind (i.e. Truth Consciousness), the Force (Chit) of Sat-Chit-Ananda divided into Knowledge and Will, eventually formulating as an invisible Energy that would become the source of creation beginning as Matter. Through its

own willful self-absorption of consciousness, the universe would begin as Inconscient material existence.

It is interesting to note that as the Involution progresses, the original Conscious Force increasingly hides. When matter takes shape from an Essential energy, the Conscious-Force is "involved," hidden completely. Matter is thus the opposite of a Conscious force, as it is unconscious, which Sri Aurobindo calls "inconscient."

One obvious question that arises is why would there be a lessening of spirit in this process; a decreasing consciousness, of conscious-force instead of an increase? It is to enable more possibilities at play in the universe -- including good and bad, positive and negative, large and small, the pleasurable and the painful, the knowledgeable and the ignorant, the harmonic and the conflicting, the love and the hate, etc. etc.

The Divine wanted to create infinite variation so that when individuals overcame them and discovered their higher nature, they would have a unique experience of joy which is a step beyond the more static Joy of the supreme.

Thus, the involution is for the purpose of creating infinite variation of forms that emerge from the Spirit. So the Spirit can be experienced in infinite ways when humans discover their higher nature.

Involution is thus the process of self-absorption of consciousness to enable ultimate possibilities and therefore infinite variation of joy. The final outcome of the involution is that energy formulates into matter, where all consciousness is lost, yet where infinite variation of possibility can begin. Matter is where life has divided down to the infinitesimal of the atom and beyond, lost its connection to the whole and is devoid of all conscious-force that was its source.

Evolution

Matter begins as unconscious existence. The process of conscious existence emerging out of the Inconscient Sri Aurobindo calls the "Evolution." Initially, it emerges gradually in the successive stages of matter, life, and mind. First matter evolves from simple to complex forms, then life emerges in matter and evolves from simple to complex forms as well. Finally mind emerges in life and evolves from rudimentary to higher forms of thought and reason. Beyond that is further evolution upward to planes of spiritualized Mind, Supermind, and above, and inward to the subliminal and psychic being (evolving soul)

In Evolution, the Conscious-Force that was hidden in the involutionary process comes out, expressing more of itself at each rise amongst the planes and sub-planes. In addition, there is also a push from that preexisting plane from Above further driving the evolution of the form, the individual at that plane. So if an individual comes to realize the importance of developing a more silent mind instead of incessant thinking, not only is the conscious-force further emerging in his mind, but the plane of Silent Mind above is pressing down and fortifying that movement.

There is another aspect of evolution that we can call "Ascent and Descent." When the individual moves to higher consciousness and therefore to higher planes or subplanes, the evolutionary movement is completed through a descent into the lesser planes of being. Thus each ascent is matched by a complementary descent for the personal progress to be completed. for example, if an individual uses his mind and perceives the importance of taking care of his weight and makes the decision to do just that (the ascent), he must implement it at a lower level (the descent) by changing the habits of his physical being -- by eating properly, exercising, and so forth.

Thus, upward spiraling cycles of ascent and descent amongst the planes is the process of the Evolution.

Thus whereas the Involution involves, hides, buries, the spirit, the conscious force for the purpose of infinite possibility to emerge for the purpose of infinite variation of discovery and therefore of joy, the Evolution is the process of the re-emerging of the conscious force in forms at increasingly higher planes, thus fulfilling the Divine Intent.

Note that it is not just the individual that is going through this process, but also organizations, business, families, communities, and even society itself.

Omnipresent Reality

Unlike the tradition Sri Aurobindo posits that there is an ultimate Reality that permeates all things. It is all and everywhere, and in everything. Thus planes of matter, vital, life, mind, etc. are simply different formations of the same omnipresent Reality. From that standpoint one sees the necessity of all things in life; that every detail is necessary in the unfolding, and therefore we should not discount anything in the unfolding of our lives. Thus even evil, the negative, the seemingly unimportant are necessary parts of existence to further enable the evolution.

To see that all of life is inextricably woven and connected is to have the vision of Brahman, which one can accede to by developing a supramental (truth) consciousness. there we are undisturbed as we see the necessity of all things, even as we bring a higher consciousness to bear to overcome the limits/negatives in the world. To perceive the oneness of All things in the details of life is an ultimate capacity of spiritualized mind.

