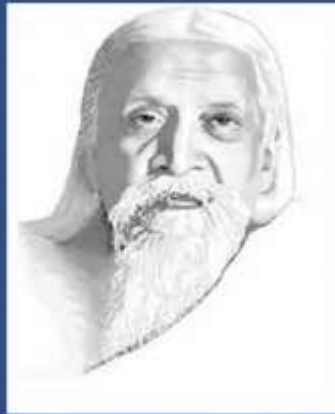


An Analysis of Sri Aurobindo's
The Life Divine



Roy Posner



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by Roy Posner

New Age author and Mother's Service Society researcher Roy Posner presents a chapter-by-chapter analysis of Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical treatise *The Life Divine*, perhaps the most profound book ever written on the nature of spirit, life, creation, evolution, and human potential.

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Introduction

An Extraordinary Vision of the Future

In one sense, Sri Aurobindo is the most radical of radicals. He begins with the extraordinary assertion that we humans might not be the ultimate form of life to emerge on earth. That we are likely to witness the emergence of a new type of individual from out of the current (transitional) human form. In addition, this new being will live his life from a *spiritual* poise and perspective -- enabling the infinite powers of the Divine consciousness to enter his being, which would in turn transform his nature, release his infinite potential, and give new meaning and purpose to life in the cosmos.

Sri Aurobindo suggests that we can begin to live this life by centering our consciousness in a deeper poise within -- instead of living on the surface of things, where we perceive existence in ignorance, division, contradiction, suffering, and pain. From this "witness consciousness," we perceive our life with greater clarity and insight; are more in touch with the multiplicity of truths unfolding around us; experience greater harmony and oneness with others; and are generally more aware and conscious of who we are, and what purpose we serve in the world.

This inner-based poise of self-awareness and self-consciousness is actually just the starting point for an even greater change: the evolution and transformation of our being through contact with the spiritual dimension of life.

In *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo explains that there are two primary means by which we connect to and are transformed by the Spirit.

First, he informs us that in the depths of our being there is a True Self and Spirit -- *an evolving Soul* that he calls the "Psychic Being" -- which is the primary lever and means of our evolutionary change. By connecting to our Evolving Soul, we perceive our ultimate purpose in life, open to the vast array of spiritual insights, forces, and powers in the universe; feel a sense of oneness with everything and all around us; and as a result, experience ultimate joy and delight in being alive.

Second, he reveals that around us there is also a descending spiritual Force -- a Supramental truth consciousness -- that we can open to,

allowing Its infinite truth power to enter our being, and uplift, perfect, and transform it. It turns out that this supramental truth consciousness is not only the descending spiritual power that can hasten our progress, evolution, and transformation, but it is in fact the very force and power that enabled the universe to emerge from a Divine Source.

As we take up the call to discover our higher nature; as we come in touch with our evolving soul; as we open and surrender to the descending supramental power, we begin to make the decisive evolutionary and transformational change. Through this reversal of consciousness, our old nature is transmuted into a new supernature. Not only are our mental, vital, and physical parts uplifted, and our capacities dramatically enhanced, but we also feel a deep connection and oneness with the world around us. In addition, we begin to feel a profound connection with the cosmic and transcendent spiritual reality, which helps us perceive life's true purpose, and our own purpose as instruments of the Higher Power. Finally, out of all of these inner and outer experiences, we feel a deep and abiding Joy and Delight in being alive.

As individuals make this decisive change in their nature, as they infuse all parts of their being with this higher consciousness, there then gradually emerges a new type of Person -- a Gnostic, Supramental being, whose existence is organized around the power of the Spirit. As a number of such individuals make this decisive change, a new human social existence begins to emerge, culminating in a Divine Life on earth. This is the powerful vision that Sri Aurobindo has offered the world. This is the revelation of a future existence for the individual and the society that he has captured so eloquently in his metaphysical treatise *The Life Divine*.

The Story of the Universe

In addition to his vision of a new humanity organized around the spiritual dimension of life, *The Life Divine* also tells the story of how the universe came to be from a Divine Source. Throughout the 56 chapters of the book, Sri Aurobindo refers to the process by which "forms of force" have emerged from an Infinite consciousness -- producing the energy, matter, and life forms in the universe. He also indicates that through this "involutionary" movement from spirit to energy, followed by an "evolutionary" movement from matter to mind, humans emerged as ignorant, divided beings who have lost connection with the One, Infinite Reality. He also describes how in the evolution we can evolve ourselves back to the original Higher Nature of the Original, Infinite consciousness so that we can find our purpose and fulfill our individual and universal destiny.

Sri Aurobindo describes how an infinite omnipresent Reality realized Itself as a Being, and then a Conscious Force, and a Delight in the involutionary process (together collectively called "Sat-Chit-Ananda")

that would lead to a manifest universe. He then goes on to describe the role played by a fourth aspect -- the Supramental Truth consciousness -- in converting the Conscious-Force into the energy that would become the source of all matter, life forms, and mental functioning in the cosmos.

Sri Aurobindo also explains the purpose and destiny of life in the universe -- i.e. why a universe of forms was created from out of a Divine source. He says that the Infinite Consciousness created this universe for the purpose of Delight; or more specifically so that It could extend its own *static* Delight into a *dynamic* Delight experienced by an infinite, multiplicity, and variety of forms (including we humans) in the manifest universe.

How then do we experience that Delight? He says that when we rise in consciousness and discover our higher, true nature, we experience that Joy, Delight, and Bliss (the Ananda of Sat-Chit-Ananda) -- thereby fulfilling the Divine Intent for manifesting a universe of forms out of Itself.

In essence, we regenerate the consciousness that was lost when the universe first emerged as unconscious matter from a spiritual Source; and through our own discovery of our higher individual, cosmic, and transcendent nature, experience ultimate, dynamic delight and joy, fulfilling the Divine Intent.

It is indeed a most profound vision that Sri Aurobindo has presented the world though this 1000+ page revelation of truth and infinite possibility.

It is also something unprecedented in human history, as he has actually explained in great detail the nature of the omnipresent Reality; the process of creation of the universe from a Divine Source; how life emerged from that source and continues to evolve; the limitations and potentials of life in the universe, including the limits of our own human makeup; the means by which we can evolve our consciousness and overcome our Ignorance and other forms of limitation born of creation; the power of the Spirit within and above that can permanently transform our nature; and the possibility of a new spirit-based existence, culminating in a Divine life on earth.

He only wonders if we will respond to his cosmic offering and take up his challenge: whether we will hear the call of the Supreme and make the difficult, yet infinitely rewarding psychological and spiritual effort to bring about this new consciousness in into our being, and through us to the world.

Those Who Can Benefit

Though the principles are profound and sublime, anyone can benefit from the knowledge presented in *The Life Divine*. Seekers of truth and

the spirit will discover a way to fulfillment and spiritual realization. Thinkers will marvel at his evolutionary philosophy. Scientists will appreciate his insights into the nature of reality. And business leaders, social scientists, educators, and artists will be heartened by his insights into the creative process.

Sri Aurobindo has sketched out a new worldview that can be applied to any field of life, and for any purpose. His insights tell us why there is difficulty and pain in life, as well as the way out. He provides us with a deep understanding of our limitations, even as he presents us with a panorama of our infinite potential. He gives us the tools to elevate our lives so we can realize our hopes and dreams, and fulfill our deepest aspirations in life.

Perhaps, most importantly he reveals the power of the Spirit in life to transform and uplift humanity. He implores us to open ourselves to the descending spiritual Force so that it can work its magic in our lives. By opening to the Infinite's Power, we rise in character and consciousness, and we develop a deep, abiding connection with the world around us.

Through the extraordinary experiences of spirit in our lives, we overcome all notions of what is humanly possible; we shed limited perceptions of causality, and traditional views of space and time. Through Spirit, we replace the finite with the infinite, and bring the future into the present. Through Spirit, we accomplish in the extreme, as we are able to create the greatest results in the shortest period of time with the least effort. Through Spirit, we attract the universe to us from within. Through Spirit we know our deepest purpose in life, feel a deep connection with everyone and everything, including the ultimate transcendent Reality. As a result of all such experiences and realizations, we feel an intense Joy and Delight in being alive.

Overcoming the Obstacles of the Book

Demands on the Reader

And yet despite the powerful vision Sri Aurobindo has offered the world, the truth is that most people find *The Life Divine* a very difficult, if not impossible book to navigate. Its long, extended passages, though perfectly logical and impeccably written, are not easily grasped by the average human intellect. Its dense prose, unfamiliar terms, and supra-normal experiences transcend both our knowledge and our experiences.

Fortunately, there is an extreme logic to every word, sentence, paragraph, passage, and chapter in the book. There is a perfection of writing, of philosophy, metaphysics, and insight that *can* be understood if we come to the book with a *steady, concentrated* mind. If we have the inner calm, discipline, patience, keen interest, and openness to the extraordinary possibilities expressed in the book, then we will be able

to follow the rich arguments, and comprehend the laws and principles expressed in this magnificent exposition of the Nature of Existence.

And yet there is another problem the book presents us with. Normally in a work of non-fiction, we acquire knowledge in a cumulative manner, as we systematically make our way through the chapters. In *The Life Divine*, however, most if not all of the major terms, themes, and insights are there in every chapter, making it that much more difficult to navigate these dense, but powerful passages.

For example, in the relatively simple first few chapters, Sri Aurobindo refers to terms and insights about the nature of the divine Reality that are not explained until later on, making it difficult to follow his reasoning and arguments. There seems to be an assumption by the author that the reader is required to understand a plethora of terms, principles, and methods before they are even explained! That might suggest that Sri Aurobindo did not write the book for the average person, or at least not for the one-time reader, but rather for those who are serious and are willing to make the journey through its dense underbrush of argument several times -- and do so with deep, concentrated effort. Or perhaps he secretly hoped that others (such as this writer) would break-down, digest, and reconstitute the knowledge so others (i.e. you the reader) could more easily make their way through this concentrated, though perfectly ordered opus of Ultimate Knowledge and Truth.

There is yet a third issue that challenges the reader. How can one truly grasp Sri Aurobindo's ideas and insights if one has not personally had such experiences; i.e. if one has not grappled with those forces, powers, dimensions, and planes in one's own life? Again, Sri Aurobindo provides no obvious way around this dilemma; asking only that we keep an open mind, and that we let the words and arguments wash over us, so that we are somehow touched at a deeper level.

There is then one final issue that needs to be resolved: it is the way the spiritual dimension of life is presented in the book. The fact is that his views are so radically different from the spiritual tradition -- Eastern or Western, -- that it is difficult to secure cosmic anchor points when following his arguments. Sri Aurobindo's unique metaphysical insights into the nature of Spirit, as well as the Divine Reality -- particularly the involutory and evolutionary process -- transcend previous discourses on these subjects, forcing us into new frontiers about the makeup and purpose of existence.

Again, however, if we give up past notions of what constitutes truth and reality -- whether philosophical or practical -- *The Life Divine* will become infinitely more accessible, and therefore that much more enjoyable.

And on a personal note, let me add this: As we perceive his unique and penetrating insights into the nature of existence, including his vision of

a Divine Life for the individual and society, we begin to feel *something very unusual* inside us. As we read through these dense, yet serene metaphysical passages, we are touched by some inimitable *vibration of the future*; one that is simultaneously unfamiliar, uplifting, and profound.

Even if you have had certain inner, spiritual experiences in the past, you will sense something *very different* in these passages: as if you have entered a kind of infinity; some sort of spiritual dream of *future* existence that is vibrating in the present; that has somehow lodged inside the deepest recesses of your being.

He Walked the Talk

One other question that presents itself when considering the magnificent accomplishment that is *The Life Divine* is how did Sri Aurobindo perceive its profundities in the first place. Did he have a special contact with the Divine? Or were his insights primarily the result of a mental exercise, in which case he used logic and reason to devise his comprehensive theories of Existence? Or perhaps he simply synthesized the knowledge that was already there in the tradition, combining it in new ways to come up with his unique exposition of Reality.

It is my belief that his inspirations descended into his field of awareness from the Spiritual Heights. The pure truths and principles of existence were able to penetrate his consciousness because he was already stationed above the normal plane of logic and reason; in what he himself called the planes of "spiritualized mind." In this hierarchy of ascending planes of mentality beyond pure reason, he was able to garner truth *directly* from the object of knowledge, which in this case is the Divine Reality Itself.

In the first plane of the spirit above pure thought, which he labeled "Silent Mind," all thinking ceases, providing him with the "open space" to think more clearly and powerfully. That enabled him to garner right logic, right relations of things, as well as profound new insights that grew out of previous perceptions.

One plane higher, in "Illumined Mind" he had visions and illuminations of truth knowledge, as they washed over him, pouring in, without the need for any thought at all. Periodically, he had a kind of spontaneous visual revelation of truth sight and light that brought him even more directly in touch with the truths of knowledge concerning Existence, Reality that is there in and accessible from the ethereal, cosmic planes.

Perhaps less frequently, but even more powerfully, he garnered powerful insight through "Intuitive Mind," where he experienced direct revelations of bits of truth that just appeared in his mind without the need for thought at all. These intuitions poured into him in continuous streams, which he simply transferred from mind to pen.

Finally, through an ultimate form of spiritualized mentality, one he called "Supermind," he experienced a kind of hyper-intuition, where the many-sided, integral truth of the object of knowledge simply appeared inside himself complete. There was total identity and unity with the objects of knowledge, as all aspects of a matter were revealed in a flash with an extraordinary power of expression, that was not only comprehensive, but dynamically creative; a perpetual marvel of never-before truth apprehension and expression in the world.

As a result of being stationed in these spiritual planes of Mind, there was a profound opening within himself that unleashed torrents of cosmic truths into his being. He even made contact with the Supermind, the ultimate Truth Consciousness, where all knowledge resides, both integrated and unified.

Sri Aurobindo had in essence gained access to the Mind of God, including a multi-faceted expression of His nature, and the process by which He emerged in the world.

Note that Sri Aurobindo wrote this seminal work from each of these spiritual-mental planes -- shifting amongst them, sometimes in one, other times in another, occasionally falling down to the hard churning of rational thought, producing greater or lesser inspirations. The higher the plane, the more he had direct insight into the object of knowledge he was addressing, producing the deepest and most penetrating revelation about the nature of that reality.

Through these spiritual powers of perception; through these spiritual-like intimations of wisdom and knowledge, he was able to experience the knowledge of the Divine *from* the Divine. It is as if the Infinite consciousness and Reality broadcast knowledge-vibrations of Itself -- explaining Its own nature, makeup, processes, intentions, et al -- and Sri Aurobindo had the inner antennae to lock into these signals. In that way, he was jotting down the truths of the Divine directly from the Mind, or consciousness of the Divine.

But that is not all. Though his wisdom came through this supra-normal cognitive capacity, it also was developed through everyday experiences of how life functioned. For example, he perceived the limitations, capacities, and powers of the human psyche because he had all of these experiences himself. He was thus able to organize the aspects and qualities of the human individual into identifiable categories, patterns, and scales of human consciousness.

Through his own experiences, he perceived planes of consciousness in life ranging from matter to spirit; from the gross material to the subtle and causal. He also identified corresponding planes of being in the human individual, from mental to spiritual; from an outer surface consciousness to the deepest depths within.

It was in the latter that he discovered the wellspring of the spirit within us; in the psychic being, the evolving soul within.

Combining his perceptions of life through spiritualized mind, his encyclopedic knowledge of the spiritual tradition (i.e. the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, and other spiritual wisdom of the world), and his own personal life experiences, there emerged from his mind a titanic flow of spiritual wisdom that he unleashed in his Magnus Opus of universal existence, *The Life Divine*.

The Language of Tomorrow Experienced Today

There is one other matter to address when considering the obstacles presented by *The Life Divine*. It is the language itself; i.e. the terminology used in the book. Not only is Sri Aurobindo's expression rich and dense with argument, counterargument, and conclusion, but the vocabulary and expressions used are quite unusual, even unprecedented in its use of the English language. In fact, both the average reader and those individuals steeped in the spiritual tradition are likely to find it that way.

Terms like "omnipresent Reality" "atomic existence," "Conscious Force," "reversal of consciousness," "Real Ideas," "the evolving soul," "supramental perception," "involution," and "inconscience," to name a few, punctuate the book. Though they may appear foreign to us at first, they nevertheless capture the Reality that he has uncovered in the book.

Even the modern jargon of science and technology will pale before the bold expressions and descriptive terms that permeate *The Life Divine*. Unlike modern technological and scientific lingo, his terms are not destined for the scrapheap of fad, are not headed for short term-obsolence, but are instead dynamic, creative, bold, bright, and brilliant illumined expressions of a multi-dimensional Reality.

They are terms that will not fade, but will brighten with the passages of time. They are expressions that will tend to capture the rhythms and interests of tomorrow, rather than fade as most works do when they are at odds with new, progressive movements of life. His is the language of tomorrow for tomorrow; embracing the infinite-like future that awaits us.

Again, it is our role in this analysis of his masterwork to explain such terms as best we can, so that you have a clear understanding of their meaning, nature, and purpose. Moreover, if you pursue the book with vigor, these terms can eventually become a part of your own vocabulary, and your own ongoing understanding of the nature of life in the cosmos. At that point, you will truly begin to understand Sri Aurobindo's mind -- including his cosmology, and his message of the dawn of the divinized individual, followed by a divine life on earth.

Experiencing the "Life" in The Life Divine

There is one final point to address, and it is perhaps the most important for you the reader. Though Sri Aurobindo writes of Spirit, the divine Reality, planes of consciousness, supernormal experiences, the process of involution and evolution, etc. the book is ultimately about *Life* - life as experienced by the individual, and life as expressed through our collective existence. The book is no mere tome on cosmology or the vast array of supra-physical planes, but how we can apply that Reality in our daily existence, enabling us to fulfill our infinite potential. This means that wherever he expresses an idea, or principle, he means for us to be apply it in a practical way to the events, circumstance, and activities of our daily lives. For example, if he writes of a theory of creation by which the universe emerged from a Divine source, he also wants us to experience that same process in our own lives; to follow it in a practical way from a vision of something to be achieved to its manifestation; just as the Reality did when it manifest a universe of forms out of its Conscious-Force.

In the end, Sri Aurobindo is asking us to participate in a process so that we can uplift our own lives, while still fulfilling a wider universal and transcendent purpose. Life therefore becomes the nexus of change. It is here that the experiment will unfold. It is here in our daily existence that we practically apply his lofty cosmic principles. He intended it so because he called his book *The Life Divine*.

With this in mind, I would like to formally welcome you to a journey of a lifetime: a voyage not only to the spiritual peaks of knowledge and wisdom, but to the shores of personal progress, evolution, and transformation.

Welcome to the ultimate adventure of consciousness and joy!

Structure and Summary of the Book

Sri Aurobindo has designed *The Life Divine* in two books. The first book contains 28 chapters, and the second book consists of two parts, each containing 14 chapters, for a total of 56 chapters.

Book I is entitled '**The Omnipresent Reality and The Universe.**'

Here Sri Aurobindo describes how the Infinite Consciousness (Brahman, the Absolute) extended Itself through the power of Truth Consciousness (Supermind) to become this universe of forces and forms. He also explains the origin and underlying nature of the planes of creation, from matter to vital life to mind, and on back to Spirit.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that as a result of the involutory aspect of this process - where the Original consciousness is absorbed at the point matter emerges - Man is born a divided being, unable to fulfill his

deepest human aspirations for God, Light, Peace, Joy, Love, and Immortality. And yet if we move to a deeper consciousness within and open to the descending Supramental power above, we will overcome our divided nature and develop a new supramentalized consciousness that will be the basis of a divine life on earth.

Book II is entitled '**The Knowledge and The Ignorance: The Spiritual Evolution**'. Here, Sri Aurobindo delves deeper into the nature of our essential Ignorance born of creation. He explains what in the involution, cosmos, life, and our being, creates and perpetuates this Ignorance in the mind, and also offers us the way out in which we arrive at a true, Integral Knowledge. From there we can come to know the true nature of Reality and live our lives in ways that enable us to fulfill our deepest aspirations.

Sri Aurobindo goes further and indicates that as we overcome our Ignorance, we can also embark on a great yogic effort to evolve our nature; to achieve (consecutively) a psychic (soul), spiritual, and supramental transformation of our being. Out of this will arise a number of "gnostic individuals," supramental beings who will be the pioneers of a new spirit-based humanity, culminating in a Divine Life on Earth.

By surrendering to the Divine Shakti, the Mother, who carries the Force, we become ultimate creators of a new world utilizing Her Supramental power. That includes our physical transformation into a new spirit-based species on earth.

BOOK 1



The Human Aspiration

(Book 1 Chapter I)

Summary

Sri Aurobindo begins *The Life Divine* by telling us that the earliest preoccupation of Man is for God, Light, Freedom, and Immortality.

And yet he also tells us that we have failed to realize it, mainly because Life/Nature itself is the very contradiction of those qualities. However, that should not deter us from seeking it. He explains that though Her ways are difficult, She *is* moving forward toward progress and evolution through these contradictory and conflicting means. Thus, from a higher perspective, Nature and Her ways should be looked upon as a necessary if limited means of bringing about evolution and progress on earth.

Sri Aurobindo also explains that we are capable of seeing the utility of these contradictions in our own individual lives as well. That the contradictions and difficulties we experience are from a higher perspective really complementary forces that enable our forward progress.

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that we not only can see the utility of the contradictions and problems of life, but can (actively rather passively through Nature's difficult course) overcome them. We do that by moving beyond the current contradiction between the two parties in any matter and discover the higher harmony. This approach recalls his famous dictum that "all problems of life are problems of harmony."

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain how we can discover the higher harmony. We do that by bringing out the hidden, higher nature behind things, which not only enables us to rise in consciousness, but fulfills the Human Aspiration for God, Light, Freedom, and Immortality. To that end, Sri Aurobindo describes how we can evolve each plane of our being to the higher quality involved in it: i.e. bring out the animus of Life that is involved in Matter; the Mind/Mentality that is embedded in Life; and the spiritual Mind/mentality hidden in ordinary Mind.

Sri Aurobindo concludes that just as the animal was the laboratory that worked out the emergence of Man, so too Man is the laboratory working

out the emergence of the Spirit, God in creation. Thus, Man in his evolution of consciousness can know, realize, and become God incarnate.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Human Aspiration

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that the earliest preoccupation of Man is for God, Light, Freedom, and Immortality. That is,

- to rise from our egoistic current human consciousness and to know, possess, and be the Divine being (God, Spirit).
- To rise from our limited mentality into supramental illumination of knowledge (Light).
- To build peace and self-existent bliss instead of the transitory satisfaction, pain, and psychological suffering (Freedom).
- And to discover and realize the immortal life in the body that is now subject to death and constant change (Immortality).

<p style="text-align: center;">THE HUMAN ASPIRATION God Light Freedom Immortality</p>

Nature Progresses through Contradictions

The problem is that life is the very contradiction of the qualities of the Human Aspiration.

But Sri Aurobindo says that should not deter or deflate us, because that is Nature's indomitable way of progress. It is through these unevolved qualities of our being; it is through the difficulties and pain of life that Nature moves forward on her way towards progress and evolution, enabling us to fulfill our Human Aspiration. (In fact, the Divine sanctions Nature's slow and difficult methods, even as it aspires for progress through Harmony and Spirit.)

Thus, the person of higher consciousness is not deterred by the negatives he perceives in life, as he understands that life progresses through things that seem contradictory on the surface, but which are really necessary for the unfolding to our highest possibility.

[Please Note: My commentary appears in brackets in a red-brown color.]

[On the surface, the contradictions appear in opposition, as negative. However, through our higher consciousness, we realize that the contradictions and conflicts between parties are Nature's way of compelling us to progress. When we see this, we realize this is not a negative process, but a positive one. Therefore, what we must do is

find the resolution by overcoming certain limitations in our being, which in turn enables a Higher Harmony to take shape and replace the duality, resolving the conflicts and contradiction. In that process, we grow and evolve, which in effect removes the obstacles that prevent us from fulfilling our Human Aspiration for God, Light, Freedom, and Immortality.]

Contradictions are Really Complements

Seeing the Utility of Opposites

Sri Aurobindo concludes that there is an impulse in man to reconcile opposites. Thus, we are capable of seeing beyond the contradiction. That we can bring harmony out of discord by seeing the utility and usefulness of the contradiction; i.e. all sides or parts of the matter. We perceive that contradictions, conflicting pairs -- such as pleasure and pain, positive and negative, etc. -- as true complements, we create greater harmony, greater progress, and thereby fulfill our Human Aspiration.

[In the lower consciousness -- mimicking Nature -- we experience pairs of existence, such as spirit and matter, good and evil, pleasure and pain, and positive and negative as in contradiction to each other, providing the basis of our divided nature. E.g., we accept that which is pleasing; which is acceptable; which we desire; but we reject that which is not pleasing; that touches our sensibilities the wrong way; that is not what we desire. In other words, we want the positives that happen to us, but do not want the negative. We want one set of the dual pair -- the good, the pleasurable, the positive, etc., but reject the other side. Thus, our desires are exclusive, and our nature is divided and splintered, preventing us from fulfilling the human aspiration.

However, in the higher consciousness, both sides of the pair are perceived as necessary for life to move forward; to enable progress, development, and evolution. E.g., we see the utility of the positive as *well* as the negative in bringing about progress. In fact, we see the negative as a positive in disguise; even a means of tremendous good fortune. Thus, from that higher consciousness the dual pair are not perceived in contradiction, but are complements to one another, necessary for upward movement and progress. Having that cosmic outlook, we open up our nature, enabling it to become more integrated and whole, allowing us to fulfill our human aspiration.

One striking example is what occurred in the aftermath of WWII. Out of that horrible war came the UN, the EU and many other global developments that might not have arisen for centuries, if ever. Thus, the negative served a great purpose in bringing forth progress in life.

In Dumas' *Les Miserables*, the evil Thenardier is the person who brings about the reconciliation and happiness amongst the three central character, Marius, Cossette, and Jean Valjean. Without Thenardier involvement, the fulfilling resolution would not have taken place. Thus, the evil served the greater Good.

Another way of saying this is that as instruments of Nature (Prakriti), the lower consciousness, the pairs are in *contradiction*. From the higher consciousness (Soul/Purusha), both are perceived as necessary for progress, and are hence *complements*. Perceiving such opposites as integrally unified part of a whole enables us to overcome our divided nature and realize our human aspiration.]

Solve Problems by Creating Greater Harmony

To see beyond the contradiction is to move from a status of division and disharmony to one of harmony. That wherever there is division or discord, we can resolve it by bringing in a higher harmony that overcomes it. That to resolve life's problems, we need to see beyond the contradiction that is there in Nature, and bring out the higher harmony that the contradictory forces are secretly moving towards. Sri Aurobindo thus offers the famous dictum that "all problems are problems of harmony."

[For example, a problem of food shortage in any area is not so much due to lack of food, but lack of agreement of the parties for its distribution, as each party pulls in its own direction. A higher harmony amongst those parties, which would involve moving beyond ego and self-concern, would resolve the problem. In this way, we can look at any problem and see where there is lack of harmony and devise strategies to increase the harmony to resolve the problem. This also applies to our own individual nature. E.g. if our mind wants one thing, but our desires pull us in another direction, then we need to bring these in balance, in harmony. When we rise in consciousness, we are able to see beyond our ego, our sense of separateness from the other parties (or parts of ourselves) which creates greater harmony, which more easily resolves problems. This insight can solve most of the problems of the world, as well as our own being that is out of balance.]

In fact, Sri Aurobindo says that the greater the disparateness, the division, the contradiction between the parties, the greater the spur to further progress and harmony.

[For example, when Louis Pasteur began to develop a cure for anthrax, he met with fierce opposition by the medical establishment in Paris, which compelled him to perfect it, which he did, revolutionizing the field and aiding France greatly. The intensity of the opposition galvanized him and his followers, enabling the breakthrough that mightily helped his country and society.]

**Solution to Life's Problems
= HIGHER HARMONY**

Our Hidden Nature and Evolutionary Ascent

Now Sri Aurobindo switches directions and indicates that the central contradiction of Man is the differential between what he perceives he is and what he actually is and is really becoming. For example, while we only see dumb Matter, he says that involved in it is a Life (a higher form) that can come out. Likewise, where we see only semi-conscious, random Life, he says there is an ordering and perceiving Mentality involved that too can come out. Likewise, where we have only fixed and narrowly focused perceptions of the surface Mind, he says there is a higher, spiritualized Mind of direct perception that is involved in it that we too can realize. Or to put it another way, Matter is a form of veiled Life; and Life is a form of veiled consciousness.

He says that Man is capable of moving upward in an evolutionary ascent, bringing to bear these higher planes in his being and existence. He especially points out our ability to rise above the current mind, limited by the pull of the physical and vital parts of our being, and realize the spirit in it, as insight, intuition, and supramental perception. Sri Aurobindo concludes that if he knew these things, he would not only rise in consciousness, but also realize the human aspiration of God, Light, Freedom, Bliss, and Immortality.

We are Here to Realize, Become God

Sri Aurobindo then makes two beautiful, poetic statements. The first is that the animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has worked out Man. The other is that Man is a thinking and living laboratory in which Nature is working out the Supreme, God. I.e. his destiny is to manifest the Divine in his being; to become God incarnate.

The manifestation of the divine in himself, and realization of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible for Man on earth. In that way, the aim of life, of Nature is to fulfill the human aspiration of God, Light, Freedom, peace, Bliss, and Immortality.

**By Becoming Divine-Like, We
Fulfill the Human Aspiration**

EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT IDEAS OF CHAPTER:

The Human Aspiration - Our deepest aspiration is for God, Light, Truth, Peace, Bliss, and Immortality.

Human Nature is Divided - We are unable to fulfill our human aspiration because our nature is divided, in ignorance.

Nature Progresses through Contradiction - Through contradictory elements, things, people, events, etc., life progresses

The Divine Sanctions Nature's Way - The Infinite consciousness sanctions nature's slow and difficult method of contradictions to enable progress.

Contradictions are Complements - That which we perceive as being contradiction, division are actually from a higher consciousness perceived as complementary and supportive of that thing's, party's progress.

'The Marvel' (of existence) - All things, positive AND negative, are necessary for progress and evolution in life.

All Problems are Problems of Harmony - To resolve any problem in life one must rise to create a higher level of harmony amongst the parties, within one's self, etc.

Higher Planes are Involved in Lower Ones - Every plane has involved in its succeeding planes as a seed of possibility to unfold. We can bring them out by rising in consciousness.

We are Here to Realize, Become God - Humans are the laboratory by which the Divine consciousness is realized in ourselves and in life around us.

[ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Progress through Resolution of Contradiction

Life evolves through the contradiction of dual pairs, and their resolution. There are infinite forms in which these dualities take shape. For example, we see contradictions between family members; between spouse; between yourself and the boss; between your desires and the realities of your life; between two nations; between two races; between two parties, political, social, or otherwise; between creeds, ideals, and values; and so forth ad infinitum in all aspects, fields, and domains of life. Life/Nature thus establishes and urges the further progress of each side of the contradiction. Without the conflict between the parties and the ensuing attempt at resolution, life would remain static, or even fall back.

When we are immersed in one of these contradictions, our goal should be to find the higher harmony that resolves it, which will enable our further progress. That normally requires us (or our party or collective) to rise in consciousness; i.e. to discover a higher center of being. That can come about by shedding a corresponding negative attitude, by withdrawing a wanting emotion, by giving up a stale habit, by

developing a new understanding, by shifting out of ego, by reaching beyond the chasm that divides, by moving out of selfishness, by taking a new approach to life, by changing a value or belief, and so forth.

In each situation and circumstance, we need to understand the contradiction (e.g. we are irritated with the behavior of our spouse), as well as what is required to resolve it (e.g. we need to shift our attitude from complaining to accepting). Both sides of the contradiction need to take that approach for optimal result and collective progress. As a result of making that inner and outer effort toward resolution, life quickly cooperates from unexpected quarters. (E.g., as a result of the spouse taking to non-complaining, he attracts a wonderful new development for his wife.) In essence, through our inner and outer efforts to engage a higher center of being, we resolve the conflict, bringing about a higher harmony, which enables a new level of progress.

There is another approach to progress other than Nature's slow and difficult way of contradiction and its resolution. It is the method Soul and Spirit. With this approach, one does not wait on Life, but one self-consciously aspires to improve and take one's self to a higher level; to raise one's consciousness at a particular level. E.g. perceiving through introspection that I can make my attitudes more positive, I make a conscious effort to raise them. Or subscribing to the deep value of respect for others, I turn my company in that direction.

At its highest, this self-conscious, self-directed, self-improving approach of Soul involves the adoption of spiritual qualities such as silence, peace, calm, equality of being, oneness, wisdom, creativity, love, and self-givingness, to name a few. It can also include opening to the spiritual Force to enable the very best conditions to take shape in our lives.

The method of Soul precludes the intervention of Nature and her difficult dualistic, conflicting, strife-worn, hot and cold ways. This is the path of Conscious Evolution (known as "yoga" in the East), and has so far been the domain of a very few. However, with the increasing emergence of individuality, including true spiritual individuality in the 21st century, this will become far more common. This initiative to progress through inner development of our consciousness will increasingly be the hallmark of the emerging New Age.

Don't Stop in the Middle

Another principle brought out in the chapter is that we should not stop in the middle of our quest and growth process. Once we have reached a level of consciousness through inner effort, we should not stop there, but continue to make progress. It should therefore be an ever-lasting upward movement.



The Two Negations

I. THE MATERIALIST DENIAL

(Book 1 Chapter II)

Summary

In the first chapter Sri Aurobindo told us that there exists a fundamental human aspiration for God, Light, Freedom, Delight, Love, and Immortality, though it remains unfulfilled due to our divided nature. In the chapter, he also explained that we can overcome the conflict by discovering the higher harmony beyond the contradictions of life, instead of waiting for Nature's slow, difficult, and painful method to do so.

Now in this chapter, Sri Aurobindo describes the specifics of how we overcome our own divided nature and thereby realize the human aspiration. To begin that process, he tells us that we need to move beyond the surface, sense-orientation of Mind to a higher, spiritualized mentality.

Sri Aurobindo then returns to the issue of Division itself. He focuses on one particular type of division that humans perceive; the apparent contradiction between Spirit and Matter. He says that the contradiction we make between Spirit and Matter is not so; that they are both true, and are in fact inexorably related and One.

Having shown that there is no inherent contradiction between Spirit and Matter, quite the opposite, Sri Aurobindo then focuses on each side of the apparent division, beginning with the materialist view of things. He describes both the limitation of the materialist-only view of life as expressed in the West, as well as its benefit.

He concludes by showing what the spiritual and material views of existence have things in common; one being that they both seek to overcome death and suffering; each from their own direction.

Here are the main points in detail:

Through Spiritualized Mind Beyond the Surface View, We Overcome Our Divided Nature & Fulfill our Human Aspiration

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo says that we can reconcile the contradictions we experience through Nature's slow and difficult method -- i.e. between what we are and what we can become; between matter and spirit, pleasure and pain, positive and negative, etc. -- by overcoming our divided nature. How do we do that?

He says that when we rise beyond the surface, sense-oriented aspect of mind to higher levels of mentality -- including rational mind and better still to spiritualized mind of vision and intuition (culminating in the plane of Supermind) -- we develop a truer view of life, reconciling things that appear in opposition, perceiving them as true complements. Or to put it another way, this movement in consciousness from the surface to the depths enables us to shed our divided nature, perceive the oneness and unity of all things, enabling us to become whole and thereby fulfill our human aspiration.

[When we withdraw from the surface visual, auditory, and other sense inputs, we develop a deeper consciousness, which causes our mentality to soar to its spiritual levels, where we experience intuition, light, etc. At that level, we perceive life more truly. In particular, we tend to perceive the necessity of both parts of any dual pair, of opposite or contradictory elements, understanding that such conflictive arrangements when resolved enables the forward movement and progress of life.]

The Contradiction Perceived Between Matter and Spirit is Not So

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on one particular contradiction and duality that we mistakenly perceive through our divided consciousness -- that which exists between Matter and Spirit. At one end, particularly in the West, life tends to be viewed from a *materialistic* standpoint, where the truth of reality are only those things that can be measured as material substance. At the other extreme is a purely *spiritual* perception of life; that spirit alone is truth, and material reality is but a transitory reality or an illusion.

Sri Aurobindo in a key statement says that we need to reconcile these two opposites. We need to see the part that both sides play in the progress of life in the universe. Spirit he tells us is the source of Matter. Matter is the means of manifesting Spirit in life. Thus, from a deeper poise, we sense their complementary relationships, while on the surface we tend to perceive them altogether unrelated, unconnected.

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that the ultimate perception of life is to see the harmony and integral oneness of Spirit and Matter.

The Limitation (and Benefit) of the Materialist View

The next and perhaps primary focus of this chapter (as indicated by its title) is the limitation of a Matter-only view of existence: in particular, the Materialist view of the world that sees itself as the only reality and thus denies Spirit. Sri Aurobindo says that this empirical, material, mechanistic view of existence keeps us from perceiving the vast array of truths of life. [E.g. There is also the vital, emotional, psychological, mental, and spiritual that are also determining life's movements. Thus, the subtle, unseen planes determine life as much if not more than the seen and measurable, empirical material.]

[A thought: Science can overcome its limitations by expanding itself to become a Science of Life, embracing all planes and their influence. Out of that can emerge a Unified theory of existence that has eluded scientists examining the world from a material-only perspective.]

And yet despite its ignorance of the subtle forces, powers, and energies of life; of its various planes, including the vital, mental, and spiritual; the Materialist view serves a purpose in that it aspires for *objectivity*, a scientific approach of things, which can help us overcome dogma and superstition, such as those espoused by religious and other limited/partial views of life.

The Commonality Between the Materialist and Spiritual View

Finally, Sri Aurobindo concludes that the Materialist and Spiritual view actually share much in common, including the desire to overcome death and suffering -- each from their opposite standpoints. [Science wishes to prolong life and eventually end death through material discoveries. Spirit longs to do the same through inner means, as it believes that immortality is a spiritual quality to be achieved.]

[It is interesting to see how Sri Aurobindo shows unity of purpose in such apparent disparate fields as spirit and science. Because he had risen to the consciousness above mind to spiritual mind in his own life, he himself had seen the higher harmony that both these views are moving toward. Thus, he saw the reconciliation of these and many other opposites in life.]



The Two Negations

II. THE REFUSAL OF THE ASCETIC

(Book 1 Chapter III)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo shifts his focus to the (traditional) spiritual position and view of existence. He describes spirit's benefits, its great insights into the nature of the Reality, but also its limitations; particularly how the Infinite Divine has been experienced apart from life.

He also indicates that in fact both the material and the spiritual view of existence have a denial view of life; the former denying the non-material, the latter denying the material.

He says that these denials, particularly the reconciliation between spirit and matter, can occur in Man when we move to a cosmic consciousness. There we perceive that matter is a substance of spirit, and spirit manifest as matter in order to enable a greater multiplicity and diversity of itself through those forms.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Limitations of the Spirit-only View (in Which Life is Denied)

Sri Aurobindo discusses the strength and weaknesses of those who espouse the Spirit-only view; of those who have sought and attained the Spirit without concern for life and material existence. He also describes how they can change and make a reconciliation with matter, and thus take a decisive step toward developing an undivided consciousness (and thereby help fulfill Man's human aspiration).

He indicates that the sannyasins of the East and other like spiritual seekers have denied the material world. Though they have had the experience of spiritual connection and transcendence; of pure spirit that is the source of all things; it has been *apart* from the world.

Sri Aurobindo reminds us that this ascendance and connection with Spirit that shuns Life, parallels the materialists who seeks existence in

material Life, while denying the existence of Spirit there. Thus, they both have a wrong, faulty view of things.

Reconciling the Materialist and Spiritual/Ascetic Denial Views

Now we have two forms of denial. The denial of the materialist, tied to his limited, shallow sense-oriented perception that only the material exists, denying spirit; and we have the ascetic, living in spirit, denying the reality of material existence. Somehow, there needs to be a broader and greater affirmation. To reconcile these two denials, this contradiction, and create an affirmation, we have to acknowledge the reality of the spiritual domain and its existence in life. That not only is there an original unembodied spiritual existence, but that Spirit has also descended and exists in the manifestation.

Through Cosmic Consciousness We Can Reconcile, Integrate Spirit and Matter

Sri Aurobindo reiterates that we can truly perceive the reconciliation of Matter and Spirit -- this universe and the Spirit Source that created it - - when we rise to a cosmic consciousness. In that state, we do not see spirit and matter as two poles in opposition, but two aspects that are really one. I.e. Matter is made of the substance of Spirit; while Spirit manifest as Matter to enable its greater fulfillment through the deployment of a multiplicity and diversity of forms in the universe. They are thus interwoven in a dynamic, integrated, unified Whole, which we can perceive when we rise to our highest consciousness

[Sri Aurobindo will eventually suggest that we reconcile spirit and matter by bringing the spirit Being into the daily Becomings of our lives. For example, if we open to the spirit, i.e. consecrate an act before undertaking it, it will be suffused with the spiritual power and attract powerful positive conditions. We can thus bring the spirit to bear to bring out its infinite potential, but also to harmonize, integrate, and divinize our own individual selves and being.]

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Moksha of the Rishis vs. Spiritual Transformation of Life on Earth

The ancient rishis of the Upanishads sought to connect and merge with the unmanifest Divine. It sought liberation (i.e. spiritual freedom and realization) that way. They concentrated their mind and melted into the unmanifest transcendent divine, the Reality, leaving life behind. And yet our goal is not to get out of life, but to transform it through the power of spirit.

As we shall see, Life is not something different from the Reality (Brahman), but an extension of it. The ultimate Reality (Brahman, the Absolute) is not only the timeless, spaceless being, but also the Mind, Life, and material existence that emerge out of it.

Thus, to open ourselves to discover and connect with that spiritual Reality and then bring it out in details -- physical, vital, mental -- of our lives is the goal of Sri Aurobindo and his Integral Yoga. It is to bring the (spiritual) Being into the Becomings of Life to divinize it.

Whereas traditional yoga (conscious evolution) consists of concentrating to connect with the unmanifest Divine, the Integral Yoga asks us to self-surrender to the Divine power so that we can bring out the divinity inherent in our minds, in our emotional/vital being, and in our physical body. It is to also divinize all aspects of life outside ourselves, physical, vital, and mental. Thus, the goal is not liberation, as the rishis experience, but to be instruments for transformation of life on earth. In that sense, the objective is not individual, but universal, fulfilling the Divine Intent through Life in creation.

It is fine to connect with the unmanifest Reality. It is a great achievement. And yet a much greater success would be to bring out the spirit in our active lives, enabling perfection, peace, power, harmony, creativity, love, beauty, and delight in the details of our existence. It culminates in supramental existence and a divine life on earth. This is in essence the Integral Yoga and transformation advocated by Sri Aurobindo.

Beyond the Rishis' Realization to Reconcile Contradictions

We have to reconcile opposites, or things in opposition, such as our ideal of romance vs. the realities of life. We need to perceive all truths. Until we do, we are frustrated. The Rishis in Moksha did not have the power to reconcile opposites. They were simply in bliss and did not see them. However, in Supermind we have the spiritual, truth consciousness that can see all sides, and reconcile the opposites, creating a greater harmony.



Reality Omnipresent

(Book 1 Chapter IV)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo tells us that reconciling and seeing the oneness and integration of Spirit and Matter is to perceive the true nature of existence, which he calls the 'Omnipresent Reality.' The Reality -- aka Brahman -- is the highest conception of existence afforded to man; and having that all-encompassing view will reconcile Spirit and Matter for us.

Sri Aurobindo then moves on and explains how the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute extended Itself from Its timeless, spaceless, immutable, ineffable status to one that includes time, space, mutability, and instrumentality. He says that this occurred/occurs in order for the infinite Spirit to fulfill Itself in life. This is in fact the reason for creation.

Sri Aurobindo then goes back to Man's perceptions of existence, and tells us that if we have the true vision of the Reality, we not only can fully integrate our view of Spirit and Matter, but other perceived contradiction in life as well -- such as between good and evil, and pleasure and pain. I.e. we perceive the necessity of both sides of the duality.

We can do that by rising beyond our current limited functioning of mind to a spiritualized mentality, which will give us a unitarian view of things. (Sri Aurobindo also tells us that we can make this transition to spiritualized mind by first making a connection with our inner being, culminating with our Soul within.)

He concludes that by having the true, unitarian view of the Reality (which he calls "supramental perception"), we overcome our perceptions of contradiction, overcome our divided nature, and thereby fulfill our human aspiration for God, Light, Peace, Freedom, Bliss, and Immortality.

Here are the main points in detail:

Reconciling Spirit and Matter is to Perceive the Reality (Brahman)

In the last chapter, Sri Aurobindo explained how we can reconcile the contradiction we see between Spirit and Matter; to see their oneness and integration. In this chapter, he indicates that this oneness and reconciliation reflects an underlying Reality that they are part of. He calls this ultimate perception of existence, the "omnipresent Reality." It, Brahman -- as it is known in the East; the Absolute in the West -- is the ultimate perception of existence afforded to Man.

[The reality is both Spirit and Matter, the Unmanifest and the Manifest, the being and the Becoming, and their integral relationship.]

Brahman: The Unity of All Existence

The tradition of the East has been to look at the Spirit as the everlasting, never-ending, permanent being; while material existence was ephemeral, temporal, liable to dissolve at any time. The West's view is nearly the reverse: it believes fully in material existence -- that which is observable, measurable, empirical -- while the unseen spiritual dimension was nebulous at best.

The Truth is that both Spirit and Matter are real. Together they are the Reality, also known as The Absolute, Brahman. Not only do Spirit and Matter, the unmanifest and the manifest, the being and the becoming make up the Reality, the Absolute, but these dual pairs are in a state of perfect Unity in that Brahman. The Absolute then is the ultimate state of existence, in which its parts lie in a state of absolute Unity with its parts. It is the highest vision of existence afforded to Man.]

Infinite Brahman Extends to and Fulfills Itself in Life

Sri Aurobindo also explains how the Reality, Brahman begins as Spirit and extends and fulfills Itself in Life.

He says (here and future chapters) that the Reality, Infinite Brahman began as timeless, spaceless, immutable, ineffable, Supreme Conscious Being. It then extended Itself to Life and Mind, houses Itself (its spiritual essence and being) in them, and uses them as Its instruments. Thus, the divine Being fulfills itself through its manifestation.

(Life, on the other hand, fulfills itself when it lends its energies to ever-new forms and activities of the Divine.)

Thus, the Reality both transcends the universe and is inherent in it. It can take on either status because it is free to do so.

[MSS explains: "A central tenet of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is that the Truth of existence is an omnipresent Reality that both transcends the manifested universe and is inherent in it. This Reality, referred to

as Brahman, is an Absolute: it is not limited by any mental conception or duality, whether personal or impersonal, existent or nonexistent, formless or manifested in form, timeless or extended in time, spaceless or extended in space. It is simultaneously all of these but is bound by none of them. It is at once the universe, each individual being and thing in the universe, and the Transcendent beyond the universe."]

We Can Perceive and Experience the Reality only through a Unitarian Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo tells us that to know the Reality is to perceive the unity and integration of the Unmanifest and the Manifest, Spirit and Matter, the One and the Many, the Being and the Becoming.

[Yet we can rise in consciousness, and see that the contradictions between us are secretly complements through which a higher viewpoint of Truth is emerging. This is the view from the perspective of Brahman, the Absolute, the Infinite Consciousness's; where there is Unity amongst all opposites.]

But how can we grasp that cosmic truth and relationship?

We can grasp the Reality -- that unity and integration of Spirit and Matter; that Unmanifest and Manifest -- by rising beyond our current, limited functioning of mind to a unitarian, supramental, truth consciousness.

But how do we do that? We rise to this unitarian consciousness by first making the soul connection within.

[I.e. when we move from the surface, sense-oriented view to a deeper poise, down to the evolving soul, our mind expands to spiritual realms, culminating in supramental perception, enabling us to perceive the unity and integral relationship of all things, including Spirit and Matter.]

Also, when we make the soul connection and thereby rise to the unitarian consciousness, we experience the original calm and passivity of the Unmanifest Brahman in our own life, enabling a free and inexhaustible activity.

[-By perceiving the Reality, I see that Matter is a form of spirit, the body of spirit; and that matter itself is spirit. I also perceive the integration of all other dualities, such as pleasure and pain, positive and negative good and evil. I thus perceive the necessity of every dual pair in existence. E.g., I see the necessity of negative circumstance (in the apparent positive-negative duality) for the unfolding and progress of life. This in turn enables me to have a more balanced and less reactive consciousness.

Thus, moving to the depths within, down to the soul; and rising to supramental perception, and perceiving the Reality behind all things calms and elevates one's being. It also empowers me to engage in a free and inexhaustible activity in my life. I.e. I have the power to

achieve anything in life, do so in a multiplicity of ways with freedom to move in any direction, and thereby attain ultimate fulfillment in life.]

Perceiving the Reality, Having the Vision of Brahman Overcomes Our Divided Nature

Sri Aurobindo concludes that by perceiving the true nature of existence, we resolve the contradictions, divisions, and dualities of life (including experiences of pleasure and pain; positive and negative; good and evil, etc.), enabling us to overcome our divided nature, and thereby fulfill our human aspiration for God, Light, Peace, Freedom, Delight, Love, and Immortality.

[ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS]

The Omnipresent Reality

There is a Reality beyond Man, Life, and Cosmos. Even beyond God as we know it. It is timeless, spaceless, immutable, ineffable. And that Reality has extended itself into this life. Matter, animated life, mentality are all forms of this Omnipresent Reality.

We are that Reality, but we do not perceive it; as It is considered something separate from ourselves. But we too are a formation of the Absolute, the omnipresent Real. We are a materialization, a manifestation of It; a substance of the Infinite consciousness. We are an extension of the One, evolving through time.

We are ourselves are also infinite in all facets of our being. Through our Higher Consciousness we perceive this.

Thus to perceive "the Reality" is to have a glimpse of the Absolute, the One and the Many, Spirit and Matter - the integral All, - the ultimate conception of Existence given to Man.

The Nature of and Perceiving the Reality

Cosmic Egg --We can think of the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute as a kind of cosmic Egg. Within the Reality are two interwoven aspects, the Unmanifest and the Manifest; the Being and the Becoming; Spirit and Matter; the Transcendent and the Universal.



Different Shadings of the Same Thing -- We also see that all planes -- matter, life, mind, spirit, etc. -- are simply different forms, shadings of the same one, omnipresent Reality.

A Totality -- We can thus think of Brahman as a totality of all of the planes of existence from Spirit to Matter. I.e. the Reality is and exists in all planes from spirit to matter.

Integral Unity of Planes -- And yet the Reality is not merely the sum of the planes or just various shadings of Itself, but is integral and unified. I.e. from the highest consciousness, we perceive how each plane is interrelated with every other. Thus, e.g. matter and spirit are associated, even unified from the view of the highest supramental consciousness. This indicates that everything we come upon, every detail of life is to be embraced, as it has the other planes, or the rest of Brahman integrally associated with it. This applies to the most significant aspects of life to the most trivial.

Individual, Universal, Transcendent -- The Reality can also be viewed as the integral relation of the Individual, the Universal, and the Transcendent.

Perceiving the Reality -- When we rise to Supermind, we perceive the above aspects of the Reality. Through constant Consecration (opening to the spiritual Force, the Divine Mother), our mind expands, culminating in Supermind, and we are able to perceive the integral Truth of this All; enabling us to embrace all of life, giving us the

wherewithal to take right, integral, perfect actions that evoke the infinite from the finite.

The Absolute's Unitarian View of Truth Beyond Contradiction

Life manifests contradictions between parties in endless ways. Life evolves through that process by discovering the unity beyond the contradictions. Suppose I perceive your falsehood, and you know mine, and during that time we interact and are in conflict.

And yet there is a deeper, greater truth beyond this, but it this higher truth, this Unity of Truth that eludes us.

Yet we can rise in consciousness, and see that the contradictions between us are secretly complements, and through that dynamic is trying to emerge a higher viewpoint and Truth. This is to have view from the perspective of Brahman, the Absolute, the Infinite Consciousness. It is the view of Pure Unity of all opposites. To have that undivided view we need to rise above our current mentality to spiritualized mind, fully realized in Supermind. Supermind is unity consciousness, where we see the truths of life as it really exists in the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute.

Are Contradictions Real?

C: Can we conclude that everything comes in life as contradictions - like good and bad, positive and negative, light and dark - are really not so, but are only our perceptions?

RP: It depends on plane from which it is perceived. From the perspective of matter, the contradiction between two opposing things is experienced fully. At the other extreme, in Supermind, they are fused and one. Not differentiated. (There are also gradations among the planes in between.)

In other words, from Supermind contradictions are perceived not as opposites, or opposing, but as complements.

Thus from the perspective of our highest consciousness there are no contradictions in life; only complementary aspects. So eg the evil serves the progress as much as the good - as was the case when so many positive developments came out of WWII, including the United Nations, the European Union, the end of Colonialism, etc.)



The Destiny of the Individual

(Book 1 Chapter V)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo reiterates his previous remarks on how we can perceive the omnipresent Reality, Brahman, by moving from the surface of life to our deeper parts within, culminating in our Soul connection. From there our Mind rises to its spiritualized heights, enabling us to have a unitarian consciousness that allows us to perceive the true nature of the Reality, the All (which from one perspective is the unity and integration of the divine Spirit and existence in the universe).

Sri Aurobindo then in the key part of the chapter focuses on our Destiny in the world. He begins by telling us that there are three aspects of the Reality (Brahman) – the Transcendent, the Universal, and the Individual.

The Transcendent is the ultimate Reality beyond this universe, out of which all has come. It is Infinite and Divine in nature. The Universal (i.e. our known universe, seen and unseen) is a form given to the Transcendent, serving to fulfill Its purpose. The Individual is the center of the universal, and He serves to fulfill the transcendent purpose. *This then is his ultimate Purpose and Destiny in Life.*

Finally, moving to a related subject, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the individual human has three levels of awareness: that which is subconscious to us, that which is conscious, and that which is superconscious.

Here are the main points in detail:

By Moving to Depths, to Soul, We Develop a Unitarian Consciousness & Perceive the Reality

Sri Aurobindo poses the question: how do we develop the integral view of the unity of spirit and matter -- i.e. the vision of Brahman; the perception of the Oneness of all things that provides the foundation through which we can fulfill our human aspiration and spiritual purpose?

In particular, he asks how do we rise to the unitarian, truth consciousness to have this Vision of Brahman?

He answers that when we move within to the depths of our being and make the Soul connection there, we move out of ego and ignorance, and rise to the unitarian, Supramental view that sees the Reality as the unity and integration of Spirit and Life; of the One and the Many; and the Unmanifest Divine and the Manifest. It is also from that vision of the Reality that we experience the Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight (Sat-Chit-Ananda) -- the very source of all existence -- in our own lives.

[Here is the overall process: Move within and Connect to Soul (Psychic Being) > See Things through Higher Vision of Spiritualized Mind > Moves us out of ego and duality > Perceive Integration of Spirit and Matter (Vision of Brahman) > Brings Spirit into all aspects of life.]

Note that Sri Karmayogi says that we can progressively move within in the first place through constant consecration; i.e. self-offering of the activities of our lives to the Divine Mother, the supramental power.]

Three Aspects of the Reality -- Transcendent, Universal, and Individual – and Our Destiny in the World

Sri Aurobindo then moves on to the central topic of the chapter; the subdivisions of the Reality and what role we play in their unfolding, which might in turn indicate our destiny in life.

He begins this discovery by indicating that the omnipresent Reality (Brahman) has three aspects -- the transcendent, the universal, and the individual. **[These three are expressions of the One Reality. Or we can say that each is a different shading of that omnipresent Reality.]**

The Transcendent

The transcendent is the ultimate Reality beyond this universe, out of which all has come. It is Infinite and Divine in nature. **[It is the Source of and Being behind the phenomenal world. It is infinite, timeless, spaceless Being.]**

The Universal

The universal -- i.e. our known universe, seen and unseen -- is then a form given to the transcendent, serving to fulfill Its purpose. In addition, the universal expresses the transcendence through a multi-faceted, infinitely-variable oneness. **[The transcendent is One, but it expresses in infinitely variable ways in the universal. And yet there is a oneness behind that differentiation in the universal, retaining the Oneness of the transcendent. Thus, when perceived from the highest consciousness, everything in the universe is perceived as interconnected, integrated, unified. On the other hand, the lower (our) consciousness misses the Oneness, seeing only division, separateness, and conflict amidst that multi-faceted, infinitely variable.]**

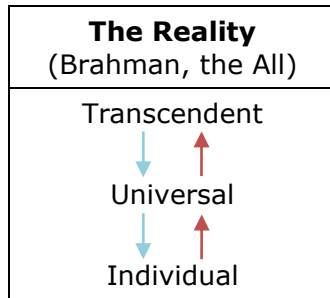
The Individual

Finally, the individual is the center of the universal, and he serves there to fulfill the transcendent purpose. *This is in fact his ultimate Purpose and Destiny in Life.*

[Imagine that the Divine has a series of Intentions. (Sri Aurobindo later calls them 'Real Ideas.')

Let us say that one is to bring greater *harmony* amongst its forms, including nations. His is the transcendent purpose that expresses in the universal existence. Now I connect to my deepest being, my evolving soul, and come to have a deep bond with others. As a result, I enable a greater harmony between forms, e.g. between my department and another's; or my district and another, creating, greater harmony and collaboration. In that way, by connecting with my True Self, my Individual being, I help fulfill a Transcendent purpose that is expressing in the Universal scheme of things. Or to put it another way, Man unites in himself and fulfills the individual, the universal, and the transcendent purpose when he reaches his deepest consciousness and self within. *This is his great Destiny in life.*

Also, keep in mind that each of us is one of the infinite variations, and can this fulfill the universal and transcendent purpose, our own realization of some combinations of real ideas and sub values in our own unique way.]



↓ = Influence ↑ = Fulfillment

Essay: Making It Real: Fulfilling Our Destiny through Work

Though in theory we can perceive that we have this triple role to play in the universal scheme of things that enables the Transcendent Will to be carried out, this may seem a little bit remote to our everyday lives. How can we then understand it and apply it in a more practical way?

One way to do this is to think of ourselves in relation to society, and in turn the society in relationship to some Higher Purpose. In this scheme of things, I partake in society, discover something I can do that is

special and can aid in its development, which would in turn fulfill a secret Intent of the Divine for its manifestation in life.

In addition, it is helpful to consider the poise from which I have this perception of a possibility in society. If we are centered in a deeper consciousness within, then we are more likely to have an individualistic view of the world, be less encumbered by the prevailing views of others, and therefore see the possibility of creating something truly dynamic; one that fulfills a deep, emerging need in Society.

Let's consider a practical example.

Suppose over time, I develop a deeper poise and consciousness within. As a result, I see the world in a different light than others. I do not merely follow the herd, but perceive new possibilities in the world that others do not see; or do not believe in. In particular, I see new ways to help society through new services in my chosen field. E.g. through that depth of clear perception and true individuality, I see the possibility of creating a new web site that can have a big impact on human relations. When I show it to others, some scoff or even laugh at me, but since my inner self is conscious, developed, and aware, I see the value if the endeavor more than ever, and so I push on. Besides, from that deeper sense of Self, I now clearly perceive how this web site serves several emerging needs of society, and no one can tell me different.

As a result of establishing a deep inner poise, even touching my True Self (Psychic Being), I have the knowledge and will to go ahead and develop the site, which I do, which turns into a rousing success. Most importantly, it fulfills several important needs of an ever-expanding, enlightened group of individuals in society. In fact, they are deeply grateful that it has helped them in several key facets of life -- in their level of accomplishment, and success; in their relations with others; and in their own personal growth.

In essence, I have connected with my deeper and truer Self, which helps establish myself as my own person, as a True Individual. From that poise, I am able to more clearly and directly look out on the world and perceive emerging trends and needs in society, which others are indifferent to or ignorant of. I then take it up, follow an organized process to make it happen, and succeed beyond my wildest dreams. I have somehow caught the Wave of something Important emerging in Society that my organization and web site has directly tapped into. As a result, I and my fellow workers are catapulted to the stars.

In other words, by becoming and acting as a True Individual, looking out and meeting the society on its own emerging terms, I have fulfilled some Universal purpose and intent. Also, when I look even deeper, I perceive that this venture that helps people in their relations in society fulfills one or more profound divine, Transcendent purposes. E.g., it creates more Harmony in the world; more Love; more insight into one's nature (Knowledge), and so forth. Each of these are Transcendent, i.e. divine, spiritual-like aspects that seek to manifest in the world.

Through my realization of my Individual true self (down to the psychic being), I have served the Universal purpose, which in turn has fulfilled the divine, Transcendent purpose and Intent in the world. In this way, I fulfill my own Destiny as an instrument for profound change and progress in life.

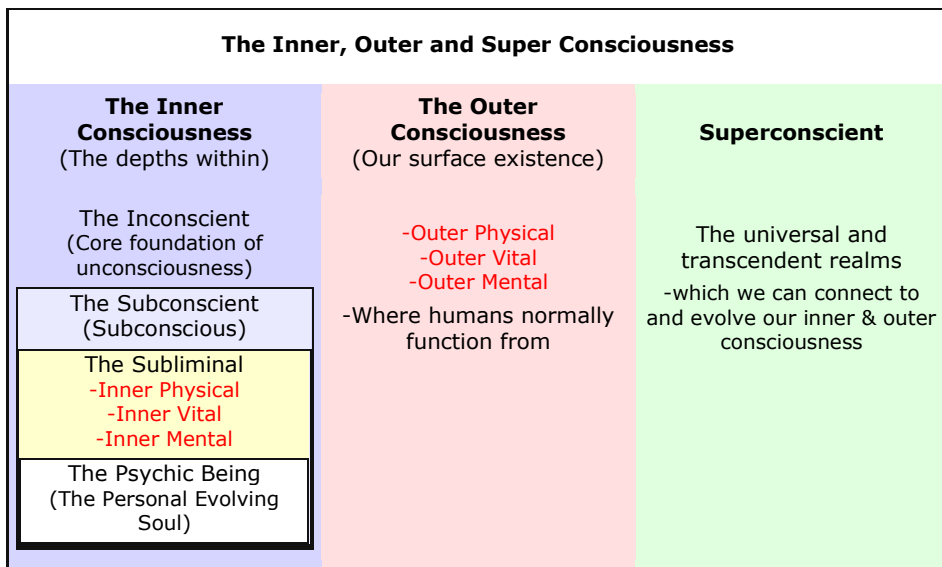
There are Three Levels of Awareness for the Individual: Subconscious, Conscious, Superconscious

Having established the destiny of the individual in creation, Sri Aurobindo then focuses on his nature; in particular, the various domains that make up his consciousness.

He tells us that there are three levels of awareness for the individual: that which is *subconscious* to us, i.e. below the surface of our normal awareness; that which we are *conscious* of, i.e. that which we can perceive; and that which is *superconscious* to us, i.e. a higher, universal and transcendent consciousness beyond our current level of awareness.

[In later chapters, Sri Aurobindo will tell us that in the subconscious there is a subliminal being, also called the universal mental consciousness, which is in touch with the superconscious. To make that subliminal, and therefore the subconscious, conscious would be one objective of individual progress, evolution, and transformation. We do that by opening to the superconscious.

Deeper still is the psychic being; the personal evolving soul, from which we realize our unity with all things, and experience ultimate delight of being, and begin the ultimate journey of transformation.]





Man in the Universe

(Book 1 Chapter VI)

Summary

Now that we have been introduced to the three aspects of the Reality - the Transcendent, the Universal, and the Individual, Sri Aurobindo begins to explain in more detail the relationship amongst them.

Sri Aurobindo also explains that when we make the soul connection within, we can align with and fulfill the Transcendent, Universal, and Individual purpose through our own being. *This he believes is the key to the evolution.*

Addressing another issue, Sri Aurobindo indicates that we are fully capable of bringing out the Spirit, realizing it in our lives, and in fact become the Divine itself, thereby, along with others, help usher in a Divine Life on earth. It is in fact our very purpose of being; our work of works; the very essence of the human journey.

He concludes that we can realize the Spirit in its various forms in life - as Being (Sat), as Force (Chit), and as Delight (Ananda) -- by consciously following a process of creation that-

--conceives the possibility

--perceives it as really real as a potential

--and then realizes it as sensation in the very fiber of his being.

As a result, we incarnate the transcendent and universal purpose through our individual effort of creation.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Relationship between the Transcendent, the Universal, and the Individual is Explained

Sri Aurobindo takes up the theme of the last chapter -- the relationship between the individual, the universal, and the transcendent to reveal their separate and integral purposes.

He first explains the relationship between the transcendent and the universal. He indicates that the transcendent Reality, the Divine All

manifest a universe in infinite space and time so that it can reveal through its forms that Reality. In fact, this progressive revealing of the transcendental Reality is the meaning and aim of the universe.

He then explains the relationship between us as individuals and the universal. He says that we are the self-conscious concentration of the All that the universe creates. Moreover, we play the central role in the universal plane of fulfilling the transcendent intent.

[Sri Aurobindo indicates here and elsewhere that the universe, which comes to us as Life, has an important role in our spiritual evolution. The theory is that in the descent (the involution from spirit to matter), the Sacchidananda before becoming Individual becomes the universe. In the same way, the Individual, in the ascent [the evolution from matter to life to spirit], in order to attain God has to become universal. (Aurovidya, slightly modified)]

Through Soul Connection, We Align with and Fulfill the Transcendent, Universal, & Individual Purpose

How then do we make connection with the universal and transcendent planes? Sri Aurobindo explains that when we connect to our evolving souls within, we break out of our limited consciousness, our ego, our sense of separateness, and connect with the wider universal plane. In the psychic being, the evolving soul, we also meet the transcendent spirit; sense its purpose, which descends into his being enabling us to bring the Divine All into our lives.

Thus, through Soul connection, we align with and become instruments of the universal and the transcendent intent. We fulfill the universal purpose, which is to progressively reveal the transcendent Reality. This dynamic he believes is the key to the evolution.

The Process of Creation to Incarnate the Divine in Ourselves

Finally, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the human journey, the work of works, man's real purpose in the world and justification of his existence is to ascend to a divine Life; to bring out the Spirit; to realize it and become the Divine itself.

More particularly, he says that every form in creation has hidden divine qualities, including an Existence (Sat), which is truth and spirit; a Consciousness, that in turn is a force and power (Chit); and a Delight, or supreme joy and bliss (Ananda) that he is capable of bringing to the surface and realizing.

"Satchitananda is the unknown, omnipresent, indispensable term for which the human consciousness, whether in knowledge and sentiment or in sensation and action, is eternally seeking."

Sri Aurobindo then tells us how he can attain this possibility. He says that through his mental idea of himself, through a self-knowledge and

conceptive power, he begins to conceive a formula to attain that goal. That conception of his intellect then matures into a vision that he perceives/experiences, until it is realized as a sensation of his very being. I.e. he brings out the Existence, Conscious-Force, and Delight in his being, thus realizing Spirit, the Absolute in his life.

By bringing out Sat-Chit-Ananda in his life, the individual is able to incarnate the Divine himself.

[It turns out that this process is the same by which we accomplish in life. E.g., I have an idea of what I want to accomplish, such as rising to the next skill level in my work (conception). I then begin to experience that new skill in my life (perception). Finally, I have attained the skill in full, as it is now realized in my being (sensation).

In fact, Sri Aurobindo will eventually indicate that the Infinite Consciousness, Brahman, the omnipresent Reality Itself followed the same essential process of creation to manifest a universe of forms.]

We should add that by incarnating Spirit, Man fulfills his Individual purpose, thus aiding the Universal in carrying out the Transcendent Intent.



The Ego and the Dualities

(Book 1 Chapter VII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo describes what it is that causes us to perceive only the part, not the whole of truth. He says it is the error of our practical reason, which is influenced and reinforced by our separative ego consciousness.

He says however that through our higher consciousness we can break the limited view of mind. We do that by opening to the universal and transcendent domains (those mentioned in the previous two chapters).

As a side point, he tells us ironically that ego, for all its faults, has the sanction of the Divine, and is a necessary stage in the course of human development.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on Knowledge itself. He indicates that we can move from merely perceiving external and secondary causes of things to their root causes by raising ourselves to the supramental consciousness, which will give us greater understanding and power over life. Moreover, he tells us that there is an inherent, pre-existent Truth behind any particular thing, which we are capable of perceiving when we rise above surface, and even logical mind, to the supramental truth consciousness.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo tells us that we can transcend our limited view of things, perceive and realize the Divine within ourselves (becoming the divinity, God itself), and thereby evolve to become the ultimate, gnostic, supramental being.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Error of Practical Reason (that Perceives Just the Part, not the Whole) is Rooted in the Separativeness of Ego

Sri Aurobindo returns to the earlier question of why we do not perceive reality properly; perceiving only parts of the truth; of one side of the duality; of contradictions instead of complements of dual pairs, etc. He

informs us that the error of the practical reason causes us to perceive only the part of a thing or matter, not the whole of truth.

"The error of the practical reason is an excessive subjection to the apparent fact which it can immediately feel as real, and an insufficient courage in carrying profounder facts of potentiality to their logical conclusion." (Sri Aurobindo, paraphrased)

But then why does the practical reason perceive truth this way? It is because it is subject to the influence of ego and its separative nature, causing Man to perceive things exclusively, not integrally and totally. This in turn causes us to experience the dualities of existence -- including life and death, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, truth and error, and good and evil.

[Ego is separative consciousness. It is concerned with its own self and its own needs, at the expense of what is outside itself, including others. Hence the practical reason that is dependent on ego accepts only those truths that conveniently fit within its own interests. Ideas, truth, aspects of existence that don't follow the selfish, separative needs of ego are discarded, rejected, or ignored. As a result of this, man experiences error, wrong action, pain, suffering, falsehood, and evil.]

[Even what we call "reason," the logical way we think, is prejudiced in its functioning, as it tends to accept what is pleasing and acceptable in its reasoning process, disregarding other truths that do not conform to the ego's standards. E.g. a scientist may use reason, but push away arguments that do not conform to his own ego, opinions, and motives. Even if he were to accept all sides in the reasoning process, he still would conclude in ways that feed his own proprietary view of things. Of course, pure reason would be full dedication to truth in the reasoning process and in the conclusions. In that way, there are few reasonable men. Strict adherence to truth is a spiritual quality, advocated by several, but practiced by few, if any.]

Through Right Consciousness We Can See the Right Relations of Things, Thereby Avoiding the Pain of Life

Sri Aurobindo still gives us hope by adding that through right consciousness we can see the true relation of things, the totality of the truth of any matter, and thus avoid error, sorrow, pain, evil, and death. In particular, we can break the reign of ego and the difficulties it creates through its exclusive consciousness by moving beyond one's own limited self, and opening to the universal and transcendent domains.

[When our consciousness moves beyond the bounds of self, or ego self, we move to the universal and transcendent planes from which we are far more open to all sides of any truth. We are open to and apprehend more of truths shadings that practical reason misses. We see that each thing serves a purpose in the totality. That nothing contradicts or opposes anything else; rather complements it. "Transcendence

transmutes opposites into something surpassing them that efface their oppositions."

Also, from that non-local domain, we break the shackles of ego, since at those planes we are less inclined to separate our own needs and ideas from those of others or what the environment is presenting.]

Ego has the Sanction/Consent of the Divine

Sri Aurobindo adds that the emergence of ego had its purpose and Divine sanction as a necessary stage in the evolution of consciousness in Man. It is an intermediate phenomenon necessary for a certain line of development; to allow for multiplicity of possibility, and hence the One to emerge as the Conscious Many.

[To enable the greatest multiplicity and possibility the Infinite consciousness allowed for all sides of what we perceive as duality -- e.g. good and evil, positive and negative, pleasurable and painful. It also allowed for Oneness, as it does separateness, i.e. ego. That way there could be the greatest quantity of, variety of possibilities, and thus shadings for the movement upward of consciousness amongst the forms in creation.

We can also look at it this way: Separative, ego consciousness was the means by which we could progress at a certain point in our evolution. When the ego asserts, it is discovered to be wrong, which compels us to see more of the truth and change our ways thereafter. It is how we progress through the means of lower consciousness. If we shed ego in the first place, we could progress more readily through positive means. It is the difference between progress through Nature and Soul. Nature is the usual means of progress, which is slow and painful. Through higher consciousness, i.e. Soul, we progress rapidly and joyfully. Progression through ego is a lower means of progress of Nature, which is sanctioned by the Divine as a necessary stage for human development.

Finally, we can say that ego is actually a higher form of what came before it, which is complete unconsciousness. Ego is thus a transitional stage between unconsciousness and consciousness.

Karmayogi adds: Man is a form of universe and universe is a form of God. For God's manifestation as man on earth, ego was required. Now for man to become God, the ego has to be transformed. By self-opening of man to the universe, ego can be dissolved and the Divine can be made as our center of existence.]

Perceiving Root Causes and Truth Itself through Supramental Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo focuses on the very nature of knowledge itself, including our ability to perceive the root causes of things, as well as our ability to perceive the inherent Truth behind any particular thing.

Perceiving Root Causes, Knowledge -- Sri Aurobindo says that we envisage only external and secondary causes of things, not the root knowledge and cause. But when we rise in consciousness, in mentality, beyond practical reason to a super-mind, we can perceive such root causes, which will in turn give us a greater understanding and power in and over life.

Perceiving Pre-existent Truth of Things -- He also says that there is an inherent, positive, pre-existent Truth in any thing. Its root is the Truth of the Infinite consciousness from which it derives. **[Truths or Real Ideas emanated from an Infinite consciousness taking shape as forms of Force. behind each thing is the essential Divine Truths that made it possible, which is inherent in it.]**

Perceiving Root Cause, Knowledge; Preexistent Truth through Supramental Perception

He also indicates that we can progressively perceive these Truths by raising our consciousness beyond surface or even logical mind. When we ascend and attain to spiritualized mind, particularly supramental, truth consciousness, we perceive the inherent truth in any thing, and do so directly without interference of mind's reason. **[In Supermind, there is realization of the Truth by Identity. In that state, we have direct connection to the inherent Truth of that thing, which is fully revealed to us in its myriad possibility, totality, and essence.]**

Man Can Transcend His Limited View, Ego, and Embrace God in Himself; Become the Supramental Being

Ultimately, Sri Aurobindo tells us that we should not merely accept God, but we should accept God *in ourselves*. This would solve so many of our problems, for after all they exist due to our misperception that God and Man are separate.

The problem has been that Man has known his Ego as center of his existence, which is a mental understanding, instead of the Divine at his core. However, if he moves to his Spirit beyond Mind (i.e. spiritual Mind), he will be able to witness the Divine as the center of this existence; i.e. God in himself, instead of Ego.

Furthermore, by knowing the Divine in himself, he can evolve into the supramental being. Just as the ape could not conceive its transformation into Man -- which the scientific theory of evolution has proved to be possible -- Man is now unable to conceive further possibility of becoming a supramental being.

[The supramental being is an ultimate form of human. He describes it in great detail in the last several chapters of the book. Suffice it to say that at that level he has integral knowledge, perceives unity in all things, is one with all he comes in contact with, has realized the evolving soul within, feels the transcended divine in his being, and has transformed his mind, vital life, even his physical body into a new formation and supramental existence.]

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Reflections on Chapter 'Ego and the Dualities'

Sri Aurobindo has earlier indicated that Nature's method of progress in life is through division and contradiction. This is the "Dualities." Through dual, contradictory pairs, progress in life occurs. However, this is a slow and difficult method. The two sides have come in contradiction to bring out the higher nature of the other side. Without the dual pairs, there is no progress through Nature's method.

For example, if I am my spouse have come together in a tight living arrangement, it is to help each of us overcome some aspect of our lower nature. For myself, I can overcome my selfishness, which I perceive in my relations. For her, she can perceive her lack of organization.

Whether we make that change will depend on our level of consciousness. To navigate the dualities, we find ourselves in, will depend on whether we have a consciousness rooted in ego or in harmony. If it is in Ego, then the progress will be difficult, painful, and slow; if at all. If we are in a harmonic consciousness, then the progress will be rapid.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that from a deeper consciousness, culminating in the evolving Soul, we will tend to progress; including through the dual pairs, contractions, divisions, we find ourselves in. Out of the Evolving Soul connection, we can rise further still to supramental consciousness where we attain ultimate, harmonic consciousness; where we are in unity with all and everything. In fact, from that consciousness, we perceive all dual pairs, contradictions, dualities, as actual complementarities instead. Thus, I perceive and myself in the perfect situation for both of us to grow. Through supramental perception, the relationship becomes the ideal platform for both of us to grow.

Thus, from an inner consciousness that rises to ultimate mental perception and power, we view all connections in life as golden opportunities for growth and progress. Through this Soul and Truth Consciousness, I perceive everything around me as an opportunity to rise in consciousness, while aiding the progress of all individuals and social life as well.

In that way, I rise beyond the ego consciousness that dwells in dualities and pain, and enter a harmonic consciousness with all and everything. In that way I perceive what Sri Aurobindo considers the Marvel; i.e. the utility of each and every thing, positive or negative, in an upward ascending movement of growth, evolution, and transformation.

Practical Methods of Overcoming Ego

Aside from the yogic movement within to the Psychic and an opening further upward to the supramental realms, we can take practical steps to rid ourselves of Ego and move toward harmonic consciousness of constant growth. Sri Karmayogi has indicated many of them. They include-

-Practice Non-Reaction. I.e. don't react to what others say and do in an agitated and bothersome way.

-Practice Non-Initiating. I.e. don't constantly initiate action, such as letting others know you are there, or speaking first to get the upper hand about yourself. Wait for Life to come to you, then take up that indicator. Success is far more likely to follow,

-Practice Taking the Other Person's Point of View. I.e. rather than assert your own position, embrace the other person's view in full. Doing so, puts you more in touch with the integral truth of things, which has a unique capacity to quickly attract positive conditions soon after.

-Be Self-Giving. I.e. instead of taking from others, life, reverse to be constantly giving of yourself; e.g. by showing interest in others' concerns, by taking pleasure in their successes, and in general showing a generosity and goodness of spirit.

Ways to Overcome Ego

I can reverse my identification with ego by becoming unselfish and regarding all other persons as I regard myself. When I hear you got a promotion, I should feel happy for you instead of feeling jealous. Instead of giving supreme importance to my needs, my priorities, my preferences, my skills, my accomplishments, I can recognize that other people are as important as I am in the scheme of things. All of the normal movements of the ego that make me more and more separated and isolated can be reversed. I can become selfless, generous; a source of endless goodwill for others. (Garry Jacobs, MSS)

On Ego

-Definition of ego: "The nature of ego is a self-limitation of consciousness by a willed ignorance of the rest of its play and its *exclusive absorption in one form*, one combination of tendencies, one field of movement of energies." (Sri Aurobindo, paraphrased)

-The dualities of life and death, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, truth and error, good and evil are the first formations of the egoistic consciousness.

The Underlying Nature of Ego

Based on what I have learned over the years about Ego, including Karmayogi's view, and what is explained in later chapters of *The Life Divine*, here are some further thoughts on the underlying nature of ego.

- Ego is of the lower consciousness.
- Ego is an effect of the bedrock of inconscience (unconsciousness) that is there in matter. (Matter is the ultimate division, in which virtually all consciousness is lost in order to separate even down to atomic existence.)
- As a body, we are separate from other bodies, and thus express the inconscience of matter. It expresses through ego -- physical, vital, and mental.
- Ego inherits the separateness of the body, which dumbly only knows its own separate existence.
- Ego is separative consciousness (vs. harmonic), cutting us off from the world and others.
- Ego asserts one's own self at the expense of others; therefore, it is separative.
- Ego's separateness gives support to the exclusivity of Mind.
- Mind tends to embrace one truth at the expense of all others. In ego, separateness occurs, which makes the Mind more exclusive, holding on to my truth vs. the multiplicity of truths of a thing.
- Ego causes mind to see the Part rather than the Whole.
- Ego thus reinforces our Ignorance.
- Thinking and acting along one line that ego props up can lead to Falsehood (enjoying Ignorance) and Evil (acting on Ignorance).
- Ego is selfishness, as opposed to selflessness and self-givingness.
- Ego attracts negative circumstance.
- Through deeper consciousness, we shed ego and develop oneness with the world outside ourselves.
- When we reach our true selves, our souls, the psychic being ego evaporates, separateness disappears, and the mind becomes intuitive and more open to infinite possibilities.
- Moving from ego to non-ego and oneness attracts positive conditions from life.
- Moving out of ego, we experience synchronicity, intuition, peace, energy, creativity, knowledge, truth, success, love, oneness, infinity, timelessness, spacelessness, and joy.

Other Discussions of Ego

Note that discussion on Ego occurs elsewhere in the book, e.g. in the chapter 'The Origin and Remedy of Falsehood, Error, Wrong and Evil,' in Book II, Chapter XIV



The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge

(Book 1 Chapter VIII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo returns to the issue of how we can make contact with the Reality. He says we progressively connect to It by moving from the surface, sense-oriented mind to rational mind, where we begin to pierce the Reality, and further still to intuitive mind where we know It more directly.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that Vedanta has given us this knowledge, but it was overpassed by the Age of Reason, metaphysical philosophy, experiential science, etc. Now however we can utilize, integrate these modern aspects and knowledge as we penetrate the Reality through intuition.

Here are the main points in detail:

We Can Increasingly Make Contact with the Reality when We Move from Sense to Rational to Intuitive Mind

Now Sri Aurobindo seeks to further explain how we can make contact with the higher Reality (Brahman, the Absolute). He describes an ever-more successful path upward path from sense-mind to pure reason (rational mind) to intuitive mind to connect with that divine Object.

He explains that thought of mind garnered through the five senses, *Sense-oriented Mind* -- sometimes referred to as the *physical Mind* -- only perceives the surface of things, the appearance, and therefore cannot grasp the Reality.

However, mind's capacity for reason; of pure, logical thought, -- *i.e. Rational Mind* -- can begin to pierce through and perceive the Reality beyond the appearance to arrive at concepts, judgments, et al. And yet even reason is limited and cannot know truths that are beyond its abilities. It is unable make the direct connection with the divine object, including the supraphysical spheres.

But *Intuitive Mind* (which is espoused by the ancient Indian tradition of Vedanta) can know the Reality much more directly, sensing something

of the Unknown behind. Intuition gives us that idea of something behind and beyond all that we know. Intuition builds the bridge between the knower and the divine object, enabling us to come into identity, i.e. direct connection, with It. Through Intuitive Mind, we absorb the brilliant messages from the Unknown, which are the beginnings of a Higher, Integral Knowledge.

Our intuitive capacity to realize the object is the scheme of understanding on which the conclusion of ancient Vedanta are built. In fact, Sri Aurobindo says that Vedanta is the best previous foundation from which to proceed, even though it has limits.

The Ancient Vedantic View of Intuitivizing the Reality Can Now Be Integrated with Modern Knowledge, Giving It Greater Depth and Power

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the Indian Vedantic tradition -- which is essentially the method of intuition that can penetrate and perceive the Reality directly -- was overpassed by the age of reason, metaphysical philosophy, and then to experiential science, etc., leading to a more subtle and ample use of our higher rational, logical faculties. Whereas Vedanta focused on intuitional and spiritual experience that comes as knowledge of truth without the need for thought; scientific, western knowledge comes through the mental functionings of reason and logic that produces the thought. As a result, intuitions of Vedanta see things in a whole; with the details being part of a whole; whereas, reason comes from the other side, proceeding by analysis and divisions, and assembles facts into a whole.

Now however we can INTEGRATE the two; I.e. Intuitive capacity can be integrated with rational understanding of things to come up with a richer intuitive experience; that brings out more insight and discovery. Or to put it another way, we can now intuitivize (having knowledge without the need for thought) the greater complexities of modern life, and material and psychological understanding, whereas in Vedic times there was less complexity that can be perceived through the intuitive form of spiritual mind.

This also applies to our quest to know the nature of the omnipresent Reality (Brahman, the Infinite). I.e. now that science and reason give us a somewhat clearer picture of the Manifestation/Matter/Life side of things, our intuitive revelations about the Reality will bring understanding that has more scope, diversity, richness, and application.

[E.g. there are now spiritual teachers who speak in detail how discoveries in biology, quantum physical, et al to describe the nature of universal consciousness. They have intuitions of spirit that have their parallels in scientific phenomenon. E.g. Sri Aurobindo's Instantaneous Miraculousness (that Karmayogi refers to as 'Life Response') has its

parallel in recent discoveries in science of instant connection between unconnected physical objects billions of miles apart.]

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Knowing the Object (Including the Reality) from Surface to Supermind

We can trace how each plane, or stage in the development of Mind and above it can perceive, know the truth of things, including the Reality (Brahman, the Absolute). Here are then several levels of Mind, some covered in this chapter, others culled from other parts of The Life Divine, as well as my own and associates' (Karmayogi, Garry Jacobs) analysis.

Surface Mind takes in information through the five senses and interprets it. It sees only the surface of things -- i.e. that which is visual, auditory, etc. Thus, it perceives that which is visible and physical. It has little knowledge of the real truths of things; only the outer facade. Imagine that there is a diamond in a warehouse. Through Surface Mind, one only sees the warehouse, perhaps a light shining through the cracks. It does not know what is inside, that it is a diamond, let alone any of its properties, what purpose it serves, etc. When you walk down the street and see something occurring, you see the surface, not knowing what really happened unless the mind is further engaged. Knowing the integral Truth of the Reality -- from Spirit to Matter -- is out of the question.

Logical Mind goes beyond surface mind dependent on sense. It thinks, using reason and logic, and comes up with an idea. But it sees along a simple line, in one direction. It takes a stand there, does not move in other directions, or see connections and relations beyond what is in front or behind it. So, in our example Logical Mind can have the idea that something valuable is the warehouse (since e.g. it is well guarded), that it may be a diamond since such things are often produced in the area, but does not know for sure. It is locked into one trend of thought, one line of things, not able to move beyond it, not able to come in identity with it that would give it the fuller truth. In this way, it can only have a very limited perception of the Reality. Having limited or unidimensional idea of how all the planes of existence makeup this One Existence in an integral fashion.

Insight is a step beyond logical mind; a higher functioning of it. Unlike ordinary rational mind, it does not hold to one truth, one part, or one line of reasoning. It tends to perceive relationships, correlations between ideas and possibilities. In our example, it senses that there is something quite valuable in the warehouse, and it is likely a precious metal or stone. That it is there for some purpose, but it knows not what.

It has garnered an idea that connects other facts it perceives, but more than that it does not know, as it is not in identity with the object. It can perceive one essential new idea about the nature of the Reality, but cannot be sure and it cannot go further. E.g. it could perceive that since all emerged from spirit, then matter might somehow be a form of it.

Intuitive Mind is a step beyond rational mind, including insight. It perceives truth not from the hard churning of reason and logic of mind, but as a spontaneous experience where the thought just enters one's Mind from seemingly out of nowhere. Intuition is a spiritual dimension of Mind in which there is a more direct perception of the object. It is in identity with one essential beam; one ray of the Totality of the object, that comes into the Mind without thought. For example, we have a sudden intuition that the diamond is being stored there for the purpose of being an energy source. It is an absolute fact, yet it is only part of the (absolute) Truth about it. It suddenly knows that Matter is in fact Spirit, as it knows in a flash the involutory process. Yet it does not perceive the Reality in all its integral dimensions, purposes, etc.

Supermind is a step beyond Intuitive Mind. Whereas intuition is one essential ray of Truth, one beam of knowledge entering the mind without thought, in partial identity with the object, supramental perception is complete Identity with it. It knows all aspects of it, what purpose it serves, etc. Also garnered is a Power to utilize it for whatever necessary purpose in life. It is integral knowledge and power coming through direct identity with the object. In our example, the knowledge of all salient aspects of the diamond immediately appears in the mind, and one has the power to use that information for a given purpose. Supermind thus can perceive the Reality in all its integral Wonder. It is an ultimate spiritualized mentality that can perceive the Reality (or any object of inquiry) from any point and line and perceive it in relationship to every other part, as well as the whole. It perceives the essence of the Reality because it is in complete identity with it as a thoughtless Idea.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS:

Methods Of Moving Toward Spiritualized Mind

By taking to mental silence and increasing consecration (opening to the Force of the Divine Mother) in our daily activities and all, we increasingly move our center of being Deeper Within, which allows the mind to think more clearly, more rationally, and have further mental intimations at the spiritual level, through illumination ("Eureka I've Got It!"), intuition (knowledge entering mind without thought), and further still to supramental perception; i.e. integral truth consciousness,

complete identity with the object under consideration in any moment (along with its instantaneous realization, manifestation).

Vedic Teachings Applied To Modern Life

The other point in the summary in the original post is that we can now apply the ancient Vedic methods of rational and spiritual mind to MODERN life and activities, thereby divinizing them, raising them up in consciousness, helping ourselves and the world progress, evolve, transform in a progressively evolving modern world. Life will surely respond in kind to choices made at these highest spiritual levels of mind.

The Nature Of The Reality

Finally, to know the Reality Sri Aurobindo is asking us to perceive the All, the integral totality of existence: Spirit and Matter are the Reality, as is good and bad, positive and negative, night and day, etc.;

Actually every conceivable aspect, dimension of life of our daily lives is the Reality.

Moreover, the Reality is at every level infused with, an embodiment of the original Spiritual Source. To have a vision of the Reality is to perceive that everything we experience in Life is an expression of that Spiritual Source and therefore that Reality.

Reality is the One and the Many (i.e. the Spirit and the multiplicity of life), the Being and the Becoming (i.e. the spirit and the spirit becoming in the details of life), the Absolute and the Relative (i.e. the Supreme and everything in creation). And each of these dual pairs integrated with one another is the ultimate perception of existence. In Supermind we see, perceive this true nature of Reality - Ie as everything, interrelated, Integral and One.

And Finally ...

From these observations we may conclude that everything is Divine, as all derives from the Divine. The Divine and its Creation (One and Many) is thus the Reality. Therefore everything around us is Divine, whether computer you are creating with, or anything else in our material or non-material existence.

Karmayogi once explained this to Garry Sir. Garry about 15 years ago asked me if I experience the Divine in anything I encounter, like a computer or room, or another person as he felt he didn't quite do so himself. For a few days I started to take notice and began to feel that various things I encountered, even everything was divine. It was a supramental revelation, It then dissipated and disappeared.

Supramental Consciousness perceives all as Divine, all as part of the integral Reality.

This way of perceiving, being, experiencing Existence, the Reality is available to each of us at any moment in time.



The Pure Existent

(Book 1 Chapter IX)

Introduction to Next Group of Chapters

Let's take a broad view of where we are headed. Sri Aurobindo has been focusing on the nature of the Reality, the All. Now Sri Aurobindo begins to discuss how the universe emerged from an Infinite Source; i.e. how the Reality, the All, Brahman extended/extends Itself from Its Unmanifest to Manifest status; i.e. from Spirit to Matter. He will do so in this and the remaining chapters of Book I.

He takes this tact not only to show how the Reality/All/Brahman extended itself to become Life/the Universe, but to explain why man is born of an essential Ignorance, whose nature is divided, preventing him from realizing the Human Aspiration for God, Light, Peace, Love, Delight, and Immortality.

(He will then in Book II describe in greater detail the nature and boundaries of that Ignorance, and how we can rise above it, acquire Integral Knowledge, and proceed to realize our ultimate spiritual and supramental nature.)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by describing a Movement of infinite boundless Energy that is pouring into creation. (He adds that the Energy's intensity and force of movement is the same in formations in creation.)

He then tells us that behind and supporting this movement is a Stability of a Pure Existent, which is ineffable, immutable, timeless, spaceless, infinite existence.

He tells us that the Pure Existent (i.e. Existence/Being, Sat of Sat-Chit-Ananda) is the first state that the Absolute takes out of itself on the way to manifesting a universe of forms.

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that we are capable of intuitivizing and drawing back into this Existence/Being in our own lives, which will enable us to change our entire outer life.

Along these lines, Sri Aurobindo adds that anything, even the smallest thing in life -- whether a form, an act, or ourselves -- is infinite in scope since it is a product of the Infinite consciousness, and is therefore capable of releasing and expressing that infinity in life.

Here are the main points in detail:

There is the Movement of Infinite Boundless Energy

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that when we go beyond ego and enter a higher consciousness, we begin to see that there is a boundless *Energy* of infinite existence, movement, and activity that is pouring itself into Space and Time. This energy's intensity and force of movement is the same in all; in the formation and the upholding of the macro and the micro; in expression or repression; in affirmation and negation; in the strong and the weak.

[Energy in motion is the basis of creation. It formulates into forms of itself. When Energy first emerges from the Absolute, it is at rest. But then it is energized and moves. As it does, forces and forms are created, including matter in the universe.]

There is also the Infinite Stability -- the Pure Existent -- Behind the Movement

And yet *behind* this movement, there is *Stability*. It is *pure existence*; eternal, infinite, indefinable; not affected by the succession of time, not involved in the extensions of space; beyond form, quantity and quality. It is immutable (unchanging), inexhaustible, and unexpended; without beginning or end; not acting, not moving, though containing all this action; not energy, but pure existence behind it. [Sri Aurobindo tells us that *Stability* and *Movement* are psychological representations of Brahman, the Absolute.]

[-The Rishis Experience of the Pure Existent Stability

Thousands of years ago, the Rishis of ancient India understood that matter has energy as its basis. It is the *Movement* of creation. They also saw that behind that *Movement* of forms of energy in creation there is a *Stability*. It is the *Pure Existent*, which is eternal, timeless, spaceless, and *Immutable*. Without that *Stability*, there is no *Movement*. It is something that Science misses completely.

-Our Experience of the Pure Existent Stability

But how can we perceive the relationship between the *Stability* and the *Movement*? Mind cannot see it readily, since it tends to divide these two, or perceive them separately, if it perceives it (the *Stability*) at all. Supermind can however see how the *Stability* stands behind the *Movement*. It is even its source, as we shall see.

-The Pure Existent that is without Shadow

Sri Aurobindo calls the Being the "Pure Existent." Why? In his terms, pure existent means that there is only the Positive, the Harmony, the Truth of things; without the dark shadow. E.g. in any event, we can see the good, but the negative is still there. A scientist creates nuclear fission, but then develops bombs that can destroy the world. The effort is not self-existent, as there is a dark shadow. In Sat everything is in an integral harmony. All is locked in Truth. There is no dark side and shadow. When we come in touch with Sat, we too experience and act life in Self-Existent Truth; in integral harmony without a shadow.】

The Pure Existent as First Step of Satchitananda on the Way to Creation

Sri Aurobindo says that the Pure Existent, Sat of Sat-Chit-Ananda, is the first step that the Absolute, Brahman takes out of itself to express Itself in form.

[-This does not mean that the Divine did not exist before. Rather the Reality, the Absolute makes itself *manifest* first as the Pure Existent/Being.

-We will later learn that there are three aspects of Pure Existent/Being. That which is timeless, spaceless, immutable Being; that which is a Conscious Being that is silent Witness, and that which is the Creator of the World (Ishwara) that will determine creation.

-Eventually Sri Aurobindo will tell us that the Pure Existent can be perceived by the individual objectively and subjectively. Objectively as Truth; subjectively as Spirit.

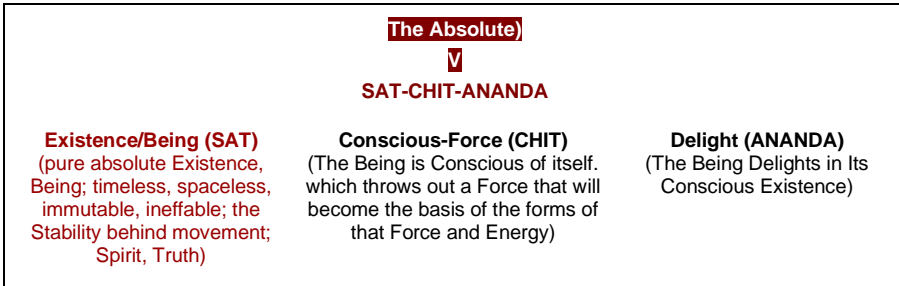
-The other aspects of Satchitananda that emerge are Conscious Force (Chit) and Delight (Ananda). Through these three aspects, a universe will be devised, and a Force generated from which all forms are realized in creation, in the manifestation. These are not separate, successive stages, but are one and simultaneous with one another.】

Diagram: Roadmap of Existence/Being (Sat), Conscious Force (Chit), Delight (Ananda)

Here is roadmap of where we are going in the next several chapters. In them, Sri Aurobindo will reveal the three dimensions or aspects of Satchitananda.

Satchitananda emerges as first step out of Brahman/The Absolute towards creation as Existence/Being (the Pure Existent), explained in this chapter, which extends to Conscious-Force, and then to Delight, explained in the following two chapters. It is the three parts of an "upper hemisphere" that will eventually be the basis of Creation (the lower hemisphere) brought into existence through the plane of Supermind that lies between. (Both Satchitananda and the Creation

make up the omnipresent Reality (Brahman).) Here is a diagram of Satchitananda:



We Can Realize the Pure Existent in Our Lives

Sri Aurobindo says that we can have intuitions of this Pure Existent/Being that is Stable and Eternal. He also says we can draw back into the Existent/Being and live in it entirely; and from there we can affect an entire change in our external life.

[-The Being has both an objective and subjective state, both of which we can intuitivize and realize. The objective state of the Being is Truth. The subjective state is Spirit.

-Experiencing the Truth of Being/Sat as Integral Harmony in Life

How do we experience Truth? It is to intuitively perceive the harmony of things. When we perceive the utility and necessity of both sides of any dual pair, such as good or bad, or pleasure or pain, we see into the truth of life. In the Pure Existent, the Being there are no opposites, only their integral oneness. Being a Pure Existent -- i.e. integral Truth without the shadow -- the Being, Sat only knows harmony. When we come in touch with the Being, Sat in our lives we also see harmony, an integral Oneness amongst all things, including all dual pairs.

-Bringing out the Infinite in Life Good, Knowledge and Joy through Being/Sat

Actually, the spark of Sat already exists in every human being and can be expressed as Truth in life. Thus, when the self-existent Truth of anything in life expresses, the indwelling infinity in it is brought out, bringing out its ultimate capacity and possibility. We can see it as life responding in quality and quantity. It is what we call 'Luck'.

As we will see when we get to the last chapter of Book I "Indeterminates and Cosmic Determinations", truth and spirit of the Pure Existent (Sat) express not only as Infinity, but as other spiritual qualities, including Goodness, Knowledge, Joy. Therefore, when he intuitivize Sat, when he connects to Being within, man can also express each of these. Thus, he can attain self-existent Goodness (good without trace of bad, self-

existent Knowledge (knowledge without ignorance), self-existent Joy (joy without sorrow) etc. by connecting to the Sat within.】

The Infinite is there in the Infinitesimal

Sri Aurobindo also adds the point that everything in existence is infinite in nature, reflecting the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute. That even the infinitesimal, whether the smallest for, act, or us is infinite and capable of expressing that infinite nature. ("This Infinite Energy gives the whole of itself at the same time to the macro and the micro.")

【Just as the Absolute is the Infinite consciousness with infinite capacity and existence, so too is the smallest thing in creation (and everything in between).

When we rise in consciousness, we can bring out that infinity. When we bring in the spiritual Force in that act or entity we stimulate its infinity and life responds to that effort. I.e. even the smallest act done in perfection, with highest consciousness, and open to the spiritual Force can bring about staggering result. E.g., brushing your teeth or meeting with a client with the right consciousness can attract the biggest client of one's life in five minutes.

To see that the smallest, the infinitesimal is not only Brahman, but Infinite-capable to manifest infinite results from it (as Brahman did in creating an infinite-like universe) is to see the Marvel. It can be perceived by rising in consciousness beyond Mind to Supermind.

Also see article: Releasing the Infinities of the Infinite Consciousness in Our Lives from Book II Chapter II.】



Conscious Force

(Book 1 Chapter X)

All action, all mental, vital, physical activities in the world are the operation of a universal Energy, a Consciousness-Force, which is the power of the Cosmic Spirit working out the cosmic and individual truth of things. (Sri Aurobindo)

Introduction

In the last chapter Sri Aurobindo describes the Stability behind the Movement of life in the universe. It is the Pure Existent (Sat) -- timeless, spaceless, immutable Being, which is the first step out of its non-existent status on the way to create a universe of forms. In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo focuses on that which is the basis of that Movement and energy in creation: Conscious Force (Chit of Sat-Chit-Ananda). It is the second step that the Infinite consciousness takes out of Itself to create a universe of forms of Itself. Here are the main topics covered:

Summary

Sri Aurobindo tells us that all forms in creation [seen and unseen] are a product of the Conscious Force.

Sri Aurobindo then describes the Conscious Force in its relationship to Pure Existent that preceded it, as well as their relationship to the omnipresent Reality (the All, Brahman).

He also explains why the Force (as Energy) moves instead of being still (to create forms of Itself in creation.)

He then explains why the Conscious Force (aka Consciousness Force) lost its Consciousness component in the involutory descent towards Matter.

Sri Aurobindo concludes that we can bring that involved, hidden consciousness to the surface, uniting it with the Force, releasing the infinite potential of that form in life.

He also briefly explains the process by which the Force/Energy constitutes itself into the forms of creation, through the interaction of unshaped versions of those forms.

Finally, he tells us that all planes of existence - from matter to life to mind and beyond - are formations of the original Conscious Force and Energy.

[Note on the Sequence of this Group of Chapters

In these groups of chapters -- from the Pure Existent through the knot of Matter, Sri Aurobindo is describing the essential planes of the Reality. The order in which they are presented is from highest consciousness to lowest. I.e. the Pure Existence first; followed by Conscious Force, by Delight, by Supermind, by Mind, by Life, to Matter.

Interestingly these chapters can be viewed from the perspective of the involution and the evolution simultaneously, which is Sri Aurobindo's intent. I.e. for each plane, he explains how it expresses in the involutory descent prior to the physical universe and the evolutionary ascent after it.

Take the chapter on Mind. In the descent, Mind is the plane that emerged from Supermind. This occurs in the involutory descent in the Unmanifest. However, Mind is also the plane of being in the manifest universe, and it is something we as human have involved to and experience. We are evolving upward, ascending from outer, physical mind to rational mind, and then to its spiritual planes, including Intuitive Mind (intuition) and Supermind (truth consciousness.)

So keep in mind that as Sri Aurobindo explains these planes of decreasing consciousness from Sat-Chit-Ananda to matter, he is applying it both in the involutory descent, but also as it expresses in the evolutionary ascent in the universe that we are forms of.]



Here are the main points in detail:

All Forms in the Universe are a Product of the Conscious Force

Sri Aurobindo tells us that the seed of all existence in the universe is Conscious Force. That all phenomenal existence resolves into Force, into a movement of Energy.

[-I.e. all forms in creation, seen and unseen, are a product of the Energy that emerges from an original Conscious Force.]

[-*Science Rejects, Can Embrace Conscious Force as Source* -- Thus, Sri Aurobindo is indicating that a Force existed before, anterior to creation, and that instruments of It (e.g. matter, life, mind) arrived later for its expression. This -- a Conscious Force and Power that is the source -- is clearly a position that Science has not yet accepted. They see matter and life as arrive coming from some original unseen physical existence that can be measured. However, if science embraces Conscious Force as the Essence and Source, then science and spirituality could one day merge together.

-*Applying Idea of Anterior Force in Our Lives* -- How can we then apply the idea of something essential and anterior to its instrumentality in a practical way in our own our lives? Karmayogi offers this application:

We always think that our office or family exists *for us*, and they are supposed to be useful to us. Likewise, when we are going to join a firm, the first things we enquire about are the incentives, increments, promotions etc. At that point, we never try to know the purpose of the organization, and how best we can serve that purpose. This is in essence the essential Truth and Power and Force behind the organization. Thus, we should understand that the office has been created with a specific aim in mind, and we have been recruited to serve that aim. Since it is anterior, serving the aim, setting aside our personal interests, will bring us progress. In fact, life is likely to respond with good fortune to that effort. E.g. within a month, our salary doubles because we have identified with, are psychologically in alignment with the company's aim and purpose. When we touch the essence of it, we garner great power to attract Luck.]

How Being is the Source of Conscious Force

-But where does this Conscious Force come from? Sri Aurobindo tells is that it is a product of the Pure Existent (the Being, Sat).

[Note: Consciousness Force is not something separate from the Pure Existent (Being, Sat). Rather we will later learn in the chapter 'Brahma, Purusha, Ishwara' that the Being is actually a *Self-conscious* Being, and thus generates a Force out of itself; thus, it is a *Conscious* Force. Or to put it another way, the Pure Existent (the Being, Sat) extends itself, turns itself outward to become the Conscious Force that will become the Energy that will be the basis for all forms in creation.]

-In addition, whereas the Pure Existent (the Being, Sat of Sat-Chit-Ananda) is the first step that the Absolute takes out of Itself to manifest a universe of forms, Conscious Force (Chit of Sat-Chit-Ananda) is the next one.

[Being is the Stability behind creation. Conscious-Force is the "substance" out of which the universe will take shape. I.e. Conscious Force will resolve into Energy, out of which forms of Force will coagulate. We could call the Force a kind of will for creation. Out of that urge and will, energy will emerge. And from that energy, forces and forms will take shape in creation.]

The Force Can Be at Rest or Move. The Being Has Chosen It to Move

Sri Aurobindo also takes up the subject of why the Force was *energized* to create a universe of forms. He says that a Force is a product of the Infinite consciousness, which is not limited in its potentiality. I.e. it can be or not be anything it so chooses. Therefore, it can remain at rest and self-concentrated; or be in a state of self-diffusion and movement.

[It chose diffusion of Itself and Movement so that an infinite variety of forms could be created out of Itself to experience an infinite variety of Delight through self-discovery of its higher nature. A Force is thus the first indicator of movement. We can think of it as the most subtle form of "substance" that will take shape as Energy at rest, which will then move, coagulating into visible and invisible forms of that Force/Energy. Energy is a kind of first "materialization" of the Force, out of which real materialization, Matter, will take shape.]

The Consciousness that Was Contained in the Force (in Satchitananda) is Lost in Involutionary Process/Descent Towards Creation

Then Sri Aurobindo addresses the fact that the universe does not seem to have retained the consciousness of the Being by extending Itself into forms of Its Conscious Force/Energy. It has somehow become unconscious in the process by which a universe emerged from a Divine Source. He explains that the *Consciousness* of that Force is gradually lost in the *involutionary* descent from pure Being/Spirit down through Cosmic Mind to Life (Energy), culminating in the complete unconsciousness (i.e. inconscience) of Matter. There, the Consciousness is fully involved and hidden -- i.e. absorbed -- in the form; not experienced on the surface.

[*Energy Out of Conscious Force Enables Forms of Creation* -- Actually, the Conscious Force, through an involutionary process, loses its consciousness and emerges as Energy at rest. The energy has lost much of its consciousness, yet it still retains a power of force. When the energy then moves, it formulates into unseen forms and forces, and then into Matter, where in that process Its consciousness is fully absorbed and hidden in those material forms.

-Later Sri Aurobindo explains that this self-absorption of consciousness in the involutionary descent was intentional. It was done to enable the

multiplicity of forces and forms, both positive and negative. By allowing for the imperfect, there are more possibilities, greater variety from which those forms can discover their higher nature and evolve. Thus, the diminution of consciousness was intended so that a robust evolution of consciousness of infinite variety of forms could take shape, and each experience Delight in their own way through the discovery of their higher nature.】

Through the Evolutionary Ascent in Creation the Consciousness of the Force Reemerges

And yet the Consciousness of that Force can emerge, as it remains a seed of potential ready to come out. Then how does the Consciousness of the Force behind any form come out? Or to put it another way, how do they reunite as they are in the Infinite consciousness above as "Conscious-Force?"

Sri Aurobindo says that the Force becomes Conscious once again through the *evolutionary* process in the universe; i.e. when matter evolves to life, and life to mind, and mind to spirit.

【That takes place through the conscious evolution of the forms, particularly we humans. As we evolve, the Force and Consciousness reunite in ourselves and in those forms we are related to, releasing its (once formerly involved) infinite potential.】

【*Consciousness and Force Reunited through Interaction of Forces* Throughout The Life Divine Sri Aurobindo will tell us that life on its own is trying to unite the Consciousness and the Force, but through its slow and difficult method of evolution. In particular, it is Nature's way of progress of having the Force of things come in contact and contradiction with another Force to bring out its involved Consciousness. Thus, in our lives, progress occurs by our coming in contact with other lives. Through these pleasant or unpleasant experiences, we are forced to adopt new behaviors, causing certain latent capacities within us to rise to the surface. This contact of our force with another brings out the Consciousness in us, uniting it with the Force in us.

Moreover, if we are conscious of this dynamic, it can be a much happier experience, as we embrace every situation that comes our way, pleasant or unpleasant, seeing them both as means, opportunities of our further progress.

Sri Aurobindo will however in 'The Problems of Life' chapter and elsewhere offer a direct spiritual method by connecting to our evolving soul so we can rise to Supermind, bringing the Consciousness and Force together, thereby overcoming our essential Ignorances about our own nature, others, life, etc. These two approaches, that of embracing all that comes our way, as well as finding our inner being and highest supramental vision of things, are not mutually exclusive, but depend on one another in our upward ascent.】

The Process of Forms Taking Shape from the Force/Energy is Explained

-Sri Aurobindo also explains the process of how forms take shape in creation from out of Force/Energy. He says that it occurs through a meeting of and mutual adoption between *unshaped* forces. **[There are forces that emerge from the Force. The meeting and mutual adoption of those unshaped force combine to create forms in the cosmos.]**

-As a side note, Sri Aurobindo also explains why there is sensation and action in the cosmos. He indicates that sensation and action occur because of the response of something in a particular form of Force to the contacts with other forms of Force.

All Planes of Existence Are Expressions of the Conscious Force

Finally, Sri Aurobindo explains that all planes below it are expressions of the one Conscious Force. The Cosmic Mind that emerged from it, the Energy at rest that followed, the forms of force of creation (including the planes of Matter, Animated Vital Life, and Mind in the universe) each uniquely, differently, and progressively express the Consciousness Force that is Chit of Sat-chit-ananda.

It is thus there in the mineral, plant, animal, and human. From what is seen **[gross/physical]** to what is unseen **[subtle and causal]**.

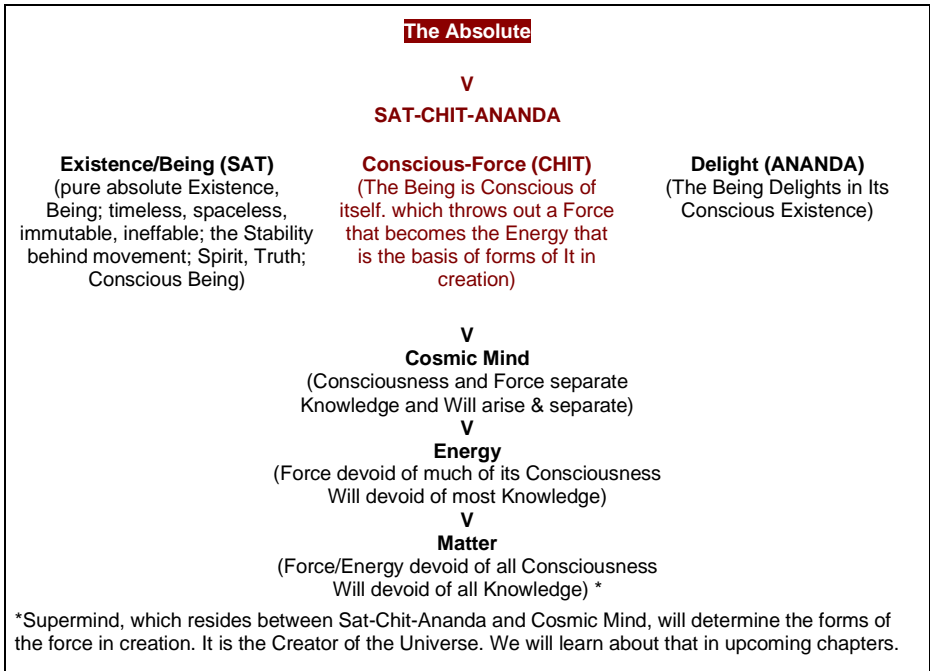
[They are expressions of the Conscious Force; yet they do not present on the surface. Yet we through our evolution can bring out the involved fusion of Consciousness and Force (or we can call it Knowledge and Will) of that plane.]

Diagram: The Role of Conscious-Force (Chit) in Creation Process:

To create the universe, the Absolute took a first step out of Itself as Pure Existence/Being (Sat). Being Conscious of Itself, it generated a *Force* that is Conscious -- i.e. a Conscious-Force (Chit). (It Delights in Its Existence and Force (Ananda).

The Consciousness and Force of Conscious-Force begin to separate, leaving Cosmic Mind. Conscious-Force becomes Knowledge and Will. The Knowledge in Cosmic Mind begins to involve, dissipate, leaving only the Will of Energy. That raw Energy then loses all vestiges of Knowledge, and divides into material matter.

(At each step the Conscious-Force increasingly loses its consciousness, as it is increasingly involved, hidden. At the point of matter arising from the Energy, there is no consciousness on the surface; it is fully involved, leaving no trace.)



ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Conscious Force Reemerges in the Evolution

All planes of existence are forms of Force, whose original status is a *conscious* Force (Chit) of the infinite, divine Reality. In matter, the Force is unconscious, and gradually emerges in consciousness through life and then mentality. The consciousness and Force are reunited in higher spiritual planes still we can evolve to, mirroring the original Conscious Force that is the source of all things.

Reuniting the Consciousness and Force

The original Conscious-Force in its involutory descent from Spirit to Matter, in stages lost its consciousness, culminating in inconscient, dumb matter. Only force remains there, without its conscious origins. Even there the consciousness and thus the Conscious Force is involved as potential.

When life emerged through animated life forms and then we mental humans, the involved Conscious Force progressively emerged. From the outset onward, the Force on the surface that was alone began to unite with the consciousness that was brought to bear. As we continue to evolve, and life in the universe evolves to its spiritual potential, the

Force and Consciousness move towards fully emerging in creation, mirroring its original status in the Unmanifest being.

Evolution as Conversion of Force to Conscious Force

The evolution consists of the emergence of the involved consciousness in the Force -- from matter to life to mentality to spirit -- revealing and reconstituting itself as Conscious Force.

Source and Action of Creation of Conscious Force

When the unknowable Infinite Reality became the conscious Being, a Conscious Force emerged that would become the Energy that has been and is source of all forms in creation.

Raising our Consciousness, Conscious Force, and the Power to Attract

Whenever we raise our consciousness, we generate a force, a power that is actually a higher degree of a *conscious* Force. That force becomes an energy that attracts corresponding elements from the field of life.

Surrendering to the Conscious Force Power

Those dedicated to the path of the spirit can surrender to the Truth Consciousness, to the descending spiritual Power to enable the consciousness and the force to emerge in the thing we are focused on. It is a Causal power garnered that creates something out of nothing; that enables the infinite to emerge from that current finite.

Consecration and Energy

Sri Aurobindo tells us that all forms are forms of energy and we are a physical embodiment of an infinite universal force. Yet often we feel that we have no more energy left in us and we need to rest or sleep or retire. How can that be? We are the universal life. We are Sacchidananda. What has happened to that universal force?

The explanation is that we have taken the infinite energy of the universal and locked it up in so many forms that are no longer alive. All our opinions, attitudes, habits and character traits are like so many atoms of matter, packed with infinite energy that is bound tightly into a fixed form, so it cannot escape or express. When Mother asks us to consecrate our acts, our past, our attitudes, She is saying that we should take all of these forms, put them into the bonfire of our aspiration, and liberate the conscious energy that is locked up within them.

Our sense of superiority, self-importance, status, prestige, self-satisfaction, pride and competence are so many locks we have placed on the doors of our being to prevent the life energy from emerging. As much energy is locked up in all of those forms as in all the atoms of matter.

For the devotee, the aim of this yoga is to release the spirit in life that is locked up in our attitudes and opinions. We really are infinite energy but it is concealed within our habits and forms. The same thing is true of our negative attitudes—what Sri Aurobindo calls negative egoism—of self-doubt, inferiority, worthlessness and incompetence. Each is a form that conceals infinite energy. Consecration helps us break all the locks.

Because in life we are not able to break the forms, life constantly comes and knocks against us to help us break them. The greater the potential within us, the greater the force that comes to challenge us. The greater the opposition from life, the greater the accomplishment that is sanctioned and possible for you.

(from 'Lectures on Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine' by Garry Jacobs)



Delight of Existence: The Problem

(Book 1 Chapter XI)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo discusses the third unfolding of Satchitananda on the way to manifest a universe of forms: Delight -- i.e. Blissful pleasure; 'Ananda' in Indian parlance. Here he tells us that --

-Delight (Bliss, Ananda) emerged from Being and Conscious Force as a third extension of Brahman in the involutory process toward creation.

-there is a parallel between the urge of Brahman's Conscious Force to manifest forms in creation, and Its urge to extend Delight to creation.

-the very purpose of creation is for the forms in creation, including we humans, to experience the same Delight experienced by the unmanifest Brahman.

-we humans experience pain instead of this Delight because of our essential Ignorance and divided nature.

-human happiness is transient, while Joy/Delight (Ananda) is everlasting.

-we can come to know the hidden, involved Delight that is there in our being by elevating our consciousness.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Emergence of Delight (Ananda) from Being and Conscious Force

Sri Aurobindo explains that the third poise that the Reality, Brahman took out of itself is Delight. First, there is the Pure Existence (Being; Sat of Sat-Chit-Ananda), which is the Stability (and Truth and Spirit) out of which all would emerge in creation. Second is the Conscious Force (Chit) that emerged from the Conscious Being, which provides the Force and eventually the Energy that is the basis of all forms in creation. Out of these come Delight (Ananda).

[Consider the relationship between the Pure Existent (Being/Sat) and Delight. We can say that when the Pure Existent (Being, Sat) experiences Itself, It has the sensation of Delight (Bliss, Ananda). Or to put it another way, the Pure Existent Delights in its very Existence and Being.]

Delights' Urge is to Extend to Creation

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that just as the conscious Force extended into a multiplicity of forms in creation, so does Delight. I.e. just as the force of consciousness is capable of throwing itself into forms infinitely and with endless variation, so too can that Delight express in infinitely various forms. Or as Sri Aurobindo puts it: "The force of consciousness is capable of infinite variation in phenomenon and form, and endlessly enjoying the Delight of that variation."

The Purpose of Creation is Delight

In fact, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the very reason a universe has been manifest is for the purpose of Delight; for the Reality, Brahman (via Being and Conscious Force) to extend its own Delight into a myriad of forms so they too could experience it in infinite variety.

[We will later learn that the Being wished to extend its own *static* Delight into the *dynamic* Delight of a myriad of forms in creation. When we discover our higher nature, we experience (our own, unique form of) Delight, thereby fulfilling the Divine intent.]

Division and Ignorance Causes Pain, Blocks Delight in Our Lives

Sri Aurobindo then asks a most profound question (hence the title of the chapter 'Delight of Existence: The Problem'). If there is such Delight permeating the Reality (i.e. the Unmanifest and the Manifest universe), how come we humans experience pain and suffering instead?

First, he answers that in fact we experience far more pleasure than pain in life, and we should keep things in perspective. He indicates that it is because there is so much pleasure that the pain seems so acute. I.e. the pain affects us more intensely because the pleasure is the norm; thus pain seems like an attack from our normal consciousness.

He then posits that our experience of pain and thus absence of Delight is due to our wrong consciousness; particularly our ignorance and divided nature rooted in our ego sense. Thus, if we overcome ego, gain true knowledge of existence, and thereby unify our being, we will experience the inherent Delight in our nature.

[From another perspective, there is no Pain in creation; there is only Delight. In Vedantic philosophy, suffering is Delight that is perceived wrongly. Thus, from a distance or later on in our lives, we see that the problems we experienced were a great spur to positive developments

in our lives; that they were actually blessings in disguise that we were unable to perceive at the time of the difficulty or loss.

We can however have that view upfront, which transmutes our perception of pain into one of neutrality or even pleasure. When we see the utility of all things, positive and negative, we experience the Marvel of existence, which causes us to drop the experience pain, and, in fact, experience Delight in its place.

Thus, it is only from a lower consciousness that Pain is perceived. It is only our limited perception due to our limited view of life. From the standpoint of Truth there is none at all.】

Normal Transient Human Happiness is Inferior to Everlasting Delight

In the chapter, Sri Aurobindo makes the distinction between normal human happiness and the Delight of the Reality, Brahman that we can experience. He indicates that the ordinary happiness and joy we experience is transient and ephemeral; depending on whether conditions are (perceived as) favorable or not. Delight of Being, on the other hand, has its source in the highest, Infinite consciousness, and is therefore illimitable, permanent, ever-lasting. It is also "self-existent" - i.e. without a shadow or dark side, including unhappiness; whereas human happiness is not self-existent, which means it can at any time reverse into its dark side, which is unhappiness and pain.

Sri Aurobindo then adds that when the Divine Conscious Force works in us, then the transient joy we normally experience will be replaced by the more permanent, self-existent satisfaction that is the Immortal's ecstasy -- i.e. Pure Delight (Bliss, Ananda).

We Can Bring to the Surface the Inherent Delight Involved in Forms

Finally, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Delight of existence is there inherent in all forms; is, in fact, the true essence of those forms; and we can bring it to the surface of our lives. He indicates that Delight is hidden, buried, and subconscious in Matter, yet it seeks in Mind and Life to realize itself. We enable that to happen by our own rise in consciousness.

【The positive aspects of the spirit -- including Truth, Oneness, Love, and Delight -- are there in forms of Force, from matter to spirit. However, in the lower forms (i.e. matter), Delight and the other spiritual aspects are completely hidden, involved deep within. This is somewhat less true for the vital being (a more conscious plane than the physical), and even less in the mind (which is of a higher plane still).

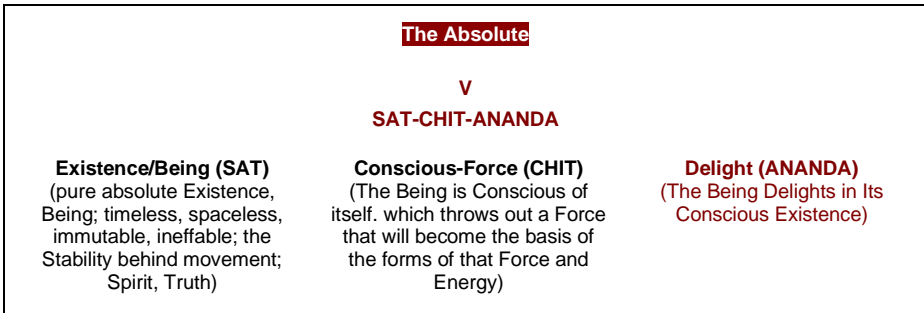
When we rise in consciousness, we bring these essential spiritual qualities to the surface. So e.g. at the vital level, the natural tendency

to be self-giving (which is involved in the depths of our being) rises to the surface and we practice it more consciously. Delight is the same. As we rise in consciousness, we experience the Delight more readily in our daily lives (i.e. at the surface).]

[Reason for Involved Consciousness: we can understand the necessity of involved consciousness from two perspectives: Variety and Discovery. (1) *Variety* -- We will later learn that these positive, conscious Spiritual aspects (Truth, Oneness, Love, Delight, etc.) are involved because the Infinite consciousness wished to create the greatest *diversity* of forms, allowing for the greatest variety of possibilities, which would thereby include all things we deem negative, unconscious, and painful. (2) *Discovery* -- Also with the higher consciousness being involved, when we discover the truths of existence, we have the joy of discovery, which is Delight. Without the involved consciousness, there could be no discovery, and thus Delight which depends on it. (I.e. Delight comes at the point in our lives when we discover something new, or the deeper truth of things, or we experience any of the spiritual aspects.)]

Diagram: The Role of Delight (Ananda) in Creation:

In this table, we see how Delight (Bliss, Ananda) is the third aspect of Sat-Chit-Ananda that emerged from the Reality (Brahman, the Absolute). Indicated here is that the Being delights in its conscious existence. Thus, Delight, the third aspect of Sat-Chit-Ananda came to be.



One Step Further:

Delights Extends to Beauty, Joy and Love

Later on in the chapter "Indeterminates and Cosmic Determinations" (Book II, Chapter I), we will learn that out of each of the three aspects of Satchitananda (Being, Conscious Force, and Delight) will emerge cosmic determinants in creation. Delight, the third aspect, will extend itself to Beauty, Joy, and Love.

Furthermore, we as conscious forms in creation can experience those three determinants of Delight through various parts of our being -- mental, vital (emotional), and psychic/soul. (1) We experience Delight in the mind as Beauty. I.e. the mind takes pleasure in the perfection of forms it perceives. (2) We experience Delight in the vital/emotional being as Joy. I.e., we have true emotional pleasure (i.e. joy) when we experience Delight through our vital feelings. (3) We experience Delight in the evolving soul within, the psychic being, as Love. I.e. when we move into the deepest depths, our true selves, we experience the Delight of creation as pure and powerful Love for each and all things.