His Yoga

In Synthesis of Yoga, Letters on Yoga, and in The Life Divine, Sri Aurobindo lays out his method of conscious evolution and transformation of the individual into an ultimate supernature to enable a divine life on earth. This is his yoga, which he called the 'Integral Yoga.' Here are a few comments:

- Sri Aurobindo calls His yoga "Integral Yoga." It is so called because this yoga is integrated with all of life; is to uplift life to its ultimate possibilities. In Sanskrit it is called Purna Yoga, meaning everything in creation is included in this yoga.
- Surrendering our very essence and being to the Divine, the Divine Mother, coming in touch with the Psychic Being, and opening to Her spiritual Force to enable the transformation of our being and all of life at all planes, leading to a new, supramental existence -- free of ego, ignorance, division, conflict, strife, want, suffering, disease and death -- is the object of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.
- Purna Yoga aims at bringing down the power of the Supramental plane; the descent of Supermind abolishing pain, suffering and death from the face of the earth.
- The yoga we practice is not for ourselves alone, but for the Divine; its aim is to work out the will of the Divine in the world, to affect a spiritual transformation and to bring down a divine nature and a divine life into the mental, vital and physical nature and life of humanity. (Sri Aurobindo)
- Sri Aurobindo recognizes the essential divided nature of man. He lives in his ego, in ignorance, in time, in limitation, finite, and suffers from disease and death. Yoga is the conscious method of overcoming Man's limited nature and arriving at his spiritual and supramental Nature.

- Integral Yoga enables the evolution and transformation of the individual, as well as the world around him.
- [The object of the Yoga] is the liberation and transformation of the human being ... the bringing down of the divine Ananda upon the earth. (Sri Aurobindo)
- Discovering the spirit in all planes of our being, and enabling the same for Nature is the goal of yoga.
- Sri Aurobindo also said that this is a yoga of Self-Perfection. The Self that is known to be aloof, perfects itself by emerging through our minds, lives and bodies. Hence the Yoga of Self-Perfection. In perfecting life, this Self enriches life, makes it spiritually opulent.
- Integral yoga aims at ALL aspects integrating in supramental harmony to bring heaven on earth.

Paraphrase of Sri Karmayogi's Detailed Comments on Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga

Social Evolution

Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision extends beyond the perfection and transformation of the individual; it includes in its scope the evolution and transformation of human society. In both the individual and in the society, the soul and spirit is at first hidden and occult, influencing the direction and course of development from behind, but allowing nature to follow its gradual, zigzagging, and conflict-ridden course. Afterwards, as mind develops and becomes more and more dominant over the obscure impulses and ego-centered drives of the vital nature, a clearer, more objective and enlightened perception and approach towards human existence and development become possible. At some highest stage of mental development, there comes into view a greater possibility and principle that is spiritual and supramental in nature, and it is at this point that a true solution to humanity's persistent problems becomes visible in the context of a greater and more radical transformation of human life into a divine living.

In *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo describes the stages of development of human society, illustrating with a perceptive analysis of historical and political developments and trends, and outlining a future ideal society towards which he says it is moving. Starting from Lamprecht's theory that societies pass through several distinct psychological stages of development -- symbolic, typical and conventional, individualist, and subjective -- Sri Aurobindo expresses his view of historical and sociological development in the light of his own theory of spiritual evolution. After taking a passing glance at the symbolic, typical, and conventional stages in Indian and European history, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the individualistic and the beginning subjective stages of modern societies. He then presents a more detailed picture of a future spiritual stage in which he indicates all the others will find their meaning and towards which they unconsciously move.

Miscellaneous Thoughts on Sri Aurobindo

-Sri Aurobindo worked for spiritual transformation, human unity, and Divine life on earth.

-Sri Aurobindo was born on the day of Indian independence. He worked his whole life, especially inwardly, toward that goal. His birthday also marks the end of the WWII in Asia, the birth date of Napoleon, and the commencement of the Woodstock festival of 1969.

-Sri Aurobindo was more than an Avatar. He was the closest thing to giving voice to the makeup and being of the Infinite Consciousness. In that sense, he qualifies as Divine incarnate; as the living Mind of God. I.e. he embodied the Infinite through intuition and supramental vision of the Supreme.

-The fact that the world has not yet taken to his Knowledge shows that more preparation is needed in humanity.

-He indicated that a few would lead the way. They would help in the interpretation and application of his knowledge and wisdom for modern Man.

-Sri Aurobindo lives in the subtle physical plane, where Mother recognized him in 1959. (He passed in 1950.) They then communicated regularly for 15 years.

FURTHER READING

- To read a summary of the essential spiritual experiences of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, click [here](#).
- To read an article that describes Sri Aurobindo's path to the future, click [here](#).
- To read an article on Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future and how Roy Posner came to his teachings, click [here](#).
- To go to the area that analyzes Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical opus, The Life Divine, click [here](#).
- To review additional thoughts on the life and teachings Sri Aurobindo from the Growth Online Knowledge Base, click [here](#).