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

-Just as Knowledge and Will are truths and powers of Conscious Force, *so is Delight.*

-Satchitananda moves toward the realization of universal, self-existent and objectless delight in the flux of the particular experiences and objects.



Delight of Existence: The Solution

(Book 1 Chapter XII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo continues the discussion of Delight (Ananda of Sat-Chit-Ananda) he initiated in the previous one. Here he focuses on the solution to the problem of why we do not experience delight categorically. He then traces how it gradually emerges through transitions of consciousness in the course of evolution, and then focuses on how we can bring it to the surface of life through movements of higher consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that the Delight the Being intended in creation, in the manifestation is a more dynamic Delight than its static form of the Unmanifest.

Then he reiterates that the Delight is originally involved, hidden in life, but has reemerged in infinite variety through various stages or transitions of evolution; in essence, in an upward movement from matter to animated life to mind to spirit.

Finally, and most importantly, Sri Aurobindo gives us the process by which we can bring about the emergence of this full, variable, dynamic Delight in our own lives by elevating our consciousness. It is a three-pronged movement: inward; opening our mind upward to its highest spiritual dimensions; and taking to a state of utter calm and detachment. This is the solution to the problem of absence of Delight in our lives and thus in creation.

Here are the main points in detail:

Creation Makes Possible a More Variable, Dynamic Delight than the Static Delight of the Unmanifest

Sri Aurobindo begins by restating that there is an inherent Delight in creation, and is in fact the very reason why a universe of forms was first created from the conscious Being. *Delight is thus the secret of creation.* [See details in last chapter.]

He then goes further and indicates that Delight was extended to creation to create a *variable, more dynamic* Delight in the Becomings of life, through the experiences of individual forms (including us).

[Delight in the transcendent consciousness, in the Being is of one variety; static, albeit fully realized at its own level. Delight becomes more dynamic in creation (the Becoming) because it can express in infinite variety through endlessly diverse forms.

Sri Aurobindo puts it this way: "There is eternal and immutable Delight of Being moving out into infinite and variable delight of Becoming."]

The Transition of Delight from Being Involved in Creation to Its Emergence is Explained

(a) Sri Aurobindo then describes the difficult emergence of Delight in the unfolding of creation; from it being involved in the inconscience of nature to its gradual emergence in life. He tells us that at first Delight is submerged, involved, self-gathered, absorbed, subconscious in the physical universe. Then it emerges in the great mass of movements of life. It surfaces further still through pain, pleasure, and indifferences, as mind and ego take root. Finally, Delight emerges more consciously by a universality, an equality, a self-possession and conquest of the limits of nature.

[-Delight is fully submerged in material existence; comes out further as life emerges from matter through animated life forms; further still through mentality (especially humans) where ego substantially takes root; and fully blossoms in the higher spiritual mind and nature. Thus, as higher levels of consciousness, Delight takes form in creation (we being the instrument).

The embodiment of this movement -- the human individual -- is therefore able to have the pleasure of discovery of that which has been hidden, which is the experience of Delight. In addition, the higher our level of consciousness, the purer, more powerful, and ecstatic the Delight.

-Let's consider Delight in the ascending movement of consciousness from mentality to spirit in ourselves. E.g. at the mental plane, I become aware of possibilities, and discover new things. As a result, the Delight is experienced only in part, because there is also its opposite, pain, since in mind I am still in the divided consciousness. However, when I move to Spirit (within or above), the discoveries are more fully positive, thus I have a closer experience of the Pure Delight of the Infinite; i.e. it is Self-existent, meaning it is without corresponding dark side, including pain and suffering. In the evolving Soul within (the Psychic Being) or opening to spiritualized Mind of Supermind above (the two highest forms of Spirit experience), there is the Purest Delight. And yet it is also more dynamic than the static delight of the Being/Sat, since it more variable, unique through our individuality as a form.]

(b) Sri Aurobindo also reiterates that the one Pure Existent, the Being intended and supports Nature's slow and difficult emergence of Delight through these stages. Why does it do so? The Being sanctions these stages in order to allow for the greatest variation and possibility of forms of force in creation.

[-I.e. through the variations of good and bad -- and, here, pleasure and pain -- all possibilities are allowed for, which enables the greatest variety of experience, and hence the greatest variety of Delight. Going through these stages from Pain to Pure Delight indicates that there is a multiplicity of experience of forms with infinite shadings from positive to negative, which is what the Being intends in creation.

Thus, the Pure Existent (the Being, Sat) sanctions this difficult process from pain to Delight in the unfolding, evolution of in creation.

-An interesting side note is to consider concerns the nature of the Infinite consciousness itself. Sri Aurobindo does not simply say that out of the Infinite emerge infinite forms of infinite variety, but that *inherent in the Infinite itself are all possibilities*. It is inherent in the One Original Infinite consciousness.]

Moving to Depths, Spiritualized Mentality, and Detachment Enables the Emergence of the Delight in Creation Key

Now Sri Aurobindo comes to the key part the chapter, reflecting its title: 'Delight of Existence: The Solution.'

He indicates that we can come out of Nature's slow and difficult method of gradual emerging Delight by *consciously* evoking it on our own. He says that through an evolution of consciousness, we can experience that Bliss directly, without going through Nature's steps of pleasure, pain, and indifference in our lives. We can do that in three ways:

(1) Movement to Depths -- The first way to move directly toward Delight without the intermediary stages of pain is to move away from the surface of life, where our waking consciousness is uppermost, -- i.e. where we experience ego, indifference, separateness, and therefore amalgam of pleasure and pain -- and instead concentrate ourselves in the depths within, enabling more direct connect with others and life, overcoming our ego-sense and separateness, thereby experiencing Delight in all things.

[When you are poised in the depths, you are less caught up in the surface bubblings of life, of lesser mind's preoccupation with sense input, of the visual and the auditory. You look out on the world from a deeper perspective; are more in tune with others and the movements of life; creating deeper bonds and affiliations, right understanding and decision, which break down ego, separateness, and selfishness,

overcoming pleasure, pain, and indifference; thereby experiencing deep, rich Joy in being alive; i.e. Delight.]

(2) True Rational & Spiritualized Mind -- The second way to move directly toward Delight without the intermediary stages of pain (as in Nature) is to center ourselves in the higher aspects of mind -- including rational and pure thought, and greater still, through spiritualized mind [i.e. illumination, vision, intuition, revelation, and supramental perception]. There we are freed from the narrow view of things, from our habitual nature, and the separativeness engendered by ego; allowing for greater understanding, which helps us become the master of our responses to the world. We thus move into a rhythm of harmony with others, the flow of life and universal forces, which retards suffering and engenders Delight.

[Let's consider these two higher aspects of Mind that when enjoined, engender Delight for us.

-*Rationality* -- Rationality as we normally know it is not true rationality at all. The commonly understood rational man does not think in a logical, rational way, which would embrace all sides of a matter. He instead is dominated by his own interests, needs, and drives, i.e. his ego-sense, which engenders exclusive thinking of the mind. We embrace one thing, but not another. We take up one line, but avoid others. A True Rational individual would seek to know the full truth, all sides of a matter, and be open to all lines of inquiry on a matter. True rationality would thus have the joy of discovery of the many-sided truth, not just what he is attached to, which would engender endless Joy and Delight.

-*Spiritualized Mind* -- Above the True, Rational Mind are planes of mind that Sri Aurobindo considers spiritual in quality. I.e. Silent Mind, Illumined Mind (Light), Intuitive Mind, Overmind, and Supermind. Moving to them evokes even greater Delight. E.g. when your mind opens to higher truths, as when Archimedes exclaimed; Eureka, I've got it!" in a moment of spiritual light and intuition, there is a great Joy and Delight in the experience. Who has not had a similar profound moment of understanding or epiphany about a matter? It brings not only deep understanding about the subject or concern at hand, but a profound joy and delight in the experience of discovery of the new. That is precisely what the Divine intended when it created this universe of forms. I.e. it hid Its properties, including Delight, so we could have the experience of discovery (of our higher nature), which would elicit intense Joy and Delight in our lives.

-*Going In Enables Going Up* -- There is actually a connection between methods #1 and #2. As Sri Aurobindo suggest throughout *The Life Divine*, as man goes deeper *within*, down to the subliminal and the evolving Soul, his mental consciousness *rises up* to spiritualized mind in the forms of right thinking through silence, illumination and light,

vision, intuition, and revelation. This experience gives us great power of understanding that can lead to powerfully positive decisions and actions, that can attract sudden, overwhelming response from life. This energizes us to no end, eliciting Deep Delight in the process.】

(3) Inner Detachment -- Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that if we could be entirely disinterested in mind and heart and impose that detachment on the nervous being, we could eliminate the imperfect touches of pleasure and the perverse touches of pain.

【We are very attached to our own thoughts, opinions, wants, and desires. We also act reflexively to the unfoldings of life, experiencing pleasure and pain, happiness and its opposite. However, if we developed the poise of detachment in the mind, heart, emotions, and nerves, we would not be subject to ups and down, to pleasure that is limited and transient, as well as to pain. Instead Delight of Being would be our never-ending experience.】

Sri Aurobindo also points out that inner calm, equality, and detachment is the first soul movement that enables our experience of Delight.

【*Non-reaction* -- Karmayogi, the great disciple of Sri Aurobindo tells us that first poise of the spirit that we should take is one of utter nonreaction. E.g. when we start the day or meet someone, the first thing to do is to be still and non-reactive, yet remain open. From that poise, you are less likely to get excited, and to experience the vicissitudes that follow. In addition, you will be more open to the needs and concerns of others; more mindful of the conditions and situations before you; more ready to act (or not react) in a particular direction; more in tune with the flow of life, which will allow life to more readily respond in your favor. The end result is continuous Delight.

We can take a similar tact when difficult situations come our way. In those circumstance (as well as intensely positive ones), we can try to be very calm and equal, not reacting to the intensity of the moment. (We call this "equality of being.") That also will free up positive energies, which will align with the very best conditions around us.

-We can see how this inner poise is similar to the "Inner Poise" of the Being. Just as the Infinite consciousness's first poise is the Stability (of Being) that knows Delight, so we to can remain still and non-reactive, attracting the very best conditions, and therefore endless Delight.】

Thus, these three methods -- taking to the Depths, moving to true rationality and Spiritualized Mind, and Inner-detachment -- are the solutions to overcome ego, separateness, division, and pain, thereby engendering a continuous stream of Delight in our lives.

In that way, we serve to bring Delight to the universe, which is the intent of the Infinite consciousness. Thus, these approaches in

combination, as the chapter's title indicates, are the solution to the problem of Delight of Existence in the cosmos.

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Manifesting Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight (Sat-Chit-Ananda) in Our Own Lives

At birth, we exist. Then we become conscious of our existence and the life around us. That self-awareness evokes a force and power within us, which expresses as energy at various planes -- physical, vital/emotional, social, psychological, and mental. That energy is organized into a Desire, a Will, and an Aspiration for things to happen in our lives. It can be at the level of achievement, at the romantic level, at the level of creativity, or any other plane of accomplishment and being. This process of coming to higher consciousness that generates a Force and Will release great Joy and Delight in being alive.

This is parallel to the Infinite Reality that extended itself to Being -- i.e. It moved from its immutable, ineffable status to one of existence as Spirit. In that process, the pure Being was conscious of Itself, aware of Its existence in totals; thus, it was a Conscious Being, actually an *infinitely* conscious one.

That in turn generated a Force; a Conscious Force. That Being, through Its Conscious Force, had an Intention and Will to manifest a universe of forms of Its Own Conception. As a result of Its Conscious existence and its conscious power and force, an infinite Delight in Itself was released. The three powers Existence/Conscious Being (Sat), Conscious Force (Chit), and Delight (Ananda) then extended Itself to enable a universe of an infinite variety of forms seen and unseen that reflected Its Intention and Its Divine attributes.

Thus, the nature of who we are and the nature of the Infinite Reality are parallel. We are each existent, conscious, generating a force that contains a will for the purpose of manifesting something that will culminate in Delight.

The difference is that the Infinite Divine is *fully* existent, *fully* conscious of itself, *fully* generates a conscious force and will that can bring about a universe, and therefore exists in complete bliss of the fact. We on the other hand, exist not in perfection, but imperfection, are only slightly conscious of our being and life, put out a half conscious force and will that leads to results that are partial and incomplete, in which we miss out on the discovery of our higher nature that could have brought the same joyful and bliss of the Divine, but in an even more dynamic form.

The goal then is for us to move from the very partial Existence, Conscious-Force Delight to its fullness, which the Infinite Divine is in essence. Then we will become infinite beings at the physical, vital, mental, and spiritual selves, instead of the limited, finite, ignorant,

individuals we are now. We can do that by elevating our consciousness; acknowledging our deficiencies and overcoming them; create a mature inner life; discover our true self, our evolving soul within; and open to the spiritual Force at all points.

Then we gradually become the Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight (Sat-Chit-Ananda) of the Infinite Divine, fulfilling our cosmic mission in life.

Additional Thoughts:

Delight of Being and Becoming

Delight of being trying to discover itself as delight of becoming is common to all. (MSS)

Pain and Mind

Pain grows with the growth of Mind in life; where Mind is bound is the life and body; a subject of their limitations and egoistic impulses. If Mind can get free of these forces, be unegotistical, in harmony with other beings, and with the play of universal forces, suffering diminishes. (Sri Aurobindo)

Pain, Suffering, and Conscious Force

There is pain and suffering because there is not enough Conscious Force to meet the shocks of life. (Sri Aurobindo)



The Divine Maya

(Book 1 Chapter XIII)

Introduction

The previous three chapters explain the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda, i.e. Existence/Being, Conscious-Force, and Delight. They are the first steps that the Infinite consciousness takes toward creation. Now before he explains the process of creation by which a universe of forms emerges from Satchitananda, Sri Aurobindo first explains the cosmic capacity that enables this process to take place. He calls this faculty to render unique forms out of the totality of the Infinite "The Divine Maya."

Summary

Sri Aurobindo describes the means by which the Infinite creates delimited, finite formations out of Itself, enabling phenomenal existence as "Maya."

He then goes on to distinguish his view of Maya compared to the tradition, which defines it as *illusion*: where forms are perceived as unreal since they appear to be separated from their spiritual Source. However, Sri Aurobindo indicates that this more traditional view is what he calls the "lower Maya;" while he is referring of its higher, more positive aspect -- i.e. Maya's creating capacity to render distinct, finite forces and forms from the undivided Infinite.

Sri Aurobindo then briefly explains that it is the Supramental plane of being [a further extension of Satchitananda] that uses the power of (Higher) Maya to create a phenomenal existence out of the Infinite Divine. This is the essence of creation.

He concludes that each form created is secretly and inextricably united and One with all other things -- as Maya has that capacity -- but we do not perceive this. However, if we raise our consciousness to Supramental perception, we can perceive it.

Here are the main points in detail:

Maya is the Power to Conceive and Create Delimited, Finite Formations Out of the Infinite

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo is now considering how a universe of finite forms emerged from the Reality; i.e. from the Unmanifest state of Sat-Chit-Ananda. He concludes that the Infinite consciousness has a power to perceive, comprehend, and create a certain Truth and order of things out of Itself; to delimit, and to shape finite appearance to enable a phenomenal existence and formation of Its own being. This is the power of Maya.

The power of Maya is thus the creative force and power by which the formless infinite will become a phenomenal world of distinct forms. Without Maya's power to represent the One Reality as finite forms, there could be no creation.

[The Infinite Divine wishes to create finite forms in order to give creative expression to the infinite *potentials* of the Being; that which is *latent* in Its unmanifest status. It accomplishes this through the Maya power.

Another way of putting this is that all that manifests in the creation process already exists as Ideas of some sought that has the potential to manifest. Sri Aurobindo will reveal these as Real Ideas that Supermind will render real as forms in creation. We humans also have that power, though we do not so readily realize or envision our own infinite potential. However, if we evolve our consciousness, we can envision all that we wish to create. At the supramental plane, we have the ability to perceive the ideas, while also having the complementary power to make them real.

Imagine if Shakespeare already conceptualized and detailed every one of his plays before he put them into writing. Also imagine that each play was interconnected with every other one as well as to a totality of vision and purpose. This would be the equivalent of the preexistent state of Real Ideas of the Being; i.e. the potential is fully envisioned, comprehended beforehand. Maya then would be the power for Shakespeare to write each play as originally conceived, while maintaining in the scenes the connection of each play to every other one and to the Source in order to express his deepest intent and purpose. For the Infinite, that deepest purpose is to express in a multitude of forms the expression of the Spirit -- i.e. Truth, Peace, Oneness, Creativity, Knowledge, Power, Love, Beauty Delight, Infinity, Timelessness, etc.

The Infinite (Brahman, the Reality) seeks *infinite* expression in order to create the greatest variety of Being, Conscious Force, and Delight in creation. Maya's creative power to delimit and make finite out of the Infinite enables this cosmic process and purpose to unfold.]

Traditional View of Maya as Illusion vs. Sri Aurobindo's Conception of Lower (Illusion) and Higher (Power of Distinction of Forms) Maya

Sri Aurobindo's version of Maya is not the same as the tradition, which sees it as the *illusion* of the Mind that is attracted/attached to distinct forms, preventing one from seeing the true essence, truth, and Reality behind, and is therefore the cause of suffering in life. He refers to this as the 'Lower Maya,' whereas the phenomenal power to create distinct forms out of the Infinite consciousness and being and *maintain the unity and Oneness with it* the 'Higher Maya.'

(He argues that forms might seem separate from their Source, leading to illusionary view and suffering [as Shankara and Buddha pointed out], but in essence this is not so since each and every form is part of, unified and One in the Reality. It is merely the lower consciousness that sees the illusion of forms separate from the Reality. The higher consciousness, particularly through supramental perception, knows the integral Oneness of all forms with one another and the Source, not the separation of those forms, which is the root of illusion and therefore suffering.)

[Thus, Maya is not an ignorance, a separation from the totality of the truth, but a transcendental power that is the expression of a divine integral knowledge, where each and every force and form that manifest is united in a totality of truth. If I see a beautiful painting, it is not an illusion that separates me from the Infinite, God, the Divine, but is a unique expression of the Godhead rendered in a unique form by the power of Maya.]

Supermind Executes the Higher Maya to Create Forms Out of the Force

Sri Aurobindo then discusses (the Higher) Maya in terms of Supermind. He concludes that Supermind is the plane that *executes* the (higher) Maya power, drawing out distinct forms of the Infinite in the creation process. Thus, Supermind, using the power of Maya, will enable a phenomenal existence out of the Divine Reality. Supermind is then the Creator of the universe.

[-Supermind as creator will be more fully brought out in ensuing chapters, including the next one, 'The Supermind as Creator.'

Maya is the capacity and power, Supermind is the plane of being that utilizes the power to render a universe from out of the Conscious Force. I.e. Energy will merge from the Conscious Force (Chit), which will then coagulate into invisible and visible forces and forms.

-The Infinite "knows" all its variable potentialities. Supermind renders them into distinct forms through the dividing power of Maya.

There is also a Knowledge of 'Real Ideas,' and 'cosmic determinants' (i.e. Truth, Oneness, Love, Beauty, etc.) that the Infinite seeks to embody through these distinct formations of Itself. Supermind has that knowledge when it uses Maya power to render distinct forms out of the Energy originating in Conscious Force.】

Perceiving the Inherent Unity of the Each and All Things (Made Possible by the Higher Maya Conception) through Supramental Perception

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on how we can come to know the (higher) Maya's power to create distinct forms that do not lose their essential Oneness with all other forms, and the One source. He says that when rise in consciousness beyond mind and intuition to supramental perception, we perceive the workings of the Higher Maya. In particular, through the supramental faculty, we perceive how the "each" (i.e. every distinct form) and the "all" (i.e. the composite of forms) coexist in the inseparable unity of being.

【We will later learn that in Supermind, each individual form maintains its essential Oneness with all other objects and the Whole, whereas in the planes below it, including Mind, that connection begins to diffuse; i.e. each form loses its connection to the purpose of the All and One, which is the cause of separation, exclusivity, division, disharmony, and suffering in life. Thus, the way existence (i.e. forces and forms) is organized in Supermind (or supramental consciousness) is based on the truth and capacity of Maya power, where the each and the all coexist in a dynamic, integral unity. I.e. each thing, though separate, is connected to all other things through an essential Oneness behind.】

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that we can rise above the exclusivity of mind to have the supramental consciousness, and thus see that all things in life, though separate to our senses, as inextricably linked in an inherent Oneness. This in turn overcomes our ego view, our sense of separateness, our attachment to our limited attitudes, opinions, etc. At that point each thing we do, or everything that happens to us is in tune with all other things, beings, and situations around us. We feel a profound bond and bliss in every aspect, activity, duty, circumstance of our lives.

【We could say that (higher) Maya is the organizing capacity and power in which the distinct form can be rendered while keeping their integral Oneness with all other things, while Supermind is that which renders that power to create a universe of forms. Moreover, we too have the same capacity to create anew in our one lives, while each distinct creation maintains a bond of Oneness with others, with life, and the transcendent Divine.】

ESSAYS:

The Higher Divine Maya

In one view of Illusionism, individual separate objects are said to not exist, and there is only the Whole from which they are part of, and maybe even the Whole is an Illusion as well. When humans are attached to the individual object, they are under the delusion of an illusion ("Maya" in Sanskrit).

Sri Aurobindo calls this attachment to the separate objects the "Lower Maya." But that is not the entire story, if even true at all. He says that the separate objects indeed DO exist, but what we miss is the Integral Relationship of each object to the Totality of which it is a part. He indicates that this "Higher Divine Maya" is the principle behind the process of creation of a universe of infinite forms, in which any one form has an integral relationship to all others and the Whole. The trouble is that we humans miss the whole as we look at each thing, fully absorbed in that form (idea, person, etc.), thereby living in Ignorance, not Illusion.

He says however that when we rise to the supramental Truth Consciousness we see each thing, matter, person, idea, force, circumstance, etc. in relationship to the Whole, which gives us a true view of the Reality. Now we have the View of the Infinite Creator who devised and manifest a universe of infinitely divine forms for the purpose of infinite Delight. Our essential Ignorance born of creation falls by the wayside, replaced by Integral Knowledge of existence.

Life's Secret Method of Progress: Divine Maya, Real Idea

When there is progress in life, it is the result of Real Ideas manifesting through the power of Divine Maya.

Explanation: As Sri Aurobindo has identified it in 'The Life Divine,' Divine Maya is the power that divides things into an infinite multiplicity of forms and forces, while each retains a connection and unity to all others, the Whole.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, we see how various circumstance are created that enabled a great progress for many individuals and aspects of society in the story. Yet the progress of each was dependent on the progress of each of the others they were related to, indicating the Divine Maya power that creates multiplicity of forms that are interrelated in their growth and ascent.

What was the progress to be created? It was determined by the Real Ideas of the Infinite Divine, such as the compulsion towards greater Harmony, Goodness, Truth, etc. in life, including variations and subsets of these, which is what occurred in the story. They all progressed, did so together, and in a multiplicity of ways that depended on their relations with one another.

Thus, we see how the consciousness-raising Real Ideas of the Infinite Divine seek to manifest in life, and do so through the dividing, yet integral relating Divine Maya power. This is the essential method of progress, evolution, and transformation in the cosmos.

Looking Forward:

Sri Aurobindo repeatedly takes up the subject of Maya in The Life Divine, especially in the chapter Brahma, Purusha, and Ishwara. Here is a preview of what he says there:

"For the Maya of Brahman is at once the magic and the logic of the infinitely variable Oneness ...

As with the being of Brahman, so with its consciousness, Maya: it is not bound to finite restrictions of itself or to one state or law of its action; it can be many things simultaneously, have many coordinated movements which to the finite reason might seem contradictory; it is but one innumerably manifold, infinitely plastic, inexhaustibly adaptable.

Maya is the supreme and universal consciousness and force of the Eternal and Infinite and, being by its very nature unbound and illimitable, it can put forth many states of consciousness at a time, many dispositions of its Force, without ceasing to be the same consciousness-force forever."

[-Here we see that Maya is the supreme, universal consciousness of the Eternal, the Absolute; that it can be any state of action, many things simultaneously, have many movements that can confound and contradiction our surface view; is unbound by anything, is unlimited; yet always maintains that Oneness in what it creates, through an infinite variability.

-Also, if each thing is connected back to the One, then even the smallest thing has infinite power. I.e. out of the finite can come the infinite. Raising our consciousness in relationship to the smallest thing can bring out the Infinite in it, evoking powerful positive response from life from out of nowhere.]

Misc. Thoughts on Maya (MSS)

- Maya is the administration of the company "Brahman," which executes the intention of the firm. [The company Brahman has an intention. Maya makes it real. Brahman is then the CEO. Maya is then the president who executes it.]
- Maya creates an ACTIVE truth of an ordered being out of a STATIC truth of an essential being. [Maya enables active truth; whereas the

Being has a static truth. Through the creative capacity of Maya, the active truth is able to come out of the Static truth.]

- Reason is the infinite intelligence of Maya. [Our ability to reason, which is to divide and separate, yet still maintains a connection to the essential Idea, is the way Maya's infinite intelligence functions in life.]



The Supermind as Creator

(Book 1 Chapter XIV)

Introduction

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo explains how Supermind is the creator of the universe, and how it does so through its Comprehending and Apprehending action. This is the great revelation and secret of Creation; perhaps the most profound insight of *The Life Divine*. He also describes the nature of Supermind as an ultimate knowledge and knowing power that we are capable of realizing.

Summary

Along the way, Sri Aurobindo has indicated that there is a plane of existence -- called Supermind -- that emerged from Satchitananda. He will now add that this cosmic plane will be the dimension that renders creation, a universe out of itself.

He actually begins the chapter by indicating that the Truths of the Conscious Being (Sat) are held in an essential unity in *comprehending* Supermind, but then differentiates into multiple entities through forces principles, forms, and movements in *apprehending* Supermind, and yet does so without each and all losing that essential oneness.

He also indicates that these Supermind fundamental Truths of the Conscious Being, of Sat are what he calls 'Real Ideas.' These Real Ideas are seeds that radiate out into creation through the supramental action, expressing spiritual Truths like Silent Witness, Creator, Knowledge, Will, Oneness, Love, and Delight in the forces, principles, forms, and movements of creation.

He adds that all of Life (i.e. Nature) is the result of the casting and expression of these Real-Ideas.

[In this way a Theory of Creation is devised by Sri Aurobindo. It is a process through which Real Ideas (i.e. Truths of the Conscious Being) are comprehended (devised) and then apprehended (manifested) through the intermediary Supramental plane and its action in the cosmos. It is in fact a *universal* process of creation that everything in the universe partakes in.]

Sri Aurobindo also describes the nature of Supermind itself as an ultimate knowledge and knowing power. It not only perceives all truths in their inherent Oneness, but has the Will and Power to render those Truths real in creation.

He also says we humans are capable of experiencing that ultimate cognitive capacity. He indicates that if we rise in consciousness, we can develop that supramental capacity of knowledge perception, and will capacity. Moreover, as a result of acquiring that integral knowledge power, we have the capacity to create infinitely in life, just as Supermind itself is able to do as Creator.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that Mind is a lesser derivation and power of Supermind, yet is a necessarily plane intended by the Infinite consciousness. **[That difference is indicated in terms of knowledge and force, time, space, dualities, causality, the finite and the infinite, unity and multiplicity, ego and psychic.]** He then reiterates that through our evolution of consciousness, we can rise from our experience of Mind to a higher, spiritualized Mind (through illuminations, intuitions, etc.) and further still arrive at Supramental Perception.

Here are the main points in detail:

A. SUPERMIND CREATES THE UNIVERSE, MANIFESTING REAL IDEAS OF THE CONSCIOUS BEING

Supermind Comprehending and Apprehending Power to Create a Universe of Forms

Now that we understand the method of (the Higher) Maya to shape finite appearance out of an undivided Infinite that enable a phenomenal existence of individual formations of Itself, Sri Aurobindo introduces us to the power that will render this capacity into a living reality. It is the power of Supermind, which he deems the Creator of those forms of force that will make up a living universe.

He says that this supreme Truth (Supramental) Consciousness -- residing between the Infinite "above" and the cosmos/universe "below" -- will through the inherent Real Idea (i.e. the cosmic conception of what creation can be) draw out the One into the Many.

[It should be noted that the Infinite Divine does not create something outside itself, different or separate from itself. It manifests and expresses truths and powers that are contained within itself in the same way that a prism reveals all the colors of the rainbow that are contained in white light.]

Supermind thus draws out the One into the Many through its comprehending and apprehending powers, differentiating and then manifesting Truths through principles, forces, and forms of creation.

--*Comprehending* Supermind subjectively *conceives* what these Truths are and holds them in an essential unity. It is thus Truth held in *potential* for manifestation.

--*Apprehending* Supermind then *projects* these Truths into the objective real. What is there *subjectively* within each form in Comprehending Supermind expresses *objectively* as a differentiated entity in Apprehending Supermind.

Real Ideas of Truth Are Rendered in Creation through Supermind

What then what are the things, entities, force, et al that Supermind is rendering comprehensively and apprehensively? Or to put it another way, what is the Truth that Supermind seeks to manifest in the universe? Sri Aurobindo says it is Real Ideas. These are the Truths the Conscious Being conceives it wants to accomplish, what it wills to manifest in creation. In that way, Real Ideas are the ultimate blueprint of creation.

Then what are the Real Ideas/Truths the Conscious Being seeks to manifest in creation? Sri Aurobindo (will later) indicate that these Truths, Real Ideas reflect "cosmic determinants;" spiritual attributes that emanate from Sat, Chit, and Ananda, taking form as Silent Witness, Creator, Harmony, Oneness, Knowledge/Wisdom, Love, Joy/Delight, Beauty, and others. These Truths/Real Ideas are seeds that seek to manifest in creation (a) through *principles*, (b) through *forms* of force (including us) who are their instrument, and (c) through *movements* of those forms. Through principles, forms, and their movements of life, the Truths of Real Idea will emerge from the One into the Many in space and time.

[Example of Real Idea: Harmony -- Imagine the Real Idea of "Harmony." The Conscious being seeks that vibration manifest in creation. Thus, principles of harmony are devised; then individuals are instruments of those principles of harmony, which occurs through those individuals' life movements. For example, there is the Harmony principle that if two individuals work in closer association, new higher possibilities can occur, such as greater accomplishment and success. Thus, I and another individual can become instruments of that principle of harmony. When I give up my ego and work in closer collaboration with that person, I engage in life movements that enable the principle of Harmony to take shape in life. This was in fact the Intent of the Conscious Being through the Real Idea seed of Harmony that it projected through principles, forms, and their movement. In a similar manner, this process occurs for every principle of Harmony, as it does for each of the Truths/Real Ideas such as Silent Witness, Oneness, Love, Beauty, Creator, Delight, and every other cosmic determinant of Sat-Chit-Ananda.]

[*Becoming Instruments of Real Ideas* -- In this way, we have a choice of whether to be instruments of the Real Ideas/Truths of the Conscious Being. The more conscious we are in our lives, the more we can sense the unfolding of the Real Idea (whether harmony, love, higher wisdom, etc.) and move in the direction of that Intent. In that way, we as individuals become instruments of a universal and transcended Intent and unfolding from on high. In fact, that itself is another of the Intentions of the Conscious Being: for us to be Its instrument!]

[*Universal Process of Creation* -- We also see from this discussion that there is a fundamental process of creation at work. We see that the Conscious-Being envisions Truths it wishes to manifest, devises principles by which it can occur, conceives of forms (like us) which serve as their instrument, and perceives movements of those Forms so that the Truths/spiritual expressions and determinants, unfold and become living reality in the manifest universe.

Interestingly, we too can follow this process in our own lives. E.g., we have an idea, vision that we wish to become real. It can be something we hope to accomplish or a deep value or belief we subscribe to in life. We then release the will and intention for it to come about. We then establish the means for that to happen -- through organization and a plan by which it can be made real. We then implement the organized plan through time-bound movements and actions, until our original Vision and Idea manifests as a living reality. In that way, we follow the same process as the Conscious Being, who devised and manifest a universe. In fact, there is really only one, single, universal process of creation that all things -- Manifest and Unmanifest, seen and unseen - - follow.]

Now the process of Cosmic unfolding continues with the involvement of Supermind, the Truth consciousness that is the instrument of the Conscious Being. Supermind thus renders these Real Ideas, these Spiritual expressions first as formations of ideaized possibility in its Comprehending capacity, and then as living realities through its Apprehending capacity. It will enable the Truths/Real Ideas of the conscious being to manifest through principles, forms, and movements of those forms.

Supermind thus serves as the instrument of the Urge, Will, and Intention of the Conscious Being to render its envisioned Truths/Real Ideas as real in creation. In Supermind through the Real Idea, the Divine conceptualizes and then renders everything It wants to manifest in life.

[Again, we see the process of creation at work, which parallels what we humans can do in life. I conceive that I want my vision/idea to be realized. This is analogous to comprehending Supermind, which seeks to create real images of the Divine's Real Ideas. I then execute my vision/idea through plan and action. This is analogous to Apprehending

Supermind., which seeks to manifest these images in space and time as living realities.]

Nature in Creation is as Expression of Original Truths of Real Idea

Sri Aurobindo adds that all of life -- i.e. Nature -- is the result of the casting and expression of the Conscious-Being's Real-Idea. All that happens in Life is the result of the unfolding of this spiritual Truth in its myriad of forms. [Though this cosmic determinism abounds, we still have complete free will to participate or not in this unfolding. we can say that we have free will within determination of the Conscious Being.]

B. THE NATURE OF SUPERMIND; OUR PERCEPTION OF IT; AND ITS RELATION TO MIND

The Nature of Supermind

Sri Aurobindo also delves further into the nature of Supermind, including its various aspects and powers. He indicates that Supermind- (1) is a power of Knowledge and Will that reside between the One and the Many; the Upper hemisphere of Existence, Conscious Force, and Delight and the lower hemisphere of Mind, Life, and Matter.

(2) is not only a state of knowledge, but a power of knowledge. It is not only an expression of light and vision of Comprehending Truth, but a Will to power and works through its Apprehending action. Thus, in Supermind is a vibration of light/knowledge. as well as a rhythm of will and force. And the two -- Knowledge and Will -- are One.

[In Supermind (i.e. supramental perception), I not only know the full truth of a thing, but I have a will for it to be realized in life. E.g. I am not only able to say have the full, integral knowledge of money, but I also have the will and power for it to come about. The same with a scientific issue or discovery, a business opportunity, a relationship with a partner, etc. In each case, I have the will and power to make what I so readily know (from all sides and in its essence) to manifest in life.]

(3) *differentiates* the Truths of the Conscious Being by putting forth principles, forms, and forms, but it does not *divide* them. Thus, Supermind as Truth consciousness maintains unity in utmost diversity. "Supermind is the realm of being in which the truth of being is luminously One with all that expresses it..."

[Division is to make things unique, but separate. Differentiation is to create differences out of the One, but with each item still one with the One. It is analogous to the colors of the rainbow, which is a diffusion of its white light. Each color is not outside the oneness of that white light, but just expresses it differently.]

Experiencing Supramental Perception in Our Own Lives (i.e. Identity with the Object)

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that Supermind is not just the power of creation, but it is an ultimate power of cognition that *we can rise to and experience*. As a result of completely knowing the object; i.e. being not separate but one with and identity with the multiplicity and totality of the object focused on, we not only develop an integral, unitarian knowledge of that thing or object, but have a matching will and power for its effectuation; to manifest and become real in the world.

[Normally we think of mental powers, even ultimate mental powers as one of knowledge and knowing; not an urge and will for it to manifest. And yet supramental perception is even above pure intuition that simply knows without thought, as it not only knows without thought in toto, but has a will and power for it to manifest as a living reality. I therefore become the ultimate Knower and while having the power to Create it through my will.]

Mind as Lesser Derivation of Supermind

Sri Aurobindo describes the difference between Supermind and Mind; the latter being a lesser functioning of the former that it derives from. Whereas Supermind sees directly and has the power of will to manifest that knowledge, Mind is a limited, preparatory form of consciousness. It knows through instruments of analysis and synthesis, which is powerful, but a lesser form of cognition than supramental perception. He indicates that Mind derived from and became a lesser version of Supermind in the involutory descent -- i.e. in the creation process from a divine source. From our side, in the evolution, humans have evolved from the base of matter and vitality to the plane of Mind. Yet it is a lesser, limited functioning than Supermind, which is above it. And yet we can rise in consciousness, move beyond Mind and recover that higher spiritualized mind; that Supermind that knows the object of knowledge in full while having the will for its effectuation.

[In the involution there is a descent from Satchitananda (Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight) to Satchitananda to Intuitive Mind to Mind to Life (Energy) to Matter. In the evolution, there is an ascent from Matter to Animated Life to Mind to Supermind to Intuitive Mind to (Existence, Conscious-Force, and Delight). Thus, in the involution Mind is a lesser power of Supermind. In the evolution (that we participate in] Supermind is a power we can rise to by growing beyond Mind.]

INVOLUTION: Sat-Chit-Ananda V Supermind V Mind V Life/Energy	EVOLUTION: Sat-Chit-Ananda ^ Supermind ^ Mind ^ Life Forms ^ Matter
V	^
Universe Begins	

Additional Perspective: MSS Summary of Chapter:

-- Supermind is vast, all-comprehensiveness, self-formulation of Truth, fused knowledge and will. Comprehending and apprehending parts are there.

--Supermind is vast self-extension of Brahman. By Idea it develops out of unity; differentiates but not divides. By differentiation it brings out the one, which involves the others.



The Supreme Truth Consciousness

(Book 1 Chapter XV)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo further explores the nature of Supermind in the creation process.

He begins by explaining the nature of Supermind, i.e. its role in the creation process; in particular, how it enables the One to manifest its infinite potential in creation.

He then describes Supermind's vision and knowing capacity; in particular, its ability to know the integral relationship and truth of things.

In the key part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo focuses on how Supermind turns the Truths of Real Ideas and Cosmic determinants into living forms in space and time. In particular, how triplicities -- such as creator-creating-creation, or knower-knowing-known, et al emerge through the Apprehending action -- to enable a dynamic existence in creation.

Finally, he describes how Supermind takes shape and influences life (including our lives) in creation; particularly how the development and progress of the world moves according to the original Truths of Real Idea that Supermind has rendered, as well as how it can emerge from its involved status and be brought to the active surface of life.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Role of Supermind in the Creation Process

He first reiterates what Supermind is. He says that it is everywhere in the universe as an ordering self-knowledge by which the One manifests the harmonies of its infinite potential. Based on the seeds of Real Ideas of the Conscious Being, Supermind releases, creates forms and powers of itself.

The Vision and Knowing Capacity of Supermind

He then describes Supermind's vision and its ability to know the integral relationship and truth of things. He says that Supermind works out things with a knowledge according to the impeccable, conscious self-vision, which is all comprehensive; all pervading, all-inhabiting. It sees the right relationship of things, and the Whole of things, etc. It sees each potentiality in its proper force, essential necessity, right relations to the others.

Supermind Enables Real Ideas, Cosmic Determinant Triplicities to Emerge in Creation

He then revisits the notion that there are two essential statuses of Supermind that enable the universe to unfold from the Infinite consciousness.

(1) It's all knowing, self-knowledge containing, undivided, *comprehensive* first status. It is Cosmic Vision -- all pervading and all inhabiting. It is where the Real Ideas seeds of cosmic determinants are envisioned and held *in potential* in an *undivided* triple status -- of subject, aspect, object; such as knower, knowledge, known; lover, love, beloved, etc.

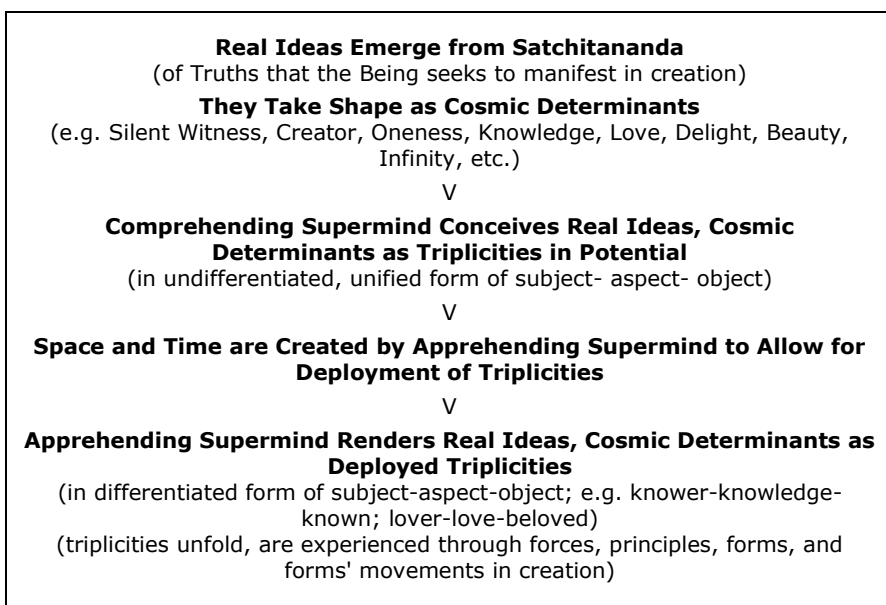
(2) Its *apprehending*, divided status from which the Many emerges from the One as individualized forms in space and time. It is where the Real Ideas seeds of cosmic determinants are *deployed* as identifiable, distinct, objectified principles, forces, and forms in the universe; in a divided triple status -- of subject, aspect, object; such as knower, knowledge, known; lover, love, beloved, etc.

--Forms are thus made possible through the Apprehending action, when the (existing) Comprehending self-knowledge of Supermind is made into an object of its own comprehending subjectivity. It is where individualization of principles, forces, and form occurs through the emergence of triune aspect of subject-object-method, as in knower-knowing- known, love-loving-beloved; and other triune determinant aspects (such as Silent Witness, Creator, Love, Delight, etc.).

--Moreover, in order for the Apprehending action to occur, Space and Time needs to be created for the Triplicities to emerge. (This is further taken up in the later chapter on Cosmic Determinants.)

[We can see how we humans are able in space and time to be the subject that engages the object. E.g. I, the lover, love the beloved. Or I the creator create the creation. Before space and time is created in the universe, there is no extension, dimensionality for this subject, aspect, object relationship. It is a flat world in which these possibilities only exist as potential in Mind. Thus, apprehending Supermind created the conditions for this dynamic, and in doing so enables the Real Ideas/Cosmic Determinants to flow through forces, principles, forms, and form's movements in life.]

Here is a diagram of the process by which the triplicities emerge in creation:



-This is the process of creation in a nutshell. First, we have an Idea of something, but then we need to make it real. It needs to become objectified, moving from a subjective possibility to an objective reality.

-How to make that shift from what we would like to happen in life to it becoming objectively real?

-In Supermind the intention and the manifestation are one thing. Supermind has the Knowledge of what is to be done, and the subject-method-object means of making it real. It Comprehends the Idea, which is the Goal and Intent, and Apprehends the Idea and makes it real as object of our intent.

-We humans don't fully know what we want to accomplish, nor do we know the method or have the full capacity to make it integrally real.

-Thus, we have to rise in consciousness.

-Through Rational Mind we can begin to see the process as direction, organization, and implementation. In the supramental Consciousness we clearly see the Possibility, Real Idea to be attained, as well as the exact process, methodology, steps, actions of making it materially real in the world.

-Opening to the Mother's Power gives us access to the entire process.

-Her power, Her Force IS the Supramental; the Supreme Truth Consciousness, where the integral perception of the Idea and the means of making it real are One. In fact, she just does it for us.

-Surrendering to Her Power, we know precisely what should be done, and what should be avoided. We know the steps to take, as we are in complete Identify with the final outcome.

-Eventually that process becomes crystal clear in our minds, and we do it spontaneously, like breathing fresh air. We become supramental creators and achievers, attracting vast outcomes, while experiencing intense Delight in the process.]

Supermind's Formation and Influence in Creation

Finally, Sri Aurobindo discusses the influence and form of Supermind in creation.

First, he focuses on the nature of the world and society. He indicates that the development and progress of the world moves according to the original Truths of Real Idea that Supermind has rendered.

[In studying Jane Austin's 'Pride and Prejudice' from the widest angle we see a society that is in transition. In particular, it is trying to reconcile the differences between the middle and upper classes through harmonic means, instead of the revolutionary method occurring in nearby France. Thus, this harmonic movement can be seen as an indicator of the Force moving in the world and its particular Real Ideas emerging in that situation. Those Real Ideas seek to manifest in progressive movements throughout society, throughout history, such as this one in Pride and Prejudice.]

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that Supermind is present in every form and force of the universe. That it secretly pervades the forms in an indwelling Presence and self-revealing Light.

[It is involved in each form, including us, but can come out through to the surface through our higher consciousness. We thus have the potential to bring out supermind as a way of knowing beyond mind, as well as bring it out in the heart, the vital being, even the physical being (as The Mother spent so much of her life trying to do.) release a supramental existence by evolving that which is involved within us and the forms and forces we interact with.]

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

How the One Became the Many; and Space and Time Emerged

[The following is based on the Theory of Creation presented by Sri Aurobindo in 'The Life Divine' and elsewhere, and further expanded on by Sri Karmayogi.]

From time immemorial, individuals have asked themselves how this world came to be, and what was the process that enabled it to happen. Here is one perspective:

To begin with, there was/is an infinite, divine Source of all things; a timeless, spaceless, immutable, ineffable Being. We can think of it as the "One," since there were not yet distinct forces and forms in a manifest universe. I.e. there was not yet a "Many." Due to some inner compulsion, the One extended Itself to become the Many, which is in essence the distinct, unique forces and forms that will become the basis of Creation.

How then did the Many emerge from the One; i.e. the Creation from the Creator?

In the Source/Infinite consciousness are Real Ideas, which are possibilities It seeks to render as living realities; i.e. cosmic determinants that the Spirit seeks to make real in creation. Among them are spiritual aspects or qualities, including Oneness, Knowledge, Creativity, Beauty, Love, and Delight. There are also variations, combination, and subsets of these that the Divine seeks in its extension from the One to then Many.

Then how were/are the Real Ideas made real in the cosmos as unique forces and forms?

The Truth Consciousness, which Sri Aurobindo calls "Supermind" rendered through its own Comprehending capacity *images* of those Real Ideas. Or to put it another way, *Comprehending* Supermind imagined and envisioned distinct forces and forms that would embody these cosmic ideas and determinants.

At this point however, these imaginations have not been rendered real; as they are only a conception of separate formations. (We can compare this to the writer who has established characters, values and meaning, and plot in his mind, but has not yet committed them to paper.) However, through Supermind's *Apprehending* capacity these envisioned formations are rendered real as distinct entries in an emerging cosmos. I.e. Oneness, Knowledge, Creativity, Beauty, Love, Delight, et al become distinct forces and forms at the unseen universal plane.

How then did these imagined forms become real?

To become separate, distinct objects, Apprehending Supermind divided each of the previously envisioned attributes of Knowledge, Oneness, Creativity, Love, Delight, etc. and their infinite variations into triplicities in the form of *subject - subject/object experience - object*. E.g. the distinct possibility of the spiritual aspect of "Knowledge" is rendered into Knower – Knowing – Known. E.g., as a knowing being one knows that which is known. (Or to put it in words of our own experience. I as knower am knowing what is known.) Similarly, there is the triplicity of the lover (the subject) loving (experience) the beloved (object). And so

forth for the myriad of cosmic determinates/spiritual qualities of the Infinite Divine. In essence, the One reality has now divided itself in various ways so that each *subject* can experience itself as *object*, thereby becoming the Many.

It should be noted that at this point there is no physical universe. Before that can come about, there needs to be a foundation for its occurrence; which is in essence what we know of as space and time. Though the Infinite Source is beyond space and time -- it is spaceless and timeless -- a potential universe requires these as underpinning. How does that happen?

When the triplicities of the cosmic determinates are established through Supermind's comprehending action, which is, in essence, how the spiritual aspects/determinants are made real as distinct forces and forms, space and time are created.

But why does this happen? To answer that we need to know more about the nature of space and time.

Sri Aurobindo and Sri Karmayogi tell us that space is created at the point where a form is able, from its own unique vantage point, to perceive other forces and forms. Space then is perceived as a sense of *extension* from one form's perspective to another's.

Then there is time, which can be thought of as an outgrowth of space. Time is created at the point where a form perceives one form, then another one, etc. in sequence, which generates the sense of *movement* in extension. The perception of movement in the extension of space is what we call time.

With the triplicities of subject – functioning – object occurring through the comprehending action of the Truth Consciousness, distinct forces and forms take shape. Though these are initially at the idea of force, power and knowledge, they eventually begin to take on properties of substance through the creation and dispersion of an essential Energy. As forms take on properties of substance, they more readily perceive other forms, creating the sense of extension, which is space; as well as the sense of movement within the extension, which is time.

In essence, this is the process by which the One extends Itself and is rendered into the Many. The process begins with the rendering of Real Ideas/Cosmic Determinants of the Source Being into forces and forms as triplicities of subject, experience, object, through the comprehending and apprehending action of Truth Consciousness. This becomes the basis of space and time, as well as the further involution of the cosmos that will culminate in the material-based universe that we live in.

Knower Knowing the Known, Lover Loving the Beloved in Involution and Evolution

The Infinite consciousness took its first step toward creation through the emergence of Sat-chit-ananda (Pure Existence, Conscious-Force,

Delight.) Supermind is a further development that enabled a universe to arise out of the Intention of Satchitananda. Space and Time emerged when objects were formulated that subjects could apprehend. Let's examine this dynamic more closely.

In Satchitananda, there are Real Ideas in potential. Supermind begins the process of making them real in creation. Let's take one of the central Real Ideas/Determinants; that of Knowledge. (There are others like Love, Beauty, Delight, etc.)

In *comprehending* Supermind, Knowledge is a Real Idea comprehended as a potential entity, but not yet real in creation; not something that can be perceived. In *apprehending* Supermind, knowledge is made real in space and time. How is that accomplished? The undivided entity of Knowledge divides into subject and object. Now a Knower (subject) can Know the Knowledge (object).

And yet in that division made real by Supermind, subject and object are still One in essence. It is because in the consciousness of Supermind the knower fully knows the known, the knowledge. Thus, in terms of the Knowledge the subject and object are integrally One. (It is equivalent to my perfectly knowing the thing under consideration, and from all angle and aspects. I am One with it; in Identity with it.)

However, in the Involution, as the somewhat lesser cosmic Mind descends from Supermind, a knower at that plane no longer fully and integrally knows the known. Thus, the thing known is not in identity with every other thing as in Supermind. As the Involution (descent) continues to Energy and then Matter, the knowledge is progressively lost. There is no knowledge (object) to be known (by a subject). All that is left is raw Force without the Consciousness of Knowledge. In essence, the Conscious-Force (chit of Sat-chit-ananda) at the Source has lost its Consciousness (here as knowledge), leaving only Force of form divided down at the atomic level which is matter. Matter is fully inconscient, without knowledge, thus no subject-object at all.

But now at the point where the Involutionary process completes, the Evolution begins. Thus, out of knowledge-less Matter come Life and then Life Forms in the universe. In the lower creatures, a modicum of sensation exists, and then the tiniest bit of knowledge emerges. Knowledge objects of thinking occur. There is thus a reforming of knower knowing the known (subject perceiving the object), but it is a very limited knowledge. It is basically a knowledge that is Ignorance. Thus, in Man, the knower knows the known in a limited sense because his Mind cannot know the integral truth of a thing; only a very limited part, as he is dominated by his lower nature, creating an exclusive knowledge.

However, as Man develops his higher consciousness, the knower and the known – subject and object – come closer in Identity when it comes to Knowledge. As Man moves beyond rational mind up the scale to

Silent, Illumined, Intuitive, Over, and then Supermind (Truth Consciousness), he perceives the object of inquiry in total. He moves into integral identity with it. In essence, the Knower now Knows the Known in integral perfection. He has thus in the Evolution risen up the planes of existence to Apprehending Supermind that established Knowledge as a Knower Integrally Knowing the Known in space and time that emerged in the first place in the Involution.

This same dynamic holds true not only for Knowledge, but for other Real Ideas/Cosmic Determinates issuing from Satchitananda -- including Peace, Goodness, Beauty, Love Delight, Timelessness, and Infinity. For example, in comprehending Supermind, a lover can love the beloved in total in space and time. (This is a power/force that is there before creation of forms, including we in the universe.) Then, in the decent of involution to matter as described earlier, that breaks down; but then in the movement back up in the evolution, it is reestablished. Thus, True Love occurs when the Lover Loves the Beloved in total without expectation or demand. The lover is now in complete identity, oneness, and rapture with the beloved.

[MISCELLANEOUS]

(include below in above)

Oneness and Unity in Supermind

- It contains all multiplicity without derogating from its own unity.
- Supermind is one in oneness and one in multiplicity, one in all conditions, and everywhere.
- In Supermind, the One and the All are the same existence. [To perceive this directly is to have the vision of Brahman.]
- In the Supramental consciousness, the knower, knowledge, and the known are not divided, but one.
- Supermind possesses and acts always on the truth of unity.

Knowledge and Will Are One in Supermind

In Supermind, Divine Knowledge and Divine Will are the same fundamental movements or acts of existence.

Supermind's Comprehensive Knowledge

- Supermind is comprehensive divine consciousness.
- Supermind comprehends all things in being and dynamic knowledge.

Apprehending (Dividing) Status of Supermind

Apprehending Supermind's power is a projecting, confronting, in which knowledge centralizes itself and stands back from its works to observe them. This centralization is the beginning of self-division -- i.e. its phenomenal appearance. It is a further departure from the unitarian truth of things and from the indivisible consciousness.

OTHER:

Experiencing the Eternal Present through Higher Consciousness

And to a consciousness higher than Mind, that should regard our past, present and future in one view, containing and not contained in them, not situated at a particular moment of Time for its point of projection, Time might well offer itself as an eternal present.

Experiencing All Points of Space

And to the same consciousness not situated at any particular point of Space, but containing all points and regions of itself, Space also might offer itself as a subjective and indivisible extension, -- no less subjective than Time.



The Triple Status of Supermind

(Book 1 Chapter XVI)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by reiterating and expanding on the process by which Supermind creates the universe from a Divine source.

Ishwara, Conscious-Force, and Supermind in the Creation Process

In particular, he goes back above Supermind and points to the Creator (Ishwara) aspect of Existence/Being (Sat) that envisions and is determined to create a universe of forms out of Itself; that wills to create forms of its own Real Ideas.

Supermind then organizes, develops, and create all things in a universe that are determined in Satchitananda. Supermind uses the Consciousness and Its Force (Chit) and reconstitutes it as Knowledge and Will, which is further diffused, enabling the planes of (cosmic) Mind, Energy (Life), and physical Matter.

Sri Aurobindo then comes to the central focus of the chapter, in which he describes the three essential statuses or poises of Supermind:

- (1) As a plane and power of integral, unitarian knowledge.
- (2) As a plane and power that is the creator of forms in creation (i.e. the individualization of that knowledge).
- (3) As a plane and power that can help us rise to in order to bring about our ultimate evolution, culminating in spirit.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Elements in the Process of Creation

Sri Aurobindo begins by explaining the source of, purpose of, process of, and role of the various cosmic forces that enables creation.

Existence (Being), Conscious-Force, Delight (Sat-Chit-Ananda)

Sri Aurobindo reiterates that Existence (Sat), Conscious-Force (Chit), Delight (Ananda) is the first step out of the Unmanifest. It is the pure existent Being, who is conscious of itself, generating a force (Conscious-Force) that it Delights in. It is these cosmic elements that will be the basis of creation.

Ishwara (creator aspect of Being)

Sri Aurobindo tells us that there is an original creator aspect of the Being -- *Ishwara* -- that envisions and is determined to create a universe of forms out of Itself; that wills to create forms of its own Real Ideas.

Ishwara is thus the creator element that uses Supermind and its Maya power of differentiation to create the forms out the Conscious Force in creation based on its own Real Ideas.

[Ishwara can be likened to the traditional view of the Creator who envisions and then sets loose the universe. Ishwara is actually but one of several aspects of the Being (Sat of Sat-Chit-Ananda), which is discussed further in the chapter 'Brahma, Purusha, Ishwara.']

Supermind; Knowledge and Will; Space and Time; Etc.

Supermind is a further step in the process, and its role is to organize, develop, and create all things that in a universe as determined in Satchitananda. We can think of Supermind as *the executor of the Divine Will of Satchitananda*.

In the process of creation, Supermind uses the "substance" of Conscious-Force (Chit) -- i.e. its Consciousness, and the Force generated by that Consciousness -- and reconstitutes it as Knowledge and Will, which is further diffused, enabling the planes of (cosmic) Mind, Energy (Life), and physical Matter.

The fusion of Knowledge and Will is what Supermind actually is. Out of the action of Supermind will come a world of Space and Time, and in it (cosmic) Mind, Life (Energy), and Matter will be enabled in the continuing involutory process.

The Three Statures of Supermind

In the main thrust of the chapter (indicated by the title), Sri Aurobindo indicates that Supermind can be viewed from three different perspectives and poises: (1) as a plane and power of integral, unitarian knowledge, which is essentially its Comprehending aspect; (2) as a plane and power that is the creator of forms in creation (i.e. the individualization of that knowledge), which is its Apprehending aspect; and (3) as a plane and power that can help us rise to in order to bring about our ultimate evolution, culminating in spirit.

(1) *As (Comprehending) Inalienable Unity of Knowledge* -- It is pure comprehending ideation of unitarian knowledge that emanates from the Supreme (yet there is no individualization yet, of forms of the force in creation).

[Mind is a lesser power of (and than) Supermind. Through Mind, one has limited knowledge of a thing. In Supermind, there is total, integral knowledge of it; i.e. each thing is known in unity with every other related thing -- reflecting the Oneness of its source in the Supreme consciousness. This is a comprehending -- i.e. knowing -- poise of Supermind; as no individualization of created forms occurs.]

(2) *As (Apprehending) Creator of Individualized Forms* -- Its apprehending role in the individualization of the Divine consciousness in unique forms in creation, with each a formation becoming a soul form and still retaining its unity with the One. A modification of the unity so to support the Many in the One, and the One in the Many. [It is the power of Supermind that has a will for and enables the creation of forms of force to come about in the universe, reflecting the essential Real Ideas that is intended in the that unfolding. Apprehension enables individualization of the knowledge into distinct forms of force in creation.]

(3) *As Supporter of Evolution of Forms to their Ultimate Possibility* -- as the means of support of the evolution of the diversified individual forms in creation back to its spiritual source. [It is the Supramental consciousness that enables us to evolve to our ultimate status, including the original spiritual aspects of the Supreme.]

[We can say that the first two poises of Supermind -- comprehending and apprehending -- are in the involutory descent on the way to creation, while the third is a support in the evolutionary ascent in creation. Once forms are enabled in the descending process, there is an ascending poise of Supermind in that the forms, including us, are able to move upward by opening to the Supramental power above, thus enabling our evolution.

The spiritual Force, i.e. the supramental power is there in the atmosphere, and each of us has access to. If we open to it, we can evoke its infinite creative power. We call the process of bringing the supramental Force into the actions, activities, and aspects of our lives 'Consecration.' For example, if I consecrate a meeting that is about to take place, then the supramental power will move into action, bringing about creative, startling positive results in that event. It is often instantaneous. This ability to bring sudden good fortune to an act, activity, problem, challenge is a hallmark of the supramental Force.

The Mother says that the Force is ever increasing in power, especial since 1956, when she personally opened the portals of that Power to enter the earth's atmosphere. If we open to the Divine Mother or Mother, we gain access to that power for that act or aspect of our being,

enabling instantaneous positive results, transcending limits of time, space, or humanly perceived possibility.

This then is the third aspect of Supermind, enabling our forward progress, evolution, and transformation.】

Process of Creation

From the above analysis, Sri Aurobindo comes up with a further description of the creation process: It is the "Supreme Being moving out into determinative self-knowledge which perceives truths of itself and will to realize them in temporal and spatial extension of its own timeless and spaceless existence." 【This statement includes the first two poises of Supermind. The third would then be to serve as a power to enable individualized forms to reach their ultimate potentiality and possibility.】

Additional:

Sri Aurobindo also adds that Supermind takes form as self-knowledge, which is also self-force. 【Self-Knowledge and Self-Force is Supermind's interpretation or resolution of Conscious-Force (Chit). Out of the unity of Conscious Force comes the unity of Knowledge-Will (Supermind), out of which will come individualized forms of creation (through Mind, then Life/Energy, and then Matter).】

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Making Real the Three Aspects of Supermind in Our Lives

A reader asks how we can make the three statuses of Supermind mentioned by Sri Aurobindo in the Life Divine real to uplift and transform our lives.

Let's examine each of the three, and how they relate to our existence and how we can apply it in our lives.

1. Supermind as Plane of Truth Knowledge

If we mean *Supermind as a state as a plane of super-mentality that related to Knowledge and Truth*, then it is difficult to apprehend directly, for as Sri Aurobindo says it has not yet been mapped out yet for us, though he went on to do just that, especially in the last three chapters of The Life Divine and in his own experience.

In general, he said if we had experiences amongst the spiritual planes leading up to Supermind, we will eventually attain to it. I.e. have the experience of those planes that would open the doors to the ultimate supramental plane of integral truth knowledge. Here e.g. are the planes leading up to it, and its relationship to Knowledge.

2. Supermind as Creator

If we mean *Supermind as a power that created the universe*, we too can follow that process in our lives, which we can do in tandem with accessing the supramental power (Mother) to facilitate the result. Let's compare the two:

Supermind made real the Real Ideas of Sat in creation by organizing the spiritual aspects/determinates (peace, truth, knowledge, oneness, goodness, beauty, love, delight, timelessness, infinity) into something real in cosmos, which enabled space and time, cosmic mind, energy, leading to matter at the start of manifestation, the physical universe.

Similarly, we develop a Real Idea of what we want to create, organize the details, and execute with right attitudes and skill, while being still, silent, equal, positive, optimistic, self-giving, harmonic, creative, etc. The thing then is manifest in life as a real thing. Out of a whole of possibility, we break it down into the constituent parts to more easily make it real. In this way we mimic the Creator aspect of Supermind.

3. Supermind as Power to Be Used for Our Evolution

If we mean *Supermind as a power that we can call into our life to transmute our existence*, then we are lucky because we have the method of consecration, culminating in the complete Surrender to Mother. This is in the approach he outlined of Aspiration – Rejection – Surrender.

However, a more comprehensive yoga is that of the Triple Transformation, which is the complete transmutation of our being mental, vital, physical by going through the three stages of the Psychic Transformation (full experience of the Psychic being and all its attributes and benefits); the Spiritual Transformation (which is the rising amongst the spiritual planes of mind, and the descent of its light into our being); and the supramental Transformation, which is the change of all aspects of our being into a new supernature.

Supermind is thus actually three things; or it has three poises. It is a plane of being of spiritual mind in which all knowledge exists and is in an integral unity, which is something we can experience as our mind expands to higher planes. Second, Supermind is the force that created the universe out of a Divine Source, turning the original Real Ideas, spiritual aspects (of peace, knowledge, oneness, goodness, power beauty, delight, love, timelessness, infinity, etc.) enabling their further formulation as forces and forms in creation. This too we can emulate in the process of our own creation. Third, Supermind is a force and power that we can open to through consecrated and surrendering efforts that sets right the conditions of life, evokes the positive instantaneously, cancels past karmas, overcomes limitations in our being, and enables us to evolve into our highest mental, vital, and physical status,

culminating in gnostic, supramentalized beings; i.e. the next human species.

Practically Applying Supermind

Q: How can we practically apply Supermind in our daily lives?

A: How to Apply Supramental Consciousness Practically in Our Lives

Implementing the supramental consciousness at the physical level of day-to-day will involve essentially introduction of three major aspects of the supramental consciousness. Its chief distinguishing marks are a total and unified point of view, fusion of Knowledge and Will into a single entity which results in instantaneous accomplishment and a sense of perpetual freshness. Acceptance of these three features in our daily lives will necessitate following changes in our thinking and feeling and acting.

1. A widening of our mental outlook so that apart from our point of view on any issue, the viewpoints of others and the total picture is always considered.

2. A fusion of our knowledge and Will cannot be possible in the finite egoistic consciousness that we live in. The Psychic lives in the Infinite and unified consciousness and so he or she who moves to the psychic consciousness can hope to acquire an ability to achieve instantaneous accomplishment. Mother's grace is also functioning in the infinite dimensions and so he or she who is in alignment with grace can also acquire this capacity for instantaneous accomplishment. But again, alignment with grace demands such spiritual accomplishments as surrender, liberation from ego-consciousness and absence of egoistic initiatives etc. As a minimum it will demand complete faith in the power of grace to act on the physical plane.

3. The supermind is perpetually fresh while 99% of our acts are routine, habit-bound and mechanical. He or she who can free himself or herself from the fixity of habits and routine. (MSS)



The Divine Soul

(Book 1 Chapter XVII)

Summary

After describing the three poises of Supermind, two in the decent in the process of creation, and a third in aiding in the ascent of the/our evolution, Sri Aurobindo begins to describe what it would be like if we evolved into our highest nature and experienced these aspects.

First, he indicates that all forms are embodiments of the divine Reality, thus we humans are in our essence Divine Souls who are destined to express It.

In the main part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo indicates that as Divine Souls we will experience many spiritual and transformative qualities – including-

- living in the truth of things
- experiencing unity in diversity
- being one with others in the play of life
- being one with the flow and unfoldings of life
- being one with the Absolute (the Reality, Brahman, the All)
- experiencing the One in the Many and vice versa
- manifesting the potentials of the One
- experiencing Sat-Chit-Ananda in our being
- experiencing the Delight of the Divine
- experiencing the Oneness of Universal and the Transcendence
- experiencing Timelessness in Time
- live as long as we wish (willful immortality)
- experience the three poises of Supermind in our life and being
- experience knowledge and will for manifestation fused

Furthermore, Sri Aurobindo tells us that as Divine Souls, we will mirror three fundamental aspects of the Reality, the All; (1) its entire unity through our unity of consciousness; (2) its unity in extension through our own unity as extended individual beings, and (3) in its poise of

evolution through the evolution of ourselves on our way to becoming True Individuals.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo states that we can begin to become Divine Souls by overcoming our ego; our separative, divided consciousness, enabling us to experience oneness and integrality of being.

Here are the main points in detail:

We are Divine Souls Destined to Return to the Source (the Reality)

Sri Aurobindo says that all forms are in essence emanations and embodiments of the divine Reality. Therefore, we are destined to express It as Divine Souls. "We are the Divine in the individual ascending back out of limited Nature to its own proper divinity."

[We are Divine Souls in essence, being an extension of the Supreme. As we evolve our consciousness, we can become Divine Souls not just in essence, but in all aspects and planes of our existence.]

We Will Express the Reality as Divine Souls in Various Ways

As Divine Souls, we will come to express the qualities of the Reality in a variety of ways, including-

Truth

We would live in the truth of things. *[We would be in the flow of the truth of things, and know that truth, and thereby act in truth.]*

Unity in Diversity

We would live in an inalienable unity with each and every thing, yet fully embrace their diversity and differences. *[I can fully become a true individual, yet still feel fully one with other and their being.]*

Oneness with Others in Life's Play

We would feel one with those around us; a Oneness with others' souls. *[As I connect to my soul and feel the oneness with others, I feel their souls as well; heightening that Oneness.]*

We would connect with others in recognizing the variety of possibilities and variety in the play -- in the delight of experience of others as if they were its own, - in experiencing that self and others are an expression of joy, Ananda of the One. *[We normally think of our lives, and its life. But we rarely think of others' life, and especially how others' life relates to our lives in the play of life; how important it is and integrally connected we are.]*

Oneness with Flow of Life

We would feel one with the unfolding of events and circumstances one is engaged in; would be open and flow with the unfoldings of life. [We would perceive the flow of life, its purposeful unfolding, and by understanding would be able to make the right decisions that lead to success in life. Also, we normally like the events that please us, not what displeases us. Yet the Divine Soul would see how all is integrally involved in our lives.]

One with the Absolute

We would live eternally in the presence of the Absolute. We would always have the conscious sense of itself as manifestation of the Absolute. Our very foundation of being would be the Absolute. [The Absolute, the reality, Brahman, is the all, and it is all things interrelated. The Divine Soul would perceive the Marvel of this All, the Reality, and our integral part in it.]

Live in One and Many

We would live simultaneously in the One and the Many. We would be aware of ourselves at once of the infinite self-concentration, and the infinite self-extension and diffusion. We would know the One in its unitarian consciousness and of the One in its extended consciousness of multiplicity. We would be aware that all variation in existence is the extension and diffusion of the self-concentrated Unity; and would perceive the Oneness in that differentiated existence. [We would see that everything we do is tied back to the Spirit, to the One, and therefore see its purpose and necessity. We would also see that every specific thing is a manifestation of the One Divine, and the One expresses its divinity in the details of the many in creation.]

Manifest the Potentialities of the One

We would know that all that takes place in one's self will be the manifested potentialities of the One. [We will realize that we are instruments of the One Divine, and all that we do is an instrumentation of that. That will give us greater faith, power, purpose, etc.]

Experience Sat-Chit-Ananda Within

We would be able experience a pure existence, consciousness, and delight mirroring those three aspects of Satchitananda. [We would feel the stillness, silence and witness consciousness of Sat (pure existent); the consciousness, knowledge, force, power, and capacity of Chit (conscious-force); and the delight and bliss of existence as Ananda.]

Delight in Experience of the Divine

We would experience utter Joy and Delight and Love through the God experience; of the Divine. [It is the experience of Ananda, Bliss of the Divine in our own being – nerves, emotions, experiences, etc.]

The Oneness of the Transcendent and Universal Divine through our Individuality

We would have the oneness of the transcendent and the universal Divine within its own being. [We would feel not only that we are true individuals, rooted in soul, but serve a role in the universal existence and unfolding as universal being, which in turn expresses the transcendent will and purpose.]

Timelessness in Time

The Timeless self would be experienced in every moment of Time in our lives. [We would feel the Timelessness experienced by the rishis in the details of life. We would also be evoking that timelessness as life response. We would also experience the past, present, and future as one continuum of time in the Eternal Now.]

Immortality

We would become immortal beyond death. There would be the possibility of an existence that would be immortal, devoid of inconscience, with unlimited energy. [We could live as live as we so choose. In a body with unlimited energy and not subject to death, possibly in a new form, we would be able to achieve this willful immortality state.]

Awareness of Three Poises of Supermind and their Unity

We would always be aware of three grades of supramental existence, and all three in their compressive unity:

- (1) as (Comprehending) inalienable unity of knowledge
- (2) as (Apprehending) creator of individualized forms
- (3) as supporter of evolution of forms to their ultimate possibility

Knowledge and Will for Manifestation Fused

We would simultaneously have the full knowledge of things as well as the will and capacity to manifest it. [As a divine, supramentalized being when I want to accomplish anything in life, I fully know what it is in the truth of its multi-faceted, perfect integral knowledge, and what it will take to accomplish it; and it will through suddenly and creatively manifest as real in the world.]

As Divine Souls, We Can Mirror Three Aspects of the Reality in Ourselves

He indicates that as Divine Souls we will mirror and embody three aspects of the Reality:

We will have *unity of consciousness* mirroring the unity of the Reality.

We will embody an extended and modified unity in our *individuality* like the extended and modified unity of that Reality. [We can become unique individuals just like the Reality differentiated in creation.]

We will embody in our evolutionary return as *true individuals*, like the return in the entire universe through evolution to the unity of the Reality. [We will evolve to True, Spiritual Individuals, just as the Reality after extending to individual forms in Ignorance, makes its way back to Unity, but now through greater complexity and diversity.]

We become Divine Souls When We Give Up Ego, Our Separative Consciousness

He concludes that we can begin to gain these attributes and become the Divine Soul when we give up ego, which supports our separative, divided consciousness, enabling us to return to oneness, integrality, and harmony.



Mind and Supermind

(Book 1 Chapter XVIII)

Background

Sri Aurobindo had initially indicated that we are divided beings unable to fulfill the human aspiration for God, light, love, and immortality. It is so because our nature is divided. He then took us on a tour of the process of creation to show us not only how the universe came to be from a Divine Source, but how Man began as a divided, Ignorant beings. It turns out that this was actually the intention of the Supreme in order to create the greatest multiplicity of forms -- including positive and negative, ignorant and aware, etc. -- who could in time uncover their higher nature, and through that discovery experience Delight and Joy of being (Ananda/Bliss).

Thus, Sri Aurobindo began with a discussion of nature of the Reality (Brahman, the Absolute, the All), in its original timeless, spaceless, immutable, ineffable form; and then how it extended to a universe of forms through a process of involution. In particular, Sri Aurobindo described how Sat (the Pure Existent), Chit (Consciousness Force), and Ananda (Delight) emerged successively, followed by Supermind, which carried out the Intent of the Supreme which was to create out of Its Real Ideas, formations of existence. Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the cosmic Mind that emerged from Supermind in the further movement of decent/involution towards creation (that will continue when Energy emerges from cosmic Mind, and Matter from Energy at the dawn of the universe).

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo describes again what Supermind is, and reiterates how Supermind creates the Universe -- not (cosmic) Mind, which is a divided consciousness incapable of manifesting the Will of the Supreme -- through the action of Its apprehending consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo focuses on the nature of Mind and mentality for the human being, including what it is, how it works, and what its limits are. He indicates that our mentality is so limited because it is rooted in the physical consciousness of the body.

He then goes on to describe the Mind of Man's particular shortcomings. He says that the human Mind only sees particulars, the part, not the whole of any matter. He says that the fundamental and greatest error of Mind is its perception of its own separateness.

Sri Aurobindo also describes the various levels of our mentality, including the corporeal, i.e. physical mind, which has a far more limited perception capacity than rational, logical mind, which in turn is far less capable than spiritual mind.

Sri Aurobindo also describes how the exclusivity of the being is the cause of the fall from Supermind to Mind.

Finally, he reiterates that Mind cannot perceive the Infinite consciousness (the Reality, Brahman), though spiritual mind above normal mind can.

Here are the main points in detail:

How Supermind is the Creator of the Universe -- not Mind -- through the Action of Its Apprehending Consciousness

--What Supermind Is

Supermind is the Truth Consciousness that uses Maya Power to Render the Real Ideas of Satchitananda into distinct forces and forms in creation.

[Supermind Creates through Unity of Forms -- Supermind is the Truth Consciousness, which knows the truths (Real Ideas) and will of Satchitananda, yet has the capacity to render them into distinct forms in creation. Supermind utilizes Maya power that renders separation of the Conscious Force into distinct forces and forms, which each retains their unity to the whole. Supermind knows and renders the Real Ideas of Satchitananda into creation. E.g. Knowledge, Truth, Power, Oneness, Love, Delight, beauty, Timelessness, Infinity, etc. (and their variations that the Divine wishes manifest in creation) is made real.

Imagine that a great writer knows the thrust of that which he wants to create, particular its key meanings and values. He then creates a story of infinite variability, while always expressing those essences in every detail. Everything becomes a dynamic whole expressing that essence. The essence of meaning and values are analogous to Real Ideas. His many sided knowledge and knowledge is analogous the Truth Consciousness (Supermind). His capacity to render the essence of the undertaking into the details of the story while retaining their interrelationship to its core meaning is analogous to Supermind's Maya power.]

[Mind's Role in the Creation Process -- Mind emerges from out of Supermind, as Mind is necessary to continue the dividing process that will enable Energy to emerge, out of which Matter is born. Whereas Supermind is a unity consciousness that is able to render the Real Ideas

of the Supreme into separate entities where each thing is maintained in unity relation to its Source and to all other things through Maya power, Mind loses that unity as each thing that emerges from it loses its relationship with each other part, the whole, and the essence. Maya power to divide is there, but not its power to hold each thing in unity with the rest.

And yet, Mind is necessary to carry out its mission to enable the further dividing of existence to lead to energy and then matter in the universe. In that process of breaking down that leads to energy and then matter, the consciousness is increasingly lost, which was the intent of the Supreme to allow for the greatest variety of forms (conscious and unconscious, positive and negative, good and evil, etc.) to enable the greatest variety of discovery by those forms, which leads to their infinite variations in the experience of Delight (compared to the great, but static delight of the Unmanifest Divine).】

【Mind in the Involution and Evolution -- Though Cosmic Mind is the next plane that emerges from Supermind to continue the process toward creating a universe of forms, in the created universe mind emerges from animated life forms which themselves emerge from unconscious matter and material things. Though cosmic Mind emerges in the descent/involution, Mind emerges progressively in the evolution through life forms, culminating in the mentality of Man.

Though cosmic Mind is here subtly, invisibly in creation, we humans gradually move toward it as we evolve in our mentality beyond the limits of our material and vital/animated life basis. As we evolve in mentality, we experience ever-higher forms of it: rising from sense-oriented physical mind to rational, logical mind, to spiritual mind of vision and intuition, culminating in Supermind.

This evolutionary movement of mind through Man is the reverse of the involutory movement where Mind emerged from Supermind (and actually Overmind below it). In the evolution there is thus an ascent in consciousness of mentality from lower to higher forms, while in the involution there is a descent in mental consciousness from higher to lower forms. (This is to allow the greatest multiplicity of possibility, including the unconscious and negative.)

The ultimate ascent in our mentality occurs when we reach Supermind, which has always been there "waiting our arrival."】

--Supermind that Knows Ignorance and Knowledge Created the Universe; not Mind

Sri Aurobindo tells us that Supermind, rooted in the unitarian Maya vision and power, has a unity view that knows both the Ignorance and

Knowledge in creation simultaneously. without it, no universe could be created

[Supermind sees the utility of both the Ignorance and Knowledge, and knows them in advance in their variation before they are created. Without that vision, no universe could exist (which contains both, which was the Divine intent to create infinitely diverse forms which could discover their higher nature and experience infinitely diverse).]

--How Supermind Creates the Universe through Its Apprehending Consciousness

So how does Supermind enable the universe? It does so through its Apprehending consciousness, the dividing mechanism that takes the workings of the indivisible All and divides it into objects of itself. It is analogous to the poet who creates and views the creations of his own consciousness before him.

This occurs through three steps.

- First, the One All translates itself into extension of space and Time. [There is no space and time, so Supermind enables it by creating extension; extension that is Space, and extension in movement that is Time.]
- Secondly, the One All translates itself into a multiplicity of Conscious Soul. [There is one Conscious Soul or Being. But now through comprehending Supermind, It is divided into Its individual aspects. I.e. the Real Ideas of the Spirit -- such as knowledge, unity, love, delight, etc. -- are formulated as distinct entities of the Spirit/Conscious Soul through apprehending Supermind in space and time. They each become objects of its own subjective awareness; taking the form of the triplicity of object, method, subject, as in knower knowing the known; or lover loving the beloved; etc. for all of these cosmic determinates.]
- Third, the multiplicity of soul-forms become divided habitation of an extended unity. The Conscious Being (the Purusha) in each form actively identifies with each. [I.e. though each spiritual aspect, cosmic determinates is formulated through the apprehending power of supermind, each item still remains aware of all the other; is still integrally related to them. It is that Maya power in which things are differentiated from one another, but retain their essential unity. That is how Supermind works and is.]

The Limits of Mind

Though Supermind is the creator of the world through its apprehending unity consciousness, the world we live in is not that way. Rather, we see things, the individual aspects of existence as divided from one another, not united and interrelated. Why do we perceive existence this way? It is due to the limitation of our mentality.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that Man in his evolution has a Mind, but it is only a first shackled movement of Mind; a limited form compared to levels of Mind that emerged from the cosmic Mind in its descent from Supermind.

--Mind's Limits Due to Underlying Physical Basis

Why is this so; why is Mind that we experience so limited in nature? It is because the universe began as matter, which is fully steeped in unconsciousness; and inheriting matter in our physical bodies, thatnescience, inconscience permeates our being, which limits the capacity of our mind. It thereby limits mind to the mechanical workings of the physical body; and to its needs, demands, and limitations of consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo indicates that we are not yet liberated in our mentality from the plunge of the Light into its shadow by which the darkened material consciousness was created. **[In the descent of the involutory process from the Source to creation, the consciousness and Light has been involved, absorbed; fully so in Matter, which limits our mental capacity to the material unconsciousness.]**

--How Mind Works

Now that he has addressed the fact that the essential cause of the limits of our mentality is the dumb, inconscient physical consciousness we inherit from matter, he begins a discussion about how our mentality functions, and its specific limitations.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that through our Minds we conceive, perceive, and see things as if rigidly cut out from a background or a mass. Our mental consciousness measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the individual whole. As a result, these parts of things can then be dealt with separately apart from the whole, allowing us to employ them as fixed units to live our lives.

[A thought: When you wake up in the morning all is a blur. Then you start noticing individual objects. Now the mind has moved into action. It is carving out an object, e.g. a lamp from the entire background or blur of reality. Mind is constantly doing that when we are fully awake during the day as well. It looks out at reality, and carves it up into pieces so we can function.

Another thought: The process of creation is related to this. I am an artist. From the whole of reality, I have a vision of a thing. I am in one sense carving out a possibility in my mind. Comprehending Supermind does something similar. Then I go ahead and make it real, so that the vision becomes a distinct cut out object in reality. Appending Supermind makes real its vision of Real Ideas by creating an object of

its subjective awareness in space and time that creates embodied principles, forces, and forms.]

--Limits of Mind that Only Sees the Particular not the Whole

-The problem is that by breaking the whole down into parts -- and even the parts into subparts, dispersing and aggregating ad infinitum, cutting down into atoms and these into nothingness -- we lose connection with the Whole of anything. Focusing on the part or the particular, we do not perceive its relationship to other parts, as well as the Whole; including essence.

[Comment: By breaking things down and then focusing on it, we lose the context in which it exists. e.g. I walk into a store, and know what I want to purchase, but I lose connection with the fact that other people are there doing the same, that there is a line forming that I am about to join in which surprises me and causes me to be miffed, I have lost contact with "Field" of existence. We do that all of the time when we focus on the part. We lose touch with the Wider Field of life. (And yet in higher, spiritual dimensions of Mind, that connection is reassembled at every moment. We perceive the context of the Whole, the Field of anything we do, any part we are connected with. E.g. in the highest aspect of Mind, Supermind, each part knows itself in context of the Whole, i.e. the Essence and One.

In addition, the fact that we lose contact with the context, the Whole, the Field when we are engaged and absorbed in the part is the very cause of our essential Ignorance. My knowledge is severely limited when I am engaged in the part without context to the wider whole. My decision making is restricted, and when I act on such decisions, the outcomes are also liable to be quite limited.

We will see our identification with the part when we engage in conversations with others; as we both express our limited opinions, due to the part knowledge that has lost connection with the wider, multi-sided truths that combine to make up the Whole and the Field of existence.]

--The Fundamental Error of Mind is Its Perception of Its Own Separateness

Sri Aurobindo indicates that we can extend this sense of the part compared to the Whole of any matter to our own individual existence relative to everything else. He says that the fundamental error of the Mind is to cause us to conceive ourselves as the center of its own universe, instead of a part of, a concentrated form of the One, the Universal. And from that original error of its particular ignorances and limitations contingent (limiting) results arise.

[Comment: Thus, the limits of Mind create a sense of separateness from others and the world. This leads to a limitation in how we function

in life, causes us to be at odds with others, leads to our sense of being divided from life, as well as being a source of our own limiting knowledge, capacity, and success in life.]

--From Corporeal to Spiritual Mind is Explained

Sri Aurobindo indicates that we can move out of this limited corporeal mentality to a higher form of Mind that is spiritual in quality. In pp. 181-184 he describes in great detail the nature of the corporeal mind, the Various Ignorance that are precipitated, as well as the forms of mind beyond the corporeal (the physical Mind), including pure thinking, higher mind (thought through silence) illumined mind of vision and light, intuition of knowledge without thought, supramental perception, etc.

The Fall from Supermind to Mind through Exclusivity Experienced by Individual Soul

Though our mind is limited by its corporeal source and limits, Sri Aurobindo returns to the involutory process of creation from a Divine source, and asks how did the fall from Supermind to Mind occur?

In the higher realms and consciousness, all things are perceived in an integral Oneness -- including Time, Force, and Substance. But in Mind, this is lost. There the individualized soul views everything from its own standpoint, excluding others. This occurs as a result of an *exclusive concentration of consciousness*; an exclusive self-identification of the soul with a *particular temporal and spatial action*.

Sri Aurobindo indicates that it starts from the soul's ignoring the facts that all others are part of itself; that all other actions are its own action; that all other states of being and consciousness are equally its own.

Mind looks at existence from the perspective of one particular moment in Time, one particular standing point in Space, and one particular form it presently occupies. By concentrating on the particular moment, field, form, movement, it loses association and connection with all the rest.

-Thus, it has thus lost the truth of the indivisibility of Space, Time, Force, Form, Substance and Movement.

It has lost sight if the obvious fact that individual Minds are actually the one Cosmic Mind taking many standpoints.

Mind Cannot Perceive the Reality; Spiritual Mind and Above Can

Sri Aurobindo also discusses here our ability to perceive the omnipresent Reality; the consciousness that pervades all planes from the Infinite to the material to mind and life. He says that the human Mind is incapable of perceiving that Reality (Brahman, the Absolute).

That only by ascending the spiritual planes above mind to Supermind can it embrace (come to know) the Infinite consciousness.

[To know the Reality is to perceive that all and everything is that Reality; with each plane a unique manifestation of it. To know the Reality is to perceive the divine in matter and in life, but to also perceive it in the unmanifest. Each plane, seen and unseen, are manifestations of that One Thing, that one omnipresent Reality. It is omnipresent in all planes of existence. Mind cannot perceive this, as it does not have the knowledge to do so, the capacity to do so, as it does not accept all things, only part or parts, nor can it integrate that all into a unifying perception. Supermind can, as it readily accepts all possibilities, sees each thing in relation to others. It has an integral view of existence, enabling it to perceive the omnipresent reality that permeates all things seen and unseen.]

[Further overview of the chapter on the limits of mind as source of our Ignorance and how we can rise to spiritualized mind to overcome our separative consciousness.]

Overview

Though the plane of Mind is an instrument of Supermind and helped enable creation, Mind in Man is Ignorant due to the divided nature. Rising above it to Supermind, he regains that unitarian view and rises out of his Ignorance.

Detailed

Utility and Power of Mind -- Sri Aurobindo explains that Mind is a subordinate action and instrumentation of Truth Consciousness, Supermind. What purpose then does it serve? Mind serves a great purpose; it is a creative agency for Life. It enables us to organize Life and Matter in a creative manner to serve our and the needs of Nature.

However, Mind sees in fragments, in contradictions and conflicts. Mind deals with things separately; it divides, perceiving the particular. It divides time, force, and substance. It does not know the whole, the unified.

Thus, man is essentially ignorant of the true truth. Mind is the nodus of Ignorance, because it is the organization of what which divides and distributes. This Ignorance is supported in man's ego, in seeing things from its vantage point of only itself, in its exclusive concentration of consciousness. Furthermore, this ego sense and ignorance is deepened by its identification with the physical body.

We can rise beyond the limitations of mind by rising to Spiritual Mind and then to Supermind. At that point we see existence in its essential unity, instead of in its division and duality that we now see through Mind.

He explains that there are realms, planes above mind that we are unconscious of; they are "superconscious" to us. Above mind is spiritual mind (Higher, Illumined, Intuitive), and further to Overmind, and Supermind. There is even the E-CF-D above this. These are realms we can evolve towards. There are also realms below mind that we are also unconscious of; they are "subconscious" to us. We need to somehow make these realms more conscious. we do this by bringing the superconscious "above" into the dark subconscious "within, rooted in the dumb inconscience of matter, to effect and change it, which will enable our core nature of darkness and unconsciousness to give way to truth and light.

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Mind vs. Supermind's View of Existence

In this chapter and throughout the book, particularly in the chapter Sri Aurobindo compares Mind's (limited) view of existence to Supermind's -- in terms of unity and multiplicity, knowledge and force, space and time, finiteness and infinite, causality, and ego and soul. (The following comparison is provided by MSS.)

Unity & Multiplicity: In Supermind the Many manifests by differentiation of the One. The One becomes the Many without ever ceasing to be the One. Supermind differentiates Truths and Powers of the One subjectively and objectively without ever losing awareness that is each an expression of the One. Each is in all. All is in each. Mind divides and aggregates. In Mind each created thing appears to exist separately and independently from everything else, including from whoever or whatever created it and from mind itself. Mind creates by division, multiplication and aggregation.

Knowledge & Force: Knowledge and Will are one in Supermind and always act in harmony. In mind knowledge and will are separate and can even act at cross-purposes.

Space: Mind regards Space as an objective reality and distance as a barrier to action, whereas Supermind regards Space as an objective status of Spirit.

Time: For Mind, time is successive. Mind lives only in the present, experiencing one moment at a time. The past is over and exists only as a memory. The future does not yet exist. Supermind has the triple time vision and lives in simultaneous time. It sees the past and the future in the present and can change them at any time, before or after they occur in successive time. In Mind, events occur in duration and there is a minimum duration required for any event to occur or any result to be achieved. In Supermind, results can occur instantaneously because the entire future is always present.

Finite & Infinite: Mind sees the world as finite. It is incapable of seeing the Infinite. According to mind, each event has finite, limited possibilities. Each person has finite and very limited capacities and potentials. Each moment is an infinitesimal, which means it contains very little within it. Supermind knows that each being, action, moment is a frontal expression of the Infinite and contains the whole Infinite within it. Thus, every infinitesimal is a seed laden with infinite potential.

Dualities: Mind and ego see the whole world in terms of dualities and opposites - good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, progress and reversal, good fortune and misfortune, pleasure and pain. The dualities do not exist in Supermind. For Supermind everything is an expression of the Spirit and serves an essential evolutionary purpose.

Causality: Mind perceives that what comes before determines what comes later, i.e. the antecedents of any act are the cause of the consequences of the act. Everything has a cause that precedes the result. But what mind calls causality is really only a description of the surface processes and circumstances in which a result issues, not the real determinants of the result. Its logic is often circular as in the case of the seed and the tree. Supermind sees the deeper source of causality expressing in the surface processes. It knows that both the seed and tree are forms built up by the force of universal life and it is the Real-Idea in Supermind that determines that force and those forms.

Ego & Psychic: Mind views everything from the separative viewpoint of the ego, which is divided and cut off from all other existences. Supermind sees from perspective of the spiritual individual, which possesses its own unique viewpoint; but also is capable of seeing from the perspective of every other individual and from that of the Cosmic Being and the Divine Being.

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

HOW MENTALITY COMES ABOUT

How Mental Thought Arose from Matter, Social Life (Vital)

We speak of evolution from matter to animated life to intelligent life. But how do we arrive at mental life; in a particular how do thoughts of Mind arise through Matter and Life.

At the most primitive level, thought emerges in the evolution though the contact of forms of matter, which generates sensations, which lead to thinking. For example, if I touch something very hot, I get an intense sensation in my hand, shout, and move my hand away. Thereafter I may look at the conditions and study it, understanding in this case that it is due to a hot coil. That all formulates as a thought or thoughts.

In this and related primitive way, thought was born in humanity. Thought was born not because we sat and contemplated life, or

meditated and knowledge appeared in our minds, but because we had intense physical experiences that generated intense sensations, which gave rise to waves of mental sensations, which we call thoughts.

At a later stage, the same process occurs through our social contacts and emotional interactions. For example, I am excluded from a group of friends, and the pain of that exclusion makes me think about the nature of true friendship and the character of those who have rejected me. Or in another case, I am emotionally attracted to someone, who later turns out to be undesirable.

In these situations, the rude emotional shock of being disappointed generates thought. When I am confronted by the very opposite of what I believe to be true, it is a blow to my convictions that makes me think freshly.

In Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri* He writes, "Life teased the Inconscient to wake Ignorance." All the intense stimulations of life make us think.

This is the process by which our intelligence has emerged, like iron being hammered into useful shapes.

Emergence of Various Types of Thought from Matter, Social Existence, Ideas

Forms Interaction Creates Sensation-Related Thought -- Humanity has evolved from the stone and the animal by the contact of material form with other material forms resulting in sensations that stimulated the gradual awakening and emergence of consciousness.

Social Interaction Gives Rise to Thought about People Society -- At a later stage, the same process repeats at the social and mental level. Contacts with other people and their attitudes generate vital sensations in us that give rise to thoughts about people and society.

Idea Interactions Give Rise to Thoughts about Life and Existence -- Contact with different ideas and experiences generate mental sensations that give rise to thoughts about the meaning of life and existence.

MIND IN THE HUMAN CREATION PROCESS

Mind Affecting Matter

We've indicated that contact of forms of matter generates sensations and sensations give rise to thoughts. I.e. Matter Creates (primitive) thinking. There is another process that works in the reverse direction; where thoughts of Mind act on Matter.

When the body receives a visual sensation that a ball is coming toward it, that sensation generates a thought in the mind. The mind decides it has to do something to avoid getting hit by the ball. Mind activates its

will and releases vital energy to raise the hand to stop the ball. This is the process by which (immaterial) mind acts indirectly on matter.

We are constantly experiencing the sensations of life or matter or events. These sensations of experience generate thoughts and these thoughts in turn generate decisions that go back down through the vital as sensations leading to physical actions.

Thus, Mind acts on Life and on Matter; even as Matter and Life helped create thoughts of Mind.

Process by Which the Mind of Man Creates Mimics Divine Creation

The process by which the Divine creates and the process by which we human beings create is the same.

The Divine creates by converting Real-Ideas into material forms. We create by translating ideas into actions. If we want to create, we have to have a clear idea and by an act of will we have to convert that idea into a decision. The decision releases and directs our vital energy to do what we have decided to do. When we do that, we are doing exactly what the Creator is doing in creating the world. The Divine conceives of a Real-Idea, it converts it into a will, and it releases the force of life to move matter. We can use the same process to achieve unflinching success.

LIMITS OF MIND

List of Limits of Functioning of Mind

Among the limits of our mentality, we can identify the following:

Limits Imposed by the Makeup of the Person

- It is fooled by sense information gathered by the visual, auditory etc., causing it to rush to faulty conclusions.
- It is overly influenced by one's needs, desires, emotions, and feelings, limiting the ability to grasp the true truth of things.
- It is dominated by the ego-sense, making it exclusive to the real and full truth of things.
- It is limited by one's fixed, repeating habits and routines, preventing it from having the flexibility to change course.
- It expresses opinions, influenced by the vital and ego-sense, which gives partial knowledge, or expresses Ignorance outright.
- It is too lazy to think or is otherwise unmotivated to truly think and engage in rational thought.
- It is not motivated or otherwise compelled to get at the True Truth of things.
- It is attached vitally/emotionally to its own Ignorance; even relishing in it ("Taste of Ignorance").

- It does not like to learn, especially from others; but find out and discover things on its own, delaying truth knowledge.
- It is influenced by dark, wanting feelings -- such as doubt, cynicism, fear, and disdain.
- It is influenced by selfish concerns and interests, avoiding the wider truths.
- It is influenced by limiting attitudes – about self, life, and others.
- It would rather defend and argue its point of view than learn.
- It is limited by one's native intelligence.
- It does not have the necessary experiences to verify the truths it has come in contact with; making the knowledge flimsy and brittle.
- It can be overwhelmed by one's feelings, emotions, sensations, and physical limitations.

Limits of Mentality Itself

- It tends to think along one line of thought, avoiding others.
- Its mental capacity cannot grasp the object under consideration directly; i.e. by Identity.
- It basis its conclusions on its own limited experiences.
- It thinks too much, blocking the direct movement of knowledge into the mind from the higher mental planes (e.g. as intuition and light.)
- The busyness of thought prevents intuition that brings truer knowledge direct from the source object.
- It is unable to grasp the truth of any matter across the full arc of time -- past, present, and future -- in the current moment.
- It tends to view life mechanistically, not perceiving its subtle movements.
- It loses connection with the Field of life that is flowing before it, becoming preoccupied with a limited subset, preventing one from perceiving the integral, many-sided truth of the moment.
- Lost in its own thought, it loses connection with other minds; delimiting what can be known from others and one's surroundings.
- It hasn't the power to directly perceive the integral truth if things (as in Supermind).
- Cornered by sense and logic/reason alone, it fails to perceive the Oneness of Life, the utility of the All, and the higher, transcendent realms of realms of Consciousness.
- It is prone to error in logic and reason.
- It is quick to judge; slow to learn.
- It can become irrational.
- It tends towards fixed beliefs, philosophies, and outlooks of life.

Limits of the World Around It

- It is prejudiced by the herd view of the society, preventing it thinking for itself.
- Social and cultural biases cloud it.

- Its logic and conclusions can be overwhelmed and therefore falsified by events and circumstance, too much information, and other intense factors.

Limitations of the Mind of the Scientist

Based on Sri Karmayogi's profound insights, Garry Jacobs has developed a new understanding of the limits of science. He indicates that the problem is not just that science is material-oriented and empirical, but that the Mind of the scientist has a number of limitations, preventing him from reaching the integral truth of things, and as a result creating a vast array of destructive outcomes that match each positive achievement. Here are the highlights of his presentation.

Linearity -- He tells us that Mind tends to think in a linear, unidimensional manner, pursuing one line of truth, ignoring other complementary sides, and thus views all reality from a single viewpoint. This is a limitation that can have dire consequences.

Division -- Mind knows by division & aggregation; by dividing each whole into parts and taking each part as a whole for further subdivision. This leads to reductionism, which in turn leads to overspecialization and fragmentation of knowledge. This narrow focus prevents a comprehensive understanding, causing not investigated negatives of other domains to slip in.

Polarization -- Mind knows by contrasting one thing from another, i.e. through dualities. It sees things in polar opposite of black or white, and right or wrong. Thus, Mind comes to know and progress only by creating opposition; by contrasting its own position with those of others. The effect of this is to attract a negative for every positive as every partial truth tends to attract its opposite.

Part vs. Whole -- In effect, Mind mistakes the part it knows for the greater Whole that is the Truth of any matter. A Whole, by the way, that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Implications for Science: The implication for science is that these limitations of Mind subdivide Reality and Knowledge into an infinite number of specializations, which cause it to lose connection with the integral Whole and Essence of any matter, resulting in negative outcomes that match their positive creations – manifesting air and water pollution, nuclear proliferation, resistance to biological viruses, inability to understand truths of existence, ignorance of the subtle movements of life, being confounded by the nature of Reality, and so forth.

If Man rises beyond the limits of Linear, Dividing, Polar, and Part-oriented Mind, it will not only resolve all of the issues and conundrums of Science, but eliminate all the negatives it has unleashed, while

contribute mightily to creating a harmonious, wisdom-based, integral and spiritual based life on earth.

SPIRITUALIZED MIND

Levels of Mind that Open to Cosmic Planes of Knowledge

There are three planes of consciousness in Man -- the physical, the vital, and the mental. The physical is -- in ascending order of consciousness -- our bodies, including its material substance, its inner and outer movements, and its sensations. The vital is a higher plane, and includes our desires, feelings, emotions, attitudes, and emotive relations and interactions with others. The mind is a higher plane still, and includes mental functionings of fact gathering and conversion; idea production; development of beliefs and values; and rational thinking; all out of which comes various levels of understanding and knowledge.

In the course of evolution, we see an ascent of consciousness from that of the relatively unconscious physical body (as in primitive life forms) to more conscious vital parts (as in animals) to the much more aware and conscious mental plane (especially in higher primates, culminating in humans). It is in the plane of Mind that Man has distinguished himself from the animal; though even there his mental understanding is limited by the needs of his lower physical and vital nature.

Here I want to narrow the focus to the planes and dimensions of the human Mind. As devised by Sri Aurobindo, Sri Karmayogi, and others, we can distinguish between several increasingly conscious planes or divisions of our mentality -- ranging from the simpler fact-processing capability to the more complex planes of reason to spiritual-like powers of direct knowing without thought. Let's examine each more closely.

Physical Mental -- The simplest aspect or dimension of the human Mind is that which captures information from the world and processes it into facts, associations, and ideas. It is the mechanical part of our mentality that we can call the Physical Mental. (We will see that there are three essential subplanes of Mind, this being the first and most basic.)

Vital Mental -- The next highest plane of mental consciousness is that which turns understanding and ideas into personal beliefs and values. At this level of Mind, ideas are personalized and emotionalized to express what we believe in; perceive to be of value. This is what we call the Vital Mental.

Rational Mind (Mental Mental) -- The highest level of Mind proper is rational and logical mind. There we engage in purer thinking, using logic to build up our understanding of any object that we are considering. This higher dimension of mind is more in touch with the truth of things, as it strains to know the object of knowledge by developing an argument through a logical sequence of thoughts.

Limits of Rational Mind

And yet even logical mind can be prejudiced in its comprehension, as it can be unduly influenced by our bodily and emotional needs and influences. E.g. if I am overly attached to my family at the expense of others, it can skew my view of things, including how my mind builds up its so-called logical point of view. There are in fact few if any individuals who engage in pure thinking untainted by our physical, vital, and psychological prejudices.

This tendency to be attached to and argue one side of a matter, even amongst highly intelligent "rational" human beings, is what Sri Karmayogi calls "intellectualization," something the Western mind finds great difficulty growing out of. However, we can shed that tendency, when we develop an inner life of calm and stillness that looks out on the world as a non-prejudicial "Silent Witness." From that poise we more readily embrace, even seek out the many points of view of any matter; the true truth of things. As a result, true rational thinking/rationality is born, and therefore a truer understanding and knowledge begins to take shape.

Spiritual Mind

Then there are the ultimate planes of mentality -- i.e. Spiritual Mind -, which consist of an ascending scale of levels beyond mind proper. There we have sudden insights, blinding flashes of truth, visions of possibilities, and sudden descents of knowledge coming as Light.

And yet even these spiritual-based insights involve a small degree of thinking; where the churning of thought still precedes the sudden descent of knowledge. E.g. when Archimedes experienced his famous moment of Light and exclaimed "Eureka, I've got it," he had been pondering the issue from many sides (i.e. engaging in rational thought) as he bathed in the tub.

Well it turns out that there are higher spiritual planes of mind still, where one experiences sudden intuitions of knowledge without any thought at all; where revelation of truth simply appear in one's Mind from the universal plane.

Beyond this is an opening the cosmic Mind itself, to the universal consciousness, where anything can be known in its many-sided truth. However, even there, there is not the perfect, all-encompassing direct connection with the object under scrutiny or consideration. That is left to spirito-mental dimension of Supermind (aka Truth Consciousness), where anything is known in its *totality*, and where one also has the *full power* to realize and make it real. Thus, I suddenly know the thing under consideration in its totality, even as it tends to manifest as a living reality in life. In Supermind knowledge and will for manifestation are fused.

Also, each thing known is understood in connection with every other in Supermind. Thus, it is a *unity consciousness* of perfect awareness of all

the parts, the totality, the whole, and the essence of any matter; all perfectly integrated and One in one's consciousness.

Sense Mind to the Subliminal

Thus, we see a scale of mentality, from lower to higher, beginning with fact processing that generates ideas; to vitalized ideas that become beliefs and personal values; to a lower and higher scales of rational, logical thought; to spiritualized mind of silence, illumination, intuition, revelation, cosmic consciousness, and supramental perception where one is in complete identity with the object; where knowledge and will are fused; where our knowledge is integrated and one with all related truths of existence.

This is what we may call a *vertical* scale of mental human consciousness. There is also a *horizontal* scale, ranging from the surface of our lives to the deepest depths within us. Let's then examine these.

At the surface, the mind is preoccupied by the inputs of the five senses. The mind perceives the world through what it sees, hears, etc. and then comes to a conclusion about things. Often this is faulty, as our eyes can deceive us from understanding the true truth of a matter. E.g. if we see a person being arrested, we may misjudge the event, concluding that he must be guilty, when in fact he is being put in the squad car to protect him from another. There are an infinite number of examples where this surface *sense mind* comes to utterly wrong conclusions. It happens to each of us a dozen times a day, as we come to wrong perceptions based on what we see, which is at odds with what is really happening.

Understanding life merely through the five senses, without engaging in logical, rational thought is an inordinately *physical* way of perceiving existence. E.g. we see how the scientist is confounded when he tries to evaluate his subject matter solely based on visible, measurable, quantifiable, material, physical fact; when the truth of the matter is more varied, complex, and lies much deeper. Likewise, the American who lives on the surface of life bemused by all of the material objects that serve him in life is a slave to this outer, sense-oriented physical mind.

Not only can we move away from surface mind to rational mind, but we can also get in touch with a deeper mind inside us. Buried within us is a subtle form of mind, a *subliminal* mental being, also called the *Inner Mind*. This mind is in touch with the universal forces; to what Sri Aurobindo calls the superconscient, or universal mental existence. Thus, this subliminal mental being has awarenesses and perceptions that transcend normal causality and views of space and time; just as the universal plane does. These subtle thoughts are constantly percolating up from the depths to the surface of our being, providing

critical hints of what to do and what to avoid, providing an Inner Guidance that can be infinitely valuable to successful living. Along with the intuitions of knowledge that descend into us through spiritual mind, these inner intimations of the subliminal mentality can provide deep, profound insights into the nature of things and the workings of life at any given moment.

The more one develops an inner life, the more the mind expands to the spiritual mental planes above, and to the subliminal mental planes in the depths of our being. Through inner concentration, meditation, (and most recommended) continuous opening to the spiritual Force, i.e. consecration, one can over time forge a powerful inner existence of calm and serenity that enables mind to soar to the universal heights above and to the deepest depths within. Streams of truth will then constantly come into our being from all directions, giving us profound knowledge, wisdom, and power, enabling us to become the Master of Life.

Archimedes Eureka Moment of Vision through Spiritualized Mind

When Archimedes had his Eureka moment, a vision of a possibility came to him. When he acted on it, he was able to solve his conundrum. Such envisioning is a movement of the higher, spiritual dimensions of mind that knows without the hard churning of thought. When Archimedes sat in the tub, he realized that he was displacing water, which he saw could be the very method to determine if the king's crown was pure gold. When he realized that possibility as a vision in his mind, he became so excited that he ran out into the streets naked crying "Eureka, I've got it!"

In the film *A Civil Action*, the John Travolta character had a similar expertise, when he recalled water spilling over the edge of a table from a tipped over glass. That enables him to envision something related to the legal case he was lead prosecuting attorney for. That vision of possibility turned out to be the decisive turn in the case that would eventually garner a \$100M settlement for his client victims. Again, there was a vision of a possibility that perceived the object of truth without going through the exercise of thought.

And yet there are methods of connecting with the object of knowledge even more directly. It is the great spiritual power of mentality commonly known as "intuition."

Then what is intuition? It turns out that Travolta played another extraordinary character in the film *Phenomenon*. In that role George Malley has a powerful mystical experience that changes the course of his life, which leads to a radical change in his perceptions of reality. In fact, from that day onward, he has one revelation of truth after another, startling the local folk. The experiences are so frequent and powerful that at one point he comments that he cannot control the constant revelations that fill his mind. In essence, he has risen to the realm of

intuitive mind, a plane of mentality where truths just appear in one's head without any thought at all. No reasoning, logical thinking, and hard churning of thought here; or even the envisioning of a possibility. It is pure knowledge that has entered the mind on its own. In that sense, George Malley's has moved beyond the experiences of Travolta's character in *A Civil Action*, as well as Archimedes in his famous Eureka moment.

Sri Aurobindo has described an ascending scale of mentality that ranges from limited sense-oriented thought, where mind is preoccupied by the input of the sense, and where the object of truth is hardly known at all and ignorance abounds; to rational thought where one uses the power of reason to come to an understanding, but which is often limited, brittle, and one-sided; to silent mind, where through a still mind one engages in purer forms of rational thinking that bring clearer thought results; to envisioning (illuminated mind) as experienced by Archimedes (and by Einstein when he envisioned riding along a beam of light, which gave him the profound understanding of the relative nature of space and time); to intuition where truth just enters one's mind as an idea and understanding without thought; to truth consciousness (aka Sri Aurobindo's Supermind, where one moves into complete identify with the object, garnering, many-sided integral truth about the thing or matter, embracing and perceiving the unity of each and all, while simultaneously harboring a vast power for it to come about in the world. Thus, at any moment there is an object that can be known; a truth about some matter that we can come to understand integrally, wholly, and dynamically.

Take this example. Imagine a box on the other side of a house. Our normal mentality can only come to understand it by inference, such as someone reporting that there may be a rectangular figurine on the other side of the home. But is that true? Is it rectangular? Is it even there? Normal mentality, including its highest form of rationality and logic stands helpless in its ability to know the object in its detail and multiplicity.

Spiritual Mind however does know the object more directly; as one has a vision of the box or knows through revelation of truth that there is a 3-dimensional square container on the other side, as one simply gathers it within one's self through the plane of universal mind. Higher still, Truth Consciousness/Supermind knows in a flash all its salient aspects, as a multisided, integral truth-knowledge rises from within. It is an ultimate revelatory experience that puts one in direct contact with that object -- whether it is material, fact, idea, circumstance, or matter. Moreover, through that supramental perception, life tends to bring that very thing into existence; or we are fully energized to do so, and have the method to manifest it as real.

As a result, one has overcome the limits of space and time, as we attract the many-sided truth of the object at a distance, doing so in an instant. It is a new form of Knowing that transcends Mind, apprehending Truth directly. It is an indicator of the emergence of a New Humanity.



Life

(Book 1 Chapter XIX)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on the next great power in the descent, the involution from the Infinite Consciousness down to Matter -- Life.

He explains that Life is universal field of energy that takes shape as forms in creation, and that its origins are in the Consciousness Force (Chit) of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Sri Aurobindo then explains what life does in terms of those forms. He tells us that this universal field of Life creates/builds up, energizes/maintains, and destroys/renews forms.

He then describes -

- how the Life/Energy express at various planes of itself in the forms, from physical to subtle.
- how the forms of energy emerge through various planes in Creation.
- how the higher involved planes emerge from out of the lower.
- how the life-play of the Force amongst those animated life-forms enables their rise in consciousness.
- the nature of will and desire in the Conscious Force as well as in the forms of Nature, including we humans.
- the nature of death as a process of life.

Here are the main points in detail:

WHAT LIFE IS: Life is Universal Field of Energy (of the Conscious Force) that Takes Shape as Forms of Creation

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo describes the Nature of "Life." He tells us that Life is a form of, a dynamic of, a current of a universal field of Energy. And that Energy has as its source the Conscious Force -- Chit of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

[-Life is a universal field of Energy from which all forms take shape; out of which all forms have emerged, are emerging, and will emerge. Thus, Life IS Energy, and forms are the result; that which comes of it. Keep in mind that "forms" are not just material forms, but all formations of Energy, including the visible and invisible, the material and the subtle. It can be an idea, a teaching, a force, a materialization.

How the Conscious Force Became the Energy

As we will learn along the way in Life Divine, in the Involutionary process (from Spirit to Matter) through the workings of Supermind, the Conscious Force involves into Knowledge and Will. I.e. the consciousness becomes Knowledge, and the Force becomes Will, and like the Conscious-Force are One and integrally unified.

In Supermind there is now perfect, integral Knowledge, where all is perceived in perfect unity, and there is an infinite-like Will and Power for that knowledge to manifest.

The involutionary process then continues. There is a further descent in consciousness and force (as knowledge and will in Supermind) with the formation of Mind, which loses the integral knowledge as Supermind. (Mind is a lesser formation of supermind, where the unity of knowledge is absent, and there is the real beginning of partial knowledge that is the basis of an essential Ignorance.)

The process of descent and continues as the knowledge is wrung out of Mind, and what is left is Energy, initially at rest. That Energy is the field of Life. That universal field then is stirred, begins to move and coagulates into forms seen and unseen in creation. In other words, Energy, also called Life, is a universal field out of which forms take shape. (In the tradition, it is explained as ether, fire, water, earth, and air.)

That universal field of Energy has become the final operation of the Conscious-Force in its descent. Forms, including Matter will follow and emerge, flow out of it.

(By the way, this process did not just occur in the past, but is always occurring happening, as e.g. when we are born we become forms of that cosmic Energy, even as it leaves us when we die, only to enter new forms. This same process occurs for all animate and inanimate; visible and invisible forces and formations. Note that Energy is not only the basis of our *physical* forms, but our vital, psychological, and mental formations.)

LIFE/ENERGY AND FORMS: Life Creates/Builds Up, Energizes/Maintains, and Destroys/Renews Forms

After indicating that Life is a universal field of Energy that formulates into forms, Sri Aurobindo further discusses the relationship between

this Life/Energy and those forms. He tells us that Life/Energy not only creates forms, but maintains, destroys, and recreates them.

Let's go into the particulars. Sri Aurobindo tells us that Energy/Life builds up the forms [i.e. establishes them] and energizes them through stimulation [i.e. so they are animated and move]. This is how the form is established and maintained through Energy.

Sri Aurobindo also describes how forms are maintained. He tells us that they maintained through disintegration and renewal of substance. [This seems a little contradictory on first reading, for how can things be maintained by disintegration? Think of a plant. When its flowers die, or when the leaves fall off, you see disintegration. However, that process of death gives vitality to the plant to produce even more leaves and flowers for that plant. Even when the plant dies, it provides seeds and fertilizer for other plants to come about or other plant, tree, or other biological formations species.

This indicates that Energy that is in the form is not lost. When the form can no longer hold it, its substance disintegrates, yet the energy is maintained in another form, which is a renewal of substance.

A form is not just a physical form, but an emotion, or an idea to name several. If an individual dies, the mental form of the idea does not die, but is maintained somewhere in the universal plane. It is a mental energy that circulates in cosmic Mind for others to pick up on.

Even when a human being dies, his accomplishments live on in other forms. In addition, there is the notion of rebirth; that the person's essence and true Self, which Sri Aurobindo will call the evolving Soul (which we can consider spiritual energy) takes on new birth in its journey of discovery.]

The Energy that Creates Forms Expresses Variably in the Planes of those Forms

Sri Aurobindo not only tell us that there a constant Energy in movement in the universe that takes various forms, from physical to subtle, but that these formations are simply different forms of that same, common Energy. Thus, the field of Life reveals itself as the same everywhere from the atom to man as Energy.

[Though we are each a formation of that energy -- that is in one sense the same in each thing visible and invisible -- we can distinguish different types of energy as forms takes shape. As a human, I am releasing physical energy through my psychical being, its actions, and movements. I am also releasing vital energy through my emotions, feelings, and associations with others. I am finally releasing mental energy through my thinking and attempts to understand. And yet they are all formations of the One essential Energy, which is the final operation of the Conscious Force.]

The Emergence of the Planes in Creation; and How the Involved Planes Emerged in the Evolution

Sri Aurobindo reminds, as he does throughout *The Life Divine*, that there are central planes of existence that have manifest in the involution, and evolved in the evolution. In the descent, the Conscious Force has devolved/involved to Supermind and then to cosmic Mind and then to Life/Energy. In the evolution that process reverses, as Life/Energy coagulates into dumb, inconscient forms, beginning as Matter, and continues upward to evolve animated life, out of which evolves mentality, and first still, upward to spiritualized mind and beyond.

However -- and here is the key -- in the descent the consciousness is not completely lost, but is *involved, hidden, embedded* in the inner core of the planes, even as it is lost on the surface. Thus, within the lower consciousness plane of Matter is involved the higher consciousnesses that of Energy Mind, and Supermind that was lost in its formation.

[In this way, within Matter in the universe is involved the superior plane of Energy/Life. Likewise, within Energy/Life is involved the plane of Mind; and within Mind is Supermind. (Actually, Mind is involved in Matter and Life, and Supermind in all three.) This indicates that the involved planes have the potential to come out, to move to the surface of existence; i.e. to manifest in full. E.g. the reason Mind emerged from vitalized /animated life forms is that there was already the plane of mentality involved in it as a seed ready to come out given the right circumstance.

-How then does the involved, higher plane come out of the lower one? As we evolve, each plane that was hidden in the descent (to enable the greatest diversity of experience of discovery and hence of Delight/Bliss), comes to the fore. In the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, we see how thought emerges when the monkey perceives the opportunity to use a bone as a weapon against the rival clan. It was not just an outer compulsion of competition and war (the interactions of one form and another) that precipitated the understanding, but a latent mental capacity that was released by circumstance. Given the outer compulsion (as well as a higher spiritual one as is also implied in the film), the monkey evolves a new capacity of a slowly emerging mental consciousness.]

A Note on How the Involution and Evolution is Expressing in Each Plane-Related Chapter

It is important to understand that in each of these chapters Sri Aurobindo is describing the *descent* of consciousness from a divine Source (i.e. the involution) and an *ascent* to the Source (i.e. the evolution) *simultaneously*. In each chapter -- Conscious Force, Supermind, Mind, Life, and Matter -- he is not only describing that plane

in the descent/involution, but also in the ascent/evolution. Thus, in this chapter of Life, he is not only describing it in the descent (as a further diminution of Mind, and the final outcome of Conscious Force), but also in the evolution in the universe as a plane that has emerged out of Matter, and for we humans is a plane of catalyzed existence beyond our material bodies. (He takes the same approach for the Conscious Force, which is the source of all existence in the involution, yet is a plane we can evolve towards. Of supermind as the creator of the universe in the involution, yet a plane we can rise to in our own evolution. And of Mind, which enabled the plane of Life in the involution, and the mentality we are increasingly developing beyond our animated life form existence in the evolution.) [ep]

The Life Play of the Force amongst the Animated Life Forms Seeks to Awaken their Consciousness

-Sri Aurobindo also tells us that Life/Energy is a dynamic play of the universal Force, and through this interchange, stimulation, and response between the forms, Life seeks to awaken *conscious* sensation in those bodies.

[We as individuals (and as collectives) are a form of that Life/Energy. We engage in the play of life, which is secretly the play of the universal Force behind. Through the interactions amongst us, the limited consciousness in our being awakens to higher forms of it. For example, I may learn something great from another. Or I may be in conflict from that individual, which raises the issue of the limitations in my being. If I acknowledge it and change it, I progress and evolve. Thus, I have risen in consciousness through mutual interchange.

It is the same between collectives, such as families, communities, nations, races, etc. This play of existence occurs for everything, animals, plants, all aspects of the elements, things seen and unseen, forces and powers and entities that exist in the subtle plane.

They are all forms of the Life/Energy engaging in the dynamic Play of the universal Force, which has an aspiration and Intent to bring about its myriad forms of consciousness into existence, including Silence, Peace, Oneness, Harmony, Truth, Knowledge, Power, Creativity, Freedom, beauty, Delight, Love, Timelessness, and Infinity.]

-Sri Aurobindo also describes the relationship of each form with the Force and with one another in terms of the *Energy*. He tells us that each form is constantly taking into itself and giving out again the breath and Energy of the common Force; each form feeds upon that and nourishes itself with it by various means, whether directly by taking in other forms in which the energy is stored or directly by absorbing the dynamic discharges it receives from outside.

[From out of the Conscious Force emerges the Energy from which forms are created and built up. These forms, including us, feed off that essential energy. In the play of life, forms feed off the energies of other forms. Thus, we as individuals feed off the Energies of others. (Or plants from minerals and the carbon dioxide in the air; and animals from plants or other animals through devouring or other forms of mutual interchange.) We are thus *individual* individuals and *social* individuals feeding and nourishing the energies from one another.]

(See G's book for more info on this topic)

Will and Desire in Conscious-Force and in the Forms of Nature

The Being (Sat) emerged from the ineffable Reality, Brahman. It was the first step towards manifestation. Because the Being was a *conscious* Being, it emanated a Force; a *Conscious* Force.

There is an *urge, desire, and will* in that Conscious Force. Since the Energy emerged from the Conscious Force, there is an urge, desire, and will in it, as well as in the forms that emerged out of it.

Thus, that same will and desire (of the Conscious Force, and its emanation, Energy) is everywhere in Nature. It is even there in the very atom, as even here there is an attraction and repulsion (mirroring our own liking and disliking). Furthermore, that will and desire is also in us, as we are made up of the atoms of matter.

We see various formations of the will and desire in Nature. It shows up as nervous energy, sensation in the *plant*; desire sense and will in *primary animals*; and mental will in *man*.

Process of Life and Death

Finally, Sri Aurobindo concludes that the natural opposition we make between death and life is an error of our mentality. That death in fact is simply a process of life. I.e., disintegration of substance and renewal of substance, maintenance of form and change of form are the constant process of life. Thus, there is no cessation of Life, only the material of one form of life is broken up to serve as material for other forms of life.

[When a plant dies, it serves as food for other plants. Or it creates the seeds of a new existence for a new plant. Thus, the energy behind the plant takes on new forms. The outer form dies, but the essential energy remains and takes on new forms. It is a cosmic version or aspect of the Law of Conservation of Matter.]

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that we humans give up one form at death only to take up another through rebirth through what he calls a metempsychosis or new ensouling of body. [When we leave our body, it goes back to the subtle planes; first to the vital realms, depositing the contents of our vitalized life; and then to the mind plane where our mental qualities are absorbed. Then the soul that remains rests or prepares for a new body, which it can incarnate into a new person for

the continuous journey of that evolving soul. We could say that the Essence or energy of our being simply takes on new forms.

BYW: Mother indicates that those with a ripe soul tend to rest more between births as they have more knowledge et al to assimilate, before taking on the next birth.]

[In the next chapter 'Death, Desire, and Capacity,' Sri Aurobindo further describes the cause of death, as well as the nature of Life, and the problems of life.]

SPECIAL NOTE

Same Chapters Used for the Involution and Evolution

Sri Aurobindo does not distinguish the involution (the descent; the unmanifest) from the evolution (the ascent; the manifestation) in the chapters from the Pure Existent to Matter. There is just one series of chapters that can be viewed in either direction; from Sat-Chit-Ananda to Matter, or from Matter to Sat-Chit-Ananda.

For example, here in this chapter 'Life,' he is not only addressing Life only in the involution (the descent), but also in the Evolution (the ascent).

Let's distinguish between the two in terms of Life:

-In the Involution/Descent, Life (which emerged from the original Conscious Force of Satchitananda) is *energy at rest*. It is *Life as Potential*; with a potential to Manifest as forms of itself.

-In the Evolution/Ascent, Life continues, but now energy *moves*, and forms of it take shape. It is the Manifestation, or Manifest Life.

-Thus, Life is presented simultaneously as *unmanifest* (i.e. as energy in potential) in the Involution; and in its *manifest* form (as moving, unseen energy, that would coagulate into living forms) in the evolution.

Here then is the two-way latter of being as indicated by the chapter names and content.

<p>Pure Existent Conscious-Force Delight Supermind Mind Life Matter</p>
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And here is how we would break these planes down in each direction: in the Involution (first column) and the Evolution (second column). The third column is how the Evolution (Ascent) occurs for human life in the universe, i.e. for we humans. (I.e. we are evolving as a species from a physical body upward.)

All three columns are thus included, are implicit in their corresponding *single* chapter in *The Life Divine*.

Involution (the Descent)	Evolution (the Ascent)	Evolution (of Humans)
Pure Existent v Conscious-Force v Delight v Supermind v Mind v Life (Energy) v Matter	Pure Existent ^ Conscious-Force ^ Delight ^ Supermind ^ Mind ^ Life ^ Matter	Satchitananda ^ Supermind ^ Spiritual Mind ^ Mind ^ Vital Being ^ Physical Body

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Energy in the Process of Creation

Question from a Reader: How does Energy fit into the process by which we create and accomplish in life?

Answer: The entire process of creation from the vision of a thing to its manifestation can be looked at from the perspective of Energy.

For example, I perceive something in life that I find attractive and want to manifest as real in the world. I thereby have a vision of what I want to create. I have in essence created a Force of energy. It is also a *directed* Force since it is a goal I want to achieve. It is further directed, amplified, intensified as it gains the sanction of my emotions. I.e. when I see the real possibility of bringing it about, and the enormous benefit that could ensue; a Will in me is generated for its manifestation. My Will in turn releases more energy, adding to the directed Force I have initiated within me.

Sometimes that is enough for life to manifest my goal. I.e. without having to take further action, life responds to the energies I have released, bringing about the conditions I had hoped for.

If, however our aspiration/intention is something significant, we need to take it to the next level by Organizing our intention, which will convert the directed Force into a Power for manifestation. For example, I consider how I can make my goal real -- including which people to contact, when to do it, what skills I need to acquire gain, what attitudes I need to change, and so forth. As a result of organizing my goal, the directed Force of Energy now becomes a highly concentrated POWER of Energy.

When I then carry out the details with determination and positive attitude, the concentrated Power of highly charged and focused energies call forth to life like magnets, evoking powerful positive results. I.e. the Energy is so highly charged within us, that it sends out a powerful signal that causes us to align with the very best of conditions, enabling us to attract our heart's desire. In essence, the Energy we have built up within us has converted into a Manifest Reality.

The energy conversion process can thus be summarized as: Force of energy through Direction > Power of energy through Organization (of the details) > Action that converts energy into something real in the world, as a living Manifestation of it.

The energy process can also be thought of as the release of mental energy that then adds vital/emotional energy, and then physical energy that manifest the object of our desire as outer, material results.

If we bring the spiritual Force, i.e. consecrated action into the equation, then life moves to the causal plane, spiritual energies are added, and things move at the speed of light, bringing about our heart's desire and much more.

Process of Creation of the Universe

This is the same essential process by which the Divine created the universe; i.e. by which Supermind manifest a universe of forms from out of the Conscious Force. As described by Sri Aurobindo and Karmayogi it is more or less as follows:

The ineffable, immutable, timeless, spaceless Brahman became the Conscious Being (Sat) -- the Spirit, Truth. Being Conscious of Itself, the Being released a powerful Force; a Conscious Force (Chit).

Supermind knew the Real Ideas that the Conscious Being (Sat) wished to manifest in a universe of forms. Supermind through its dividing action reconstituted the Conscious Force into Knowledge and Will. I.e. Consciousness became Knowledge and Force became Will. (Knowledge was the means by which a Mind could perceive Consciousness, and Will was how a vital being of volition like we humans can express the Force.)

Out of Knowledge and Will, Supermind created the forms of force that it intended through its Real Ideas.

E.g., Supermind intended to turn the Real Idea of LOVE into a living reality in the cosmos. It had the integral Knowledge of what Love is in its various aspects, as well as the Will and Power for it to come about. Though Its comprehending and apprehending power, Supermind turned the Real Idea of Love into an object that a subject perceives. I.e. in space and time, Supermind splits the idea of Love into the form of Lover – Loving - Beloved (subject - action/movement -object). Supermind has thus organized the Real Idea of Love into the ability of a lover to love a beloved. In this way, all forms in the universe can love' whether it means loving our children, our mate, or any others we come in contact with. Sub-aspects of Love take form as everything from human values like self-givingness, goodwill, and gratitude to human infatuation and desire.

In the same way, other Real Ideas, such as Delight, Creativity, Goodness, Oneness, Wisdom, Truth, are manifest by supermind as forces and forms. E.g., the Real Idea of "Truth/Knowledge" is formulated as Knower Knows the Knowledge through the action of the truth consciousness of Supermind.

The process of creation then continues, as the Knowledge and Will further breaks down, losing much of its consciousness, becoming an essential Energy at rest. It then begins to move and formulate into constituent elements – plasma, fire, water, earth, etc. --, which become the basis for material forms that manifest in the universe.

Thus, the process by which we create in life, as described earlier, parallels this cosmic process by which the universe emerged from a Divine Source.



Death, Desire and Incapacity

(Book 1 Chapter XX)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo once again explains the nature of life. He reminds us that Energy is a product of a Conscious Force that takes shape as a myriad of forms; and participates in their creation, disintegration, and recombination. He goes on to tell us that these forms engage in a mutual interplay of that force and energy, from which life derives its character, all the while being an instrument of a Divine Intention and Will.

Sri Aurobindo takes up the theme of why there is limitation in human existence. He says it is due to our divided being that does not exist in Oneness.

In the main part of the chapter, he undertakes a comprehensive examination of each of the following: the nature of and reason for Death; the purpose and limits of Desire; and the cause of Incapacity through dissolution and disease.

He indicates that Death is a process of life and is necessary for the Soul's evolution. In particular, he says that there are two reasons for death: (1) the Soul's seeking of sustenance through multiple births; and (2) the seeking of immortality in life.

He then indicates the cause and purpose of Desire. He tells us that individualized life forms are subject to Desire because it seeks Bliss (of the Spirit). I.e. desire is how the limited individual experiences Bliss. However, he can follow a process upward to ever-higher forms that end in Bliss/Delight of being.

Then Sri Aurobindo explains why the individualized form - i.e. we - are subject to Incapacity, including Disintegration and Disease. He indicates that the latter two occur when there is not a proper balance between the life force and the forms that contain it.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo explains how we can overcome death, desire, and incapacity on life. He explains that Man can move out of these statuses by the gradual awakening of Self. And the awakening to Self occurs when the Supramental truth consciousness and power becomes the leader of our being.

Here are the main points in detail:

Nature of Life, Energy, Forms, Its Character, the Divine Intention

Sri Aurobindo begins by reiterating the central ideas of the previous chapter (as he often does). He once again reminds us that-

-Life is an Energy of Consciousness, of the Divine, a universal Force generating itself into forms of that Force.

-Life (as the universal Force) is working to create, energize, maintain and modify, even to dissolve and reconstruct forms. In particular, it is all-possessing and all-creative Will of the universal Supermind that maintains and energizes, constitutes and reconstitutes individual forms and acts in them.

-There is Will and Intention of the Divine in the process of creating these forms, as well as in their interplay. That Real-Idea of the Infinite Being is the determinative of and creative agent of those forms and their movement.

-The forms created are engaged in a mutual play and interchange of the secret Conscious Force, which in effect is the expression of the Character of Life.

Our Limitations and Divided Nature

Now Sri Aurobindo takes up the theme of why there is limitation in human existence. He says it is due to our divided being that does not exist in Oneness -- within our own self and with the world. If that is so, how does our divided being express? He says that it occurs in three ways: as death, as desire, and as incapacity/strife. They are the trinity of divided being.

Death, Desire, and Incapacity

In that light, he undertakes a comprehensive examination of each of these; i.e. the nature of and reason for death; the purpose and limits of Desire; and the cause of Incapacity through Dissolution and Disease. Let's go through these three analyses:

DEATH

Death as Process of Life

The first statement Sri Aurobindo makes about death is that it is a process of life. He explains that in death the only thing that ceases to exist is the form. The consciousness and the force that animated the form do not die.

[We can think of a light bulb whose source is the energy behind it. Though the bulb goes out after extended use, the energy behind it remains. What is required is a new bulb. The same is true of life. Life cannot sustain itself in a form. It therefore goes out and dies, but a new form utilizes it. When the old form can no longer hold it, a new one is required.]

We see this dynamic in many forms of nature. A tree spreads its seed to enable more trees, knowing at some level it cannot live forever. We can therefore say that the appearance and dissolution of forms is a process of life that enables the energy to find new avenues for its expression.

Sri Aurobindo indicates therefore that death is absolutely essential for the progress of life. It is not an error, or aberration, or unwanted attribute of life. Without it, all progress and evolution would eventually cease.

Says Garry Jacobs in his book *Lectures on The Life Divine*: "Suppose today that you found yourself through a miracle of medicine you could live for 5000 years. Then when we, say, make an experiment and take a very serious effort to improve your position tomorrow, immediately the thought will come, "What's the hurry? I am going to be around for 5000 years. I have plenty of time." That explains why there is death, to keep up progress in life, preventing it from falling back into decay and nothingness.

Jacobs continues: "All forms of force try to maintain and perpetuate themselves. In doing so, they tend to become rigid and unchangeable. This is true of physical forms of matter, the organizational forms of society we call institutions, and psychological forms such as our opinions, attitudes and character traits. When a form becomes rigid, it no longer responds and adapts to the impact of external forces, so eventually it breaks under the impact or gets petrified."

We should also keep in mind that in death, there is no cessation of consciousness, only of the form. Death is necessary for the soul's evolution.]

Death Necessary for Soul's Evolution

Sri Aurobindo indicates that death is necessary for the soul's evolution. How does that occur? He tells us that the soul takes birth in a body, and assumes a human character. Though the character is inherited genetically and is partly a product of our upbringing, the soul chooses certain circumstance that build up the character of that person in a certain way so it can derive benefit and understanding from those experiences in its own journey through time.

Once the soul has acquired the experience in this birth (and if the body still is still alive), the form dies and the character dissolves, so that the

soul can choose a new field and new form for further experience. In that way, death (and rebirth and death, etc.) is absolutely necessary for that soul's evolution.

Reason for Death 1: The Soul's Seeking Sustenance through Multiple Births

In other words, now we know why individual life form dies. We are subject to death because the soul seeks the infinite consciousness through finite bodies. I.e. multiple births through limited-consciousness forms are required to garner the sustenance and understanding the Soul seeks on its Journey. Death is required of the form in order for the (evolving) Soul, (the True Self, Psychic being) to continue on its new bodies to fulfill its Aspiration of higher understanding and fulfillment.

Reason for Death 2: The Seeking of Immortality in Life

Sri Aurobindo also says that death exists because the individual life seeks the Infinite, i.e. immortality through a limited individual body. [As explained in the next chapter -- "... death is only the negative term in which Life hides itself and tempts its own positive being to seek for immortality." [In other words, death compels Life to seek for Immortality. How do we gain immortality? By bringing the Higher Consciousness, the spiritual Force into the cells of the body. Just as we can be transformed mentally and vitally, we can also evolve physically into an immortal form.]]

DESIRE

Cause, Purpose of Desire

Now that he has explained the various reasons for death, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the reasons for Desire. He tells us that individualized life forms are subject to Desire because it seeks Bliss (of the Spirit). I.e. desire is how the limited individual experiences Bliss, but he can follow a process upward to ever higher forms that end in Bliss/Delight of being.

He tells us that the way we as limited beings can discover the Bliss is to go through the stage of desire. As we become more aware and sensitive in consciousness, we move out of desire to higher forms of it that culminate in spiritual Bliss. Or to put it another way, Bliss (spiritual Delight) is the ultimate pleasurable form that Desire now seeks as lower physical and vital urge.

[We can take any formation in life and see it at various levels. E.g. at the physical level, seek pleasure in pure physical activities, like food, sex, and others. At a higher level, that becomes pleasure in the experience of owning things, or having money, or fame, or intensely

interacting with others. At the mental level, there is the pleasure of understanding, organizing, planning, conceptualizing etc. At the spiritual level, one feels pure joy and delight in simply being alive. This ultimate Bliss needs to go through the steps of Desire at the physical, vital, and mental plane, and arrive at the spiritual plane of Pleasure/Bliss because Man begins as an Ignorant, unconscious, contradictory being.]

INCAPACITY THROUGH DISINTEGRATION & DISEASE:

Cause of Disintegration and Disease

Finally, Sri Aurobindo explains why the individualized form, i.e. we are subject to Incapacity, including Disintegration and Disease.

He begins with the latter two, and indicates that they occur when there is not a proper balance between the life force and the forms that contain it. I.e. if the supply of the life force is less than that which is required by the body, disease and disintegration occur.

-He also adds that not only are there certain energies required for its own internal functioning and needs, but the energies of life in the body have to support the attack of the energies external to it in the universe. [One interpretation: I.e. outside influences, material and subtle – e.g. from the environment, from the world around us, from other – also draw on the energies of the individual forms, on our energies, and an imbalance will cause disintegration and disease.]

-This imbalance of energy will cause dissolution of that form/physical body, unless it can change and renew its form-type.

Overcoming Death, Desire, and Incapacity through Lead of Supermind

Finally, Sri Aurobindo explains how we can overcome death, desire, and incapacity on life. He explains that Man can move out of these statuses by the gradual awakening of Self. And the awakening to Self occurs when the Supramental truth consciousness and power becomes the leader of our being.

He indicates us that if Supermind leads, then it will replace our essential Ignorance, the dividing mechanism of mind, which will overcome our exclusive and separative consciousness. As a result of this movement from Ignorance to Knowledge, the right balance of energies (between the life force and the form it inhabits) will be restored -- preventing disintegration, dissolution, and disease, thereby enabling endless life.

[Supermind is the consciousness that sees beyond duality, beyond exclusivity and separateness, and embraces all possibilities. It opens

one to the infinities of life, to the widest possibilities, potentials, and energies.]

Sri Aurobindo says that only in Supermind can the body and the vital and mental being acquire the necessary charging of energies that prevent imbalance, preventing death, dissolution, and disease, and allowing it to move to the infinity, to the physical immortality, never-ending physical, vital, and mental capacity it seeks and is capable of.

Or to put it yet another way, the Mind, not separated from Supermind, of divine knowledge, would be free from its ignorance, and would not be subject to its ignorances of death, desire, and incapacity.

-Supermind then is not only a mechanism of perfect knowledge, but is the mechanism for the perfect vital (i.e. life force, emotions, feelings, association with others, outer activities, etc.) and bodily existence.

[If we move to the depths within and rise to Supermind or call in the spiritual Force and rise to it, we overcome the limitations of the Mind, including its exclusivity and narrow focus; the limits of the vital, including its separateness and ego-sense; and the limits of the unconsciousness, in flexibility and lack of suppleness of the physical body.

In tandem, we are able to overcome our incapacity, including the tendency toward dissolution and disease, and eventually death itself; replacing them with infinite capacity and never-ending existence, i.e. immortality.]

Other

Overcoming the Limitations of Life -- The overcoming of the limitations of life of the individual is the gradual awakening of self, of master of its self, which gives it a power, the growth of its individual power.

Death also Due to Universal Forces -- Sri Aurobindo also says that death is also due to forces and energies of the universe itself.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

New Forms of Life

We see how in life there is a continuous replacement of form with the new. Why does this occur? Sri Aurobindo says that in order for life to keep evolving, ossified forms need to be replaced. Here are some examples:

- The French Revolution meant death for thousands of aristocrats but renewed vitality for the French nation, which rose to its greatest heights under Napoleon.

- Companies go bankrupt, but social progress continues.
- Nations disappear, but humanity evolves.
- Old customers and ways of life die, but Life is perpetual.

Thus, the secret of death of forms is to enable life's continuous progress and evolution.

It is the same with us. The secret of death is that it enables our continuous progress. I.e. we die so that our True Self can continue on its journey through multiple births to gain ultimate knowledge, consciousness, and power. This process also enables an ultimate, supramentalized individual to come about, which allows for an immortal existence, and a divine existence for life on earth.

Thus, whether it be aspects of change in society or in us as individuals, the secret of Death is it makes Life immortal.

We should keep in mind that this movement towards permanence and immortality has precedence. For one, there is an Infinite Consciousness beyond the universe that is Eternal, never-ending. We too as embodied forms in this universe are moving toward that permanence and immortality through an ultimate elevation of consciousness.

Form and Energy

We observe the forms of life around us and wonder where their origin and source of power lies. It comes from energy. Moreover, there is a fascinating relationship between the forms and the energy behind it.

Energy is the source and basis of all forms, whether physical forms of rocks or humans, or mental forms such as concepts and ideas. Forms however tend to break down. However, the energy behind them does not go away. Rather it formulates into new forms. For example, when a form of government, such as monarchy, breaks down, the energy behind it does not wither, but reformulates itself into a new form, such as democracy.

When things die -- whether anachronistic forms of social influence like aristocracy, or the physical human body -- that form is unable to hold its energy. It thus seeks corresponding new forms to inhabit, such as a new social order or a new form of life; even a new human body. In the 1960s, the global Hippy movement was born in the San Francisco area. It sparkled like a comet across the sky changing the world, and just as suddenly died out. But then the energy behind morphed a new form with the rise of Silicon Valley, the personal computer, the Internet, and the Smartphone, all in that very same area. Their influence is untold, approaching infinity.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that energy is the source of all things, all life seen and unseen in the universe. He says that there is a constant, dynamic energy in the cosmos that takes subtle or gross form -- whether a physical body or object, a plant or animal, or an idea or insight. This

common energy flowing subtly and invisibly through the universe has as its source a spiritual Conscious-Force of the one Infinite Consciousness.

Though we are a product of that universal force, energy is not a static entity. For example, we humans can increase it at any time -- whether it is physical, vital/emotional, mental, or spiritual energy. Increasing any of these will give us not only a greater power to accomplish, but a greater zest for life. If this is so, then what can we do to increase our energy? There are a number of practical approaches.

One is to increase our level of aspiration in life. The more intense our aspiration to achieve a goal, the more our will is engaged, and thus the greater energy released. Another way to maintain and build our energies is to maintain a positive attitude. Whereas negative attitudes tend to deplete our energies, even evoking instances of sudden ill fortune, positive ones -- whether towards others, one's self, one's work, or life -- tend to have the opposite effect.

Thus, the more we increase our energy, the more likely the forms that relate to our being will maintain themselves and avoid breaking down. If we lose physical, vital, or mental energy, those corresponding forms tend to wither. E.g. our body decays, our will depletes, and our understanding diminishes.

In the end, energy is the source of all accomplishment. It is energy that created, is creating the universe from a divine, Infinite consciousness. Likewise, it is energy that also enables us to create and achieve in life. The greater the consciousness, the greater the energy -- physical, vital, mental, and spiritual, and thus the greater sustainability of the forms of our being and our capacity to thrive.



The Ascent of Life

(Book 1 Chapter XXI)

The ascent of Life is a movement from division to rediscover our oneness with the whole universe; from ignorance to right knowledge, will, and action; from impotence to infinite capacity for self-fulfillment. (MSS)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo addresses the issue of the evolution of life on earth; in particular, the three, actually four successive statuses that the forms of life undergo.

He says that the first status of life is Unconscious Will to Survive; the second status is Ego-Oriented Interchange; the third is Mutual Interchange and Harmony; and the fourth is Spiritual Unity with Others, Life.

Sri Aurobindo also briefly discusses how the development of our mental inner/psychic capacity enables us to perceive the evolution of consciousness in our being through successive life/lives, enabling us to perceive the continuity of change.

Here are the main points in detail:

First Status of Life: **Unconscious Will to Survive**

The first status of life is of force, of dumb subconscious will. It is mere physical energy, subject to mechanical, material forces. This is reflected in the necessity of the separative ego that lives in division and duality; that merely tries to survive.

Second Status of Life: **Ego-Oriented Interchange**

The second status is a breaking of the bounds of separative ego toward interaction with others. It is a compulsion of Nature to begin to fuse ourselves with others. In this status, there is death, mutual devouring, desire, and the need to expand, conquer, and possess. It is the struggle to possess, to master self and not self. This is a movement out of the

influence of physical, the mechanical to the vital proper. It is also the beginning of the emergence of conscious mind.

*Third Status of Life: **Mutual Interchange and Harmony***

The third status is the conscious movement towards commonality, mutuality, harmony, etc. It is a movement toward cooperation and mutual help, adaptation, interchange, fusion, conscious joining and interchange. It is a movement out of ego to meet and include other egos. In its higher aspects, it is vitally reflected as the ability to be self-giving towards others, and to feel love. A law of love, of common help, of kindness, affection, comradeship, unity, self-giving, etc.

He also indicates that in this third status, there is an increasing predominance of Mind. Mind is of a higher consciousness, which does not need to devour to grow. To the degree that Mind is free of the material influence, it will have these positive influences.

This third status does not eliminate desire of the second status, but transforms and uplifts it; for after all love is the desire to give one's self to others.

*Fourth Status of Life: **Spiritual Unity with Others, Life***

Sri Aurobindo says that ultimately there is a need to harmonize two principles of life: the necessity of the will of the separative ego to survive in its distinctness; and the compulsion imposed upon it by Nature to fuse itself with others. It is that of the individual and the universal.

He says that these will be harmonized, fused when we reach a higher status still, through the capacity of higher (spiritual) Mind. That will bring about the unity and freedom of the Many of creation.

The Psychic Being and Past Lives

-In the psychic, Man becomes aware of the persistent memory of continuity [I.e. past lives] and the future lives being created out of this life -- the persistent personality.

-Only a mental being, supported by the psychic being can persist linking the past to the stream of continuity.

-The mental being expressive of soul consciousness becomes the nexus of the persistent individual and collective life.

Other points:

Life and the Human Aspiration

In reiterating on the nature of Life, Sri Aurobindo makes an interesting statement that links life with the Human Aspiration, as discussed in chapter 1. He tells us that that "Life is a dark figure of the divine

superconsciousness Force whose highest terms are immortality, delight, and omnipotence."



The Problem of Life

(Book 1 Chapter XXII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on the underlying cause of the problems of life, as well as the way out. He indicates that at the cosmic level of the descent, the involution there has been a separation between Consciousness and Force, which are One in Satchitananda, but are divided in creation. This expresses as an essential Ignorance that manifest at various levels for the individual human, providing the root cause of all human difficulties.

He then describes how the Consciousness and Force that are One in the highest Reality, were separated in Life, causing our ignorance and incapacity; i.e. life's problems. He then describes how through our mentality and Supramentality, they are reunited.

Sri Aurobindo categorizes these two movements into four stages; two in the Descent/Involution, where there is the separation of consciousness and Force; and two in the Ascent/Evolution where they are reunited in life.

Having made these distinctions, he then focuses on the third and fourth stage of the four above -- involving our Mentality and Supramentality -- and the issues involved in their increasing manifestation, which progressively reunites the Consciousness and the Force, enabling ultimate capacity -- mentally, vitally, psychologically, and physically -- thereby overcoming the problems of Life.

In terms of our mentality, he describes the essential aspects of our Ignorance: He says that: (1) we are aware of only the surface parts of our being; not the deeper parts. (2) We are separated from the Universal domain. (3) Each of the central planes of our being -- physical, vital, and mental -- is limited. (4) There is discord and Ignorance in our relationship to the world.

He goes on to say that all of these forms of Ignorance are resolved when we rise to the Supramental Truth Consciousness, which is enabled through a Soul movement within, thereby fully reuniting the Consciousness and Force, giving us limitless capacity, and therefore overcoming any and all of life's problems.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Problem of Life: Separation of Consciousness and Force; Unfolding of Ignorance

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the underlying problem of life is that there has been a separation between Consciousness and Force, which leads to our essential Ignorance -- e.g. of the truth of our being, existence, and our relationship to it -- from which all of life problems arise.

[As a result of this separation in life, in our being, we have little knowledge, capacity, and power in life, and as a result, all manner of problems arise.]

Four Poises in the Relationship of Consciousness and Force from the Unmanifest to Creation

Sri Aurobindo takes us back to an understanding of how Consciousness and Force moved from its poise of Unity in the unmanifest state of the Infinite Reality to complete separation in creation, and then gradually back to unification through our evolution of consciousness. In that regard, he describes the four poises that Consciousness and Force have taken in their relationship; two downward of separation, followed by two upward and reunification, allowing for infinitely greater capacity on our part, and thereby overcoming the problems we and the collective have in life.

Poise 1. The (the unmanifest) Satchitananda is Being, Consciousness-Force, and Delight. There the Consciousness and Force (Chit) are One.

[Satchitananda is the first steps out of the unmanifest Infinite Divine. It is the triune of Existence, Conscious-Force, and Delight; Sat, Chit, and Ananda. It exists and is conscious of the fact; that consciousness creates a Force, a Conscious Force; and It Delights in that self-awareness and consciousness. Though we perceive them as separate, they are intractably One. Satchitananda are first steps out of the unmanifest Infinite Reality on the way towards creating a universe of forms

More to the point of what Sri Aurobindo is addressing here is the fact that the Conscious-Force are together and One. There is a consciousness that is also a Force. There is a Force that is fully Conscious. There is no separation between them. This means that the consciousness manifests a Force. And the Force is a Conscious Force. It is comparable to the fact that I am conscious in life, and therefore generate a vast power and energy in me. Or I have a great knowledge, but it is a knowledge that generates a power to manifest as a living reality. Thus, the Conscious Force (in Chit of Satchitananda) is infinitely conscious, and generates a Force and Power that is infinitely capable of

manifesting that Consciousness. There is a Consciousness of all that is and is possible, as well as a complementary Force to make it real. Thus, the Force and Its Consciousness are inextricably One and Infinite in scope, individually and together.】

Poise 2. In the material nature (in the universe), Consciousness and Force are in complete separation, as a result of the underlying inconscience of matter.

【When the Conscious-Force (Chit) descended in the involution, not only did the consciousness get diluted to enable the greatest variety of possibility, but it was now divided in full from the Force with the emergence of dumb, unconscious matter.

Now the individual human (or for that matter any aspect of life) does not have both an infinite consciousness and power to manifest itself. The Consciousness is sorely lacking in ourselves and life, though there is Force; but it is an unconscious Force or mostly unconscious one. I certainly do not have full consciousness, only very partial. The Force and power I do have is not matched by a compressive knowledge, awareness, and consciousness to direct that Force to its infinite potential. In Life, in my life, the Consciousness and Force are not integrated; they are separate. In fact, there is little consciousness on my part, only a force and urge to be and do, though undirected with right awareness, knowledge, leading to suffering, strife, incapacity, disease, and death.】

Poise 3. In Mind and Life (in the universe), there is a movement out of Inconscience, allowing Consciousness and Force to begin to come together.

【As we develop our mentality, we begin to become more conscious. As a result, the blind Force of Life begins to be directed for productive use. In essence, the Consciousness and Force, once separated in the Involutionary process, begins to reunite through our increasing mentality, generating productive power.】

Poise 4. In Supermind (that we rise to), the partial affirmation of Life and Mind is completely resolved, fulfilling what was held in potential in our being. (It is the life of the real Man towards which we are headed.)

【Supermind is a mental plane far beyond sense and rational mind. It garners truth directly without thought, including the many sides of any object of inquiry. It also has a power to manifest what it knows; or it is a power to manifest Its knowledge. When we experience the world through Supermind, we have instant, multi-sided integral knowledge without the need for thought, and instant realization, manifestation of the knowledge in the world. Life just suddenly responds with a new

reality. E.g. a new opportunity suddenly arising in the world, a new peace treaty appearing out of nowhere, a vast sale suddenly coming from the most unexpected location. I.e. a Possibility is now known fully, plus it actually happens! That is the power of Supermind, the Truth Consciousness. Therefore, to the point, through Supermind the Consciousness and the Force are reunited. In Supermind, there is total consciousness and total Force Power for its realization. Consciousness and Force are total and One.]

Four Difficulties/Ignorances of the Consciousness and Force Being Divided in Our Lives [add comments]

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the third poise -- of the fact that in Mind and Life (in the universe) there is a movement out of Inconscience, allowing Consciousness and Force to begin to come together. He delves into the difficulties of the emerging Mind and Life in terms of Consciousness and Force. These are in essence various forms of our Ignorance born of creation.

(1) We are only aware of a small part of our being; the surface mind, life, and physical being. We are unaware of our subliminal mind, the subconscious, the subliminal life impulses, and the subconscious corporeality. We are unaware of them, even as we are governed by them. To overcome this, we must come in contact with the Truth power (supermind) that contains the knowledge and the will in an integral unity.

(2) Man is separated in mind, life, and body from the universal. We are thus incapable of knowing others. Our knowledge of others is limited. We must come in conscious unity with them. To do that, we must come in contact with the Universal. And we can only truly come in contact with the universal through Supermind.

(3) Mind, Life, and Body each are limited. They are each at cross-purposes with the others. However, there is a higher consciousness or soul in each. If Man becomes a self-conscious and truly thinking being, he can begin to harmonize these disparate parts and create unity in himself. He can unify them in Supermind. From there, the Conscious Force can reunite in his being.

(4) In Man, there is a discord and ignorance in his relationship with the world. He needs to find a principle of harmony, joy, and unity. It is only through the highest possibilities of Mind -- i.e. Supermind, the truth consciousness -- that this can take place.

[These are similar to several of the seven essential ignorance of man, described in later chapters, especially in Reality and the Integral Knowledge in Book II.]

Overcome Life's Problems by Connecting Within to Soul & Rising to Supermind

Sri Aurobindo thus concludes that through our higher consciousness we can overcome these Ignorances and turn them into Knowledges, thus reuniting the Consciousness and the Force, thereby overcoming the essential Problem of Life. By coming in touch with our True Selves, our Psychic Being within, we rise to our Supramental nature, overcoming our essential Ignorance, reuniting Consciousness and Force.

[Emergence of Consciousness through Soul and Supramental Connection -- In our deepest depths is the seed where the consciousness and force are united. By connecting to soul and rising to Supermind, we break the shackles of dividing mind, overcome our various Ignorances, reuniting the Consciousness and Force at the surface of life -- i.e. in our conscious being and in all the things we do and connect with in life.

Emergence of Consciousness through Force Interacting with Force -- Interestingly, life on its own is trying to unite the Consciousness and the Force, but through its slow and difficult method of evolution. In particular, it is Nature's way of progress of having the Force of things come in contact and contradiction with another Force to bring out its involved Consciousness. Thus, in our lives, progress occurs by our coming in contact with other lives. Through these pleasant or unpleasant experiences, we are forced to adopt new behaviors, causing certain latent capacities within us to rise to the surface. This contact of our force with another brings out the Consciousness in us, uniting it with the Force in us.

Moreover, if we are conscious of this dynamic, it can be a much happier experience, as we embrace every situation that comes our way, pleasant or unpleasant, seeing them both as means, opportunities of our further progress.

Combining the Two Approaches -- Sri Aurobindo is here however offering a direct spiritual method of connecting to our evolving soul so we can rise to Supramental perception and embodiment, bring the Consciousness and Force together, thereby overcoming our essential Ignorances. These two approaches, that of embracing all that comes our way, as well as finding our inner being and highest supramental vision of things, are not mutually exclusive, but depend on one another in our upward ascent.]

How Dividing Cosmic Mind Created these Problems

The dividing action of cosmic Mind results in taking the undivided Force and turning it into the apparition of dualities, oppositions, and the denials of Satchitananda. (The dividing action of Mind in the involution from the Divine Source created the dualities, oppositions and denials of

Satchitananda. It thus created the separation of Consciousness and Force.)

[In life, the Mind serves us greatly, as we are able to distinguish elements out of the undivided whole. This gives us power of distinction to engage in life. The problem is that in perceiving individual elements we have lost touch with the Oneness of each thing: in each things relationship to other things, as well as to the Whole it is part of, as well as its Essence. Rising to higher mental consciousness, i.e. pure rational thought and beyond to silent mind and to intuition and revelation, culminating in supramental perception, we regain the power to identify each element in relationship to its totality, mimicking the supramental action in evolving this universe of forms from the Infinite divine. This is the situation in our own lives.

In the cosmic scheme, Cosmic Mind had a similar, powerfully positive, but also limiting effect. Through the overseeing action of Supermind, cosmic Mind enabled the energy out of which forms would take shape in creation, but also because of its own limited capacities relative to Supermind, it allowed for dualities, divisions, oppositions, and contradictions were enabled in the unseen and then the seen cosmos that is the created universe. In Supermind, division occurs, yet all individual entities are still connected in Oneness. In Overmind, and furthermore in Mind in the descent, created division, with each thing losing its connection to the Source. This mirrors the effect of the later-to-arrive human mind, which divides for its progress, but in that process, each thing -- thought, knowledge, insight -- loses its essential unity with the Source knowledge and consciousness.]

On the Infinite Potentiality of the Consciousness and Force

Sri Aurobindo also describes the potentiality and power of both Consciousness and Force. Here are several aspects: [ep]

-The Potentiality of the Force, like the Consciousness -- Where the Consciousness is infinite, one, transcendent of its acts and forms while embracing and informing, organizing, and executing them, as in the consciousness of Satchitananda, so will be the Force, infinite in its scope, one in its works, transcendent in its power and self-knowledge.

-What the Consciousness and Force Must Entail -- The Consciousness must come in possession of both the diversity and the unity; of the One knowing itself as the Many, and the many knowing themselves in the One; then the Force will be of the same nature.



The Double Soul of Man

(Book 1 Chapter XXIII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by reviewing the ascending status of life and delight he covered previously.

He then reminds us of the power of Ananda (Delight) that has emerged in Satchitananda, and begins to focus on how we can experience it. He says it happens when we connect to our Psychic Being, the Evolving Soul within us.

Sri Aurobindo then describes the psychic being in greater detail, including its journey through multiple personalities it inhabits across multiple births. [rebirth]

Sri Aurobindo then changes direction somewhat and tells us that we actually have two souls: an outer desire "soul," and an inner psychic being, personal evolving soul. The surface desire-soul works through our cravings, our emotions, our aesthetic faculty, and our seeking for power, knowledge, and happiness. On the other hand, the subliminal psychic entity and being has a pure power of light, love, joy, and refined essence of being.

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that developing our psychic center brings great benefit to ourselves and the world, including our experience of Delight [Ananda/Bliss] that the universe was created for.

Then how do we then connect with the psychic entity within us, the evolving soul? He tells us that when we connect to, surrender to the Divine behind all material life, we develop an individual soul, which is the psychic being.

He then concludes that this experience of the Psychic Being (and its transformation) will be part of a first stage of a wider yogic movement that also includes a Spiritual and ultimately a Supramental transformation.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Ascending Statures of Life, and Delight

As explained in earlier chapters, Sri Aurobindo reminds us that there are several statures of life, each of a higher order than the previous. They are (1) dumb unconscious drive; (2) desire, eagerness to possess, and give; (3) love, which seeks to possess, be possessed, to receive and give; (4) to receive and give to satisfaction.

He says that these ascending statures are the stages of the soul's seeking for Delight in things. **[In each stage the soul's seeking for the Delight in this is of a higher order, since the life experiences are of an increasing higher order.]**

Delight in the Universe

He tells us that Delight permeates the universe. That like the Conscious Force (Chit), the Delight (Ananda) is omnipresent in the cosmos.

Delight through Connection to Psychic Being

He then indicates that the central means by which we experience Delight is within; in the psychic being; the personal, evolving soul (which mirrors the Delight (Ananda) of Satchitananda. **[When we are centered in our psychic being, we experience divine values like Peace, Truth, Goodness, Love, Beauty, AND Delight. Delight is the joy of being alive, of living moment to moment, but in its highest form is the Bliss of the Divine Being.]**

The Journey of the Psychic Being through Multiple Personalities It Inhabits Across Multiple Births

Sri Aurobindo then describes the psychic being in greater detail. He tells us that it is the flame of the Godhead that is within us. That it is our inner guide, which helps control us and contain our excesses; and is the silent witness inside that calmly observes the world.

He also tells us that the psychic being **[the evolving soul]** is imperishable and exists between lives, and when it enters our being before birth it gives us the potential in life to take on the psychic personality, which enables us to become true individuals, expressing our ultimate individuality.

Sri Aurobindo then describes the process by which the psychic being progresses through the person it inhabits in each birth. He says that this inmost psychic entity takes form in us and we develop a psychic personality or person, which changes, grows, develops; and then continues to develop through the next Individual, Personality it inhabits.

The psychic being is thus the traveler between birth and death and between death and birth; and our nature parts are only its manifold and changing vesture.

The Double Soul: The Desire Soul and the Psychic Being (Evolving Soul)

Sri Aurobindo then changes direction somewhat and tells us that we actually have two souls: an outer desire "soul," and an inner psychic being, personal soul. The surface desire-soul works in our cravings, our emotions, our aesthetic faculty, and seeking for power, knowledge, and happiness. On the other hand, the subliminal psychic entity and being which has a pure power of light, love, joy, and refined essence of being. [The desire soul leads to short-term, ephemeral happiness and joy, whereas the psychic, evolving soul leads to deep Joy and Delight that is blissful and never ending.]

Developing Our Psychic Center for Our Own and the World's Benefit

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the benefit that comes to ourselves and the world through our connection to our psychic being, to our evolving soul.

He goes so far as to say that the single key to the change in our human nature, as well as solving the problems of the world is our conversion to the psychic entity. [I.e. when we move away from our surface consciousness to being stationed in the deepest depths of the psychic entity within, in our evolving soul.] When we do this, we overcome all of our problems as well as Man's limitations in life.

Move to Psychic Center by Opening to Divine

Then how do we develop the psychic being? He tells us that when we connect to the Divine, we develop an individual soul, which is the psychic being. [Practically speaking in Sri Aurobindo's yoga it means that when we connect to Mother and her supramental Force our consciousness deepens, and our center of being moves closer and finally touches and is enveloped by the psychic entity; garnering all of its astonishing benefits for ourselves and the world.]

Psychic Connection and Delight

Completing the circle of this chapter, he says that through the Spiritual and Supramental transformation (which he describes in detail in the 'Triple Transformation' chapter near the end of the book), the Psychic Being connects with the original Delight.

In Supermind the psychic being is uplifted by Its light and Force to unite with the original Delight of existence from which we came, and for which we came.

[Psychic Being

There is the Divine reality, a portion of which enters your being, gives you your individuality. It is your Soul. Its source is beyond the manifestation, a piece of which is in you. There is also a deputy of the Soul called the "Psychic Being." It is a terrestrial entity that is developed in you that has been on its own journey of realization through multiple births. It seeks your experiences to further that growth. It is a journey from Ignorance to Integral Knowledge.

We can come in contact with the psychic being through concentration. When we do, we experience the spiritual attributes the Infinite intended for the creation – including silence, peace, harmony, knowledge, wisdom, truth, goodness, love, delight, timelessness, and infinity.

When we are in touch with the Psychic Entity, we experience its Guidance, continuously indicating what we should and shouldn't do.

Coming in contact with the psychic being is a requirement for making the Surrender to Her in the integral yogic process. Spiritual and Supramental realization are further stages. The deeper we go in, the more the mind expands to intuition, revelation, and supramental perception of the complete knowledge of a thing inside without a single thought.

The Mother says the psychic being is like a flame, but cool. She also says that if you get in touch with it you can remember corresponding moments where you were in touch with the psychic in previous births. The psychic being resides behind the heart, in a cave, about the size of a thumb.

The psychic is experienced as an emotion, but not like a vital emotion. It is such a powerful experience that it wells up tears in us, but not tears of joy or sorrow, but something beyond.

We live on the surface of life and need to break through the crust that separates us from the psychic being. Sometimes the psychic cries out as it is buried inside, and we have not made the effort to get in touch with it. It is called Psychic Sorrow.

By going deep within we touch the Psychic entity. When we do we feel the transcendent more acutely, and therefore wish to surrender to the Divine Shakti, Mother. Now we live for Her, for the Divine, and our entire life's purpose is taken in that direction. We become direct instruments for the evolution, including the emergence of Spirit in Life. We are set on the road to becoming the Supramental Being, and as a result an instrument for the emergence of a Divine Life on Earth.]



Matter

(Book 1 Chapter XXIV)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo continues on his journey of insight that began with Existence (Sat), Conscious-Force (Chit), Delight (Ananda), Mind, and Life, and now to Matter.

He begins by telling us that Matter emerged from out of Energy/Life in the process of creation, i.e. in the involution. He also indicates that animated Life (the Vital plane) will emerge out of Matter, and Mind out of animated Life in the evolution.

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates that Life and Mind in the universe are limited by their foundation of Matter. This is so because Matter is formulated as inertia, inconscience, and atomic aggregation – has become a “Knot of Matter” - which limits Vital Life and its forms, as well as Mind and its formations in the world. Moreover, as a result of this foundational condition, each of these planes are in contradiction, disunity, in conflict with their own selves, as well as with one another as experienced by the human individual.

If Matter is so limited, then why was it allowed to be in such an inflexible, unconscious form in the first place? Sri Aurobindo indicates Matter exists and does so in its limited formations so that the highest Consciousness can take form in the *greatest multiplicity and variety in order to inculcate the widest diversity of the experience of delight in creation.*

Then Sri Aurobindo explains how Matter was/is created. He says that the universal plane of Mind created matter. In particular, Universal Mind in its dividing action separated its Energy into distinct forms, down to the atomic level, which is Matter.

Sri Aurobindo then reveals that though Matter seems to us inconscient and inert, the Existence, Consciousness, Force, and Delight that are its ultimate source is concentrated, involved, and absorbed in it.

Sri Aurobindo goes on to make the astonishing claim that Matter IS Satchitananda; IS Spirit itself!

Equally powerful,- echoing the chapter on Omnipresent Reality,- he indicates that matter and spirit are fundamentally *one thing*, not divided; merely different shadings of the Reality, the All, the Absolute.

Here are the main points in detail:

Limits of Matter on Life and Mind

Sri Aurobindo begins by reiterating that creation, the manifestation arose as a great pulsation of the Divine All, which is the Energy and Life behind all existence, all planes in the universe. **[Energy/plane of Life is the final operation of the Conscious Force (Chit), and is the basis of all existence in the universe.]**

In the evolution, i.e. existence in the universe, Matter arose from the plane of Energy/Life, and then Life/Life forms (i.e. the Vital plane) arose from Matter. Mind then arose out of the Life/Life Forms.

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates that Life in the universe (including life forms), as well as the Mind that arose from those life formations are limited by the foundation of Matter.

What then are the limitations of Matter that limit Life/Life Forms and Mind in those forms? Sri Aurobindo tells us that Matter is formulated as inertia, inconscience, and atomic aggregation – i.e. is the Knot of Matter -- which limits Vital Life and its forms and Mind in the universe. Moreover, because of the Knot and limited, problematic nature of Matter, Life in the universe is constantly at war with Matter, as is the higher plane of Mind at war with Matter, as well as Life.

[The physical consciousness of matter taking shape in the body of the individual does not want to change, and it is ignorance, placing those limits in the animated life forms, including us, in creation. As animals and we move around and interact with life, we have this inertia and ignorance limiting our vital/Life existence. This is also true at the level of Mind, which is limited by Matter's fixidity, rigidity, and ignorance, causing the Mind to be very limited in having the knowledge and knowing the truth of anything, of any matter or concern. Also, the vital life limits the Mind, because of its passions, desires, and limited attitudes, casing the mind to be prejudiced in its perceptions of the truths of existence. It shows this in its limited understanding of matters, in its opinions, it limited attitudes, and questionable beliefs, which are all filtered down to what we need and desire and are attached to; not what the true truth is of any matter.]

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that the material principle inherent in Matter itself is that which causes Life to culminate in death. **[I.e. the inflexibility, inertia, and unchanging nature of Matter put limits on Life and its animated forms in the universe, in particular for its force (life force) to maintain itself, and avoid dissolution and death.]**

Matter Exists to Enable Multiplicity of Being, Consciousness, and Delight (Satchitananda)

If Matter has such a limited consciousness, bordering on complete unconsciousness, why did the Infinite allow it to be in the first place? Why did the original energy of Sat take this fixed, inflexible form?

Sri Aurobindo indicates Matter exists and does so in its limited formations so that the highest Consciousness can take form in the greatest multiplicity and variety in order to inculcate the widest diversity of the experience of delight in creation. Or to put it another way, the division of Matter takes shape in order to allow for separateness and division; for separate centers of consciousness, each of whom are able to inculcate a dynamic and individual form of that being, consciousness and delight.

[We have indicated several times that the more diversity of formations the greater the discovery of higher consciousness, and therefore the more variety of the experience of those forms in creation. Matter is that matter is the breaking down and dividing of the of the energy/force to the atomic level, and through those increasingly separate and increasingly divided centers of consciousness, there is infinite-like variety that allows for infinite possible experiences of discovery and hence Delight. Or put simply, Matter exists because it enables infinite variation, with the potential for infinite forms of higher consciousness, which means infinite variation in the experience of Being (Sat), Conscious Force (Chit) and Delight (Ananda).]

Matter is Created through Universal Mind

“Matter is actually a substance of the one Conscious-Being phenomenally divided within itself by the action of the universal Mind.”

Now Sri Aurobindo addresses the question of how Matter is created. He says that the universal plane of Mind created matter. In particular, Universal Mind in its dividing action separated the Energy into distinct forms down to the atomic level, which is Matter. **[Of the Conscious Force emerged the Energy/Life that is there before material creation. Thus, universal Mind (which actually enabled the energy to emerge from the Conscious Force) then separated, divided that energy/Life into distinct forms down to the atomic level, which enables Matter. (Matter is substance of Energy broken down to the atomic level.)]**

Sri Aurobindo also explains it from an even loftier view of things. He says that universal Mind **[which one can interpret as Overmind and Supermind, which is prior to the plane of Mind]** turns its “multiple viewpoints” of universal existence into standpoints of universal life, turning them into forms of atomic being as Matter.

[This touches on the principle that from out of the Pure Existent and Being (Sat) came Real Ideas, formations of truth that the Infinite consciousness seeks to manifest in creation. The Real Ideas express as

cosmic determinants, such as Peace, Oneness, Knowledge, Beauty, Love, which it seeks to manifest in creation. These are its multiple viewpoints it has, and seeks to manifest as real formations in creation. Through Universal Mind, the energy is divided down to atomic existence of matter in order to begin the process of seeing the Real Ideas manifest in all their diversity and multiplicity in universal life for the ultimate purpose of infinitely variable discovery of regained consciousness of that which is involved that leads to infinitely variable Existence, Consciousness, and Delight.]

Finally, in this area, Sri Aurobindo indicates that Matter is an extreme fragmentation of the Infinite. [From the Infinite came Sat-Chit-Ananda, and from Chit (Conscious Force) came the Energy at the outset and basis of universal existence, which then fragmented into the extreme as atomic existence which is Matter, to fulfill the Intent of the Infinite Consciousness to manifest its Real Ideas/cosmic determinate in infinite variability of existence, consciousness, and delight through those forms. Matter is thus the ultimate expression of multiplicity; yet is divided, unconscious with the potential to become fully conscious and thus expressing a unique form of Delight.]

Satchitananda (Existence, Consciousness, Force) Is Involved in Matter

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that though Matter seems to us inconscient and inert, the Existence, Consciousness, Force, and Delight that are its ultimate source is concentrated, involved, and absorbed in it.

[Let us consider how Satchitananda is involved in Matter: Sri Aurobindo tells us that Matter is the self-absorption of the Divine as inconscient self-oblivion. I.e. the Divine directs Its Infinite Force and turns it in upon itself, concentrating it away from the surface, plunging within Its own self into self-oblivion, like a stork burying its head in the sand. That is Matter. (It does this for ultimate possibility, e.g. of positive and negative, for infinitely variable discovery and hence delight.)

Though Matter is inconscient because we do not see any sign of conscious awareness on the surface – i.e. it does not move; does not respond to stimulation -- the consciousness is there nevertheless, involved, hidden from the surface. This is because the consciousness of the One can never be destroyed, it can only be concealed.

What then is that consciousness doing? It is revolving around itself, focused on itself, entirely turned inward, like the eternal serpent that has swallowed its own tail. There is no sign of consciousness or force on the surface of Matter.

The Aliveness of Matter at the Atomic Level – From a scientific view, if we look deeper into the nature of Matter, we will see that if not truly conscious, it is very much “alive.” For example, when we look at a stone, we see only solid, immobile, unresponsive form. However, science has discovered that the apparently solid stone actually consists of millions of atoms whirling about at high speed in all directions. Each of these atoms in turn appears to be a solid object from a distance, but on closer examination, it is found to consist of elementary particles spinning around the atomic nucleus at high speed. The sense of solidity and immobility is only an illusion.】

[The Emergence of Force and then Consciousness from Matter

If the force/energy and consciousness is involved in Matter, i.e. invisible on the surface, how does it begin to emerge? Though it is not directly addressed in this chapter in any comprehensive way, it is taken up elsewhere in *The Life Divine*.

To begin, it turns out that since the Energy/Force is of a lower order than the Consciousness, it tends to emerge first.

How then does this Energy/Force emerge from Matter? Well, we know that the atom is laden with enormous energy, and there are a vast number of atoms in Matter. We have seen that we can release enormous force from Matter, e.g. through atomic reaction. Or as we see in normal life, Matter becomes *animated* matter as its force is released that is involved in it.

Gradually the consciousness also comes out. E.g. the properties of minerals and plants, including their curative powers, are expressions of that buried consciousness.

Also, as the spiritual aspirant opens to the Supramental power, the Divine Mother, the spiritual Force, it can act on matter to evoke its consciousness, causing it to e.g. suddenly begin functioning better. Likewise, calling to the Essence of a material object can draw out better functioning of that item. The Mother used to bring the supramental power into the cells of her body to enable them to overcome their resistance and programming to accept disease, dissolution, and death, and made great headway in this regard, especially for future experiments and emergences.】

Matter is the Way Sense Mind Experiences Satchitananda/ Spirit

Sri Aurobindo indicates that there is a relationship between Matter, Spirit, and Mind. For one, he indicates that Matter is the way the Mind experience Satchitananda/Spirit. Or to put it another way, Matter is perceived as Spirit by the Mind of sense.

[The Nature of Matter Viewed from Different Planes -- The way we perceive matter depends on the planes of being through which we observe, perceive, or grasp it. When we perceive it in our minds through our five senses, it appears as *static form of substance*. But when we perceive it through a higher mental consciousness, we perceive it as a *form of force*, as the physicist now sees it, with its myriad movements and gyrations. Higher still, from cosmic consciousness of spiritualized mind, we perceive all as an *ocean of energy*, including what we call matter. When one rises to Transcendent Consciousness and views the universe, *it reveals as form of Spirit, spiritual substance.*]

Matter as Form of Satchitananda/Spirit

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to make the astonishing claim that Matter IS Satchitananda; IS Spirit itself.

In a beautiful statement Sri Aurobindo indicates that Matter is a form and body of Spirit; of Satchitananda; an extreme aggregation of the infinite.

Perceiving the Unity of Spirit and Matter through Supermind and Bringing Out Its Infinity

In conclusion, Sri Aurobindo tells us that Matter and spirit are fundamentally one thing, not divided.

They are each different shadings of the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute. Satchitananda (including Spirit and Truth) are the (unmanifest) shadings of the Absolute, and Matter is another shading.

They are both Brahman, and therefore they are One, even as Mind sees the division. **[This is a theme he has continued from the chapter on the Omnipresent Reality, which resolved the division of Matter and Spirit, perceiving them as one thing, as different expressions of the same thing, making them One in Essence.]**

Finally, Sri Aurobindo asks, how can we then perceive this Oneness between Spirit and Matter, this Vision of Brahman that express in all things unmanifest and manifest?

He tells us that if we are stationed in Supermind, we see the perfect Unity and Oneness of Satchitananda/Spirit and Matter.

Furthermore, knowing this brings out the fact of the infinite potential of matter since it is imbued with the infinite potential of spirit. **[And through our elevation of consciousness, and opening to and utilizing the spiritual Force, we can bring out the consciousness and spirit of Matter, bringing out its infinite potential to the surface of life.]**



The Knot of Matter

(Book 1 Chapter XXV)

Summary

In the previous chapter Sri Aurobindo indicated that Matter is formulated as inertia, inconscience, and atomic aggregation, which limits Life and Mind, the planes above it. This is then the knot and difficulty of Matter.

In this chapter he continues and expands on this theme, focusing on three aspects of Matter's knot -- Ignorance, Inertia, and Division – and their influence on the higher planes of Life and Mind.

Sri Aurobindo begins the chapter by reminding us again that Matter is really a form of Spirit. I.e. that which we sense as Matter has Spirit as its soul and reality. More particularly, he indicates that Matter is the objective aspect of the Divine, is an expression of Existence (Sat), with all of God ever-present in it and behind it.

Then Sri Aurobindo reiterates that because of Matter's limitations, the planes beyond it, Life and Mind [i.e. Vitalized Life of the form including we humans, and beyond that the vitalized form's Mentality] are limited, restricted by it. He tells us that Life and Mind are limited in three ways by Matter: through *Ignorance*, through *Inertia*, and through *Division*. The three together in essence reflect the essential "Knot of Matter", affecting all aspects of life, and all aspects of our being.

And so, in the heart of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo explains each of these three knots of matter in detail.

-First, Sri Aurobindo indicates unconsciousness of Matter reflects in our *Ignorance*, particularly perceivable at the mental level.

-Second, Matter is also bound to mechanical law and a colossal and obstinate *inertia*, obstruction, and negation, persuading Life and Mind that they cannot go further, cannot expand, and therefore cannot move to their progress, evolution, and final victory.

-Third, Matter is the culmination of the principle of *division*, and therefore is the basis of struggle and contradiction in life.

In sum, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Ignorance, Inertia, and Division of Matter impose pain, suffering, futility, and dissatisfaction on the emerging vital and mental existence.

He then moves on and says that we can reverse the unconsciousness of Matter, enabling its involved Spirit and Divinity to come forth. That occurs through the action of the supramental power that we can be instruments of.

And yet despite these limits of Matter on Life and Matter, Matter can evolve and be transformed. He indicates that can occur through a rise in human consciousness.

Rather than discussing overcoming Matter *in general* through higher consciousness, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the limitations of Matter as expressed in our *physical (material) bodies*. He tells us that the material-based human body can be transfigured by the descent of a Higher Power, which would release the Spirit and Consciousness involved in it. As a result, a Supramental Being could develop that would permanently liberate the bodily existence from all suffering, division, and death.

Here are the main points in detail:

Matter as Form and Body of Spirit

Sri Aurobindo begins by reminding us again that matter is really a form of spirit. I.e. that which we sense as Matter has as its soul and reality, Spirit.

More particularly, he indicates that Matter is the objective aspect of the divine Existence (Sat) with all of God ever present in it and behind it. [In the Unmanifest, Existence is Being, subjective in the material sense. But in the manifest universe, Existence presents its objective status, which Sri Aurobindo indicates is Matter.

We could therefore say that the Involution is the subjective, and evolution is the objective. Thus, the Being, the pure Existent that is subjective in the Unmanifest has become materially real, i.e. Objective in Matter. Or to put it another way, just as energy/Life is the final operation and objective status of Conscious-Force (Chit), so too objective matter in the evolution is the final operation of subjective Existence in the involution.]

Matter's Negative Influence on the Planes Above It

Then Sri Aurobindo reiterates that because of Matter's limitations, the planes beyond it [i.e. Vitalized Life of the form, and beyond that the Mentality of that vitalized form; Life and Mind] are restricted by it. Because of Matter's basis, Life in the universe is gross and limited, and

stricken with death and pain. Also because of matter's basis of the form it inhabits, Mind is more than half-blind.

Plus, the influence of Matter is to simply deny Spirit, as opposed to just limiting it.

Together this limiting affect, Sri Aurobindo calls the "Knot of Matter." These are in essence the rules of the game in which evolution in the cosmos began. [Thus, we see again that Evolution begins in conditions that are the very opposite of the status of Sachchidananda because of Its intention to annihilate, involve itself in creation for the purpose of infinite variety, discovery, and Delight, when It reemerges in those forms.]

Now Sri Aurobindo begins to explain each of these three knots of matter in detail.)

Knot of Matter

- ♣ Ignorance
- ♣ Inertia
- ♣ Division

--1. Ignorance of Matter

The first fundamental opposition Matter presents to our existence is that it is completely unconscious; therefore, it is the foundation of Ignorance. Because Consciousness has lost and forgotten itself in Matter, Mind contains those limits, which expresses as its Ignorance.

[If knowledge is the integral truth of things, then Ignorance is the opposite. Because Matter is inconscient, unconscious, it is the underpinning of the unconsciousness and ignorance in our mentality. In other words, the material underpinning of Mind causes our thinking processes to be fixed, limited, and inflexible; seeing only the part, instead of the many-sided whole and Truth, which is our Ignorance, instead of our Integral Knowledge.]

--2. Inertia of Matter

The second fundamental opposition Matter presents to our existence is that it is bound to mechanical law and a colossal and obstinate inertia, obstruction, and negation. As a result, Matter persuades Life and Mind that they cannot go further, cannot expand, and therefore cannot move to their progress, evolution, and final victory.

How does the inertia of Matter affect each of Life and Mind?

In Life -- Life strives to enlarge and prolong itself and succeeds, but when it seeks utter wideness and immortality, it meets the iron

obstruction and inertia of Matter, finding itself bound to its narrowness; to the law of death, desire and limitation.

In Mind -- Mind also has an expansive moment that is blocked by Matter's inertia. Our higher mentality seeks to embrace all knowledge, all light, the integral truth of things, but instead there the inertia of Matter limits Mind, keeping it from expanding in Knowledge, leading to deviation, error, doubt, denial. As a result of our limited knowledge, life is limited and gross.

--3. Division of Matter

The third fundamental opposition Matter presents to our existence is that it is the culmination of the principle of division, and therefore is the basis of struggle and contradiction in life.

[Matter causes Life to be divided, such as when one-part works in contradiction with another because of its ego-sense, its sense of separateness. Likewise, Matter causes Mind to be divided in its understanding in opposition of another's perception, which creates conflict and contradiction of opinions, position, beliefs, and ideas.]

Sri Aurobindo then explains what it is about Matter's makeup that is the basis of this dividing and contradictory, opposition-creating quality and effect. He tells us that Matter only takes form through aggregation or assimilation of units/masses, involving the destruction of one by another. Through both means, matter's origins are struggle and death with other units/masses.

[-The very fact that a mass of matter is separate from other masses creates a sense of division that is then echoed in our vital and mental existence. One stone is divided from another. My body is divided from others. That causes my Vital/life being to have a sense of separateness from the needs and concerns of another person or party. That becomes the basis of our opposition, contradiction, and even conflict. We are thus divided from one another in our nerves, emotions, and attitudes. Likewise, Mind tends to think what it believes, not embracing other's beliefs, which sit outside its field, also leading to contradiction with others in terms of understanding and belief; not to mention of being divided from the total Integral Truth of things.

-Also, the process by which matter comes about in the first place; its massing of its form through aggregation and assimilation of other units, has the force of division and conflict, which carries over to the vital and mental aspects of the lives we lead.]

The Effect of the Three on Our Being

In sum, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Ignorance, Inertia, and Division of Matter impose pain, suffering, futility, and dissatisfaction on the emerging vital and mental existence. Though the vital/emotional and social being, as well as the mental has a propensity to expand beyond

its current limits and bounds, the material influence holds it back, preventing progress and evolution. [It is hard to break through into spiritual perception, such as intuition because the Mind wants to fall back into its Ignorance and exclusivity born of Matter. The Mother struggled to change the consciousness of Her cells to overcome illness, dissolution, and death because of the material tendency towards *Inertia*. We don't readily move into harmony with another or others because there is the material influence and pull on our vital being to remain fixed, separate, and divided in our own selves from others, reinforced by the Ego-sense.]

Transforming Matter and Bringing About a Supramental, Divine Physical Body

Sri Aurobindo says that despite the limits of Matter on Life and Matter, it can evolve and be transformed. In fact, the immortality that Matter can become, and the infinite Spirit has veiled itself in the dense robe of the material substance, which can be brought to the surface, into life.

Before he explains how we can facilitate this process, Sri Aurobindo first explains the reason Spirit is embedded in Matter to begin with.

Involved Spirit Allows for the Play of the One and Many

Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Spirit exists in matter as a result of the supreme creative power of Supermind.

[-In the involution the Absolute extended itself to Existence, Conscious Force, Bliss (Delight). It further extends itself to Supermind to enable matter. The apprehending functioning of Supermind creates the plane of (universal) Mind to enable a dividing action on substance of Energy, which we experience as divided forms, the disaggregation of Matter. It is this way down to the atomic level.

-Through this process, the individual knower regards a form of his own being as other than he, as object. Thus, there is a division between the knower and the known.]

Supermind however permitted the reign of the material principle on the surface, involving Spirit. Supermind did so only as an initial condition for the evolutionary play of the One and the Many.

[Again, Sri Aurobindo explains the Involutionary process of the Spirit; that it hides its consciousness so that we can discover our higher nature and experience the delight of discovery, which is the Intent of the Divine in creating matter and its limited nature.]

Bringing Out the Spirit in the Physical Body to Create a Supramental Being

Having explained the method and reason for the involved Spirit in Matter, Sri Aurobindo explains the means by which it can be reversed in the evolution. He tells us it occurs through a rise in human consciousness.

However, rather than focus on the transformation in matter in general, he focuses his attention here on the human physical body (which is of course a physical entity, consisting of animated matter).

He tells us that the material being can be transfigured by the descent of a higher power, which would release the Higher Law, the Spirit and Consciousness involved in itself. As a result, a supramental being would develop that would liberate the bodily existence from suffering, division, and death.

[The descent of Spirit would release the involved spirit, consciousness in Matter, transforming it into a supra-material being, not subject to ignorance, inertia, division, contradiction, suffering, dissolution, and death.

More particularly, we can speculate at this point that he is referring to the descent of the supramental force and power, which he will later refer to as the divine Shakti and force of the Divine Mother, which would release the consciousness, the spirit involved in the physical body.

This is precisely the experiment that the Mother undertook in the last several decades of her life to transmute her physical body by opening to the supramental power, which if successful would lead to the emergence of the (first) supramentalized body. She succeeded to a certain degree; opening a window of possibility for all of humanity.]



The Ascending Series of Substance

(Book 1 Chapter XXVI)

Summary

After descending from Spirit down through Matter in his explanation among the previous chapters, Sri Aurobindo offers an overview of these planes. He says that there is an ascending scale of substance amongst the planes. That as we move to higher planes of consciousness, that plane is (a) less bound to the physical form, and is (b) more subtle, flexible, interactive, interchangeable, unified, invisible, and infinite.

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that as Man ascends in consciousness, he brings out corresponding higher possibilities in the grades of the substance.

He then asks whether it is possible to move beyond our current physical makeup by making use of the higher planes of consciousness. He tells us that if we come in contact with our Consciousness, it can be made to impose its own law and power on that dense matter, and substitute their pure, higher, intenser conditions of being, replacing the current limits of our physical being. This would create a higher order and overcome the limits of the current methods of animal birth and life and death; the difficult alimentation, and facility of disorder and disease.

He then concludes that opening to Supermind would enable the emergence of a life-power increasingly liberated from its mortal limitations; a physical life fit for a Divine inhabitant; and by exceeding our current dense, gross physical body, the conquest of death. In essence, an earthly Immortality.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Ascending Scale of Substance Amongst Planes

Sri Aurobindo tells us that there is an ascending scale of substance from matter to spirit. I.e. the nature or quality of the substance of each plane is of a higher quality as you move up the scale.

He indicates that as we move to higher planes of consciousness, that plane is (a) less bound to the physical form, and is (b) more subtle, flexible, interactive, interchangeable, unified, invisible, and infinite.

[The plane of matter is bound to the (physical) form, but the life/vital plane above it is not, as it is focused on movement, association’s needs, wants, emotions feelings, associations, etc. The plane of mind and its knowledge and thoughts have little or no physical form; are invisible waves. Spirit is beyond this still, and is formless.]

Likewise, the plane of matter is gross, inflexible, fixed, divided, visible and finite; while the life/vital plane above it is less so, and the plane of mind less so still. When we reach the plane of Spirit (including spiritual mind, supermind and Satchitananda), it is ultimately subtle, flexible, unified, and infinite.]

[We could add that the higher the plane, the greater the subtlety, culminating in Supermind, which is beyond subtle; is causal. The more subtle, the more powerful; the greater permanence in its being, the greater its potential, plasticity, range in Its becoming. Invariably, because of all of these factors, the higher the plane, the greater the consciousness.]

Satchitananda	Formless	Causal, Subtle	Invisible	Flexible, Changeable	Unified
Supermind					
Mind					
Life/Vital					
Matter	Form	Gross, Material	Visible	Fixed	Divided

How Man Enables Higher Scale of Substance

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that as Man ascends in his consciousness, he brings out corresponding higher possibilities in the grades of the substance. In that way, he is thus the great instrument of evolution itself. [I.e. the more Man evolves, the more he brings out newer shadings of subtler substance. Thus, his own evolution enables evolution of life in the cosmos.]

Limits of Matter and the Conscious Force

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on the issue of the possibility of the evolution beyond the limits of our current physical makeup through the higher powers we possess beyond the material.

On the way to that discussion, Sri Aurobindo reiterates the limits of physical matter (which is the building block of our bodies) in terms of

Conscious-Force (Chit). He tells us that in matter, the Conscious Force masses itself more and more to resist other masses of Conscious Force. (As we move up the scale towards the vital and mind, that reverses.)

Bringing the Higher Substance to Overcome Current Limits and Processes of the Physical Body key

That being so, how can the material, in particular the physical body overcome its current limits?

He tells us that our substance does not end with the physical body, but rather it is just the material starting point of our existence. That behind our gross physical body there are other and subtler grades of substance with a finer law and greater power, which support the denser power. Moreover, if we come in contact with their consciousness, it can be made to impose its own law and power on that dense matter and substitute their pure, higher, intenser conditions of being for the limits of our physical being.

This would create a higher order and overcome the limits of the current methods of animal birth and life and death; the difficult alimentation, and facility of disorder and disease.

The Supramentalization of the Body and Physical Immortality key

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain the role of the supramental in this process. He posits that not only is there an evolution of consciousness and substance from the physical to life to mind to supramental consciousness and being, but that the individual, lower planes, including the body can evolve from where they are to a diviner, supramental status.

Thus, opening to Supermind would allow the emergence of a life-power liberated more and more from its mortal limitations; a physical life fit for a divine inhabitant; and by exceeding our current dense, gross physical body, the conquest of death; in essence an earthly immortality.



The Sevenfold Chord of Being

(Book 1 Chapter XXVII)

Summary

In the previous set of a dozen and a half chapters, Sri Aurobindo focused on the planes of being from the Pure Existence (Sat) to Conscious-Force (Chit) to Bliss (Ananda) to Supermind to Mind to Life/Energy to Matter. They are seven expressions of the omnipresent Reality.

They express and exist to serve both the involution (the descent) and the evolution (the ascent). There is an involutory descent from Pure Existence (Sat) to Conscious-Force (Chit) to Bliss (Ananda) to Supermind to Mind to Life/Energy to Matter to enable a universe of forms, as well as an evolutionary ascent from Matter to Pure Existence, a movement toward increasingly higher consciousness.

Supermind plays a vital role among the planes, serving as an intermediary, rendering/creating power between the upper hemisphere of Existence, Conscious Force, and Delight and the lower hemisphere of Mind, Life/Energy, and Matter.

Supermind also aids in our own evolution (in the lower hemisphere) so we can evolve and connect back to the upper of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Sri Aurobindo also tells in an unusual remark that the planes above in the higher hemisphere reflect in corresponding planes in the lower. Existence (Sat) in the higher reflects and becomes Matter in the lower. Conscious-Force (Chit) becomes Energy/Life. Delight (Ananda) becomes the Psychic Being of the universe. In addition, Supermind reflects in the lower hemisphere as Mind.

Moreover, each of the planes of the lower hemisphere reflects and is embodied in the human. Matter takes form in us in our physical bodies. Life/Energy manifest in us as our life force and vital being. And Mind takes shape as our power to think and reason in a functioning mind. In our evolution as humans, we are evolving upwards amongst these planes though our human instruments of those planes.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Eight Planes of Being

There are eight planes of being in the involution and evolution; that makes up the Reality. There is Existence, Conscious Force, and Delight above in an upper hemisphere, and Mind, Life, and Matter in the lower one. In between is Supermind. There is also the psychic being within us.

Involution and Evolution in the Eight Planes

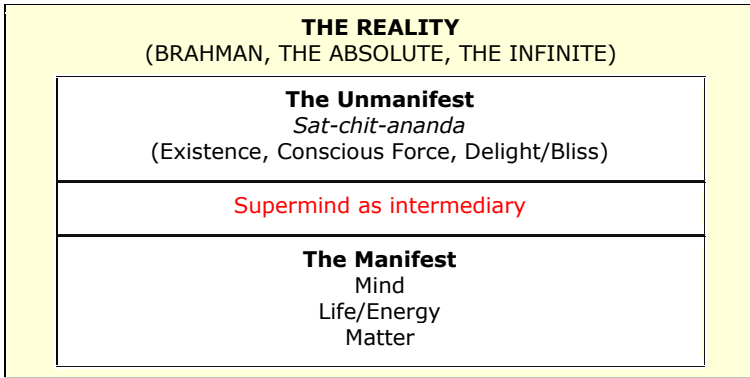
The eight planes express both in the involution (the decent) and the evolution (the ascent). The involution is a descent of being from the Pure Existent (Sat/Being) to Conscious Force (Chit) to Delight (Ananda) to Supermind to Mind to Life to Matter. The evolution is the ascent upwards from Matter to Life to Mind to Supermind to Delight to Conscious-Force to Existence.



Supermind's Role in the Eight Planes of Being

Supermind is the intermediary plane that sits between the upper hemisphere of Existence, Conscious-Force, and Delight, and the lower hemisphere of Mind, Life, and Matter.

Supermind's Place in the Scheme of Things



-Supermind renders the Infinite Reality of the upper hemisphere and its three sub planes of Sat-Chit-Ananda into the plans of the lower hemisphere of Mind, Life, and Matter. In other words, the Infinite reality is rendered by Supermind into the universe. (Supermind as the instrument of Sat/Existence will render the Conscious Force/Sat that will be the forms of force of creation.) This is essentially the Comprehending and Apprehending poises (1 and 2) of Supermind.

-Supermind also is the plane, the level of consciousness that enables beings, including us humans to link to the planes of the upper hemisphere in our evolution. (This is the third poise of Supermind)

Corresponding Planes of Upper and Lower Hemisphere

-The planes of the upper hemisphere have their corresponding planes in the lower hemisphere, as indicated by this chart.

Involution (Descent)	Existence (Being)	Consciousness Force	Delight	Supermind
Evolution (Ascent)	Matter	Life	Psychic Being	Mind

The inversion of Spirit/Existence is the non-spirit of the inconscience of Matter. The inversion of Conscious Force is the Force without consciousness that is Life/Energy. The inversion of Delight is Psychic Being buried deep within us. The inversion of Supermind where Knowledge and Will are one is Mind in living beings/man where they are divided.

[The final operation of Existence (Sat) is Matter. The final operation of Conscious Force (Chit) is Energy/Life. The final operation of Delight

(Ananda) is the evolving Soul. The final operation of Supermind is Mind.]

How Matter, Life, and Mind Manifest in the Individual Human

We human beings are manifestations of the planes of the lower hemisphere. Matter takes shape as our physical bodies. Life takes shape as the life force in us, the animated, alive quality of our being. Mind for us takes shape as our mentality. Above that are the planes of spiritualized mind and on to Supermind and the upper hemisphere.

Our Evolution Upward amongst the Planes

In our evolution of consciousness, we move up amongst these planes. The purpose of our existence is to move upwards in our ascent amongst these planes.

[*Note:* Life in the universe begins at the plane of Life in the descent/the involution. That plane of Life is Energy. It is out of that energy that Matter will take shape, which is the final plane in the ascent, and the first plane in the ascent in the Eight Chord of Being.]

[-*An Eighth Chord:* There is also the Psychic being in us and life that is an eighth plane. When we as individuals move up from our mentality to spiritual mind and above, there is also a movement within. At the depths within is our Psychic Being. From there we move up in consciousness. In other words, to move up, we need to move within to the Psychic. The Psychic is also where we discover our ultimate purpose in life -- delight of being -- mirroring the plane of Delight/Ananda of the upper hemisphere. It is, however, buried within us, and we must discover it for it to be consciously part of us.]

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS:

Planes of Being of the Individual

Expressions and Needs at Each Plane

Humans are physical, vital, mental, and spiritual beings. We are comprised of these in varying degrees. I have a physical body, and all its organs, muscles, tissue, etc. at the physical plane. I have sensations, needs, feelings, emotions, attitudes, interrelations with others at the vital plane. I have thoughts, ideas, beliefs, engage in rational/logical thinking at the mental plane. And I experience peace, harmony, love, and blissful transcendence, amongst others at the spiritual plane. We are all of these things and more, as the planes interact as one thing; and I am one being.

We also have *needs* at each of these levels, with the most basic and essential ones being at the physical plane, with gradually decreasing imperative necessities fulfilled at progressively higher levels, i.e. vital,

mental, and spiritual. Most essentially, we need to function and be fulfilled at the *physical* level -- in terms of our health and well-being, proper nourishment, security and safety, and others. At the *vital* level, we require friendship love, family relations, emotionally fulfilling work, etc. At the *mental* level, we have the need to understand, to be conscious and put into effect the things we believe in, to organize our existence, to conceive of achievable goals, and the ability to think logically and rationally, amongst others. At the *spiritual* level, we seek and aspire to be fulfilled in terms of peace, harmony, truth, wisdom, goodness creativity, love, delight, timelessness, infinity, and other higher consciousness qualities.

Evolution Upward and Descent Among Planes

As we move up the scale of planes, there are a decreasing number of individuals who are realized there. E.g. there are far fewer mental individuals than vital-centered ones. And yet in the course of human evolution, we are increasingly evolving upward amongst these planes (actually their subplanes, e.g. from fact processing to true rational thinking of mind) in terms of our needs and nature. That is, we have evolved from essentially physical beings focused on survival and the material necessities of existence, to vital beings who seek to fulfill themselves, engage one another through social intercourse, and so forth. Now in the last several centuries, and especially the last fifty years, our mental capacities are accelerating. We are emerging as true mental-oriented beings.

As we evolve upward amongst the planes (and subplanes) as a society and individually, we may also notice corresponding *descent* that complements the process of ascent. For example, if I develop new mental capacities that I never had before, there will be the tendency to practice what I have learned at a plane below it. Thus, if I want to understand why I have certain physical ailments, and gain that knowledge, I can then turn around and *implement* it at the physical level -- i.e. a lower plane, so that I can now fully overcome my illness. In this way, the process of progress contains these loops of ascent to a higher plane and a descent into lower planes for its implementation. Overall though, there is still a movement upward.

Scale of Progress Among Planes

Also keep in mind that we can progress to different degrees; in an ascending scale of "development, evolution, and transformation." For example, if I change an attitude, I make a certain progress in life at the vital-mental subplane. This is development. If, however, I change my vital nature from being coarse to something more refined in my vital interactions with others, I have evolved at that plane. Transformation is the complete perfection of that plane. E.g. I become a self-giving, calm, serene, and fully positive individual at the vital plane. Thus, at each plane I can develop, evolve, and be transformed. I can also do

the same for my entire nature; i.e. I can become a completely, integrally transformed being.

Types of Individuals (as Expression of Planes)

Using this approach, we also recognize different types of people from amongst physical, vital/emotional, mental, and spiritual. Though people draws from each of these planes to lesser or greater degrees, one plane usually stand out in that person's nature. For example, one individual is highly focused on his using his mind (such as a programmer, scientist, or philosopher), and is therefore of a mental bent; while another person is centered in his emotions, and is therefore predominantly vital in nature. Then there is physical person who does physical oriented activities, has simple tastes and wants, with his mental life mostly developed.

What we call a "ripe soul" or "realized individual" has a spiritual center and orientation. His nature is to seek out and practice those methods and means that bring spiritual-like results -- such as meditation that creates quietude, self-givingness that enables harmony and love, or the experience of the transcendent divine within, which creates ultimate Delight and Bliss.

Perceiving How Life Presents Itself Among the Planes

It is also helpful to take any situation, circumstance, aspect, thing, and evaluate it in terms of the plane or planes involved -- physical, vital, mental, or spiritual; or any combination. This will give the observer more penetrating insights into that object of inquiry. For example, when trying to come up with a solution to a conflict between two parties, we may notice that one person is more emotional and vital, and the other more mental. In that way, we can appeal to the first person's emotions, or better yet come to work with them through a calmer basis, while we confront the mental person through the realm of ideas, though his better understanding of the situation. In this same way we can evaluate, groups of people, communities, nations, speeches, developments in the world, technologies, and so forth. we will automatically then have a leg up on understanding the issues, giving us great insight for decision making, actions, and so forth.

We garner a tremendous power of observation and insight when we see the world and the unfolding of life through these four planes of existence. Perceiving the physical/material, vital/emotional, mental, and spiritual planes of being is one of mind's great tools to make deep sense out of the world around us.



Supermind, Mind and the Overmind Maya

(Book 1 Chapter XXVIII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on two topics that relate to the fall and limits of consciousness in creation:

- (1) the nature and limits of Overmind, and how it is beginning of the lapse in consciousness in creation.
- (2) the contradiction between the planes in the upper consciousness and how they became their opposite in creation, causing all our human difficulties.

As for Overmind he indicates that on the positive side there is generally unity and oneness of perception there; as well as the beginnings of separateness, uniqueness, and the individuality of things. However, on the negative side there is also the first lapse into division; the root cause of conflict; of self-assertion and ego; and therefore, of Ignorance. This is as opposed to Supermind.

Sri Aurobindo indicates that Overmind generally sees from the perspective of its own self, leading to separative consciousness, whereas Supermind sees from the perspective of each and all things, leading to unity consciousness. This is in fact how the Gods – which are of Overmind – see things. Each God is fully developed, yet each sees from its own perspectives, not of the other Gods.

In the second part of the chapter Sri Aurobindo describes how each of Sat, Chit, and Ananda became their opposite in the involutory process toward creation; i.e. Being to Non-Being; Conscious Force to Unconsciousness; and Delight to Insensitivity.

He then goes on to explain how each of the three contradictions lead to unique problems in life. The contradiction between Being and Non-being shows itself in the universe and life as the division between Life and Death. The contradiction between Consciousness-Force and Inconscience shows itself as the division between Truth and Falsehood (and between knowledge and error). The contradiction between Delight and Insensibility shows itself as Pleasure and Pain.

This thus explains all of the difficulties and problems of life.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Superconscious Planes of Spiritual Mind

Sri Aurobindo begins by reminding us that there are two realms or planes we are not normally conscious of; the superconscious, above mind, and the subconscious below our conscious awareness.

In the realms above mind that are superconscious to us, there are spiritual mental planes, including Higher, Illumined, and Intuitive Mind. These, especially the higher ones are the source of original thinking and genius.

We get in touch with the spiritual planes of mind when we open ourselves to the universal forces, to Cosmic Mind above, as well as by connecting to the subliminal and then the psychic being within.

Overmind: Universal View, Yet the Beginning of Separateness and Ignorance

Beyond these are two ultimate planes of spiritual mind, Overmind (Universal Consciousness), and higher still Supermind (Truth Consciousness). In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo places special emphasis on Overmind.

He says that in Overmind, there is generally unity and oneness of perception as in Supermind, but also the first lapse into division. Overmind is great in that these divisions enable the beginnings of the separateness, uniqueness, and the individuality of things, yet is the source of limitation as each division has lost touch with the others, and is therefore the root cause of limitation in our being, propagating ego and our Ignorance.

Whereas in Supermind one sees the totality, i.e. the All, and unity of a thing, i.e. the parts and the Whole; the integral, many sided truth of any matter; in Overmind one perceives that totality, but from the perspective of only one particular view; of each division's particular perspective.

[For example, let's say I am pulling out of my space in a parking lot. I see that another car in front of me is pulling out. This is the limited, surface perception of sense mind. However, my mental reason can also deduce that someone else may be pulling out in back of me as well. In intuition, I just instantly know of a problem on my left without thinking. Now in Overmind, I perceive all of the possibilities around me at once. In essence I have the universal view or consciousness of the situation. Supermind is more or less the same. However, whereas Supermind has the view of all views simultaneously, as if I were able to perceive the perspective of all the cars around me simultaneously, Overmind sees

all the possibilities from one perceiver, i.e. me. Thus, though Overmind has the many-sided, i.e. universal view, it has it from one entity that is unique and separate that is looking out on the world. Supermind sees it from all perspectives simultaneously.]

In sum, in Overmind one sees all, the totality, but from the perspective of one thing or self or division; whereas in Supermind one perceives the totality, but from all perspectives of all things simultaneously, indicating a unity or unitarian view. [Supermind also perceives from the status of each thing the unity with all other things and with the Totality.]

As a result, Overmind is the first step towards a separative consciousness, whereas Supermind is the full, integral, dynamic, many-side Unity consciousness. [This is the actual status of the Reality, the All, Brahman; and in Supermind It this way. supermind is the unity consciousness that perceives the unity of Brahman.]

OVERMIND	SUPERMIND
<p style="text-align: center;">Sees All (Universal consciousness) Sees from perspective of its own self First step toward Separative consciousness</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sees All (Universal consciousness) Sees from perspective of each thing and all things Unity consciousness</p>

Overmind and the Gods

It also turns out that Overmind is there in the creation process; the point at which the Gods emerged as invisible forms of force. Sri Aurobindo says that Overmind releases a million Godheads; each fully developed and powerful along its own line; empowered to create its own worlds. And yet though each God, power, force expresses itself in the full, totality of being, each loses touch, its absolute oneness with all others (perceiving the totality only from its own perspective.).

[In creation, Supermind creates the universe by creating forms of the conscious Force, based on the Real Ideas of the being. However, it is in Overmind that the Gods are born, and each God though fully developed along it line, is not in unity with all the others. E.g. if I am a particular God, I have total knowledge and power over that particular consciousness realm I oversee, such as the Preserver realm. However, I (as the God Preserver) have lost touch with the unique knowledges and powers of the other Gods. On the other hand, in Supermind, I would allow all the Gods to form in their uniqueness, but each would be fully in unity with every other. I would be One with my brother and sister Gods.

The Mother used to have powerful experiences in which she would ask certain individual Gods to Surrender to Her, as she was the instrument of Supermind, which knows and embraces all of those powers and life principles, realized them all, and held them in integral unity. It is the reason Sri Aurobindo asked the Mother to give up their plan to have the Overmental (universal) Consciousness be the source of the new Divine Life, and instead have the supramental power be that basis. That is what they worked for in the latter part of their lives.】

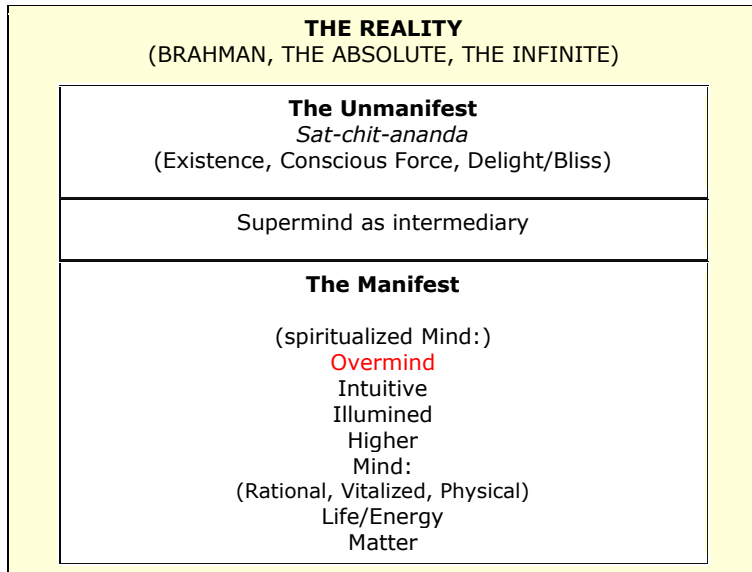
Overmind and the Ignorance

Sri Aurobindo also reiterates that since Overmind illuminates the separative nature of a thing -- working in truth through division, not unity, integrality -- it is the origin of the cosmic Maya, of separation in the descent from Supermind. Since each thing is perceived separately, then each idea, force, separative consciousness and form can collide, come in conflict; asserting itself. It is thus *the power that made the Ignorance possible, and the beginnings of the separation from Truth.*

【Overmind is not the cause of all division in creation. It is rather the first essential step in that direction. There is complete duality, division, when we move down into sense mind or worse, where there is Ignorance of the many-sided truth of things, let alone even the part.】

【Another important point is that in Supermind there is not only integral knowledge and truth, but a power for that to manifest in life. In Overmind, there is no such power over life. That is why Supermind is a power to truly transform life, whereas Overmind is not. That is why Sri Aurobindo told the Mother that they were seeking to establish the Truth Consciousness of Supermind in the world rather than just the universal consciousness of Overmind, which does not have that power to effect such transformative change in the world. They thus dedicated themselves to bringing down the supramental consciousness and power into the world. This was their Mission.】

Overmind's Place in the Scheme of Things



[Miscellaneous Points: **On Overmind vs. Supermind**

-Supermind expresses the integral relationship of all things born of the Absolute through Satchitananda; Overmind takes this unity, and expresses the uniqueness of things born of division.

-In Overmind, the integral Knowledge and Will of Supermind (reflecting the integral Consciousness and Force of Satchitananda) begins to be lost. *In Overmind, the Will begins to lose its Consciousness, and becomes the early basis of our Ignorance.*

-Overmind is a world of harmony. Whereas where we see contradictions in ordinary mind, in Overmind one perceives them as complementaries.]

Gods, Overmind, and Ignorance (by Karmayogi)

Sri Aurobindo used to say that he never wanted to be limited by the gods. The gods belong to the overmental plane. Their dimension, Mother says, belongs to the dimension of earth. Overmind is a plane where the full power of truth does not exist. It is a plane where truths can protect themselves and act, eliminating the destructive influence of ignorance. Overmind brings together several truths to act in unison. Krishnavatar came from this plane. The color of this plane is blue. Sri Aurobindo explained to Mother that the overmental truth had no power to transform ignorance into knowledge. It can function successfully protecting its truth and avoiding the warping influence of ignorance. Truth is self-existent in the next plane of Supermind. Here there is no ignorance. Power of Supermind can enter into ignorance, reach its

foundation of truth, unite all of them and from there transform ignorance into knowledge. Without that seed of truth, however little, neither ignorance, nor evil, nor falsehood, nor even hostility can exist. Beings of the supramental plane are of the dimension of the universe. On February 29, 1956 when the Supermind descended, Mother found herself as big as the universe and in a golden form. The gods have a limitation when they come to function in the supramental plane. Sri Aurobindo had declared he never wanted to be limited by the gods in his work.

Inversions from What is Above and What is Below, and the Difficulties of Life

Finally, Sri Aurobindo discusses how the Being above became the Non-Being below. How through the involutory process the Being, Conscious-Force, and Delight above become their opposite or negation, or inversion below. I.e. Being of the upper hemisphere becomes Non-being in the lower (particularly matter); how Conscious-Force above becomes Unconsciousness below; and how Delight above becomes Insensitivity below.

There thus seems to be contradictions between that which is above and that which is below. This is especially seen in the universe and life, which is in the lower realms, as it perceives its aspects, as cut off or lesser than the higher aspects that it is an inversion from.

- The contradiction between Being and Non-being shows itself in particular *in the universe and life* as the division between Life and Death.
- The contradiction between Consciousness-Force and Inconscience shows itself as the division between Truth and Falsehood (and between knowledge and error)
- The contradiction between Delight and Insensibility shows itself as Pleasure and Pain.

Thus, we can see the root beginnings and causes of all problems, contradictions, divisions, dualities in the universe. This is VERY SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT EXPLAINS ALL OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE!

[Through Nature these lesser and greater contradictions work themselves out in an ascending movement back to their oneness; though through our invocation of Spirit we overcome them rapidly as we see them in their inherent oneness and unity, i.e. as we develop the supramental and Brahman consciousness.]

Contradiction of Above-Below; Its Expression in Life; and Its Resolution

Essential Contradictions Between Above & Below	Existence (Being)	Consciousness-Force	Delight
	Non-Existence (Non-Being)	Inconscient (Unconsciousness)	Insensibility
How that Contradiction Expresses in Creation/Life	Life and Death	Truth and Falsehood (& knowledge & error)	Pleasure and Pain
<p>-The essential contradiction that exists between the Above (the Unmanifest) and Below (the Manifest) is reflected in the contradictions in Creation/Life. (shown above)</p> <p>-The resolutions of the essential contradictions between the Above and the Below, as well as the contradictions in the Creation/Life (that reflects the essential contradictions) occur through the workings of Nature, or better, faster through our invocation of Spirit in life.</p>			

OTHER POINTS

On Original Thinking

Original thinking and the authentic perception of things is an intuitive element of spiritual mind. **[Karmayogi is an original thinker whose writings pour out like a fountain in many fields of life, yet are all tied back to spirit. He is in touch with various planes of spiritual Mind. He is what I call a multi-dimensional spiritual genius.]**

Genius in the individual is born of the connection to Cosmic Mind.

Summation of Involution & Evolution in Creation Process

--INVOLUTION

The One, Satchidananda's Aspiration to Create

The indivisible omnipotent, omniscient One, Satchidananda, Parabrahman, Conscious Being, chooses to manifest itself for the delight of self-expression, self-discovery and evolution. Its challenge is to conceal itself from itself, to create a world of finite creatures that lack the self-consciousness and power of their creator. Since it alone exists, it must create a world out of itself.

Maya as Method of Creation

Maya is the Infinite's power of self-limitation in form, delimitation, measuring itself out. All creation is a self-envisioning, an imaging or

imagining by the One of a real idea which it manifests out of its own being and substance within itself. [Real Ideas include spiritual aspects like peace, harmony, truth, knowledge, goodness, love, delight, infinity, etc.]

Comprehending Action of Supermind

In the higher Maya, all forms are conscious forms of the infinite, one with it both in essence and in consciousness. All delimitation takes place within the context of oneness. Through comprehensive supermind, Conscious Being as subject perceives itself as object within itself and one with it and the Infinite. [E.g. For real idea of Knowledge -- the Knower, the Knowing, and the Known are one thing; or for Love - the Lover, the Loving, and the beloved are one thing. Subject and Object are One.]

Apprehending Action of Supermind

Through apprehending supermind, Conscious Being as subject perceives itself as object outwardly separate but inwardly one with itself and all and the infinite. Supermind distinguishes and differentiates without division. This is the status of Divine Mind. It possesses the mind's characteristic power of perceiving the whole in terms of many parts and subdividing the parts infinitely. But simultaneously it retains the knowledge of the whole of which the parts are only representations and expressions. [E.g. For real idea of Knowledge -- the Knower Knows the Known, as they are now separated out yet still in unity; or for Love - the Lover Loves the Beloved. Subject and Object are divided from one another, but still retain their Oneness.]

Division and Loss of Consciousness

In the lower expression of Maya, [the further decent in the involution] mind loses the perception of oneness. Conscious Being is divided into an infinite number of parts, of beings, of centers of consciousness, viewpoints. The conscious being identifies itself with each of these separate viewpoints and looks out from each to view the world and itself from a separate vantage. On the surface it has lost awareness and perception of its origin, of oneness, of power. It has limited its consciousness to that of a single surface perspective. It has fallen into Ignorance of the whole and its own true reality. [E.g. For real idea of Knowledge -- the Knower only partially Knows the Known; or for Love - the Lover is unable to or cannot fully Love the Beloved. Subject and Object are divided from one another, but have begun to lose their oneness. Ignorance is born]

Division of Forces and the Origin of Forms

Conscious being is also force. As mind divides the consciousness into millions of separate viewpoints, it divides the force into millions of separate forces. Force remains one. But that force identifies itself with these millions separate viewpoints and makes them standpoints of force. It seeks to establish, preserve, and grow each separate center of that force.

Force seeking to form and support a center of function acquires a form of force. This force is only divided conscious force. The interaction of forms of force generates sensations-it releases spurts of consciousness that are inherent in the force. Mind perceives the forms of force through these sensations as material substance, Matter.

Source of Ego

The identification of the Conscious Being with limited viewpoints, standpoints and forms of itself, the concentration of awareness and force in the separate identity of each form and the seeking to preserve and develop each form as distinct from others is the origin of ego. This expresses as the attraction and repulsion of form to form according to whether the contact enhances or threatens the existence and growth of the form. The essence of ego can be seen even in the attraction and repulsion of the subatomic particles in matter. It becomes the divided, limited/finite, ego living in time in the surface mind. This is the involution.

--EVOLUTION

Emerging Consciousness through Interactions of Forms of Force

In the evolution, the contact of form of force with form of force releases sensations and gradually awakes consciousness in each form. As the consciousness force emerges, the form evolves and acquires characteristics appropriate to express the inherent conscious force. It acquires the capacity for response to stimuli, mobility, perception, and adaptation that we see in lower and higher life forms. Eventually the emerging consciousness reaches the stage of mental self-awareness we find in man. In the animal, external contacts generate nervous sensations. In man, the sensations also stimulate conscious thoughts.

Ascent and Descent in Evolutionary Process

As each higher power evolves out of the lower, it also acts on the lower from which it has emerged. Each ascent is followed by a descent. Life makes matter animate. Mind applies its capacities to observe, understand and organize life and matter.

Limited Perspective of Mind

Mind does this from perspective of its own individual viewpoint, standpoint and form, i.e. ego. Therefore, its knowledge is limited to the awareness of the individual viewpoint. Its force is limited to that of an individual standpoint of the infinite Force which meets itself in millions of other infinite forces that express the same Force. It is limited by identification with its specific form of force, a mortal physical body. What we call mind in us is the emergence of conscious sensation and thought on the surface, ignorant of the subconscious and superconscious ranges of awareness that are subliminal to our surface experience.

Mind Detaching from Lower Influence to Evolve

For mind to acquire true knowledge and power and to discover the true freedom of the infinite, immortal being of delight of which it is an instrument, it has to detach itself from its identification with the body, the limited selfish struggling force of life and the narrow selfish viewpoint of ego in order to discover the Oneness of which it is an expression, which is its own true being. This it can only do by moving from the surface to the depth, from the ego to discover the psychic.

BOOK 2



Indeterminates, Cosmic Determinations and the Indeterminable

(Book 2 Chapter I)

Intro to Book 2

In Book 1 Sri Aurobindo covered the Human Aspiration; why it remains unfulfilled due to our divided nature; the true nature of omnipresent Reality; and how the universe came to be from a Divine Source emerging through an involutory process from Satchitananda to matter and back upward (which also explains the limitations of consciousness inherited through the original unconsciousness in creation).

And yet he tells us that an involved Consciousness Force is everywhere inherent in existence ready to come out through our higher consciousness. This he says is the occult secret of Nature.

In Book 2 Sri Aurobindo delves more into how the Infinite consciousness became the Ignorance, and how it, through us, evolves back to Integral Knowledge through Spiritual Evolution and the emergence to the Supramental existence beyond that.

More specifically, Book 2 Part 1 explains how the Infinite Consciousness has become the Ignorance.

This first chapter of Book 2, covered next, examines various explanations of what determines reality in the world of ignorance we live in. Why things are the way they are. Why things happen the way they do.

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by asking what is it that determines existence and life in the cosmos; i.e. what is the source of that determination? Is it chance, mechanical necessity, a hidden divinity, or something more; perhaps a combination of these in some way?

He says that the ultimate determinant is the Absolute. And this Absolute is not just an extra-cosmic Source of creation, but that Being and Spirit, that Conscious Force is also *imminent* in; *exists in the forms* of creation, seeking to further emerge in the evolutionary process.

Sri Aurobindo also tells us that the Absolute, this Infinite seeks to deploy original Truths through those forms, which he calls "Real Ideas."

He tell us that Real Ideas have an inherent power to *fulfill themselves*, are deployed by Supermind, and are fulfilled through the emergence of Consciousness in the forms of creation.

In terms of the above discussion, Sri Aurobindo then moves on to the issue of chance, freewill, et al. He tells us that because of the immanence of the Creator in creation, because of the infinite variation of possibility intended by the Infinite/the Absolute, and because of the unfolding of Real Ideas and the cosmic laws associated with it, we are able to explain what we perceive as Chance, Mechanical necessity, and Free Will in creation.

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to describe the specific ways the Real Ideas, - these "cosmic determinants" originating from the Source, - unfold in creation. He tells us that specific determinants derive from each of Sat-Chit-and Ananda and include powers of Self, Witness, Creator, Knowledge, Beauty, and Love. Eg Beauty and Love emerge from Ananda.

He then explains the power that enables these cosmic determinates to be deployed in creation. He says that through the comprehending and apprehending capacities of Supermind time and space are created, which gives birth to the eight determinants.

He tells us that each Real Idea is deployed in triune forms of subject-object-experience. E.g. consider the determinate of "Knowledge." In that case, the triplicity deployment takes shape as Knower (subject), Knows (experiences), that which is Known (the object). I.e. the knower knows the known.

In essence, for each cosmic determinate/Real Idea Supermind creates objects of its own subjective intention.

Sri Aurobindo also explains that the Real Ideas are the seeds of potentiality that exist in the forms that seek to come out in the evolution.

Here are the main points in detail:

Determination of the Infinite in Creation

Sri Aurobindo raises the question of what determines outcomes in the universe, if anything. Is existence just random Chance or is it

obediently following rules of Mechanical Necessity in Nature? In other words, what is determining things in the universe?

He concludes that an Infinite consciousness is the ultimate determinant of things. However, it is not just the source of creation, but is immanent in life. It is active in it behind the veil of the surface of the forces and forms in the universe.

He then goes further and explains that because each force/form has the Infinite consciousness veiled within it, each has an infinite potential.

Finally, he concludes that there are fundamental Truths or Real Ideas that the Infinite seeks to manifest through the forces/forms of creation.

[Here is a more detailed analysis of the above ideas.]

The Infinite's Determination in the Universe

We can see several possibilities of what determines in life, what causes things to be what they are.

1st possibility: CHANCE:

In this view, Nature as an inconscient Force acts at random creating by chance without any determining principle. Perhaps there is a limited amount of determination that arises out of persistent repetition. Also, this possible determinant implies a boundless Possibility as the origin of things.

The trouble with this view is that there are many laws operating in the universe, from the most obvious physical ones, such as cause and effect and gravity to the more subtle ones. Even the mind itself thinks in an orderly pattern that is not mere randomness and chance.

2nd possibility: MECHANICAL NECESSITY:

This implies a clockwork perfection of the universe, as a kind of Machine of predictability, of mechanical laws of nature, such as Newton's laws and theory of relativity. However, these laws that suggest uniformity cannot account for the variation and multiplicity of existence. It cannot also account for how consciousness emerged from the inconscience of matter.

3rd possibility: EXTRACOSMIC DIVINITY:

This indicates that a divine consciousness, and will --- omnipotent and omniscient, -- organized and created the universe. It would also explain the reasons for the mathematical law, beauty, artistry of the universe; the works of Intelligence, law, design, formula, adaptation of means to ends, invention and emergence of Mind.

On the other hand, how would it account for arbitrary nature, incomprehensive purpose, meaninglessness, unnecessary; and undivine elements, including ignorance, strife, suffering, evil.

SRI AUROBINDO'S VIEW

Immanent Creator

Sri Aurobindo's view is that there is an Infinite consciousness that is casting infinite possibilities into forms in an evolutionary cosmic order. Moreover, and this is key, in those forms there is a secret involved Consciousness that is acting from behind and is progressively emerging in the evolutionary process of that form.

Thus, the Creator is not just extra-cosmic and all-determining, but is *immanent* in life, emerging through the evolutionary process of those forms.

Infinite Potential of Each Finite

This also indicates that in each finite form or force, there is an infinite consciousness behind, and so it is infinite in potential itself. I.e. Every finite contains or has behind it a concealed Infinite. Thus, the smallest thing can have the greatest effect. And everything, no matter its nature small or large, plays an integral role in the Reality and its evolution forward in the universe. Thus, we should respect every detail as a means of infinite results emerging from it. The smallest think can solve a crime, or lead to attracting a new job etc.

Real Ideas (Truths) and Intentions of the Infinite

Finally, Sri Aurobindo that there the Creation itself is a manifestation in disguise of truths and powers of the Infinite being. That from Satchitananda there are Real Ideas and intentions – such as knowledge, love, et al -- that the divine seeks to manifest in the world. (This is described in the next part of this chapter analysis.)

Vehicle of Truths Are Determinants of Nature

Moreover, Sri Aurobindo tells us that forms or vehicles of these truths and powers are the general determinates of Nature

Resolving Determination with Chance, Necessity, Free Will

From this analysis of the nature of determination, Sri Aurobindo is able to explain both Chance and Mechanical Necessity in Nature in Nature.

He says that the variation of the Infinite consciousness (the Absolute) explains what we perceive as *Chance* in Nature. [What we perceive as *Chance* is not really so, but an expression of the infinite variation and multiplicity of expression of the Infinite consciousness.]

He also explains that the principle of truth powers of the Infinite explains what we see as *Mechanical Necessity* in Nature. [The aspiration to make real and deployment by the Infinite of Real Ideas, the Truth currents into creation (e.g. Knowledge, Beauty, Love, Delight, etc.) explains the Mechanical Necessity of laws that we see in Nature. These Real Ideas seek to manifest in creation through its forms, including us, which creates cosmic laws of unfolding that seek to come about. E.g. there is a movement towards greater harmony unfolding in the conflict between two parties that the Divine intends, even if they do not. They can learn to perceive and collaborate with such principles and unfoldings.

These Real Ideas, cosmic determinants explain all of the laws of creation from subtle, such as Life response to the more gross and material, including the laws science has revealed.

Then what of Free Will? How is that reconciled based on Sri Aurobindo's view of determination?

He answers that though there is a determination from the Infinite, we have free will of whether we want to partake in that determination. We can choose to do so or not, or anything in between.

[Philosophically we can say that the determinism of the Infinite is the utter freedom of the Finite. I.e. though the infinite divine enabled this universe, this world -- including the hidden spirit in all things that is there just below our field of awareness in all things seen and unseen - - we are *free* in the finite world we live in to discover it.

Man always has the choice to either identify himself with the ego, the limitations of time, the finite possibility in the moment, and the dualities of Nature, including pain and suffering; or he can choose to find his inner self, his soul, his oneness with all, the timelessness of the Being, the infinity in the finite moment, and the Reality of the Being; i.e. the indwelling Spirit that arose from the Divine source, and is the source of fate.

It is our choice.

Now that the spiritual Force, the supramental power is here, and has descended into the earth's atmosphere, it is easier for us to make this choice. (*Paraphrase of MSS*)

- Creation is an ordered deployment of the infinite possibilities of the Infinite.
- Every possibility implies a truth of being behind it, a reality in the Existent.
- Each reality would be a fundamental spiritual aspect of the Absolute.
- Out of it would emerge all its possible manifestations, and in turn their forms, powers and possibilities.

How Satchitananda Reflects as Determinants in the Universe

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the specific truth powers of the Absolute that are the determinants of existence.

He reiterates that the Supreme and Eternal Infinite determines itself to our consciousness in the universe by real and fundamental truths, as "Real Ideas" which can be seized by us, especially if we rise to a consciousness of spiritual intuition and beyond. He indicates that it is through the comprehending and apprehending action of Supermind that this occurs.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on the specific determinants that emerge from the Absolute/Satchitananda that determine existence.

We know that in the involution the Absolute extended itself to the triune Existence, Conscious Force, Delight -- Sat-Chit-Ananda -- to enable creation. Moreover, from each of these three emanate determining truths or Real Ideas.

-From Existence (Sat) come the determinants of *Self, Creator, and Witness*.

-From Consciousness Force (Chit) comes the determinants of *Knowledge and Will*.

-From Delight (Ananda) come the determinants of *Love, Joy, and Beauty*.

Fuller Analysis of the Cosmic Determinant Qualities

[Eventually in this and other chapters Sri Aurobindo gives us a fuller array of cosmic determinants, including *Timelessness, Eternity, Infinity, Silence, Harmony, Truth, Knowledge, Goodness, Power, Creativity, Beauty, Love, and Delight*. Some come right out of an aspect of Satchitananda, such as Timelessness, Eternity, and Infinity coming out of Sat (which are expressions of Sat), while others like Goodness come out of a recombination of items. (In the case of Goodness, it is the determinant of Truth interacting with the Chit (Consciousness) that creates it.)

Here then is a projected view of the determinates across the three aspects of Sat (Existence/Being):]

SAT Existence/Being	CHIT Consciousness-Force	ANANDA Delight/Bliss
<p>-Timelessness</p> <p>-Eternity</p> <p>-Infinity</p> <p>-Silence (from?)</p>	<p>-Truth</p> <p>-Knowledge</p> <p>-Goodness (from Consciousness & Truth)</p> <p>Power (from ?)</p>	<p>-Creativity (from?)</p> <p>-Beauty</p> <p>-Love</p> <p>-Delight</p>

How We Can Express these Cosmic Determinants in Our Lives

Since these are the determining qualities in the universe, we too are determined by them (should we collaborate with their unfolding in life), and therefore we can progressively express these higher cosmic attributes in our own lives.

Specifically, in life we can experience the following qualities based on those attributes:

- our sense of self; our awareness of ourselves and our potential to create (Self)
- a way to stand back and view the creation (Witness)
- our ability to create anew (Creator)
- our ability to comprehend and know what has been and what we are creating (Knowledge)
- our will and drive to see through and realize what we want to create (Will)
- our urge to share a relationship with other forms, beings, creation, God (Love)
- to experience the satisfaction of life, including what has been created (Joy)
- to experience the harmony and beauty of all that is, and what has been created (Beauty)

Triune Expression

Sri Aurobindo indicates in order the determinant to express, there needs to be a subject a method, and an object. Thus, for the determinant of Knowledge to be realized in life, there is a (1) Knower that (2) Knows (3) the Known. Likewise, the Lover Loves the Beloved.

[Sri Aurobindo indicated this emergence when describing the role of Comprehending and Apprehending Supermind. As there was a shift

from the former to the later, the essential nine determinates each split into three to create the triune. Now there was subject – process – object, three aspects instead of 1 for each of the determinates.

Thus, the determinate of Love splits into *Lover Loves the Beloved*. That way we human in our emergence can express Love. We cannot just be Love. We can be the Lover who loves the beloved. In that way we can Love. By the way, even though each determinate splits into three, the three are still in an essential Oneness, as everything though separated in Supermind are also one in Supermind. Supermind is after all Unity consciousness. Unity of the Many with the One.]

Here is the entire listing of determinates split into their triune status:

Three Poises (Triune) Of Cosmic Determinants

<i>Satchitananda</i>	<i>Determinants</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Object</i>
Existence (Sat)	Self (Being)	Self	Is Aware	Of Its Existence
	Witness	Witness	Witnesses	What is Witnessed
	Creator	Creator	Creates	The Creation
Consciousness Force (Chit)	Knowledge	Knower	Knows	The Known
	Will	Will	Wills	What is Willed
Delight (Ananda)	Love	Lover	Loves	The Beloved
	Joy	Enjoyer	Enjoys	The Enjoyed
	Beauty	Beholder	Beholds	The Beauty

[In addition, we could say that the 9 have now divided into 27 aspects. Moreover, any of the 9 or 27 can integrate with any of the others, creating other cosmic determinates descending into the earth, which we can express through our own individual elevation of consciousness.]

[Also, to reiterate, though the cosmic determinants are those listed in the table above emerging from each of sat, chit, and ananda, we can extend that list and come up with the following determinants in creation. *Silence, Peace, Oneness, Truth, Knowledge, Goodness, Love, Beauty, Delight, Timelessness and Infinity*. Each of these exist as Real Ideas of potentiality waiting to come out through the evolution of the form, i.e. us. And each of these formulate into 27 through the triune aspect emerging through Apprehending Supermind, and can express in life as a mixture of any combination of the 27.]

Real Ideas as Seeds of Potentiality that Emerge in Evolution

Sri Aurobindo then takes up the issue of how the cosmic determinants, the Real Ideas express in the forms of creation, in us.

First, he reiterates that there must be behind the action of the material energy a secret involved consciousness, cosmic, infinite; building up through the frontal energy its means of evolutionary manifestation; a creation out of itself in the boundless finite of the material world. **[This is the Existent (Sat) and Conscious Force (Chit) involved in the forms.]**

Particular vs. General Determinates -- Moreover, in the forms there are truths and powers involved in it that are the particular determinants of the general determinants. **[The Real Ideas are the particular determinants; whereas the Existent and the Conscious-Force are the general.]** Thus, the growth of the tree out of the seed would be accounted for by the indwelling presence of the Real Idea, which has to emerge from its own self-expression.

Real Ideas/Truths Emerging and Perceived in Supermind

Again, we should keep in mind that Sri Aurobindo indicated in earlier chapters that the deployment of the Real Ideas and then their emergence into triplicities occur through the comprehending and then apprehending action of Supermind. The Comprehending action of Supermind identifies these determining qualities, and the Apprehending action makes it real as triplicities, where each one is in perfect unity and identity. E.g. the Knower completely knows the known; is completely in identity with it.

“The deployment of these powers, possibilities and consequences is held together by Supermind cognition in an innate oneness.”

Sri Aurobindo in the chapter also indicates their relationship to our own lives; how we would be aware of these qualities in creation. *He says it can occur fully when we reach the Supramental plane.*

To the Supramental, truth consciousness the determinants, the imperatives would be apparent. In fact, he says that in Supermind these imperatives/determinants, the possibilities, and the actualities would be a single whole perceived, whereas in Mind there are not.

[When you are in Supramental Consciousness, you are one with the beloved, one in joy, create the perfect creation, know the knowledge in perfection, etc. plus oneness and truth of being in all cross associations among the triune of determinates.]



Brahma, Purusha, Ishwara — Maya, Prakriti, Shakti (Book 2 Chapter II)

Summary

In the previous chapter Sri Aurobindo asks what is it that determines existence and life in the cosmos; i.e. what is the source of that determination? Is it chance, mechanical necessity, a hidden divinity, or something more; perhaps a combination of these in some way? He says that the ultimate determinant is the Absolute, the Reality, the All that is an Infinite.

Sri Aurobindo also tells us that the Absolute seeks to deploy original Truths through those forms, which he calls "Real Ideas." These Real Ideas seek to manifest in life.

In this chapter, he goes further and asks what is the real source of the makeup and nature of the Absolute, and what is its power to determine things in the creation. He also asks what is the logic of its way, and why are we not able to perceive that logic in our lives.

Three Aspects of Sat

To begin this journey of discovery, Sri Aurobindo indicates that to know the source of the determination in the cosmos, to know the Real Ideas and cosmic determinates that are trying to manifest in creation, we must examine Satchitananda Itself; in particular, its first triune, Sat – the pure Existant, the Being.

More particularly, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the source of determination of Sat can be found among its three fundamental divisions or aspects. They are:

1. *Atman*, the Self of all existence, the cosmic Self
2. *Purusha*, the Conscious Being, the Silent Witness, standing back from the activities of Nature
3. *Ishwara*, the Divine Being, the Supreme Person, the All-person, who is Master and Creator

Three Corresponding Powers

In order to understand the ultimate source of determination, Sri Aurobindo then examines the distinct method or power of each of the three aspects of Sat utilized in their functioning. He indicates that-

1. Atman uses the power of *Maya* to imagine possibilities for creation.
2. Purusha uses the power of *Prakriti* (Nature) for the conscious being to unfold in creation.
3. Ishwara uses the power of *Shakti* (force, power) to manifest forms as real in creation

Power to Conceptualize and Execute (and thus ultimately determine)

Having explored the three aspects of Sat and their corresponding powers, Sri Aurobindo then examines the capacity of each of those aspects to *determine* reality.

He indicates that there are two ways to measure their capacity to determine reality: (a) its capacity to *conceptualize possibilities*, and (b) its capacity to *execute them*, i.e. make them real in a potential universe

He concludes that Atman and Purusha are not capable of doing both, but *Ishwara* is. Working through the power of *Shakti*, *Ishwara* has both the capacity to be conceptively creative/imaginative, as well as the capacity to execute those capacities and make them real. Thus, Sri Aurobindo reveals that *Ishwara is the single great engine of creation* (utilizing Supermind as its instrument). (this is a key in the chapter)

Connecting to Ishwara (the Creator)

Now that Sri Aurobindo has ascertained that *Ishwara* is the single great conceptualizer and engine of creation, he addresses the effect of our having a relationship with *Ishwara* (the Creator). He indicates that when we open to *Ishwara* (via the Divine Mother), we move to a higher state of consciousness, which has the effect of reuniting Consciousness and Its Force in Life, which was separated in the Involutionary process.

By opening to the Creator and Its *Shakti*, and thereby reuniting the Consciousness and Force back, we also create infinitely in our own lives, and thereby play a direct role in the Evolution.

Finite, Infinite: Space and Time

Sri Aurobindo then shifts direction to describe the nature of finite and infinity, and space and time.

In terms of *infinity*, he tells us that the Infinite consciousness has a logic beyond that of the mind of Man, which is a practical concept that we can emulate practically in our lives. ("Practical Concept of Infinity") If we do, we can become the master and ultimate determinant of our own life, just as the Infinite is of creation.

In terms of *space and time*, Sri Aurobindo explains what they are in terms of the Infinite consciousness as well. He explains that space is an objective experience, and time is a subjective experience.

Moreover, focusing on time, Sri Aurobindo indicates that we can simultaneously experience three forms of it in our lives for an ultimate relationship to time:

- (1) The experience of Time we normally perceive, which is an Eternity as it goes on forever.
- (2) The experience of the timeless eternity (of the eternal Being) as the Rishis' experienced it, yet have it within our lives.
- (3) The eternity of seeing the past, present, and future in the eternal now.

Here are the main points in detail:

PT. 1 THREE ASPECTS OF SAT & THE POWER OF EACH

Three Divisions of Sat: Atman, Purusha, Ishwara

In earlier chapters, Sri Aurobindo explained how Supermind is the creator of the universe through its comprehending and apprehending power. It deploys the Real Ideas through cosmic determinates. He now goes back to the source of the determination in Sat-Chit-Ananda, in particular the role played by Sat (Existence, Being) in the creative process.

Sri Aurobindo indicates that Sat (the Being, the Pure Existent; that which we identify as Spirit and Truth; and that which is the first "manifestation" of the unmanifest, ineffable division of Brahman), contains three aspects:

(1) Atman

This is the Self of all existence, the cosmic Self. It constitutes, envelops, pervades, sustains, all things; is omnipresent in all. It is silent, immutable (unchanging), uninvolved, impersonal; experienced as transcendent. It is the ultimate, source consciousness that supports, envelops, informs all. [It is the source Brahman of which all things in the cosmos are infinitely variable formations of.]

(2) Purusha

It is Soul, the Conscious Being; self-aware of its existence. It is the Silent Witness that stands back from the creation, the activities of Nature in an exclusive concentration. It limits itself to a spiritual status, putting away from it any activity. [Eg when we meditate or are

otherwise stationed in the Inner Being, we move to stillness, and therefore we are Silent Witness to the unfoldings of the world.】

(3) Ishwara

Ishwara is the Self/Atman but as Divine Being, the Supreme Person, the All-person, who is Master and Creator of the universe. Ishwara is the source of all powers, the creator of all energies; the source of all personalities and individuality; the ruler of all work. Ishwara is conscious of all, is aware of the truth of all things, is the inhabitant of all. Ishwara is Lord & Master that wills, governs, possesses. Ishwara is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Ishwara is Friend; the All-Beloved Lover. The Enjoyer of all delight. 【Ishwara is like the entrepreneur who has a vision of a great company, makes it real, becomes the head of his staff, makes the key decisions, has full authority to do as necessary, is aware of all developments in the business, applies high values, and is continually executing a strategic plan for accomplishment and progress.】

In the diagram below, we see Sat in its three aspects in relation to Sat-Chit-Ananda.

THE ABSOLUTE (Infinite, Reality, Brahman)		
SAT Existence (Being)	CHIT Conscious-Force	ANANDA Delight
1. Atman (Self) -- 2. Purusha (Conscious Being, Silent Witness, Spirit, Soul) -- 3. Ishwara (Divine Being, Creator)	--	--

Extra: All are from the Nine

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that all in the universe is a result of these three influences; that everything we experience in life is a result of them.

Actually, all that occurs in the universe is the result of nine influences; the three we have just covered, the three powers of each (which we will learn about next), as well as Sat (existence), Chit (Conscious-

Force), and Ananda (Delight) itself, (of which in this chapter we are focusing only on Sat (Existence)).

These in turn express through cosmic values and qualities (also called Cosmic Determinates or Real Ideas) that go forth in life - including silence, peace, truth, knowledge, goodness, will, beauty, love, joy, timelessness, infinity, etc.- so that life can experience and realize them in full in the Many, the evolution. All of existence is in the process of fulfilling these cosmic values and determinates. That includes all that happens in our own individual lives.

Three Powers: Maya (for Atman), Prakriti (for Purusha), Shakti (for Ishwara)

Still the question remains: which of the three is truly the real determinate of creation; of existence in the universe? They all exist and determine our lives, but which enabled a universe of forms to emerge from an Infinite consciousness?

To help us make that decision, we need to know the *power* that each of the three utilize in its cosmic functioning.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that there are three powers: Maya, Prakriti, and Shakti.

-*Maya* is the power to conceive of, imagine possibilities, while still retaining oneness amongst them. Atman/Self uses this power.

-*Prakriti* is the power of Nature in creation. Purusha uses this power to bring about itself. Through the slow, difficult movements of Nature (Prakriti), the consciousness or soul of forms reveal themselves. **[When we have problems in Life we are caught in the web of Prakriti, of Nature, but through our working through it, we become Purusha, the Conscious Being.]**

-*Shakti* is pure power of intention and will. Ishwara uses the power of Shakti to create the world through Supermind; to manifest forms as real in creation. **[It is akin to the act of creating something, like writing a novel, with all its meaning, intentions, values, etc. where we use our will and power to make it real. That force and will is similar to the Shakti and Force behind the will of the Ishwara. The divine Mother acting in the world, the supramental action is that will of creation in the universe. It is the power of the Creator aspect of the Divine, the Ishwara.]**

Capacity to Determine Reality

Having explored the three aspects of Sat and their corresponding powers, Sri Aurobindo then examines the capacity of each of those

aspects to *determine* reality. Which he asks is the ultimate determinate of Reality?

He indicates that there are two ways to measure their capacity to determine Reality: (a) its capacity to *conceptualize possibilities*, and (b) its capacity to *execute them*, i.e. make them real in a potential universe.

Sri Aurobindo then weighs the three aspects and powers against the two criteria to determine which is the ultimate influence and determinant of Reality.

-He tells us that *Atman* (Self) through the power of *Maya* has the capacity to create/imagine possibilities; to supports and inform, but not to dynamically execute, making things happen. It can imagine the universe in its various aspects, but not execute that; make it real in the universe. (*It is therefore conceptually creative, but not dynamically executive.*)

-*Purusha* (Self as Conscious Being, Witness, Spirit, Soul) uses the power of *Prakriti*, the limitation consciousness of Nature for life to first emerge. Through the limited consciousness of Nature (*Prakriti*), life gradually emerges toward its higher aspects of *Purusha* (Conscious Being, Witness, Soul, Spirit).

Purusha therefore is dynamically executive to create, unfold. Yet it is not conceptually creative/imaginative. It can manifest unfolding in creation through its deputy *Prakriti*, Nature, but not conceive/imagine what that should be.

However, the third aspect, *Ishwara* (the Divine Being, the Creator) works through the force, power of *Shakti* (represented by the Divine Mother) and can both conceive/imagine and execute. It can conceive/imagine a universe *and* have the power to manifest it as real. *It is thus Conceptually creative and dynamically executive.* It is very much the engine of creation, with Supermind as its instrument. **Ishwara is thus the true determinate of creation and therefore Reality. Key!**

[We can see a metaphor and reality for *Ishwara's* capacity. Imagine a writer, such as Jane Austen in her role as novelist and more for her novel 'Pride and Prejudice.' As writer, she conceives the story. As producer, she watches the performance. As director (Lord), she commands over its movement. As actor, she is conscious within each character. She is all these things simultaneously, just as *Ishwara* is.]

The three aspects of Sat, the power behind each, and each aspect's capacity to conceptualize and execute are summarized as follows:

SAT (Existence, Being)		
<i>Division of Sat:</i>		
Atman (Self, The original, undefinable, infinite condition) Supports, informs	Purusha (Conscious Being, Witness, Soul Spirit) Experiences	Ishwara (Divine Being, God, Creator) Wills, governs, possesses its world of manifestation
<i>Power Used:</i>		
Maya (divider in unity)	Prakriti (Nature)	Shakti (Force, Power)
Capacity:		
Conceptually Creative It is Conceptually creative through the power of Maya. It can conceive (the universe), but not execute.	Dynamically Executive It is dynamically executive through the power of Prakriti (Nature). It can execute (the universe), but not conceive it.	Conceptually Creative & Dynamically Executive It is both conceptually creative and dynamically executive through the power of Shakti (and therefore has greatest power). It can conceive and execute the universe.

Results of Reuniting of Opening to Ishwara through the Divine Mother **KEY!**

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that we can participate in the creation process. That when we open to the Ishwara (Creator) through the Divine Mother, the supramental Shakti acts and overcomes the limits of our being; moving life from our current state of inconscience born of matter to a state of consciousness. It is through our self-giving and surrender of our self and nature to the Divine Being that we can attain to our highest self and supreme Reality.

[This is perhaps the key to the chapter. He is suggesting that just as the Ishwara, the Creator aspect of the Divine, enables the creation, so too each of us can become an Ishwara - opening to and surrendering to the Mother, the supramental power, - thereby creating infinitely, while bringing the divine attributes into the details of Life; in effect,

furthering the Evolution. This is our method and cosmic purpose on earth.]

Introduction to Infinite, Time, Timelessness, Space, Etc. from Sat

Sri Aurobindo now shifts direction and explains how out of Existence (Sat) emerges infinity, finite, time, timelessness, eternity, space, etc. All of these are determined by Sat (Existence).

First, he will focus on the Finite/Infinity aspect, including the nature of the Infinite consciousness, the logic of that Infinity, and how we can make that a practical concept for us to live in our own lives.

PT. 2 PERCEIVING THE LOGIC OF THE INFINITE

Sri Aurobindo begins by reminding us that the Infinite is the Brahman, the Absolute. Moreover, it has its own cosmic workings and logic. However, our minds are not capable of perceiving that logic. It is only when we move to our deeper consciousness within (soul, psychic being), and then rise to Supramental perception that we can fully know the Infinite's ways and true workings; Its profound Logic. Or to put it another way, Mind, as an instrument of the Ignorance, cannot know the Logic of the Infinite, but an Infinite Consciousness can.

[Eg our ordinary mind does not see what is behind the phenomenon of 'synchronicity,' calling it coincidence or simply ignoring it. Or when an instance of sudden good fortune occurs, one does not ordinarily associate it with a raising of consciousness that took place shortly before – such as an inner movement out of a negative attitude that precipitated it. There are also dozens if not hundreds of subtle life laws that Karmayogi and other have explained in terms of acts, accomplishment, and spiritual development that the normal human mind does not follow, but that a spiritualized mind – from intuition to supramental perception -- that is educated in these principles can.

Thus, the reasons for life's outcomes and more are explained by the Logic of the Infinite, while our normal awareness steeped in a mental finite logic cannot explain them.]

Infinite as Practical Concept

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that when we seize the fundamental truths of the Infinite that are continually expressing, its Logic, we will garner a profound power in life, increasingly manifest a higher consciousness in a myriad of way, and uplift our existence to their ultimate, infinite possibility, enabling a Divine Life.

Infinite is a Practical Concept

Sri Aurobindo adds that by knowing the laws governing life, i.e. realizing Logic of the Infinite, the Infinite becomes a *practical* concept and reality for us, not something far off and distant from our current existence. I.e. we can use it in very practical way to enable us to have ultimate power of understanding and of action in every moment in time.

[Logic of Finite vs. Logic of the Infinite

Here are some thoughts on what the finite mind can perceive vs what the Infinite knows.

- Why things happen the way they do is not known by the finite mind and its logic, but is explained fully through the Logic of the Infinite.
- The action, purpose, and significance of the unfoldings of life in the universe are incomprehensible to the finite mind, but can be explained by the Logic of the Infinite
- The sudden shifts in situations, conditions, etc. are understood only superficially by the mind, but is fully explained by the Logic of the Infinite
- The failure and success of actions are understood slightly through the logic of the finite mind, but is fully and integrally explained in the Logic of the Infinite
- The relationship the play, the player, and the playing field in the unfolding of our lives are barely known through the finite cognition of the mind, but are fully perceived through the Logic of the Infinite.
- The rationality of the mind has a very limited, finite understanding of circumstance, whereas the Infinite sees it from all sides.
- We want certain things to occur, and when it does or doesn't, we do not understand, but the Infinite does.
- We can shift from our current finite status and learn all of that which governs the Logic of the Infinite, enabling us to become infinite in power, scope, capacity, realization, consciousness, as well.]

The Nature of the Infinite (and ways we can emulate it)

Now Sri Aurobindo draws back and addresses the issue of what the Infinite itself actually is.

Unmanifest/Pure Being and Manifest/Dynamic in Unity

A first thing he does is examine the Big Picture of the Infinite; including what it is and what purpose it serves. He reiterates that the Infinite has an original status of the One. However, being static in consciousness and being has extended Itself to a dynamic status of multiplicity in the Many.

He also reiterates that the unmanifest/static One and the manifest/dynamic many are not simply two separate divisions of Itself, but are in fact inextricably related in an integral unity and oneness. **[The Infinite, the Reality is not just the sum of the unmanifest and manifest, but also their integral harmonic interconnectedness. We are not just an infinite variety of manifest forms, but are One with the unmanifest Source from which we came. Our entire existence is bound up with it.]**

Creates What is Already in Itself

Sri Aurobindo also makes the fascinating remark that the Infinite does not create something completely new out of itself, but rather manifests what is already in itself, including its essence of unity. **[That which emerges in the Many is simply different formations of Itself. Eg, matter is a dense, obscure form of spirit. Mind a subtler form, but not yet spirit itself, etc.]**

Infinite Variation of Itself

Sri Aurobindo thus reiterates the notion that the Many (essentially the manifest) contains infinite variations and expressions of the One in force and form. **[The Many was devised as extension of the One to enable infinite variation of force and form in the Many so that it could have the experience of infinite variation of Discovery of its higher nature, bringing infinite variation of Joy.]**

“The Absolute, Brahman, the Omnipresent Reality is Infinite. It is infinite not just in quantity. It is also infinite *in qualities*, as well as in the dimensions of space, time, property, color, texture or design. It is Infinite in each of these dimensions and there is infinity of dimensions – dimensions of consciousness, knowledge, energy, force, power, form, beauty, love and ananda. Thus, the Absolute is an Infinity of Infinities. It is Infinity to the power of Infinity, Infinity -- ∞.” (MSS)

Boundless Totality

Sri Aurobindo posits that the Many is not just an infinitely varying multitude, but the *quantity* of that multitude is boundless, without end. **[Perhaps he is simply indicating that there can be endless numbers of forces and forms in creation; in the many.]**

Indeterminable by Anything; Self-Determining; Determines All

Going back to the previous chapter – as well as the central issue in this one -- Sri Aurobindo reiterates that the Infinite is indeterminable **[I.e. nothing determines It.]** Thus, it is self-determination; determines its own existence. And looking at it from the other direction, the Infinite determines All; all aspects of the multiplicity of the Many.

[We can collaborate with its determination; by opening to the Will of the Infinite consciousness. That would give us ultimate power and purpose in life, while fulfilling the Higher Intent.]

Self-Determining/Conceiving, Self-Limiting, Self-Absorbing Powers

In one of the most important descriptions of the Infinite, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Infinite consciousness has not only a power of Self-Determination, but also of Self-Limitation and Self-Absorption.

Self-Determination was explained earlier. The Infinite is determined by nothing, It determines itself, and It determines all that comes from it (creation).

Self-Limitation is the power to create individual specialization from out of a common totality, universality, or mass. Thus, each thing – force, form, object, person, etc. - would have its own self-truth.

Self-Absorption, a third power of the Infinite Consciousness, is a plunging into itself, in which all would be involved. In it, the knowledge and inner consciousness would be lost in pure being. It is the state we know as “inconscience.” [The outcome of the involution from the Infinite to matter, there is an elimination of consciousness and knowledge, to the point that in matter, it is all but gone, though involved, hidden, in its depth. Matter is essentially the inconscience.]

[Using the Three Powers of Creation in Our Own Lives Key

One key Sri Aurobindo brings out is that we too can manifest the qualities and nature of this Infinite consciousness. That like the Infinite, we too can engage in the process of creation by utilizing the three powers.

I.e. I can self-determine, self-conceive that which I wish to be or become (Self-Determination). I then select that specific element or aspect that I am interested in creating/becoming, within the realm of infinite possibilities (Self-Limitation). I then completely focus and absorb my energies on that which I selected and limited myself to, forgetting all other matters in order to accomplish it (Self-absorption). Or as Sri Aurobindo says, one is concentrated, self-absorbed in the one thing one has self-limited oneself to.

If I follow that process, I will create infinitely in the world; just like the Infinite consciousness that enabled an infinite-like universe. It is in essence the Process of Creation that Sri Aurobindo is revealing to the world that we can follow in our own lives.]

The Infinite/Brahman/Reality that is Individual, Universal, and Transcendent

Finally, Sri Aurobindo reiterates things he has said about the Infinite, Brahman, the Reality. [These three are really the same thing.] He tells us that the Infinite is the triune aspects of the *Transcendent* that is behind and sustains the universe; the *Universal* that upholds all being in the cosmos; and the *Individual* who manifests the other two through

one's soul and psychic being. In other words, *the Infinite can express itself as Transcendent, Universal, and Individual*. [This is similar to what he says in the early chapter about the omnipresent Reality; that it is Individual, Universal, and Transcendent.]

It also turns out we as human beings can also manifest these three aspects in his own being. In other words, the individual consciousness can see itself as a true, developed Individual [i.e. with connection to his psychic being], as well as being a universal being who fulfills the universal purpose, as well as transcendent [the divine will, intention, expression] in his nature. In this way, the individual can realize all these aspects of the Infinite in his life and being.

PT. 3 THE NATURE OF SPACE AND TIME

Now that Sri Aurobindo has described the nature of the Infinite, including its qualities, planes, and logic, as well how we can evoke its power, making it a practical concept for us, he moves on to explain the nature Space and Time. Again, he begins by indicating that they emerged out of Sat (Existence/Being) of Sat-chit-ananda.

Space and Time

Sri Aurobindo makes the general statement that Space is the Infinite/Brahman self-extended for the holding together of forms and objects. [In essence, Space is extension to allow forms and objects to exist.] Time, on the other hand, is the Infinite/Brahman self-extended for the deployment of *movement*, carrying forms and objects. [In essence, Time is extension in movement.]

Space in Relation to Infinity; Time in Relation to Eternity

Sri Aurobindo also indicates what the ultimate truth and nature of Space and Time, which is their spiritual quality. He says that the fundamental truth and original status of Space is the infinity of the Infinite. [Space is originally infinite in capacity, though we only perceive its finite nature.]

On the other hand, the original status of Time is the eternity of the Eternal. [I.e. Time exists eternally, though we only perceive time moments; i.e. limits of measured time.]

In this context, we see that both Space and Time are the original *spiritual* extension. [I.e. they were the first extensions to come out of spirit. And they mimic or hold within themselves, or have in essence Spiritual aspects/qualities; namely *infinity* (for space), and timelessness (for time). (These are the first two cosmic determinates, followed by peace, truth, goodness, beauty, love, delight, etc.)]

Eternity in the Timeless and in Time

Now Sri Aurobindo hones in on Time; particularly as it relates to Eternity. He indicates that there are two forms of eternity. One in the unmanifest, and the other in the manifest. There is an Eternity in the *Timeless*, which is an *immobile* status. There is also an Eternity in *Time*, which is of *motion in status*. [The Timelessness of the Divine is a forever, an Eternity, but there is no movement. When we meditate, and all thoughts cease, and the world falls away, we can have a glimpse of this. The Time in the cosmos, the universe can go on forever, an eternity, but it is measured in the motion of things. We say it can “take an eternity for that to happen.” Once my spiritual teacher told me to be patient, as if I had all eternity for X to come about. This is the Time of eternity in the universe.]

Time, Space, and Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that there is a relationship between Time and consciousness, with each person and their particular consciousness having a different experience of it. Thus, the experience of Time in Mind Space is a subject phenomenon, which is different than that of Physical Space, which is more objective. [When I am centered in my Mind, Time seems to go faster than when I am centered in my emotions of the Vital, where it seems to slow down. When I am in the physical consciousness, it goes slowest still. Eg, when I am absorbed in a book time flies, but if I am in pain or stuck in a jail cell with nothing to do, time seems to go by very slowly. Then there is the Spirit. When centered there, time happens in a flash; which we can call timelessness or perhaps instantaneousness. Eg in a meditation, an hour can seem to go by in five minutes.]

Thus, we can say that Time depends on the consciousness and position of the observer.

Time and Subjectivity

Now Sri Aurobindo links time and space to subjectivity and objectivity in describing their nature, which is closely related to the previous topic on time's relation to consciousness.

First, he tells us that subjectivity and objectivity are two sides of our consciousness. Within this definition, he then describes Time. He indicates that Time has *no objective reality*, but is a *subjective* phenomenon. And what determines that subjectivity of time? It is the status of the consciousness (of the reality, including we humans). [This fits in with the earlier idea Sri Aurobindo presented when he indicated that the status of time depends on the plane of consciousness from which time is experienced – physical, vital, mental, and spiritual.]

Simultaneous Experience of Triple Time-Eternity Vision as Ultimate Experience of Time

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on how we can have an ultimate relationship to time in our lives. He indicates that this ultimate perception would be a triple time vision. It is the simultaneous embracing of three views of eternity:

(1) The experience of Time we normally perceive, which is an Eternity as it goes on forever.

(2) The experience of the timeless eternity (of the eternal Being) as the Rishis' experienced it, yet have it within our lives.

[Instead of being lost in Moksha and its timelessness as the Rishis expertise it, we feel that way as we move along in our lives through meditation, consecration, concentration, right perception of flow of events, etc.]

(3) The eternity of seeing the past, present, and future in the eternal now.

[It is to experience the past, present, and future as one undivided arc of time.

One result is that from that perspective one can have power over the three. I.e. from the current moment, you have a power over past, present, and future. E.g. from the present moment you can consecrate an upcoming activity and thereby create a positive outcome of that future. Or you can "past-consecrate" a negative outcome rooted in the past cancelling the detrimental impact it is having on the present; even changing that past outcome in the first place!]

Perceiving the integration of the three views of eternity simultaneously is what Sri Aurobindo refers to as the Triple Time Vision; or Simultaneous Time.

But how do we have this Triple vision and experience of time; simultaneous time? He says it is experienced when we connect with our evolving soul within; the Psychic Being.

BONUS ESSAY

Please see the Bonus Essay at the end of this book 'Individuality and the Manifestation of Infinity' by Garry Jacobs of Mother's Service Society, which directly relates to the issues addressed in this chapter, including how we can become the Ishwara in Life and therefore infinite creator by opening to the Divine Mother.

ADDENDUM TABLE: Here is a table of spiritual determinates and values emanating from the Source consciousness.

Cosmic Determinates (Real Ideas, Spiritual Values)		
THE ABSOLUTE (Infinite, Reality, Brahman)		
<u>Sat</u> (Existence, Being) <u>Brahma</u> <u>Purusha</u> <u>Ishwara</u>	<u>Chit</u> (Conscious-Force)	<u>Ananda</u> (Delight)
Infinity, Eternity, Silence, Truth, Goodness	Knowledge, Will, Power	Beauty, Love, Delight
Supermind		
Mind		
Life		
Matter		



The Eternal and the Individual

(Book 2 Chapter III)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that through an inward and upwards self-unfolding of consciousness, we can overcome our essential Ignorance born of creation, replacing it with an Integral Truth and Knowledge.

Limits of Logical Mind -- He then focuses on the utility, but also the limits of logical Mind to break out of that Ignorance and come in touch with that Knowledge, as it is only capable of perceiving a very small part of the truth of a matter. He then tells us that this is so because Logical Mind, i.e. reason identifies the individual self with the ego.

Ego's Negative Effect on Mind -- He then says that the problem with Ego is that it tends to internalize the workings of life Nature, viewing it from its own limited perspective. Thus, we perceive only the small part of things; i.e., those we identify with; only a part of any or the entire Truth.

From Ego to Greater Self -- To break this false individualization and perceptions of existence by ego, we need to come in touch with our Greater Self and World Being.

Greater Self and Connection with Others -- Sri Aurobindo tells us that when we move to the soul and Self within, we come in touch with a wider existence, enabling us to connect to other souls, individuals, and the cosmic. He thus asks us to come in touch with this True Individuality, which will break the bounds of ego and separativeness, enabling us to live in unity and mutuality with others. (This is the key point of the chapter.)

Utility of Positive and Negative -- Then moving in another direction Sri Aurobindo acknowledges the utility of both the positive and the negative for progress in life, and how the latter is teeming with force, with potentiality for progress; to enable life to move forward. (He will take up this idea more fully in the next chapter.)

Contradictions are Really Complements -- Along a closely related line, Sri Aurobindo reiterates that when we rise to our highest consciousness, all dualities, contradictions in life can be seen for what they really are -- as complements, i.e. complementary pairs.

Here are the main points in detail:

Our Essential Ignorance vs. Integral Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo begins by describing the difference between our essential Ignorance and the Integral Knowledge we can move towards. He indicates we need to discover the nature of our essential Ignorance, and the Knowledge that must replace it. He tells us that through our inward and upward self-unfolding of consciousness, we discover that Knowledge. [Inward is into depths of being, culminating in the psychic being, we are in touch with all dimensions of eternal existence; and upward, e.g. beyond Mind to Supermind and even to being, we do the same. Both are thus conduits for moving from Ignorance to Integral Knowledge.]

Utility and Limits of Logical Mind and Our Ignorance

He then focuses on the fact that the logical mind is helpful in breaking the Ignorance, but is limited. He says that it is helpful for overcoming the essential Ignorance by the partial understanding, intellectualization, et al of normal mind, but itself cannot arrive at the Knowledge we are seeking. He says that it is more a guardian against error than a discoverer of truth; that its propensities to make distinctions are stumbling blocks on the road to Integral Knowledge. [Mind of sense misses most of the truth of the object. Logical Mind can garner one or two aspects, though we tend to argue for them (which is intellectualization). Only spiritual Mind (silent, illumined, intuitive, overmind (universal) and supermind are the planes from which we can garner the integral truth of a thing, object, which is the basis for overcoming our essential Ignorance than leads to Integral Knowledge.]

Limits of Reason Caused by Ego, Preventing Integral Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo then addresses the reason why Logical Mind is so limited. He says that the main problem is that the reason identifies the individual self with the ego, and the exclusions of consciousness that arise when we are absorbed in ego. [Through the lower planes of Mind, even logical mind, we focus on one or two aspects, or one line of reasoning, and insist on it, as our ego has come to the fore and asserted its attachment to the limited understanding we have.]

He then explains what the problems of ego are. In particular, he focuses on the fact that through our ego we tend to *centralize the activities of*

Nature in ourselves. That is, Ego tends to internalize the workings of life Nature, Life, viewing it from its own limited perspective. Thus, we perceive only the small part of things; i.e., those we identify with; only a part of any or the entire Truth. **[Ego identifies the workings of Nature with our own selves, causing us to be out of truth with the Truth of things. This individualization of the workings of Nature is the essential behind his Ignorance, preventing Integral Knowledge and Truth of any object, any thing; of life itself, including its workings.]**

Thus, if we are to move out of the Ignorance and towards Integral Knowledge, we need to somehow move out of ego. To do that, we have to see beyond this individualization of ego to *our greater self and world being*. We have to come to see that this self of our individuality is not only an ego self, but one that embraces the whole world and all other beings.

Moving Out of Ego and Ignorance through Soul Connection Key

Now we come to the crux of the chapter. How do we move towards this wider self, this individuality that embraces the whole of existence beyond ego? He says when we *move to the soul and Self, we move towards this wider existence*.

Then in what ways do we move to this wider existence through soul and Self? For one, he says that this Self and Soul connects us to *other souls, individuals, and the cosmic. This is the unity of being; in Self*.

[Through soul connection, we move out of ego and individualization, and open to the wider sphere, including other individuals, their soul, and the universal/cosmic planes of existence. This enables us to break the barrier of separation of self with Other, the dual, enabling non-dual with others and the cosmos. We thus move from separation to oneness and unity, which in turn enables us to take a far wider perception of the truth of things, enabling us to cast aside the limited perceptions in our Ignorance, and open the doorways to *many-sided*, true Integral Knowledge of things.]

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that there are thus two becomings of the Self – one individual, the other cosmic **[i.e. one Individual, the other, universal and transcendent]**. Moreover, these two becomings are always interrelated and mutually dependent. For the liberated soul, the individual Self who comes in contact with the cosmic Self, perceives that all is in each and each is in all; and that all is in God and God is all. **[Beautifully put. I.e. through the realization of this dual Individual and Universal Self, he perceives that everything is in himself, and that he himself is part of that all.**

Furthermore, from that harmonic plane, he perceives that God is not merely something behind or separated from existence, but that all things make up God, even as God expresses through each thing. God is thus the Omnipresent Reality, Brahman, the Absolute.]

Perceiving our True Individuality that Enables Our Unity, Mutuality with Others Key

Thus, Sri Aurobindo asks us to consider the fact that we are fully capable of moving from our current, normal, limited individual status to becoming the True Individual. This person is not the ego, and yet who has a relationship with other individuals. **[This True Individual has broken the bounds of limited self, to a wider Self, where he is one with other and life, and therefore has many-sided knowledge and Truth of things. He is a True Individual because he is now able to perceive things in fantastic ways that the normal individual cannot; who is attached to the small, common view of things.]**

The true individual is a conscious power of the being of the Eternal in his power of individualizing self experience; living in unity and mutuality with others. This is the key point of the chapter.

Utility and Power of the Negative

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on several particular ways Man expresses his Ignorance.

One has to do with how we see the positive and negatives of life. He says that rather than look at the negatives as we normally do, we should understand that they are packed with force, teeming with power of existence, full of actual or potential contents. **[Negatives are actually more intense forms of the positive that are very helpful for evolving life; for doing it quickly and integrally.]**

He says that the negatives bring in the rest of the possibilities of the Absolute that the positive does not allow for. **[E.g. by allowing for negative like suffering, evil, ignorance, error, falsehood, etc. we allow for far greater possibilities of unfolding in life. Life has a richness now for unfolding that enables all sorts of possibilities, and infinitely positive outcomes that a positive only existence would not allow for. The Play of Life is enriched through the negative expressions in life, enabling vastly varied resolution, progress, and delight of discovery.]**

A particular example: a great war may seem negative from one point of view, but from another, it may clear the way to great possibilities it may have not had before. Thus, WWII was negative in terms of suffering, but it ended Colonialism, brought about the European Union, allowed for new formations of World Unity, overcame Man's physicality and brutish nature to a large degree, etc.]

From here, Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that everything has the Eternal in it, including the negative. I.e. the Absolute includes all and everything. That it is not bound to the limits of the positive. **[The Reality, Brahman is the All, and includes the positive and negative in all their iterations and variations. And each and every thing serves the divine Intention, Purpose, and Unfolding.]**

Seeing Contradictions as Complements through Higher Consciousness **Profound**

Sri Aurobindo then says that when we rise to our highest consciousness, all dualities, contradictions in life can be seen for what they really are - as complements, i.e. complementary pairs. **[This is profound indeed!]**
On the other hand, the human reason sees contradictions.

Unity of All Things in the Absolute **Profound**

Sri Aurobindo concludes that from this highest consciousness we perceive that all realities of existence stand in a primary relationship to each other in a free unity of the Absolute. **[Karmayogi says that this is a vision of "The Marvel" of existence.]**



The Divine and the Undivine

(Book 2 Chapter IV)

Summary

Continuing a theme he introduced in the last chapter, Sri Aurobindo explains the necessity and utility of the Undivine -- the Nescience, Inconscience, Ignorance, and Imperfection -- to allow for the greatest possibilities, varying intentions, which in turn enables the greatest diversity and multiplicity of Delight (which occurs when we discover our higher nature).

He begins by explaining that the source of the Undivine, its fall, and imperfection proceeds from the phenomenon of division or rupture in the Unity of Existence.

Reason for Ignorance and Imperfection

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on and explains the reason and utility of both the Ignorance and the Imperfection in creation.

In terms of the *Ignorance* he says that the supreme Knowledge limits itself to multitudes of Ignorance in order to work out all of Its intentions; and to construct universal harmonies through these ignorances.

In terms of the *Imperfection* he says that by constructing multitudes of Imperfection that greater *perfection* in life is made possible. He also explains that through a gradual movement from imperfection to perfection, there is the eventual victory in knowledge, power, possibility, over impossibility, etc. And through that process of discovery one experiences an increasing Joy.

Reason for Self-Limitation of Consciousness, the Fall

Broadening beyond Ignorance and Imperfection Sri Aurobindo explains the reason for the original Self-Limitation in Consciousness in the entire Involution; why there is the Fall into nescience, division, Ignorance, and Imperfection in the universe.

First, he tells us that this Self-Limitation of Consciousness is sanctioned by the Divine because it serves a role in the uplifting of Man. He then explains that the Divine has purposefully decided to limit its force and consciousness, and through the difficult workings of various possibilities, works out Its intentions. I.e. to manifest Its Real Ideas as forms in creation, it has self-limited Its consciousness to allow for every possibility -- positive and negative, good and evil, and Ignorance and Imperfection.

Imperfections, Evil are Really a Process toward Unity

Finally, Sri Aurobindo tells us that at one level, from the perspective of the highest consciousness, these imperfections are not really "imperfect," but rather indicate a process of an unfolding in oneness and unity, thus serving the great, Divine Purpose. The same is true for Evil in the world.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Source of the Undivine, the Fall, Imperfection

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that the undivine, the fall, the imperfection in life (and before it) all proceeds from the phenomenon of division or rupture in the Unity of Existence.

Expression of Divided Nature in Our Mentality

That division, contradiction that breaks up the inherent unity of existence, expresses in mental being. He says that in our mentality, we develop wrong consciousness and understanding, which leads to incapacity, inertia, falsehood, error, pain and grief, wrong-doing, discord, and evil.

The Divine Sanction the Imperfections of Life

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to tell us that imperfection's manifestation -- as contradiction, division, ego, and separative functioning -- is in fact *sanctioned* by the Divine. The Undivine, the Fall, the Imperfection can even be perceived as a *power* of the Divine, as it serves a role in the uplifting of Man.

Reasons and Utility of Ignorance, Imperfection

In perhaps the most important part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo focuses on why the Divine sanctions the Imperfection and Fall. He says the Divine sanctions imperfection, division, contradiction etc. in order to allow for the greatest variety, multiplicity, and possibility of being.

[which in turn allows for the greatest diversity of discovery in life; hence Delight.]

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain how the Divine sanctions the Fall, and even sees it as a divine *Power* through two particular expressions of it -- in terms of the *Ignorance* and in terms of *Imperfection*. Let's explore this

A. The *Ignorance's* Divine Sanction & Power to Work Out the Divine's Intentions and to Construct Universal Harmonies

First, he discusses how the Divine sanctions the *Ignorance*, perceiving its utility, even its great power. He tells us that Supreme Consciousness and Knowledge limits Itself to multitudes of Ignorance for two purposes.

1. To work out all of its intentions

To paraphrase: It is only a supreme self-possessing Knowledge, which can thus be powerful to limit itself in the act and yet work out perfectly all its intentions through that apparent ignorance.

[The Divine has innumerable Real Ideas it seeks to manifest in the world as forms of those ideas. It can work out all its intentions along these lines when and where there are the greatest variety and possibilities. The Ignorance allows for this.]

2. To Construct universal harmonies through these ignorances

To paraphrase: In the universe we see this supreme self-possessing Knowledge work through a multitude of ignorance, each striving to act according to its own blindness, yet through them all it constructs and executes universal harmonies.

B. The *Imperfection's* Necessity

Sri Aurobindo tells us Imperfection becomes a necessary term of the manifestation: for, since all the divine nature is concealed but present in the Inconscient, it must be *gradually* delivered out of it. This graduation necessitates a *partial unfolding*, and this partial character or completeness of the unfolding necessitates imperfection.

Thus, through this gradual unfolding from out Imperfection, there is the eventual victory in knowledge, power, possibility, over impossibility, etc.

Partial Movements of Progress from Imperfection to Perfection, and the Joy of the Discovery

A few other points about the partial movements out of Imperfection to Perfection.

Sri Aurobindo says that through ever-higher gradations, we are lifted out of these imperfections in the evolution. However, these being gradations necessitate a *partial* -- not a complete - unfolding.

Moreover, this process from imperfection to perfection through partial unfoldings, through gradation brings us the Joy of Discovery at each point along the way, fulfilling the Intent of the Divine.

By hiding Himself in the involution, we can elevate our nature and discover Him in various processes in life -- including the process of the gradual, partial movement from imperfection to perfection -- enabling us to experience the Joy and delight of Being.

The Reason for the Original Self-Limitation in Consciousness in the Involution

Sri Aurobindo then goes back to explain why there is this entire Fall from the Supreme Consciousness to the Unconsciousness of existence in creation in the first place. In other words, why there is a Self-Limiting of the Supreme consciousness in the involution, that expresses through our Ignorance, Imperfection, and Evil.

First, he tells us that like the Ignorance and the Imperfection, the Fall that is this original process of Self-Limitation was intended and is sanctioned by and is the very purpose of the Divine.

Then he describes the purpose of Self-Limiting Its Consciousness in the involutionary process before creation. He tells us the Divine has purposefully decided to limit its force and consciousness, and through the difficult workings of various possibilities works out its intentions which express through produce positive and negative effects, which are worked through to achieve the secret intention of manifestation of Its Real Ideas and Higher Harmonies into the forces and forms in the Manifestation.

"Through the sum of the many limited workings that the indivisible Omnipotence executes infallibly and sovereignly its purposes. The power to limit its force and to work through that self-limitation, by what we call labor, struggle, difficulty, by what seems to us as a series of failures or half-balked successes and through them to achieve its secret intention, is not therefore a sign, proof, or reality of weakness, but a sign, proof, reality, -- the greatest possible, -- of an absolute omnipotence."

[Self-Limitations for Individual or Collective Accomplishment – We can compare the process of Self-Limitation of the Infinite Divine and that of the individual or collective. Both seek to achieve their aims. The former

by a self-limitation in consciousness for the play of possibilities; the later so it can focus and achieve one thing from out of many possibilities.

In the process of creation and accomplishment for the individual or collective one out all the possibilities focuses on one particular thing, i.e. self-limiting ourselves to it. That enables a far greater possibility of accomplishing it, then if we chose many things, or allowed all. We can't accomplish everything at once, so we self-limit ourselves to one or a few things, and then concentrate and absorb ourselves in it so it manifests as real from out of our original idea. This mimics the way the Divine created the universe, in that it limits itself from infinite possibilities to focus on certain things to be made real, as forms in creation out of its own Intention, Real Ideas.]

Imperfections, Even Evil, Don't Exist; Serving a Great Purpose in their Processes as Seen from Higher Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that from a status of the highest consciousness, we know that these imperfections are not really "imperfect;" but rather indicate a process of an unfolding in oneness and unity, thus serving the great, Divine Purpose.

He says that they actually "creations of the Divine consciousness projecting mind away from its all-knowledge so as to realise these opposite or contrary values of its all power, all knowledge, all delight, all being and unity." **[Powerful statement!]** This integral movement to embrace all opposites and contradictions as a process of movement from imperfection to perfection is the Divine intent.

(He goes further still and says that even *Evil* does not exist from the perspective of our highest consciousness. That it too is part of a process and serves the Divine Purpose and Intent.)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Beyond Positive and Negative

Returning to a theme of the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo indicates that Creation unfolds itself as dualities one of which is positive and negative. There is nothing negative. To know the negative as positive is to know the Absolute.

[If we say that the greatest hiding enables the greatest Delight in its discovery, then the small, false, ignorant, et al movements out of the inconscience, is divinely sanctioned. Then all negatives as listed on p.405 are Divinely Sanctioned as necessary stages between the inconscience and the release of the hidden Divinity that gives greatest delight.]

[Even though this Ignorance, division, duality, pain, etc. do not exist at higher levels of consciousness (where instead there is oneness and

unity), at the lower levels, where it is perceived from and does "exist", it is Divinely sanctioned.】



The Cosmic Illusion

(Book 2 Chapter V)

Introduction to Next Several Chapters

In the previous chapter Sri Aurobindo began to explore the nature and reason for the Ignorance in creation. In the next group of chapters, he will try to uncover how the Ignorance expresses in we humans, as well as devise a way to overcome it so we can realize our highest consciousness and ultimate possibility.

Introduction to Chapter

Sri Aurobindo begins his quest to uncover the nature of the Ignorance in we humans by asking how does it express in our consciousness. Deferring to the Indian tradition he asks first asks if life is in fact an Illusion (Maya), and if so how does it relate to the Ignorance. He will conclude that there is no Illusion in life, and what we call Illusion is actually the Ignorance, which is very real. Having revealed this, let's summarize the process Sri Aurobindo goes through in the chapter to come to these conclusions.

Summary

The question Sri Aurobindo addresses in this chapter is whether the existence we perceive though our mind is real or is an illusion. He begins by telling us that the mind in its futile attempt to perceive life concludes that all life is an illusion and a dream, which is actually the basis of Buddhism and other world negating religions and teachings.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on dreaming; on whether it is real or an illusion. (On a sidetrack, he explains how we can have dreamless sleep by merging with the Source consciousness.) He concludes that dreaming is no illusion, and does in fact have a degree of reality. He comes to the same conclusion by examining the imagination of the mind.

In perhaps the most important statement Sri Aurobindo concludes that the limits of Mind to perceive reality indicate its perceptions are an *illusion* is mistaken. Rather the mind's perceptions of existence itself, including dreaming and imagination, are indication of its *Ignorance*, of its very limited knowledge of existence. *The illusion that Mind perceives is not due to the illusion of Existence, but due to its very limited understanding and knowledge of existence; i.e. its Ignorance.*

Sri Aurobindo goes on to reiterate that Mind is an instrument of ignorance because the illimitable Consciousness and Force of the being entered into a state of limitation and separateness in the involutory process. This is no illusion, but a reality of existence.

Here are the main points in detail:

Three Levels of Mind – Physical, Vital, and Mental

Sri Aurobindo begins by explaining three levels of mind; physical mind, vital mind, and thinking mind. Physical mind believes in the objective, not the subjective; in the material object. (E.g., science's empirical view is of the physical mind). Vital mind believes in the emotive satisfaction and pleasure. It has a life will. Thinking mind (i.e. mind proper, or rational mind) inquires into, questions all, and erects systems of certitude of what it knows.

Thinking Mind Perceives Its Limits and Believes in Illusion of All Beyond Human Effort and Terrestrial Endeavor

Sri Aurobindo then focuses in on one aspect of thinking mind, and how it is the original source of our perceiving that the world is an illusion. He says that a point in its analysis of life, it realizes that all its mental constructions are futile and therefore it begins to seek for something beyond itself. It perceives that all is a dream, a hallucination, a cosmic Illusion that there is an illusion beyond all human effort and terrestrial endeavor.

Sri Aurobindo concludes that world negating religions (such as Buddhism and followers of the teachings of Shankara in India) arise from the principle of negation.

Dreaming and Imagination

Now Sri Aurobindo begins to explore the more subjective workings of the mind, and whether those experiences are an illusion or real. He begins with sleep, and then goes on to imagination.

Dreaming is a Movement from Unconsciousness to Half Consciousness

He tells us that the source of dreaming is in the subconscious, i.e. subconscient. And behind it is the even less conscious Inconscient (i.e. unconsciousness). He says through sleep there is the movement from non-consciousness of the Inconscient to a half consciousness of the subconscient.

Means of Dreamless Sleep

Then Sri Aurobindo explores further nature of sleep; focusing on this best, most conscious sleep. According to him that entails having dreamless sleep.

He tells us that when we have dreamless sleep, we enter the realm of the inner consciousness, the Subliminal. Deeper still within the Subliminal, one can have complete dreamless sleep as one gets in touch with the universal consciousness. **[According to The Mother, when one touches these planes in sleep, one wakes up completely relaxed and refreshed; even if touched on for a very few minutes.]**

(He also tells us that one can even get in contact with worlds of beings that arose during the Involution, and worlds that have arisen in the evolution.)

The Dream State is No Illusion; It Has a Degree of Reality

Still, Sri Aurobindo has in mind the question of whether existence is illusory or real, and whether such a seemingly intangible realm as sleep is one or the other. Sri Aurobindo concludes that these source planes through which dreamless sleep are possible indicate that the dream state is not an illusion; that there is a degree of reality there.

Imagination's Relation to the Limits of Mind; and Its Ignorance, but is Not Illusory

Now Sri Aurobindo turns to a discussion of human imagination, and whether it is an illusion or real. To do this, he begins by focusing on the nature of Mind.

He tells us that Mind is limited in its knowledge of truth and actuality, and hence turns to imagination and discovery to supplement itself, which is its way of touching the Unknown. He concludes that our mental imagination is an instrument of Ignorance; a resort, device, and refuge for its limited knowledge; but the imaginations are not purely a cosmic Illusion.

In fact, imagination can create its own potentialities and possibilities in the world.

Mind and Its Dreams, Hallucinations, and Imaginations are Not Proof of Cosmic Illusion, but of Ignorance Key

Sri Aurobindo thus concludes that the dream states, cosmic hallucinations, imagination, and the mind itself are not proof of the cosmic Illusion. They are in fact not illusions, but are real; except that they are steeped in Ignorance.

The illusion that Mind perceives is not due to the illusion of Existence, but due to its very limited understanding and knowledge of existence; i.e. its Ignorance.

Mind is thus a force of Ignorance that is moving toward an integral Truth and Knowledge (culminating in the realms of an increasingly higher, spiritualized Mind).

Maya is Not Illusion but Ignorance

Sri Aurobindo also reiterates that he differs from the tradition when it comes to the concept of Maya. He says that Maya is not illusion, but an Ignorance that has a reality.

[Maya is in fact a Power, the dividing mechanism by which separate forms are enabled in creation (through the action of Supermind). I.e. to create separate forms (to enable the greatest variety and multiplicity of forms to have the widest experience of Delight), Maya allows for unconscious aspects of existence, including that of limited or non-knowledge, i.e. Ignorance. That dividing, form-creating role of (the Higher) Maya in creation, and the fact that it is not the source of illusion, but of Ignorance is explained in greater in the earlier chapter 'The Divine Maya.']

Limitation and Separateness of Mind is Not an Illusion, but an Original Ignorance and Inconscience Key

Sri Aurobindo concludes with a powerful statement about the relationship between Mind and Illusion. He tells us that Mind is an instrument of ignorance because the illimitable Consciousness and Force of the being entered into a state of limitation and separateness in the involutory process. This is no illusion, but a reality of existence.



Reality and the Cosmic Illusion

(Book 2 Chapter VI)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo, in painstaking detail, explains the limits of our view of cosmic Illusion, and then indicates that there is a fundamental Reality that contains all things, in which everything exists in an inherent unity. This reality expresses as an essential Being behind creation, as well as all things in creation in an inexorable integral Oneness.

Moreover, he revisits an earlier theme that it is only through a higher consciousness, through an intuitive and supramental capacity that we can penetrate and perceive the true nature of the Reality, including its infinitely variable aspects, its expressions in all planes in all things, and their integral oneness and unity.

Sri Aurobindo also explores what it would be like to have the Brahman consciousness that perceives the true nature of Reality

Finally, he explores the nature of the Reality in terms of time and timelessness; as well as Infinite and finite. He tells us that the timelessness of the Unmanifest can emerge in Time, and that the infinite can replace the current finite through the influence of the Spirit.

Here are the main points in detail:

1. BRAHMAN (& ITS ASPECTS) ARE REAL

Sri Aurobindo Asks, "Is Existence Real?"

Sri Aurobindo asks the questions: are the perceiver, the perception, and that which is perceived real, or an illusion? Moreover, is the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute itself real or an illusion?

Inadequacy of Illusion, Unreality as Answer

He begins this process by examining the various views that take life to be an Illusion in order to see if they explain the nature of the Reality, Brahman, the Absolute.

He indicates that the view of illusion or the unreality of cosmic existence solves no problem in understanding existence, as it only cuts the problem out for the individual, rather than untangle it. It is an escape from the issue or problem, not a solution.

He then reiterates that the traditional view of Maya as Illusion and Unreality is itself faulty. Maya is rather a power of differentiation, of difference; enabling specific formations of things to be created, to emerge from the whole.

[In the tradition, Maya is seen as the illusion of separate forms. But in his view, the Maya power enables the One to differentiate itself into the many. He actually calls this the Higher Maya, allowing the lower maya to be what the tradition believes. Thus, the Higher Maya power is that which turns the One into the Many through the instrumentality of Supermind, while the lower Maya is what those in the tradition who speak of Maya as the illusion of reality are referring to.

It is interesting that in both cases, it is related to the distinct objects and forms. In lower Maya, it is an illusion of not perceiving the true reality behind the form. In the Higher Maya, it is the power that creates those differentiated forms out of the One. Still in the end he indicates that the lower Maya is not a helpful view, whereas the Higher Maya process (via Supermind) is the very methodology that enables Creation; the Many out of the One.]

Brahman, (the World, the Universe) is Real

With unreality and illusion as non-starter explanation of existence, Sri Aurobindo concludes that Brahman, the Absolute, the Reality is in fact real. [I.e. it IS the real; includes all and there is nothing else. It is both Being and the Becoming, One and the Many, including all its variations.]

He says that in fact, *only* the Reality exists, and *all* is the Reality. Since all is the Reality, then the universe and all in it must be included. Therefore, the world, the universe is Real. (key)

Brahman Is a Real Power to Create the Real

He then reminds us that the consciousness and power of Brahman is the real creator; the creator of realities.

[Brahman must be real because it is creating the realities out of Itself. E.g., existence, conscious-force, delight, cosmic mind, energy, matter, animated material life, mentality, etc. will all emerge from the Unmanifest Brahman. I.e. from the unknowable, unmanifest Brahman will emerge its real manifest forms.]

2. PERCEIVING BRAHMAN, THE REALITY

Now Sri Aurobindo shifts focus on our capacity to perceive Brahman, the reality. [It is a subject he addressed in the chapter 'Omnipresent Reality' and several others after that in Book I.]

The Nature of the Reality

First, he reiterates the nature of the Reality (Brahman). He reminds us that the Reality is an eternal Oneness, status, absolute, illimitable [infinite, eternal], ineffable [indescribable] essence of pure existence supporting an eternal dynamis, motion, infinite multiplicity of itself. [Here he appears to be describing the static Brahman aspect that is behind, the Source of all creation; as opposed to expression of Brahman in the manifest universe. Still the Reality includes the All; the being AND the becoming. The One and the Many.]

Limits of Our Consciousness to Perceive It

But why can't we perceive the Reality, as the All permeating all; being All, including the Being and the Becoming, the One and the Many?

Sri Aurobindo says we cannot perceive the Reality because of the limitation of our mentality. He says that our cognitive consciousness is too limited, ignorant, and finite to perceive the Reality. Our conceptions of reality depend on our way of contact with existence in this limited mental consciousness, which is very different from the way an original and ultimate Consciousness sees it.

Limits of Reason

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on the limits of reason itself, and the reasons for its inability to perceive the Reality. He tells us that reason is accustomed to cutting the whole into segments, and selects one segment of the whole as if it were the entire reality.

He tells us that the intellectual problem and difficulty is raised by our finite reasoning power that cuts, separates, and opposes things, such as the opposition we make between Spirit and Nature. We cannot see these dual aspects as part and parcel of the same reality, as different reflections and expressions of it.

[We see the ocean and we may perceive the river, but our mind is unable to see that the river is one with the ocean it flows into. They both are water. They both are substance of the same One Reality. Likewise, in our daily lives we have difficulty perceiving that all that is happening around us, what we are made up of, of the various planes of matter, life, mind, spirit are different forms of the same one reality. We perceive only separate parts, not their being a part of and one with the All, the reality, Brahman.]

Perceiving Brahman, the Reality through an Ultimate Consciousness (key)

-If our reasoning capacity cannot perceive the Reality, then how can we experience it? He tells us says the Reality (Brahman) is only seizable by an *intuitive* experience. [As we move beyond mind proper to spiritualized mind, including intuition and above, culminating in supramental perception, we can perceive the true nature of the All, of the Reality that permeates and is inherent in all things.]

-Sri Aurobindo then discusses what an ultimate consciousness would be like that could perceive the Reality in all its possibility, fullness, integrality of existence.

He says that such an original and ultimate consciousness would have a *unitarian view of things* -- embracing diversity, being all-accepting, all-embracing; having an indivisible, integral view of the whole; would embrace all terms of existence in a single integral view.

In addition to the perception of a multiplicity of things integrated into a Wholeness, this True Consciousness and perception of the All would perceive the *Essence* common to everything.

[We could say there is a spirit or conscious Force or something of the original static Reality behind all that is there in all things. When we get in touch with it we can bring out its higher capacity, its infinity to aid us in life.]

Thus, from that truth consciousness (Supermind) one could regard all aspects, all forms, all dynamics, all movements as phenomenon and consequences of the same essential Reality.

[This unitarian view of existence that can perceive the dynamis, the oneness, interrelation, and integration of the Reality is the Truth Consciousness; the Supramental perception.]

Comment:

If we perceive the true nature of Reality, we will *accept all things as necessary* in the unfoldings of our lives; whether positive or negative, big and small, etc. This will make us far more flexible in our perceptions, including our ability to perceive the true truth of things, and therefore the ability to make the right decisions that lead to magnificent outcomes.

In addition, through this consciousness we will be able to see the subtle *interrelationships* of any and all things we come across in our lives; giving us an integral knowledge that can lead to right thought, values, decisions, behaviors, and actions. We will see how any thing is related to other things, and where they fit in the smaller or larger picture, as we have a continuous integral perception in our mind's eye.

Finally, through this vision capacity of the reality we will always be able to get at *the essence* of all matters, to see into the heart of things, which will give us a magnificent capacity of insight and deeper and wider intelligence, and therefore a great power and potential mastery over life.

3. THE REALITY IN TERMS OF TIME; INFINITE & FINITE

The Reality and Time

Perceiving the Unmanifest and Manifest of the Reality in Terms of Timelessness.

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the matter of how we can view the Reality, the Absolute, Brahman in terms of *time*.

We should recall that the Reality is both the Unmanifest (the source of creation) and the Manifest. He says that the Unmanifest exists in eternal Timelessness, which is self-evident to itself, even as it exists in eternal motion in Time in the Manifest. **[I.e. in the Unmanifest, there is the eternity of timelessness; and in the Manifest there is the unfolding of Time that occurs forever, eternally. We can call it Time Eternity. They are thus two forms of eternity.]**

He also adds that the Timeless eternity and time eternity as two aspects of the Reality, the Absolute and both are real.

Relation of the Timeless and Time Eternities

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that the timeless Eternal of the Unmanifest and the Time Eternal have a relationship with one another; i.e. one of dependence.

He says that what is manifest in the Timeless manifests itself in Time.

[This suggests that though we are bound to Time, behind it or within it is the potential for timelessness. In other words, we are capable of bringing the timelessness of the Unmanifest into the Time of the manifest. That would enable us to overcome time in this Time-bound world. E.g., when we evoke sudden good fortune, we overcome the limits of time, cancelling it, essentially replacing it with no time, i.e. timelessness.]

All Finites Are Infinites in Spiritual Potential

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that if we look deep enough, we will see that all finites are in their spiritual essence the Infinite. **[Just as we can bring the timelessness of the Unmanifest into the Time of the manifest (i.e. create No time), so too we can bring the infinite into our life and replace the corresponding finite. E.g. if I am able to accomplish at a certain level now, and I bring in the Spirit, suddenly life responds with good fortune, bringing outcomes and benefits that replace the current**

finite level of accomplishment with an infinite like one. We can thus go further and say that every finite has the potential to be an infinite when we bring in the spiritual dimension of life.]

“To truly understand the world-process of the Infinite and the Time-process if the Eternal, the consciousness must pass beyond the finite reason and the finite sense to a larger reason and spiritual sense in touch with the consciousness of the Infinite and responsive to the logic of the Infinite, which is the very logic of being itself and arises invariably from its self-operation of its own realities, a logic whose sequences are not the steps of thought but the steps of existence.” [very powerful and poetic]

A Forward-Looking Question

From the above discussion on the nature of the Infinite and Finite, Sri Aurobindo then asks how did an illimitable [unlimited, Infinite] Consciousness and Force of integral being enter into limitation [Finite] and separateness. [I.e. how did the status and consciousness of the Infinite become delimited to a lesser consciousness in finite forms and forces in Creation. This will be addressed in the following chapters.]



The Knowledge and the Ignorance

(Book 2 Chapter VII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo tells us that here in life, consciousness has formulated itself in the figure of an Ignorance that is laboring towards consciousness.

He then defines Ignorance in terms of human perception. He says that Ignorance is the *absence of the divine eye of perception*. In Ignorance there is non-perceiving, as opposed to its opposite (in Knowledge) where there is perfect Perceiving.

He then addresses the question of what is the cause of this Misperceiving of Ignorance. He explains it in terms of Mind and Knowledge

In terms of Mind, he says that the root of Ignorance is the fact that *Mind measures off, limits, prioritizes, and divides*. This causes Mind to become *exclusive*, to be *separated from its Higher Principle*, and is therefore the very soul of Ignorance.

Similarly, he says that Ignorance is in its origin a dividing mental knowledge which does not grasp *the unity, essence of things*, but works on *dividing particulars, separate phenomenon, partial relations*. This is then the essence of the Ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo then surprises by pointing out that both the Knowledge and Ignorance are independent, equal, and original *powers* of the Consciousness. He tells us that *Ignorance is a power of the one divine Knowledge-Will; the power of the one Consciousness to regulate, hold back, measure, relate in a particular way the action of the Knowledge*.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo says we can come out of Ignorance by observing the structure of our surface consciousness, and by focusing on and shifting to a deeper and higher plane of mental perception.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Reality Expressing in Various Planes

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that there is only one Reality. And that Reality expresses through various planes. I.e. all of the planes of existence (from Spirit to Matter) are simply different expressions of that same Reality.

He poetically says that these planes are the seven colors of the one light of the Divine consciousness, of the Infinite.

The Inconscience Underlying All, and the Concealed Superconscious

He then moves the discussion to the expression of the various limits in creation that we are bound by. He indicates that existence, including we humans, are under the yoke of death, limitation, ignorance, weakness, and suffering. He goes on to say that these are due to the Inconscience [unconsciousness] underlying all creation. That leaves us with a divided consciousness, instead of a harmonic and integral one, leaving us subject to a blind Force. [Consciousness and Force are integrated in Chit of Satchitananda. But in the descent, the involution, the Consciousness separates from the Force, and further down still, the consciousness dissolves into inconscience, leaving only Force, which manifests as Matter, material existence in the universe.]

And yet Sri Aurobindo tells us that contained in that Inconscient, unconsciousness is a concealed Superconscious that is gradually emerging from it. [That superconscience is the embedded, involved, hidden original Conscious-Force.]

Life Formulated as Ignorance

Having listed the various expressions of limitation we are subject to due to the underlying inconscience of creation, Sri Aurobindo focuses on one particular form -- the Ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo begins this process by comparing the Ignorance to its opposite, the Knowledge. He tells us that there are two sides to existence: The Ignorance that exists in Nature, and its opposite of Light and Knowledge of the Spirit. [We could say that Ignorance is like the shadow to the light of Knowledge.]

Furthermore, he tells us that here in life, consciousness has mainly formulated itself in the figure of an Ignorance that is laboring towards the [integral] Knowledge.

Nature of Mind as Source of Ignorance key

Sri Aurobindo then hones in on how Mind itself is the cause of the Ignorance. He says that at the root of Ignorance is the fact that Mind

measures off, limits, prioritizes, and *divides*, causing it to be *exclusive*, to be separated from its Higher Principle. It is in that way the very soul of Ignorance.

[From one perspective, it is positive that Mind has these propensities, since they enable we human to function in life. And yet from another, it causes us to have a limited, exclusive, divided view of things that has lost touch with the higher principle of Unity of Knowledge. I.e. the ability to see each thing in relation to and in harmony with all others; i.e. Unity Consciousness of Supermind, which formulates as Integral Knowledge.]

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates that Mind is also capable of unifying and universalizing Knowledge. [I.e. when Mind moves to its higher formulations of spiritual mind of (in ascending order) silence, light, intuition, overmental/universal consciousness, and supramental perception.]

The Source of Mind's Limits is Ignorance's Divided Nature **key**

Sri Aurobindo then asks how did the limitations of Mind that is at the heart of Ignorance come to be? He says that in fact this separation of Ignorance took place *previous* to Mind.

To address this further, he explores more deeply the nature of Ignorance itself, and compares it with its opposite -- Integral Knowledge.

Now coming to the heart of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo says that Ignorance is the *absence of the divine eye of perception*. [In Supermind, we have the divine eye of things, enabling us to perceive the truth and knowledge of a thing in all aspects simultaneously and in unity. In Ignorance, we have lost that.]

Now connecting mind and Ignorance, Sri Aurobindo says that Ignorance is in its origin a dividing mental knowledge which *does not grasp the unity, essence of things, but works on dividing particulars, separate phenomenon, partial relations*.

[This is the heart of the matter. There is something in the origin of Ignorance that has these characteristics. Somehow, in the descent of consciousness in the involution from Supermind, there was a plane in which these limiting qualities began to take place. We know it began in Overmind, and proceeded to intensify in limitation, culminating in Mind. As the Unmanifest in the involution moves down the chain of consciousness from higher spiritual to lower mentality, we lose the unity and essence of things, as we are lost in the particulars, in a separative understanding, that is partial, incomplete, and even false.]

Sri Aurobindo then reminds us that the opposite of this Ignorance is Knowledge, which tends towards unification, seizing the oneness, the essence, the self-law of existence. [In Supermind, it is perfect, integral

knowledge; i.e. Unity consciousness. It embraces in its understanding all other understandings of the thing; thus, the unity.]

Utility of the Ignorance (when Seen in Relation to the Knowledge)

Sri Aurobindo now very surprisingly, almost shockingly points out that both the Knowledge and the Ignorance are independent, equal, and original *powers* of the Consciousness. [Normally we think that the positive power is better than the wanting one. However, Sri Aurobindo in his illimitable knowledge sees both as necessary in the cosmic scheme of things. Both the ignorance and the Knowledge aid in the forward movement of life. Ignorance is a foundation to build on. It is the ground by which the infinite variation of forces and forms can move up the scale to a higher, integral knowledge. The Divine in this way sanction suffering on the way to Delight; evil on the way to the True Good, etc.]

He then goes on to sum up relation between the Ignorance with the Knowledge. He tells us that-

- Knowledge and Ignorance are two *co-existent* powers present in the universe that are light and shadows of the same one consciousness.
- Ignorance is dependent on Knowledge, even as it is a limitation and contrary action of it.
- The beginning of Ignorance is the limitation in Knowledge.
- *Ignorance is a power of the one divine Knowledge-Will; the power of the one Consciousness to regulate, hold back, measure, relate in a particular way the action of the Knowledge.* [This is profound in that it explains how the One Consciousness utilizes the Ignorance in terms of the knowledge. For example, when in *Pride and Prejudice* Eliza is ignorant of Darcy's good side, while falsely believing in the goodness of the treacherous Wickham, life creates the difficult dynamic by which she can discover the truth of things, overcome her limitations of consciousness, and thereby attract happiness through her marriage to Darcy. In this way, the One Consciousness partakes in the Play of Life toward ever-higher, increasing consciousness of the players.] **Key**

Observing Our Consciousness to Come Out of Ignorance

Finally, Sri Aurobindo briefly mentions how we can come out of the Ignorance. He says that we can do so by observing the structure of our surface consciousness, and what is above and below it, to distinguish the nature and scope of the Ignorance.

[Our surface consciousness is focused on outer appearances, of that which these senses perceive, losing touch with the rationality of Mind and its greater perception of truth, let alone the spiritual dimensions of mind above it, which can seize the many-sided truth of a matter more

directly. If we observe our limited surface consciousness in relations to these, we can learn to consistently move our consciousness to a deeper poise, so we tend to move toward rationality, to insight, and to intuition over time. As a result of that higher consciousness and corresponding knowledge, we can move out of the Ignorance, and into a more integral knowledge, which is a critical dimension of evolving our higher nature.】



Memory, Self-Consciousness and the Ignorance

(Book 2 Chapter VIII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on how our Ignorance causes us to misperceive the true nature of Time, and how we can gain a right Knowledge of it by discovering our True Self.

He tells us that in the Ignorance we are limited to living in the current moment; unable to truly know (a) what is in the past, but rather only to have a limited memory of it; nor able to know (b) what is to occur in the future, only an inference of it.

To compensate, memory developed; as well as imagination, thought, and idea symbols.

Focusing on memory Sri Aurobindo indicates that it cannot fathom the smooth flow of all events of the past as if they were unfolding before us, instead picking and choosing that which it wishes to record and keep for the present.

In the key part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo tells us that we can have the true perception of time when we live in the (true, integral) Knowledge. There one experiences undifferentiated time, not separated into past, present, and future as in the Ignorance, but an undivided, continuous stream of unfoldings of eternal time in the Now, the Ever-present. **key**

Moreover, we rise to this integral knowledge and experience of eternal time by going beyond the limits of Mind to the stable consciousness of the True Self (the Evolving Soul, the Psychic Being). There we experience an undifferentiated, eternal quality of time in the Ever-Present. We experience the time-lessness of the Eternal as we move through the becomings of life. **key**

Here are the main points in detail:

Our Ignorance of True Nature of Time

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling tells us that due to our Ignorance we do not have the perception of the timelessness in time; i.e. the connection with the past, present, and future in the eternal Now. Rather, in the

Ignorance, we are (a) limited to living in the current moment; unable to truly know what is in the past, having a mere limited memory of it; nor (b) that which is to occur in the future, but only inferencing of it. Moreover, the Mind tends to see things linearly, in a successive view of itself.

Or to put it more succinctly, the mind's Ignorance is limited by a realization of the present, a memory of the past, and inference of the future -- conditioned by temporal and successive views of itself.

Memory as Substitute for Perceiving the Past

Now before discussing the solution to this problem, Sri Aurobindo branches off a bit to discuss how the Mind makes up for this incapacity relative to time.

To make up for our inability to perceive what has passed, memory was developed in the animal and human form. Memory thus attempts to connect us to the truths of the past.

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that memory succeeds to a limited degree; and yet it cannot fathom the smooth flow of all events of the past as if unfolding before us, instead picking and choosing that which it wishes to record and keep for the present. **[Imagine if we can know any aspect of our own past or any past in the Now, having it run by us as if in a film, uninterrupted without any gaps.]**

Also, because of its limits in perceiving the past, memory can hardly indicate the nature of the future. It can only infer it, not truly know it. **[If I were to have smooth access to all of the past in the Present, I could more readily perceive or anticipate where life is heading.]**

Memory, Imagination, Thought, and Idea Symbol as Substitute for Limits of Mind to Know in the Moment

In addition, Sri Aurobindo tells us that memory is one of several ways Mind makes up for its inability to know what has occurred past, present, and future in any given moment. He says Mind makes up for this with not only memory, but also with imagination, thought, and idea symbols.

Seeing Time in Its True State through Knowledge Instead of Ignorance **key**

Now Sri Aurobindo returns to the central issue of how we can have the right relation to time that Ignorance does not.

He tells us that we *can* have the true perception of time **[all together, undifferentiated in the eternal Now]** when we live in the Knowledge. **[He is referring to a profound, integral, ultimate knowledge of truth, not just ordinary human knowledge of things.]** In that Knowledge-state, we look on time as a *simultaneous single entity or arc of existence that*

is timeless; that is eternal; that includes past, present, and future in the current moment.

Thus, whereas the Ignorance is the consciousness of being in the *succession* of Time, divided and dwelling in the moment, Knowledge knows the undivided, eternal unfoldings of time in the eternal Now. Whereas Ignorance lives from moment to moment, field to field, relation to relation, Knowledge exists in the flow of eternity, embracing all fields and relations simultaneously in the Ever Present. ["Knowledge" here is really to have the Supramental Truth Consciousness; which is an integral Knowledge.]

Rising to that Knowledge by Connecting with Our True Self (Psychic Being) key

Sri Aurobindo then asks: how do we gain that Knowledge that enables us to have the awareness of all time, undifferentiated eternity of time, past, present, and future in the Ever Present, Eternal Now?

First, he reminds us that these sharp distinctions made between the present and past self-consciousness are limits of the Ignorance of mind. However, he indicates that *beyond* Mind is a stable consciousness in which such conceptual divisions cease to exist.

Then what and where is this stable consciousness? He says is our True Self (our Psychic Being; the Evolving Soul) within.

Settled in that deeper poise, we overcome our Ignorance of time, and instead experience an undifferentiated, eternal quality of time in the Ever-Present. We experience the time-lessness of the Eternal as we move through the becomings of life.

[*Experience of Timelessness/Eternity in Time*: It is relatively easy to imagine the timelessness in the eternal Spirit, i.e. where there is essentially no time. It is a little more difficult to conceive of eternal time in life in the universe. The eternal time of the universe is undifferentiated time; i.e. no past, present, and future, going on in all directions eternally. This is an eternity of time that we experience in the Now.

But when we live in the Ignorance, we only experience the present, a little of the past through memory, and a limited expectation, but no true knowledge of the future. When we move to the Psychic Being, we move toward out of Ignorance and into an Integral Knowledge in which we experience not only the timelessness of the Eternal Spirit or Non-manifest existence, but also the experience of undifferentiated time, including what we normally call "past, present, and future" in the becomings of our lives – i.e. in the Eternal Now.

This too is a kind of time-lessness, as it goes on eternally. I.e. there is an eternity of time experienced in the Ever-Present, the Now. It is undifferentiated time that goes on forever backwards, now, and forward

-i.e. eternally, in a timeless-like manner, that we experience any time when in the higher consciousness of the Integral Knowledge as a result of being centered in our True Self, evolving soul, psychic being.

Or to put it simply, *in the Eternal Now, experienced through the Psychic Being, there are no divisions of time, but only the experience of an eternity of time. Since the Real Self is the **eternal** Self, it can look out on time as an undifferentiated, eternal becoming in the Now.*]

ADDITIONAL:

Ignorance as Mediator between Inconscience and Integral Knowledge

There is a fundamental Inconscience of matter in the universe. At that plane, there is no knowledge. Ultimate Knowledge is the other extreme; what Sri Aurobindo calls Integral Knowledge. Therefore, he says our essential Ignorance (born of creation) is a "mediator" between the self/all Knowledge and the complete Inconscience.

Integral Knowledge Sees Beyond the Process to the Essence of a Matter, Thing

He also indicates that in the True, Integral Knowledge, we truly perceive not only the unfoldings of life, i.e. the "process," but also what is behind the processes - i.e. their essence and consciousness.

Essay: Timelessness in Time

Have you ever meditated before; say for an hour or longer? Those who have experienced this inner approach to the spirit often claim that it felt as if 10 minutes have gone by when it was in fact an hour. That is the difference between one's experience of time (1 hour) and timelessness (10 minutes). Time is the unfolding of moments in duration. Timelessness is its reverse -- the absence of time; i.e. no time.

One time I was driving along a wide-open highway from Los Banos in the central Valley of California towards the coastal mountains. For half a minute, I experienced what felt like a point in the future on earth where time no longer existed -- though space was still there. Can you imagine such a thing? Was this a prophetic vision of life in some distant time-less future or an experience of timelessness in the Now?

When a human goes into outer space at the speed of light and returns a year later, for him 1 year has passed. But now when he looks around at the earth, dozens or even hundreds of years have passed. The people of his generation are now old or long gone. In one sense, he has experienced timelessness relative to the people who have lived in time.

When I change an attitude or focus my intention on something or open to the spiritual Force, something equally astonishing takes place. Sudden good fortune rushes toward me. What would have taken place in the future (if at all), suddenly occurs in the present. Again, the limits of time have been overcome -- replaced with no time, i.e. timelessness. Or to be more accurate, timelessness has occurred within the becomings of time, releasing the infinite potentials of life.

God, the Divine exists in timelessness; Life in the universe is in Time. His aspiration is for us to experience His Timelessness in the details of our lives, i.e. in Time. It is the destiny of life on earth. Perhaps that is what I had a glimpse of on the road from Los Banos nearly a decade ago.

Whatever you raise your consciousness -- whether by meditating, improving your nature, opening to the Spiritual Force, or moving to the depths within to your evolving soul, you move from the passing plane of Time to the eternal plane of Timelessness where it has entered that Time through the becomings of our lives. It is where time and timelessness meet, and thus where sudden good fortune (i.e. life response) arises. It is the plane of instantaneous miraculousness. Where the finite is replaced by the infinite.



Memory, Ego and Self-Experience

(Book 2 Chapter IX)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo revisits the topic of how we can move from our limited experience of time, -- as a differentiated past, present, and future -- to perceiving it as eternal timelessness in the Becomings of our lives; i.e. in the Now.

He says that we experience time divided into past, present, and future because of our essential Ignorance born of creation, reinforced by living in the surface consciousness, i.e. through the senses.

There we experience not a continuous, undivided timelessness, but a constant rapid shifting of Time-point, which it is impossible to arrest for a moment; as well as a shifting of space field, and of circumstance.

We can however experience undivided, continuous stream of Time as an eternal Now and Present when we move to the stillness, the "is"-ness, and stability of Self, of Being.

Moreover, he indicates that simply by residing in that psychic being and self we move into the state of timeless being because that is its nature. He thus indicates that not only is the consciousness of Self timeless, but it is also capable of freely regarding Time as a thing reflected in it.

But how do we move to the state of Self? He says we do that through Detachment; standing back from life, perceiving and observing ourselves dynamically in the becoming. As a result, we rightly perceive the unfoldings of existence, including the expression of time in the context of its timeless, Eternal nature.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Undivided Nature of Time vs. Our Divided View

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the true experience or substance of becoming in Time is a flowing stream or sea that is not divided in itself. **[I.e. there is one continuous undivided existence to time.]** However, we experience Time as divided in our observing consciousness **[into**

separate entities of past, present, and future; as separate moments occurring in linear fashion from past to present to future.】

Ignorance is Root Cause of Our Divided View of Time.

What then causes this divided view of Time in our consciousness? He says it is due to the limiting movement of the Ignorance on our being, which limits and constrains our view of it, causing us to miss its undivided, continuous-stream nature.

Surface Consciousness Constrains Our Perception of Time

In particular, Sri Aurobindo indicates that we experience the Ignorance, this lack of Knowledge about Time because we live in the surface consciousness. 【The Ignorance is sustained when we live on the surface of life rather than the depths within, preventing us from perceiving the undivided, continuous nature of Time in the becomings of our lives.】

Shifting of Time-Point and Space Field in the Surface Consciousness

How in particular does surface living cause us to perceive Time in divided fashion, which is not the true Truth of its nature and existence? Sri Aurobindo indicates that through our surface consciousness there is a constant, rapid shifting of Time-point, which it is impossible to arrest for a moment. There is also a shifting of space field, as well as of circumstance. 【In the surface consciousness, we experience points of time and space acutely, and lose the undivided smoothness of Time's true nature. The senses are caught in the outer existence constantly capturing inputs that appear to us like snapshots of time, instead of the free-flow, undivided, eternal Time that it is.】

Experiencing the Eternal Now, the Ever-Present from Poise of Being

Sri Aurobindo then asks; how do we overcome this limited, sense-based perception of time? The obvious answer is that we need to move out of a surface consciousness.

He says that we do that by fixing ourselves in the direct self-consciousness, of the stable Self within; the immobile "Is". In that way, we experience the timelessness of time, an eternity of time in the Now, in the eternal present, unaffected by distinctions of past, present, and future. From there we are unaffected by sense, and are unburdened from the limiting perceptions of the personality of the individual, especially the surface person, enabling us to experience time for what it is, eternal in its becoming. **key**

【When we live on the surface, outer consciousness, we are pulled away from life's truths, including the true nature of time. In surface living,

we are influenced by the inputs of the senses that cause us to perceive rapid shifting of Time-point, like snapshots, pulling us away from the undivided, eternal nature of time that includes all three or transcends them in the eternal Now.

Also, from the deeper consciousness within, in the stable, still, immobile Self, we just are, and not subject to the influence of the personality; of the distorting and dividing influence of the surface person.]

In Self, Being One Experiences Timelessness; and Time as a Form of It

Now Sri Aurobindo goes on to us that the True Self (the psychic being, the evolving soul) Itself is one of timeless being. He says that not only is the consciousness of Self timeless, but it is also capable of freely regarding Time as a thing reflected in it. **key**

[In the True Self, the Psychic Being, one experiences not only Timelessness, but perceives Time as a reflection of, an expression of, a form of Its own Timelessness.]

Detachment Enables the True Self that Gives Us Control Over the Becoming, Including Time

Then Sri Aurobindo asks more generically, how do we move away from the surface consciousness to the True Self so we have the right view of time?

He says we do that through Detachment; standing back from life, perceiving and observing ourselves dynamically in the becoming, which enables us to gain control over our feelings and actions.

Sri Aurobindo also says that when we completely detach the mental aspect of our being from our own experience, we become fully aware of the multiplicity of its aspects.

As a result of being detached from the surface consciousness, we rightly perceive the unfoldings of existence, including the expression of time. From that detached status, we experience the successions of Time in the context of its timeless, Eternal nature. (Past, Present, and Future become one is a Simultaneous, Eternal time.)

Or to put it another way, by being detached, we become the Self that is immutable (unchanging); the Self that exists in the Becoming, that Becomes eternally in the succession of Time. **key**

Mental Silence Enables Experience of the True Self

Finally, Sri Aurobindo that we can only find this immobile Self when the outer mental and vital activities are quieted; its truth experienced in mind's Silence.

Role of Memory in Our Experience of Time (redux)

In the chapter, Sri Aurobindo also reiterates and fortifies certain insights he revealed in the previous chapter, about the role of memory in our experience of time. Among them:

- Memory offers the intelligence the past data of experience.
- Memory serves to link our past and present experiences and personality, *preventing chaos and discontinuity*.
- Memory is a mediator between sense mind and the coordinating intelligence.
- There is an arrangement of things in Space and Time, but no gap or division, except to our Ignorance. To bridge the gap, we call in various devices, including memory.

Ego-Sense as Device of Ignorance on the Way to Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo also mentions that like memory our ego-sense is another device of our mental Ignorance. And like other limited aspects of our being, like pain relative to pleasure, ignorance relative to knowledge it serves a purpose in creation. In the case of ego, it is the means by which the mental being becomes aware of himself.

He says that the ego-sense is a preparatory device; a first basis for the development of real self-knowledge.

From Surface to Depth to Move from Ignorance to Knowledge

He also once again reminds us that in the surface existence, there is the full reign of Ignorance. The way out is to go deep within, and from there are able to rise in mental consciousness to its spiritual aspects (like light, illumination, intuition, universal consciousness (overmind), supramental perception), and thereby experience the full, integral knowledge.



Knowledge by Identity and Separative Knowledge

(Book 2 Chapter X)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo covers a wide selection of subjects related to our ability to come in contact with the True Integral knowledge, which is the capacity to integrally Know the object of inquiry by Identity.

First, he describes several cognitive methods of knowing the object of inquiry; ranging from the highest, which is knowledge by Identity, and then progressively lower, from knowledge by Intimate Contact, to Knowledge by Separative Direct Contact, to Wholly Separative by Indirect Contact.

He then tells us that moving from the surface to the depths of our being enables us to move up the scale from limited, separative, indirect contact to the object to direct, intimate, perfect knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo then reminds us that it is our surface Ego that is the support and cause of our Ignorance, our Limited Knowledge at the lower end of the scale.

He then delves into a very powerful section where he describes the subtle perceptions, faculties, and experiences of being we have when we are centered in the Subliminal (Inner) Realm; that enables us to perceive knowledge from the higher end of the scale. He tells us from that deep, inner, subliminal poise,

- we perceive the source of what we think, feel, and act
- we perceive our limited nature
- we are able to overcome the limited nature we see in ourselves
- we develop a power over life from within
- we develop supra-normal faculties
- we come in direct contact with other individuals, as well as the impersonal forces of life.

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that from the subliminal realm within we also experience Cosmic Consciousness; as spirit, as cosmic energy, and as cosmic mind and life.

He then tells us that we can go beyond universal/cosmic consciousness to Knowledge by Identity. There one has an *enveloping cognition and vision; where each thing is perceived in terms of each and all things; of its larger all containing existence.* [He will call it "supramental perception".]

Sri Aurobindo then traces how we can progress from limited knowledge to the perception of knowledge by identity: How we can move from surface, outer relationship with the object, to inner identity with it through intuition and beyond.

Ultimately, our ability to reach these highest planes of spiritualized mind and beyond is determined by how close to our True Self we go. The deeper we go within, culminating in the Evolving Soul and True Self, the greater our capacity to relate to come into full identity with the object under consideration.

He tells us that from the Psychic Being, we perceive the Truth of things; we perceive that which is Divine in life; and we move towards an Integral Knowledge that can lead to a higher Spiritual and then Supramental Transformations.

Finally, he tells us that there is one obstacle that needs to be overcome in this endeavor: it is the unconsciousness of the Subconscious being within. He tells us that through the connection to the Evolving Soul, the psychic element, we open to the superconscious, which can then overcome the limits of the subconscious. In fact, in that process we also evoke the hidden, involved, superconsciousness that is already there buried in the subconscious. [ep]

Here are the main points in detail:

The Scale of Four Cognitive Methods of Knowing key

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo begins by describing the four cognitive methods of Nature that range from knowledge by identity (highest) to separative knowledge (lowest). They are-

(1) *By Identity* -- Knowledge by identity is the original and fundamental way of knowing. It is unified with the source of that knowledge. [I.e. from the Supramental truth consciousness, one knows the object of knowledge directly from within one's self without thought; and there is an inherent unity of that knowledge with all other related knowledges. E.g., the object is on the other side of the barn, and I know everything about it in the details, essence, and whole. Also, I perceive the relationship between that and the greater or wider knowledge importance from which it derives. It is supramental perception that is

an Integral Knowledge by identity with that object as well as Unity with the original, higher truth from which it derives.】

(2) *By Intimate Contact* – A derivation of knowledge by identity, but where that knowledge is separated from the source. 【In Supermind, there is an inherent identity with the object, as well as a unity with the source of that knowledge. In Overmind and one or two spiritual planes of mind below it, there is still a certain direct identify and connection with the object, i.e. perceiving it in its various aspects and whole, but there is more an identification with that specific truth, rather than the Source Knowledge from which it derives. E.g., I know the thing behind the barn fully or mostly fully, but I have lost identity with the Higher Knowledge and Higher Purpose from which that particular knowledge derives. There is more of a focus on the full individual realization of that particular thing without a harkening and association with the source Truth and Purpose beyond that thing.】

(3) *Separative Direct Contact* – There is a partial identity with the object of Knowledge being cognitive, and there is little or no unity with the source of Truth related to it. 【Further down in the lower planes of spiritual mind, there is only a partial identity and connection with the object of knowledge. And a mostly separation from the source knowledge, purpose, truth. E.g., I don't simply know what's behind the barn, but have to think about it to come up with some logical possibility, or I will be forced to learn about it over time. Also, there is little or no connection with the purpose of that thing in relation to the total knowledge that is trying to be presented, or its purpose in the greater scheme of things or the unfolding of life.】

(4) *Wholly Separative by Indirect Contact* -- Knowledge comes fully through the machinery of indirect contact; and thus there is complete separation from the object. Also, there is no association with the source knowledge or purpose as we are fully living in the Ignorance. 【E.g., I don't know what is behind the barn, only coming to that information by happenstance if at all. Thus, I am separate from direct contact, i.e. being identity that garners full knowledge through intuition and other higher manners of spiritual mental perception. In addition, there is virtually no association with the Unity of Truth and Purpose beyond that object that it is related to. I.e. if I do garner a bit of the knowledge about the object, I absolutely do not see it in the context of some higher knowledge from which it derives, or what purpose it serves in the scheme of things.】

Moving from the Surface to the Depths Enables Movement Up from Limited to Direct, Perfect Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo then reemphasizes that when we move away from the surface of things [the external consciousness of sense mind and the inputs of the senses where our knowledge has an entirely separative

basis] and into the depths, we develop higher cognitive abilities (from amongst these four), enabling us to move from our separative Ignorance to Integral Knowledge. Also, the movement inward to a witness consciousness frees us from the limits of Nature, and puts us more in tune with our own and the world existence.

Our Surface Ego as Cause of Ignorance, Limited Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo also reiterates how the surface ego and its separative consciousness is the cause of the limited knowledge that is the basis of our essential Ignorance.”

However, we can grow out of our separative and limited Ignorance when our ego-sense opens to the wider existence and true being within, enabling a direct knowledge, including one of identity. [I.e. when we open to the depths, culminating in the subliminal and ultimately the psychic being, we connect to a wider, universal existence, which dissolves our ego, enabling our minds to expand beyond mind into the realms of spiritual mind -- of silence, light, intuition, universal consciousness, culminating in supramental perception, where are in direct contact with the object under consideration.]

The Subtle Perceptions, Faculties, and Experiences of Being Centered in the Subliminal Realm **key**

Sri Aurobindo’s next major focus in the chapter is describing the experiences that we have when we move to the depths of our inner being, i.e. the subliminal.

They include the many ways we gain power over life, among them-- *Perceiving the Source of What We Think, Feel, and Act* -- By going within to the inner mind, vital, and physical, we are able to perceive the spring of our thoughts and feelings, the sources and motives of our actions, and the operative energies that build up our surface personality.

We Can Perceive our Limited Nature -- From the depths, our mental, vital, and physical limitations can be seen for what it is -- positively, neutrally, and negatively. E.g., from the subliminal, we more-readily perceive the mistakes of our outer consciousness.

We Can Overcome our Limited Nature – In addition, from the depths, we develop powers of control over our limited nature. In the short run, we can choose the right direction to move in any moment, and in the longer term develop a power to change the limiting aspects of our nature, enabling us to harmonize that which is divided.

Power Over Outer Life from Within – Thus, from the depths, we develop mastery over our outer mental and psychological existence; the outer [i.e. social] vital life; as well as enhance our outer physical energies.

We Develop Supra Normal Faculties – Sri Aurobindo also indicates that being stationed in the subliminal, we possess powers of telepathy [communicating through the subtle sense], clairvoyance [to perceive into the future], second sight [to see what one cannot normally see], and other supernormal faculties.

Coming in Direct Contact with Other Individuals and the Impersonal Forces of Life – Continuing on the theme of these subtle sense faculties, Sri Aurobindo tells us that from the subliminal we enter into direct contact with other consciousnesses and objects, achieving an immediate, intimate, and spontaneous knowledge of persons, objects of the occult and normally intangible energies that surround us.

-That includes becoming directly aware of the thoughts and feelings of others around us; including feeling their impact and movement. As a result, we can be a conscious help to others, have a luminous interchange in our relations, and develop an inner understanding and union.

-It also includes changes our relation to the impersonal forces of the world around us. In our dealings with the impersonal forces of the world, we become aware of the mental and vital forces; with the immediate motive and movement of these forces; allowing even the forecasting of future actions, sensing the coming of future events.

Subliminal Experience of Cosmic Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that from within, the subliminal can break the boundaries of individuality and enter into a cosmic consciousness. That we can project ourselves beyond the limits of the sheaths of our being, forming a circumconscient through which it receives contacts of the world, and further beyond to the cosmic existence around is. [This is essentially a connection with the plane of Overmind, which is essentially the experience of the universal consciousness.]

He says that the first result of this universal consciousness is that we experience this superconscience as cosmic *spirit*.

Another is the experience of a cosmic *energy*, which we perceive as working through one's life beyond the normal individuality.

There is also an opening to the cosmic *Mind* and *Life*.

Ultimately, there is a sense of unity of the individual person with the cosmic; the universal consciousness, the superconscient. [This is essentially the plane of Overmind.]

Subliminal Experience Beyond to Knowledge by Identity

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that there is an even greater power that the universal consciousness of Overmind, which is knowledge by identity. There we are one with the object of perception. *It is an enveloping*

cognition and vision; each thing is perceived in terms of each and all things, of its larger all containing existence. [It is the experience of supramental perception at the plane of Supermind. At this plane, our knowledge is complete, integral; and one of unity of all related things.]

Limited, Sense-Based to True, Integral Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo then traces how we move from limited knowledge to the perception of knowledge by identity as described above.

He tells us that in surface consciousness, knowledge represents itself as a truth seen from the outside, thrown on us from the object. In this surface mind pierced by sense, there is no inner identity with the object, only an outer relation and perception of it through the senses.

However, to the degree we live in the depths within, the greater we relate, the more knowledge we have of the object by identity. There is no need to perceive the thing through the outer sense, but to increasingly intuitivize and know the object from within.

Thus, in the depths, we can perceive and be in identity with objects that on the surface we perceive hardly any connection with.

[E.g. in sense, I have to see the object that is behind the barn to know it. In spiritual mind when one moves to the depths, we tend to know that thing as a knowledge vibration that we increasingly intuitive from within.]

By the way, the “thing” that is behind the barn does not have to be a physical object, but information about an event, an action, a sensation, an emotion, an idea, or any other non-embodied object of inquiry.]

How to Experience Knowledge by Identity

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on the planes of higher consciousness required to experience knowledge by identity of having the complete, integral experience of the object from within.

First, he reminds us that in the subliminal, even in the cosmic consciousness (overmind), we get a greater knowledge, but not a complete and original one (as in Supermind where there is knowledge by identify).

He says that to have knowledge by identity we need to go beyond the inner mind to the superconscient; in particular, to the planes of the higher hemisphere. *[I.e. supramental and above. Supermind resides in the upper hemisphere, with universal mind (overmind), intuitive mind, illumined mind, silent mind, rational mind, sense mind, below it in the lower hemisphere. From the supramental truth consciousness, we experience identity with the object; as we know the parts, and each in relation to one another and the whole of the object under consideration. Recall he indicates that it is “an enveloping cognition and vision; each*

thing in terms of each and all things of its larger all containing existence.”]

Separative Knowledge, Differentiation, and Identity

Sri Aurobindo also gives us a powerful definition and distinction: He says that the separative knowledge arises when the sense of differentiation overpowers the sense of identity. This is a key statement in the chapter.

Integral Knowledge & Connecting to the Psychic Entity, the Soul key

Though an inner status enables us to have the higher associations with the object of knowledge, it reaches its apex when we connect to the psychic entity within. The deeper we go within, culminating in the Evolving Soul and True Self, the greater our capacity to have these subtle experiences and garner their powers. Sri Aurobindo describes these subtle experiences and powers in several ways:

We Perceive the Truth of Things -- By connecting to the soul, we develop an intrinsic spiritual perception of the truth of things; and the perception of that which is Divine. **[From the deepest depths within, in the psychic entity we perceive the full truth of the object (thing, event, idea, etc.) under scrutiny. Knowledge is full, complete, in unity with all other aspects as the knowledge is garnered directly through identity. E.g. stationed in the silence and witness consciousness of the psychic being, I perceive the truth of what has occurred before me; or what happened earlier; or what is out of my view, as a full integral truth of things appear in my being. It is a super intuition of the details experienced within, including the parts, the essence, and each thing in relation to a higher unfolding, with a corresponding power for its realization and manifestation.]**

We Perceive that which is Divine -- Also by connecting to the psychic entity, we develop the perception of that which is Divine. **[In these deepest depths, we are open to universal and transcendent forces, and we sense which ones are divine in essence and nature. E.g., I feel that which is of a higher consciousness, and which is not, and therefore know in which way to act, or wait to avoid.]**

Towards Integral Knowledge & Transformation – Finally, through the psychic connection, we begin to move towards the integral knowledge and transformation. **[Sri Aurobindo near the end of the book will describe three stages of transformation, which he calls the Triple Transformation. The first is the psychic change, where we are fully enveloped by our True Self. That is followed by the Spiritual Transformation, which is in essence an opening into the spiritual dimensions of mind and the truths and transforming powers that come**

as a result. That in turn is followed by the ultimate change, the supramental transformation, where all parts of our being – from mind to the physical body – are transmuted by the supramental power and influence.

Therefore, in this particular statement, Sri Aurobindo is indicating that the psychic change brings about an aspect of the spiritual transformation of integral knowledge. Centered in the psychic, the spiritual transformation of a transmuting of the mind to light, illumination, intuition, and revelation (plus their transmuting power) occurs.]

A Personal Note -- It is also important to reiterate that the more we open to the Divine Force, to the supramental power, to the Divine Mother, the more we are able to open up the subliminal and psychic planes within us, enabling us to continually live our lives from this plane. That in turn will open the mind to the spiritual realms of mind, from silent mind to illumined to intuitive and above. This is the yogic practice I have engaged in. By continually opening to the force, life around me is constantly set right, while it gradually is building an inner life in the subliminal and psychic realms that is in turn opening my mind to more continuous experiences of the illumined and intuitive truth of things.

The Superconscious Connection that Overcomes the Subconscious Influence

In our inner consciousness, there is a higher and lower element; the former being the psychic being, which is our evolving soul absorbing its experiences in the current and future bodes in its journey through time, as well as an unevolved aspect that is the subconscious. Sri Aurobindo tells us from time to time that one of the keys to our evolution is overcoming the limitations of the subconscious, which includes its pessimism, fear, fixidity, openness to illness, dream-filled difficult sleep, and all manner of wanting qualities inherited through hundreds of generations of memory of past failures, dissolutions, and death. (It actually has even deeper roots in the unconsciousness, nescience of matter.)

And yet here in the chapter, Sri Aurobindo begins to describe how we can overcome the limits of the subconscious. He tells us that the more we open, go, live, receive from within, the more we draw away from subjection to our subconscious origins and move to the superconscious. I.e. when we live more deeply within, we open to these higher spheres of intuition of Intuitive Mind, of cosmic consciousness [of **Overmind**], and knowledge by identify [of **Supermind**], thereby overcome the limits of the subconscious over us.

Bringing Out the Involved Superconscious in the Subconscious

Sri Aurobindo actually tells us that the superconscious is not just in the cosmos, but is involved in the subconscious itself (as well as the darker inconscient/unconsciousness that it is part of). And when we move to the depths and open ourselves to the superconscious planes of spiritual mind and above (including Satchitananda), we bring out the superconscious nature hidden, involved in the subconscious. In that process we also experience integral truth of a thing; i.e. knowledge by identify.

Thus from, an inner life centered in the psychic being, we not only can perceive the superconscious buried in the inconscient, but are able to draw it out of its sleep in the Inconscience.

[The Mother said that the greatest obstacle to the transformation of the being is the resistance of the pessimistic, fixed, fearful, etc. subconscious nature within. However, if we connect to the Psychic element, our Evolving Soul, we break through to the superconscious and come to a more integral knowledge by identity, which also releases it from its involved sleep in the subconscious nature. She often commented in The Agenda, that one of the keys for enabling the Spiritual Force, the supramental Power to overcome the belief among the cells in the inevitability of decay, dissolution, disease, and death, was overcoming the pessimistic and resistant nature of the subconscious. The subconscious is after all an expression of the Nescience – i.e. the ultimate unconsciousness, fixity, and resistance of Matter. With the subconscious resistance overcome, the Force could “reprogram” the cells with a higher consciousness, and enable a new form of body to emerge that was relieved of all the limitations of its current human physical nature.]

Essay:

Embracing Another's Point of View

When you live in the surface consciousness rather than the depths, you tend to ignore the full truth of things. E.g. if another individual brings up a point of view about a matter, you are less inclined to embrace it. In the deeper consciousness, one is accepting of all truths of a matter. In fact, when another person expresses a point of view, rather than reject it or challenge it outright, one remains calm and perceives how it fits in within the context of one's own view, as well as the wider object of inquiry that is being addressed.

From the supramental point of view, all truths related to a matter have their own truth, and one perceives that. Thus, Supermind is a consciousness of Unity. It sees any point of view in terms of the Whole, the Essence, and all other truths related to a matter.

Imagine that you are having a discussion in a group, and you express your opinion. Normally, one hopes that others agree with it and embrace it. However, when another expresses a different view, the tendency is to feel scorned or otherwise neglected, and we tend to defend our position. This is called "Intellectuality" by Sri Karmayogi.

However, when we are centered in a deeper poise, we shed our ego, are not so defensive, and tend to embrace other's points of view. From the depths within, culminating in the Psychic Being, the Evolving Being and True Self our minds expand upward into spiritual domains, where we perceive the truths of other positions relative to our own; even relative to the object of inquiry under discussion.

From the deeper poise within, of "Witness Consciousness," we have a harmonic view rather than a separative sense from others, and from other truths, circumstances, and possibilities. From these deepest depths, we transcend our emotional, vital ties to things, and in that freedom, embrace all positions and possibilities. From the subliminal depths within, we have an all-embracing consciousness that takes in all truths of a matter, even as it sees each truth relative to the all other positions, including one's own.

Thus, in this meeting, there is a rapid movement toward the deepest truths of a matter. With that knowledge, one can make the most profound and insightful of decisions that lead to very powerful, positive outcomes. By rising beyond our separative and exclusive view of other's thoughts and opinions, we open to a universal plane, out of which come decisions and actions of great truth, wisdom, goodness, power, harmony, and delight.



The Boundaries of the Ignorance

(Book 2 Chapter XI)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on the subtle, hidden planes of being that influence and affect our daily lives; as well as the wide scope of our essential Ignorance born of creation.

The Subliminal -- He begins with the higher, subtle sense of the Subliminal being within and its positive influences on our waking consciousness that percolate up into our field of awareness. He tells us that our inner being, including our subliminal part has a subtle sense, and a vast capacity to perceive all that enters or touches us and our environment; that it is in touch with wide-ranging secret and subtle forces and knowledge; with the intraconscient and circumconscient planes of existence.

The Subconscient -- Sri Aurobindo then moves onto explain the nature of another, though related plane of our being - the subconscious, - which is in essence based on the Inconscient or unconsciousness [of our material being]. He tells us that it stores impressions of our past experiences; that it is the root of our unconscious habits; that it affects our dreams, our mechanical, repeating actions; that it enables obscure impulsions and motives; and that it is the basis of perturbations and upheavals in our nature.

Four Realms of Consciousness -- Sri Aurobindo then explains in detail the nature of the four realms of consciousness he has identified -- *the subconscient, the subliminal, the waking consciousness, and the superconscient*; the latter of which is the supreme Higher Reality that we experience. It is our Real Self in the cosmos. Moreover, our subliminal being (and further still the psychic being) is in touch with the superconscient.

Sri Aurobindo further explains that the limited subconscient/subconscious, and even its inconscient/unconscious basis is not doomed to remain as it is, but is evolving in Man towards, into the knowledge of the superconscient.

Ways Ignorance Express (Its Boundaries) -- Finally, Sri Aurobindo now takes on the various ways the essential Ignorance of Man expresses.

This is what he calls the “boundaries” of our Ignorance. Specifically, he tells us that we are ignorant of-

- our superconscious self, the subliminal, and the subconscious self
- our universal selves
- the world in which we live
- ourselves in Space
- ourselves in Time

Here are the main points in detail:

From Ignorance to Knowledge

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo begins by describing how we have a consciousness of Ignorance that is moving towards a consciousness of Integral Knowledge. He tells us that this Ignorance is a separative knowledge laboring towards a Knowledge by Identity.

-The consciousness of the Mental man is a many-sided Ignorance striving to become an all-embracing Knowledge; a limited separative awareness of things striving to become an integral consciousness and knowledge.

Ego-Sense as First Lynchpin of Our Existence on Way to True, Spiritual Self

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain the utility of the human ego. He tells us that the Ego first basis of coherence, a lynchpin to hold ourselves together, to support our existence.

He goes on and tells us that that the Ego sense and idea not only maintains a constructed symbol of self, a separative ego, but doing so serves duty for the hidden Real Self, the spirit or true being. **[It is necessary as a means of the establishing the first primitive condition of self on the way to True, spiritual Self.]**

The Higher, Subtle Sense of the Subliminal

Now Sri Aurobindo compares the limited ego-sense to the higher Subliminal-based existence.

First, he reminds us that the Ego reinforces our tendency towards surface living, and hence our Ignorance. **[We do not perceive the depths of truths around us; only the surface truths; or a few truths that our vital being is attached to; hence our essential Ignorance at the Ego plane.]**

On the other hand, the inner being, including our subliminal part has a subtle sense, and therefore a much vaster capacity to perceive all that enters or touches us and our environment. **[We perceive the multitude of truths about any matter, about what is happening around us, in terms of our engagement and exchange of ideas with others, etc.]**

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to tell us that this subliminal being is in touch with wide-ranging secret and subtle forces and knowledge; with the intraconscient and circumconscient planes of existence. [The subliminal, the inner being sits in the subconscious yet has antennae that pick-up signals and truths of knowledge and influence from the universal and transcendent planes. It is thus in touch with higher truths of our being, with wider possibilities, with positive, even spiritual dimensions. And that updating positive knowledge and influence is constantly rising to the surface and influencing our waking thoughts and actions. The more we live in the depths, the more that influence on our surface existence. At the depths of the subliminal is the True Self, the evolving soul that lives in harmony with all existence, lives in the time and timelessness, opens to the supramental plane and life.]

The Nature of the Subconscient

Sri Aurobindo then moves onto explain the nature of another, though related plane of our being: the subconscious.

In order to explain the nature of the subconscious, also referred to as the "subconscient," he first tells us that the essence of it is an Inconscient or unconsciousness. [The unconsciousness/inconscience of the physical body is the basis and great influence of the difficult, but not fully unconscious subconscient.]

Storing Impressions of Past Experiences -- Now he begins to describe the subconscient in some detail. He tells us for one that it is vibrating on the borders of consciousness, swallowing into its depths impressions of past experiences. [The subconscious is not so much a memory of past experiences, but a storage area of impressions of past experience, often tinged with a cloudy, pessimistic, even negative residual memory of things.]

Unconscious Habit – Relatedly, impression of past experience become seeds of unconscious habit and return constantly and chaotically to the surface, bringing up futile and perilous impressions and influences.

[E.g., when I walk down the street, and come to something vaguely familiar to me, I have a negative association of it surging up from within, and influencing me. Likewise, I can have the same fixed habit of not wanting to take certain actions because I feel some type of futility associated with it.

This is almost the opposite of the Subliminal, which connected to the superconscient, sends up positive impressions and influence.

It is interesting that Karmayogi have said that the subliminal sits on the tip of the subconscient, or is even a positive part of it. He then goes on to say that if we increasingly open to the superconscient realms, not only will the subliminal intensity; but the wanting influence of the subconscient can be overcome and transformed. In fact, the Mother

said that was one of the keys to the physical transformation of the cells of the body; the overcoming of the body's subconscious pessimism.]

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that the wanting subconscious influence-
-in dreams [Obscure impression of the past are stored in the subconscious and appear in dreams. Often when one wakes exhausted from sleep one has done battle in one's dream due to obscure, repeating, and otherwise negative influences stored there.]

-in mechanical, repeating actions [The subconscious compels us to just repeat the same thing; in a way blocking my ability to think of doing things in another way.]

-in obscure impulses and motives

[Certain little-known compulsions on our part have their origin here. Perhaps many of the psychological illnesses, like obsessive-compulsiveness, neuroticism, and other have their roots here. Also, dark tendencies and motives to do certain strange or uncalled for things.]

-in perturbation and upheavals

[We are compelled to act in ways that switches on certain lower vital tendencies such as getting over-excited or taking to psychological states that are dark and dreary. Perhaps depression and similar psychological ailments have their roots here.]

Summary of the Inner and Super Consciousness

After describing the subliminal and subconscious planes within, Sri Aurobindo then goes on to summarize these and related parts of our being. They include-

(1) *the subconscious* – the darker, limited inner consciousness that contains impressions of our past, and the difficult influences of the world. From the sea of the subconscious come waves to the surface, normally of the wanting and disturbing kind.

(2) *the subliminal* – This is the inner/higher mind, life, and physical. And it is supported by an even deeper and more profound psychic being. From the sea of the subliminal come waves to the surface, normally of the positive and helpful kind.

(3) *the waking consciousness*. This is the consciousness of ourselves and life we are normally familiar with.

(4) *the superconscious* – This is a supreme Higher Reality that we experience. It is our Real Self in the cosmos. Moreover, our subliminal being (and further still the psychic being) is in touch with it.

Beyond Time from the Subliminal Depths

Moreover, Sri Aurobindo adds that from the depths in the subliminal one is not limited by the moments of time. It can perceive the past,

present, and future simultaneously. [E.g. the subliminal can sense the right thing to do and have that influence bubble to the surface of our waking consciousness, as it is in touch with the superconscience that can see into the future.]

Evolution of Inconscient, Subconscient into the Superconscient

Sri Aurobindo further tells us that the limited subconscious/subconscious, and even its inconscient/unconscious basis is not doomed to remain as it is, but is evolving in Man towards, into the knowledge of the superconscient.

The Variety, Boundaries of our Ignorance

Having described the Inconscience/unconsciousness that is behind existence (in this chapter focusing on its limited effect on the subconscious), and earlier in the chapter indicating that we have consciousness of Ignorance, a separative knowledge laboring towards a Knowledge by Identity, Sri Aurobindo now takes on the various ways the Ignorance expresses. This is what he calls the boundaries of our Ignorance. Specifically, he tells us that we are ignorant of-

-our superconscient self, the subliminal, and the subconscious self [these invisible planes we have just covered.]

-our universal selves [of our role in enabling the universal plane fulfill the transcendent will beyond our individuality.]

-the world in which we live [e.g. of what is truly happening in the world, let alone the nature of life, including its subtle principles and methods.]

-ourselves in Space

-ourselves in Time -- i.e. of the past, save our physical existence and memories. We know nothing of the future. [We are limited to a very partial knowledge of what is occurring in the present, know only a very partial and incomplete knowledge of the past primarily through our memories, and have virtually no knowledge of the future.]

Ego's Reinforcement of Our Ignorance

Then Sri Aurobindo returns to the earlier theme of the Ego, but here focuses on how it clinches, supports, reinforces Man's sense of division, and therefore of Ignorance. He tells us that Ego is the most formidable of the knots that keeps us tied to the Ignorance. [He has spoken of this many times, and will continue to do so. The ego is the separative consciousness that causes our mind to take excluding, exclusive points of view, thus shielding us from the many-sided truth of things, which is in essence our Ignorance born of creation. He also has told us that moving out of ego (through a deeper consciousness instead of the

surface) will release us from the Ignorance and allow us to discover the Integral Knowledge.]

ADDITIONAL:

Overview of Chapter by Karmayogi:

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo says man is not a mere body, but a soul that co-exists with souls. In our ignorance we mistake ourselves as our ego, but our own being is the same as the Being of the Cosmos of which our mind is aware only a little surface - it is subliminal, the being is below the mental cognition - and in a huge part of our being our entire past is buried of which we are not conscious - subconscious.

God, the Superconscient, Sachchidananda, Oversoul, are great terms expressing the enormous size of our own being. As these are above our consciousness, we call this Superconscience.

We are not aware of any of them, except our egoistic, personal life in the society.

Thus, man has developed seven ignorances.

In an attempt to draw a parallel, we can conceive of the social man in business in the context of his customers, his own sales persons, and the wider society. The shop owner is the profit-motivated little ego. His sales staff are his vital personality, the customer and public are his wider body, the widest society is his God, the oversoul.



The Origins of the Ignorance

(Book 2 Chapter XII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo contemplates the ultimate origins of the Ignorance. He asks how could the Ignorance, this self-limiting and separative knowledge have arisen?

He says we cannot look to Brahman, the Original Consciousness for the source of our Ignorance. Nor is the Ignorance inherently there in the Multiplicity, in Creation. (as there is an inherent Oneness in the Many in its essence and origins)

Rather, the origin of the Ignorance is in the separative movement of the Force (of Consciousness-Force (Chit)) in the *self-absorbed concentration of that Force in action*. In other words, it occurs in the *Involuntary process*.

But at what point in the involution?

Sri Aurobindo says it can be explained by first understanding how *Knowledge* emerges from out of Consciousness in that involutory process. He says that the Ignorance comes into play at a later stage, when Mind, i.e. cosmic Mind is separated from its spiritual and supramental basis.

[It will be revealed to be the breakdown of the Integral, Unitarian Knowledge of Supermind into the many-sided, yet separative knowledge of the universal consciousness, Overmind.]

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to say that this self-absorbed concentration and separative movement culminates in the forms of creation, including us, where our mentality is separative and divided from the totality of the truth.

Here are the main points in detail:

Where is the Source of the Origins of Our Ignorance?

Sri Aurobindo at the outset of the chapter asks what is the source of the Ignorance -- the self-limiting and separative knowledge we have inherited.

How could the Ignorance, this self-limiting and separative knowledge have arisen, come into action, and maintained itself when it arose from the Being -- which is itself not this way, and is in fact indivisible?

We know that somehow the Supreme has plunged itself into its Ignorance in us, but where, at what point or level did it occur?

Its Source is Not in Brahman or Multiplicity

Perhaps, Sri Aurobindo asks, the origins of the Ignorance are at the level of the Infinite Consciousness (Brahman, the omnipresent Reality). Sri Aurobindo says we cannot look to Brahman for the source of our Ignorance. **[Brahman is beyond duality, separateness, etc. It is even beyond consciousness; let alone divided consciousness.]**

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that the Ignorance is not inherently there in the Multiplicity -- the extension of the unmanifest Brahman -- because there is an inherent Oneness in the Many in its essence and origins.

[At the point where Supermind comprehends and then renders the Many from the One, each item of the multiplicity is unified with every other in inherent unity and oneness. This is at the supramental level of creation. Though at lower planes the oneness of the many begins to break down, at its highest nature each member of the Multiplicity is inherently one with the others, indicating that the Fall into Ignorance does not take place there.]

The Source of the Ignorance is Found in the Self-Absorbed Concentration and Separative Movement of the Force

Though Sri Aurobindo goes on to consider other potential sources of the Ignorance, he concludes that the origins of the Ignorance are rather in the separative movement of the Force aspect of Consciousness-Force (Chit).

[When the Unmanifest, Infinite Brahman takes its first step toward creation, it occurs as Existence (Sat), Consciousness Force (Chit), and Delight (Ananda). He tells us that the Force of the Consciousness is where the Ignorance has its origins.]

Existence (Sat) is a Conscious being, and being conscious, it releases a Force and power. (It is the Force of Consciousness.) It is in this Force that that we can begin to trace the separative movement from which the Ignorance originates. **[**

Then what IS this separative movement of the Force (of Consciousness) that is the source of the Ignorance? He says that it is self-absorbed concentration of that Force in action. **[Meaning that a degree of the Consciousness of the Force has been lost.]**

More particularly, because of this self-absorbed concentration of the Force, each form, including us, experiences itself as a separative

movement, thereby shutting out awareness of what its total self and being. [We as a form through the self-absorbed concentration of the Force lose connection with a wider existence, with the totality of things, causing our mentality to be exclusive in its knowledge, i.e. Ignorant, relative to the totality of the wider existence and knowledge.]

Particularly Due to Limited Movement of Knowledge that Emerges from Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo pushes forward to get at the deepest understanding of this matter. He explains why this self-absorbed concentration and separative movement of the Force (of Consciousness) occurs. He says that it can be found in how *Knowledge* emerges from out of Consciousness in the involutionary process.

[The original status of Consciousness Force (Chit) later becomes Knowledge and Will through the action of Supermind. I.e. the Consciousness becomes Knowledge, and the Force, will. Knowledge can be said to have been conceived and brought about so that Mind, including a human mind could comprehend existence.]

The Ignorance Appears First in Overmind, where Knowledge is Total, but Not in Unity as in Supermind

But where does the Ignorance come into play in this process? Sri Aurobindo says that the Ignorance comes into play at a later stage, when mind, including the human mind, is separated from its spiritual and supramental basis.

[Ignorance indicates a lack of (integral) Knowledge. Though Knowledge derives from Consciousness, and Will from Force, somewhere the knowledge is lessened, causing Ignorance to come about.

Sri Aurobindo indicates that this lack of or degradation of Knowledge occurs not in Supermind, where the Knowledge is integral and total, but in a lesser formation, which he will later reveal as Overmind (universal consciousness).

In Overmind, the Force begins to separate from the consciousness in order to create individual sense of things in preparation for manifestation of forms of force in creation. E.g. in Supermind I know all sides of a matter, and perceive how each is part of the Whole. In the somewhat lesser Overmind, I perceive all aspects of a matter, but lose connection with the Whole, the totality, and essence. Thus, the Gods, who originate in Overmind have perfect knowledge in their own sphere, but do not integrate and have a bond of unity with other Gods who each have their own perfect Knowledge in their sphere. Supermind is an integral unity consciousness of knowledge; Overmind and integral consciousness of knowledge somewhat devoid of unity. It is at that

point that the separateness, and thus the limited Knowledge, which is the Ignorance, begins.]

The Ignorance Culminates in Our Mentality of Division and Exclusivity

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to say that this self-absorbed concentration and separative movement culminates in the forms of creation, including us, where our mentality is separative and divided from the totality of the truth.

[As we move down from Overmind to cosmic Mind to matter, the Knowledge decreases, and then virtually disappears. In the evolution, the human individual inherits this lack of knowledge, as he is born Ignorant, not having the integral knowledge.

In this separative consciousness, the human Mind thinks exclusively. We accept that which our senses tell us, which is a very partial knowledge of reality. We also accept that which is embraced by our vital emotions and attitudes, which also masks us from the integral truth of things.

As a result of the exclusivity of the mind caught up in sense input and the domination and influence of our vital and physical desires and needs, there is a constant sense of division between ourselves and the world. Our sense, and our vital being influence and tell us one thing, and others, life, and the world say another. There is thus constant division between our mentality and existence around us. It is this fundamental aspect of our Ignorance that is the source of all of our suffering, misunderstanding, and inability to realize our infinite potential.]

Commentary: EMBRACING THE VAST POWER OF THE FORCE

The Supramental Force essentially won WWII and ended the Cold War, and yet we believe so little in it to elevate our own lives. To help us to move to the heights of success, wealth and other forms of greatness would seem to be but a trifle for the Mother, yet we hardly ask this of Her, believe hardly at all in Her ability to help us reach such heights.

This is mostly due to our extremely limited understanding of the nature of Reality, which includes our inability to recognize the vast power of the Force to quickly act and alter the conditions of our lives. We can literally have anything we want, manifest any deep aspiration if we simply and intensely open to Mother and ask for it. We can become great in our field, be wealthy beyond compare, find the love of our lives, and discover the deepest riches of our inner being and the outer life.

Our inability to capitalize on this Ultimate Opportunity is due to our essential Ignorance born of creation, which expresses through a puny

mind that sees a tiny sliver of the truth of things. Bugged down on the surface of life, locked into our preferences, held captive by our fixed habits, chained by our wanting attitudes and misbegotten beliefs, our mind misses 99% of the truth and power of existence, including the vast power of the supramental Force to rapidly change conditions for the better.

And yet we can begin to overcome mind's limits, its fundamental Ignorance of the multi-sided truth of things by embracing Mother and Her Force in full. When we enthusiastically believe in it and open to it, She will quickly act and help us realize our fondest dreams, while elevating us from Ignorance to the integral knowledge of what is happening and can happen in our lives.



Exclusive Concentration and the Ignorance

(Book 2 Chapter XIII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by again explaining the source and nature of the Ignorance in our being.

He begins by reminding us that through a process of self-absorption the Conscious-Force became a part Knowledge that excludes the rest from its awareness. This is our involutory inheritance and is the deepest source of the Ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo explains that the Ignorance in us exists by a *wall of exclusion that limits itself to a single aspect, field, domain, or habitation*. This exclusion and limitation relative to the totality of existence, to the Reality creates Ignorance at several levels for us in creation. We are-

- Ignorant of our Full Self
- Ignorant of our Integral, True Self
- Ignorant of the Totality of Our Inner and Extra-Cosmic Nature
- Ignorant of our Time-less Awareness

Sri Aurobindo then returns to an issue he has addressed previously: the utility of the Ignorance in creation. He says its utility is twofold: it serves to enable Man to defend, live out his individuality in time; and it helps Man discover the multi-sided integral Knowledge and Truth, which enables him to have the Joy and Delight of that discovery.

Pursuing again the issue of the deepest source of the Ignorance in the Involution, Sri Aurobindo more specifically indicates that it originates not in Supermind (Truth, Unity Consciousness), but in Overmind (Universal Consciousness). Though infinitely profound in Overmind, there is the loss of inherent Unity of knowledge and connection with all other related knowledges and things. He goes on to tell us that Overmind is in middle ground between Supermind's Light of Truth and the Ignorance of Mind.

Sri Aurobindo reminds us that if we quiet the frontal movement of concentration and move to the depths within, we will discover our true Self, which will open us up to vast truth and knowledge, and the end of our essential Ignorance.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo most surprisingly tells us that Ignorance is actually a *power of Knowledge*. It enables Man to limit himself, to focus his concentration to the work in hand; to accomplish a particular thing. He says this is power of Self-Limitation. It is not however the Truth of things, but rather a first step in the Ignorance to function in life. There are naturally many steps upward in that power of Knowledge to the Integral Truth of things.

He thus once again reminds us that Ignorance also allows for the multiplicity of possibility; of infinite variation in creation, on the way to an Integral Knowledge.

Here are the main points in detail:

Ignorance as Absorbed Concentration of Conscious Force

Sri Aurobindo continues in this chapter to explain the source and nature of the Ignorance. First, in revisiting something he covered in the previous chapter, he explains that the Ignorance has at its source the subordinate action of Brahman: in particular, the self-absorption consciousness of the Force, which becomes a part Knowledge that excludes the rest from its awareness; that becomes forgetful of self and the total reality of nature.

[In the movement from Supermind to Overmind to Mind, the Consciousness of the Force becomes a Knowledge, which then becomes a part Knowledge that is exclusive and forgetful of Its True Infinite Nature. Man inherits through his body, vital, and mind this limitation, and in particular through his limited mentality, has a very part view of any matter, as well as lost his awareness of his true self and higher nature.]

Ignorance Creates a Wall of Exclusion to a perception of a Single Aspect, while Losing the Sense of His Own Full Self

Sri Aurobindo then continues along this line and explains that the Ignorance exists by a wall of exclusion that limits itself to a *single aspect, field, domain, or habitation*. This exclusion and limitation in turn creates Ignorance at several levels:

Ignorant of One's Full Self – For one, in that Ignorance, one loses track of one's own *full self; one's many-sided being*. Sri Aurobindo compares it to an actor who plays a part in a play, fully immersing himself in it, but is forgetful of his own many-sided self; his full nature as the total person he really is beyond acting in that scene or story.

Ignorant of One's Integral, True Self – Furthermore, in that exclusivity and limitation of Ignorance there is limiting, separative conscious energy that is absorbed in its works to the apparent *forgetfulness of its integral and real self*. [I.e. one loses connection to one's True self, the Psychic being, the personal evolving soul that is one's true nature.]

Ignorant of the Totality of His Inner and Extra-Cosmic Nature – Also, as a result of this wall of exclusion and limitation of the Ignorance, Man is unaware of his hidden parts within and the wider, cosmic existence; i.e. the subconscious and subliminal existence within, and the superconscious without. (And which by the way all realized, held together, and integrated in the psychic being).

Ignorant of Time-less Awareness -- Similarly, from that exclusive, limited Ignorance status, Man loses touch with the true nature of Time. In particular, he perceives the present; lives moment to moment; yet is ignorant of the future and the past (save what he knows through memory).

In other words, through the exclusivity of the Ignorance, we perceive the part, not the whole of our existence. The stream, but not the wider, infinite-like sea.

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates that there is hope. For just as the actor will come back to his own self, the full totality of his being, so too we can do the same relative to our awareness, knowledge, consciousness, and being.

The Utility of Ignorance -- for Individuality and Delight

As he has done before, Sri Aurobindo describes the utility of the Ignorance in creation. It is two-fold. First, he tells us that the Ignorance, i.e. the absence of real Knowledge, serves the purpose of enabling Man to defend, live out his individuality in time. More particularly, he tells us that Man has to put on the temporal, psychological, and egoistic ignorance in order to protect himself against the light of the infinite and the largeness of the universal, so as to develop behind this defense his temporal individuality in the cosmos.

Second, through that Ignorance, Man can discover that integral Knowledge, and thereby have the Joy and Delight of that discovery. In other words, the purpose of this exclusive concentration, this Ignorance is for the joy of discovery of our greater Knowledge as intended by the Spirit.

[Joy and Delight (Ananda of Sat-Chit-Ananda) is what Sri Aurobindo gives for the reason for our existence, i.e. the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body, and is therefore why the Creator allows for infinite *diversity* -- including Ignorance and falsehood, and error -- to enable the infinite *discovery* that will elicit that Joy (Ananda). More generally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that Satchitananda descends into

material Nescience and hides itself so that through Man he rediscovers that absorbed energy, which brings Delight.]

Ignorance Originates Not in Supermind, But Overmind

Continuing along he began in the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo more directly indicates that the Ignorance originates not in Supermind (Truth Consciousness of Unity), but Overmind (Universal Consciousness that has lost its inherent unity with all other related things). [as it begins to identify with its uniqueness, like a particular God relative to other Gods, a complex idea that has lost its association with a related one, etc.]

He goes on to explain the difference between Supermind and Overmind. He tells us that in Supermind the infinite light and truth and power are always present. It is there even in the most finite workings. Moreover, in supermind this consciousness of unity embraces the consciousness of diversity. [Explain]

Overmind, on the other hand, is where the unity begins to break down; where the consciousness of unity and diversity come apart; where the light of truth shuts off.

He says that Overmind is the middle ground between Supermind’s light of truth and the ignorance of Mind, where the light of truth is shut off.

Sri Aurobindo in a memorable phrase indicates therefore that Overmind “hides the face of the supramental truth but reflects its image.”

On Overmind

The next step in the process of creation [the involution] is the emergence of the Overmind. This is the first step into the Ignorance. What Sri Aurobindo means by Overmind can be imagined this way: I identify with one aspect of my personality, but I do not identify with all the other aspects. I think of myself as an adult. I look back and see myself behind that adulthood, but I say the child-self or my other-selves are not me. What I see of myself is true, but it is no longer the whole truth. I still know myself, but I do not know every other manifestation of myself. Overmind is the plane of the Gods. Each God is a manifestation of the Divine. Each is a true manifestation of the Divine, one aspect. Each of them can look back and find the Supramental Divine behind or within them, but none of them recognizes that all the other Gods are equally aspects of the Divine. Each expresses a Truth of the Divine, but limits itself to one aspect or portion of the whole Truth. It is the beginning of division and of separative knowledge. (MSS)

Reversal of Ignorance from Exclusive Concentration on Surface to Experience of True Self Within

Near the end of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo devises the way out of the Ignorance. He indicates that to remove the veil of the Ignorance, the Conscious-Force of being in us uses a reversal action of its powers of exclusive concentration. This is done by quitting the frontal movement of Nature -- essentially Prakriti -- in individual consciousness, and substituting the deeper, non-surface, inner True Self and Being -- essentially Purusha.

[Ignorance is overcome by moving away from the surface to the depths and discovering our True Self and Being, which enables our mind to expand to spiritual mentality, opening us up to integral knowledge.]

Purpose of the Ignorance, and the Power of Self-Limitation

Finally, Sri Aurobindo reminds us that the Ignorance is not so much a bad or negative thing, but a power of Knowledge to limit itself, to concentrate in the individual to do the work in hand, to accomplish a particular thing.

The Ignorance is therefore expressing a special power - of Self-limitation. In fact, Self-Limitation is a viable aspect and power of the Infinite, serving a purpose.

In the end then, the Ignorance, while being a power of manifold absorbed and self-limiting concentration of the conscious being, is also a natural capacity of variation in one's self-conscious knowledge.

[Self-limitation enables a particular thing to occur to be accomplished. And though that creates a separative consciousness, it enables the infinite variation to blossom in creation; for multiplicity of possibility, infinite variation in creation to occur, on the way to an Integral Knowledge. In this way, Self-Limitation is a power of the Infinite Consciousness. Implicitly then, Ignorance is serving that same purpose; and has the same wanting and helpful qualities.]

Self-Conception, Self-Limitation, Self-Absorption in The Creation Process

Sri Aurobindo in his metaphysical opus 'The Life Divine' references three connected principles of creation: Self-Conception, Self-Limitation, and Self-Absorption. Let's examine them, and then relate it to our own lives.

In the process of Creation from an Infinite Consciousness, the Being conceived that which it wished to become in a manifest universe. These "Real Idea" were divine attributes such as Peace, Truth, Knowledge, Delight, and Love. This is the principle of Self-Conception in action.

To manifest the Real Ideas in a created universe, the Being extended Itself and evolved a new plane which Sri Aurobindo realized and called "Supermind" (or Truth Consciousness). Supermind first comprehended the Self-Conceptive Real Ideas of the Infinite Consciousness, and then through its Apprehending power divided them into triune entities. E.g. Knowledge became Knower – Knowing – Knowledge. I.e. the knower knows the knowledge. It is a subject apprehending an object. Apprehending Supermind followed this process for all the Real Ideas; including. Lover Loves the Beloved. It is in essence a self-limiting movement from non-division to division.

As a result of this process, Space and Time were born, and the Divine values entered creation, seeking their manifestation in the coming evolution. This entire process was one of taking a Whole of possibilities and dividing it into parts of realization. The parts were a delimitation of the One. Hence this entire process is known as "Self-Limitation," the second great principle in the Involutionary process. It sets the stage and enables a universe of infinite possibilities and their evolution in consciousness.

The third principle in this dynamic of creation is Self-Absorption. In the involutionary process from Spirit to Matter, the Being increasingly lost its Consciousness to the point where the matter that emerged from energy was devoid of all Conscious Being, Force, and Delight. And yet this was the Intention of the Infinite; to lose its consciousness, as it made its way from Spirit to Matter.

But why would the Infinite increasingly hide its consciousness on the way to creation beginning with Matter?

It is for the purpose of Delight. When the unconscious forms in creation (including us), discover their higher Nature, they experience a DYNAMIC Delight that is superior the static Delight of the Infinite Being. Also, by losing its consciousness, its wholeness, its oneness, things break apart infinitely, down to the atomic level in matter, which enables infinite variety, multiplicity, possibility in the evolution upward, as now everything is included -- the unconscious and the conscious, the good and the bad; the large and the small; the pleasurable and the painful. As a result, each thing amidst an infinity of forces and forms can experience the dynamic joy and delight of discovery.

In addition, there is the possibility of each form shedding its ignorance and separateness from the whole and discovering its Oneness with life and all other things. In fact, this is the Evolutionary process we are living out today. In this process, the Self-absorption, the negation of the Consciousness in our being is reversed, and the higher nature the Divine intended for us in life emerges. The Real Ideas of Peace Truth, Knowledge, Goodness Delight Love, Timelessness, and Infinity of the Being are increasingly manifest in our lives and in the life of the world. Hence this principle of Self-Absorption of consciousness in the involutionary process is linked to its principle of Self-Limitation, which

is in turn related to the original Self-Conception. That is, the Infinite consciousness self-conceives Real Ideas of possibility to manifest in a universe (Self-Conception). Supermind then delimits the Conscious-Force in order to divide things into infinite variation of forms (Self-Limitation). And then the Consciousness is fully absorbed, hidden beginning with infinitely divided matter to enable the forms that emerge, including us to eventually discover our higher nature and experience Delight in creation (Self-Absorption).

By the way, we follow that same process when we try to rise in our own lives; when we try accomplish at a higher level. That is, we conceive what we wish to become (self-conception). We self-limit ourselves to that particular effort from amongst all things we could do (self-limitation). And we self-absorb ourselves fully in that effort, forgetting all other matters (self-absorption). The result is the manifestation of our Intent; and infinitely so!



The Origin and Remedy of Falsehood, Error, Wrong and Evil

(Book 2 Chapter XIV)

Summary

In this very interesting chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by addressing the issue of good and evil. The first and surprising claim he makes is that good and evil serve a purpose in the evolutionary Intention behind things. He then goes on to explain how good can come out of evil, and evil out of good. Moreover, we should keep in mind that our notion of what is good and what is evil keeps changing as we and society change.

Sri Aurobindo then shifts and focuses on the roots of evil. He says it is not inherent in the Absolute or Satchitananda, rather it occurs at the occult planes that emerge below Supermind. **(Overmind and below)** That in these supraphysical realms there are personalities, powers, and forces that are titanic and daemonic. And that the intention of these powers of Darkness and Evil seek to prolong the Ignorance and Inconscience in creation.

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that Man has become an instrument of these supraphysical energies and forces, - both good and evil - incarnating them in the world.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on how evil came to express in our own *human nature*. To do that he diverges and focuses on how mind came to be in the first place; in particular, how the surface consciousness and thinking intelligence came to be. And yet despite its positive utility and effect, the human intelligence is also filled with human error, contributing to our essential Ignorance.

In perhaps the key to the chapter Sri Aurobindo indicates that falsehood and evil take root in our *vitalized mind of desire and sensation; in the most surface mental and vital consciousness*. Thus, our beliefs and opinions take shape as a part knowledge that suits our lower nature and the inputs of our senses. *It is in essence the Ego asserting itself at the level of Mind. This is where evil establishes itself in Man.*

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain in detail how Ego appears in the three increasingly dark aspects of our being - as Ignorance, as

Falsehood, and as Evil. Interestingly he goes on to explain the *utility* of ego in the wider scheme of things. That Ego is the first necessary means by which we distinguish ourselves from others and the mass. Otherwise, we would not have a unique identity, a sense of our own existence.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that to completely eliminate this triune of darkness, we need to not only connect to our Psychic Being, but to experience our eternal Self and cosmic being, and further to realize the transcendent Divine. As a result, we become instruments of Its light and power, enabling us to permanently overcome the ego sense, and thus eliminate ignorance, falsehood, and evil in our nature.

Here are the main points in detail:

Review of Ignorance

Sri Aurobindo begins by restating his definition of Ignorance. He tells us that Ignorance is *self-limiting knowledge, oblivious of the integral self-awareness, and confined to an exclusive concentration in a single field.*

With this in mind, Sri Aurobindo embarks on a journey to uncover the origin, purpose, and nature of Evil.

Utility of Good and Evil

Surprisingly at the outset, he tells us that both Good *and* Evil serve positive purposes; serving the evolutionary Intention behind things. **[I.e. the Divine purpose and intent behind that progress.]**

Good Out of Evil, Evil Out of Good

Then Sri Aurobindo goes on to make another remarkable statement. He makes the powerful assertion that *Good comes out of Evil, even as Evil comes out of Good.* Let's explore these notions a little further.

Good Out of Evil

Let's start with how Good comes out of Evil. Sri Aurobindo in various places indicates how the negative is often the greatest power for accelerating the evolution and contributing to the Good. Evil is the same; playing an unseen constructive role in Nature, in the evolutionary unfolding of life.

[E.g. though horrific, WWII brought about true liberal democracies as well as the European Union, developments that might have taken centuries to occur, if at all.]

In Jane Austin's 'Pride and Prejudice,' the duplicitous Mr. Wickham continued to appear at all the critical moments of Mr. Darcy's life, culminating with the scandal he initiates that Darcy resolves enabling his marriage to Eliza Bennet whom he madly is in love with.

Likewise, in Dumas' 'The Count of Monte Cristo,' the innocent, but naive seaman Dantes was put in prison because of evil acts of others. However, the prison became the learning ground for him through Abbe Faria who teaches him about all aspects of life. Plus, Abia gives him the map that enables Dantes to become the wealthiest and most powerful man in society.]

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to say that when Evil produces Good, it is because there is actually something True in that evil. That the evil brings a certain intervention of truth in it, which also has the effect of redressing and rectifies that which is false; is inert, backwards, etc.

Evil Out of Good

To explain how Evil comes out of Good, Sri Aurobindo resorts to a powerful analogy. He says that just a shadow depends on light for its existence, so Evil depends on (an unseen) Good.

[E.g., the good intentions of the Europeans to placate the Germans strengthened and emboldened the latter at the outset of WWII. Likewise, Gandhi's attempts at non-violence, an apparent Good, delayed Indian independence and led to the partition with Pakistan, who till this day remain acute enemies, with nuclear arsenals pointed at one another. Likewise, in attempting to release the power of the atom for scientific inquiry, an apparent Good, the atomic bomb was created, the greatest Evil ever known to Man.]

[Good and Bad Relationship in Our Own Lives

We can see this same basic dynamic in our own lives. That many good things happened because of the bad; and many bad things came out of the good.

(Good out of the Bad) E.g. as a result of falling to the depths of poverty, we make the great effort that sends up to the top. Or because of the ill-will of another party we are dropped to the bottom of the organization, but then others rally around us, and we are taken to heights we would never have dreamed of.

(Bad out of the Good) We have a very solid success, but then become complacent and fall down sharply like chutes and ladders. Or in our munificence we are self-giving to bad people, which comes back to haunt us. Etc.]

Changing View of Good and Evil

In this light, Sri Aurobindo reminds us that not only is our view of Good and Evil limited, but it is also constantly changing. [A Good in yesterday's society may be an Evil today; and something once considered an Evil in the past may be a Good today. E.g., it was believed by Christians (and other Semitic-based religions) in the past that non-believers of another faith were false and evil, but now such religious leaders and followers indicate that the followers of these other faiths are Good. Women showing their shape was once considered Evil, but that is no longer the case in most nations.

It also works in the opposite direction. What we consider Good, such as flogging and other forms of torture for doing a wrong, are now considered Evil. Bleeding a man who was sick was considered a Good; now it is condemned as a falsehood that when practiced is False and Evil-like.]

Evil Not Inherent in Brahman (the Absolute) or Satchitananda

Sri Aurobindo then takes a sidestep and addresses a great question of metaphysics and philosophy. Is there inherent evil in creation; i.e. at the Source of being in the universe? Sri Aurobindo concludes that there is no inevitable cosmicity of falsehood and Evil. I.e. there is nothing inherent in the realm behind the universe -- i.e. the Absolute, Brahman, the omnipresent Reality -- that has evil in it. Nor is it there in Sat-Chit-Ananda (of the Upper Hemisphere.) Nor is it there in essential cosmic principles or primal powers in the cosmos [i.e. the Real Ideas].

[There is no Evil in the Infinite Supreme, because it is beyond such notions. And there is nothing in the Existence/Being (Sat), Conscious-Force (Chit), and Delight (Ananda), the first step out of the Supreme on the way to creation -- that would indicate a source Evil. After all, the Being (Sat) is a Pure Existent; the Force (chit) is fully conscious in the highest sense; and Delight (Ananda) is the joy of Being, which is surely not evil.] [ep]

Source of Falsehood and Evil in Creation in Occult Planes

Leaving behind the Absolute and Sat-Chit-Ananda, Sri Aurobindo concludes that falsehood and evil originate in the occult planes in the unfolding of Life, in the creations of Life or Mind in Life. He says it is there in the *supraphysical* realms where there are personalities, powers, and forces that are superhuman, divine, titanic, and daemonic. Here there are powers and forces of Light and Darkness, harmony and anarchy, Good and Evil.

[As we know, Sri Aurobindo earlier indicated that Supermind divided the Conscious Force, resulting in an unseen *Energy*. Out of that Energy came the forces and forms of creation – unseen and seen; i.e. supraphysical and physical. The supraphysical, unseen forces of

Life/Energy would formulate positively and negatively, i.e. as Good and as Evil.

Gods as we know them are mostly positive and Divine-like, but other forces were/are wanting and negative, including titanic and daemonic. Elsewhere in *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo breaks down these Good and Evil supraphysical, unseen forces in detail.】

Man Incarnates the Supraphysical Good and Evil Energies

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to say that Man becomes an instrument of these supraphysical good and evil energies and forces, incarnating them in the world. 【An evil individual may come in contact with evil occult forces that support his positions and actions. Even a good person can unknowingly become their instrument. Sri Aurobindo indicates that Man can become instruments of these good and evil energies, without knowing the origin of one's actions.】

Powers of Evil Seek to Prolong Ignorance, Inconscient; and Block Progress, Evolution

Sri Aurobindo also says that the intention of these powers of Darkness and Evil seek to prolong the Ignorance and Inconscience in creation. 【In other words, they seek to block movements of progress and evolution of Man, and even beyond Man. By prolonging Ignorance in the world and by keeping the limited unconsciousness of the physical plane intact (i.e. maintaining the Inconscience, they block progress, evolution, and transformation. Mother would offer refer to these dark and Evil Forces as “the Hostiles,” and we have to be on guard against them, as they can appear in others, and in ourselves.】

Evil from the Supraphysical Does Not Appear in Physical Matter

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on how this Evil appears in our own human nature.

He says that though the Dark forces emerge from the original Energy, there is no real evil in matter, in the fundamental physical, material objects in creation. This is the case because the material realm has no real level *organization of consciousness* for that evil to manifest. 【Being essentially inert, inconscient, there is little scope for Evil to enter.】

Falsehood and Evil in Man

If not in matter or material objects, how does the falsehood and evil emerge in Man? Sri Aurobindo tells us that it takes root in his *vitalized mind of desire and sensation; in the most surface mental and vital consciousness*.

[Our human mentality is dominated by our emotions and sensations. I.e. those propensities influence how we see the world. What we want, what our desires long for, what are sensations have an urge effect the knowledge we perceive in our minds. If I see a car that is beautiful and will give me status, I might not have the presence of Mind to perceive that the interest rate is at 30%! My emotions, feelings, desires, and sensations have dominated my thought processes. In this way, we develop false views of life. If we then act on that false way that is abusive to others, then Evil takes root. If e.g. my desires compel me to believe one particular race is inferior, and then I act on it and try to wipe them out, I have taken my falsehood to the level of evil through action.]

Emergence of Surface Consciousness & Thinking Intelligence

Having raised the ability of Falsehood and Evil to penetrate the vital-influences and surface Mind, Sri Aurobindo goes on to explain how Mind developed in the first place; in particular, how our surface consciousness and then the thinking intelligence emerged.

He says that our surface consciousness is a product of a mentality pushing through the physical and vital consciousness, which is further drawn out through contact with the outside world. Thus, what emerges is a consciousness of the senses, of the surface, which he refers to as the Vital or Life Mind (aka Sense Mind).

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to say that this vital or life-mind then matures into a thinking intelligence, which is a significant improvement in Man's capacity to understand and know in life. He says that as Mind emerges from out of the surface consciousness, i.e. Sense Mind, to thinking intelligence, it develops characteristics of observation, invention, devise, intention, and purposefulness. In addition, through the vital emotions personal values and beliefs emerge, adding to that intelligence.

Role of Subliminal in this Process

Sri Aurobindo then reminds us that there is another force at work, pushing out the lower (surface consciousness) and then the higher (thinking intelligence) mentality. It is the secret, hidden, unobserved Subliminal being within us, through which right perception of truth guide our surface awareness.

Here's how it works: The indwelling intuition and instinct of the Subliminal being penetrates the physical unconsciousness of our being (essentially the physical/material realm), is absorbed somewhat in its movement upward by the lower consciousness (sense mind), and ends in a relatively higher consciousness, i.e. the thinking intelligence (though without the intuitive capacity).

Thus, the Subliminal influence enables us (animals, humans) to act with right instinct in life, as it sends minimum intuition and instinct necessary for the animal being to maintain its existence and survive. This expresses as the automatic instinct in Man, which works whenever it is warranted. Later on in the process, this Subliminal through its intuitive and instinctive influence push helps in the establishment of the surface consciousness (sense mind), and later takes shape in the development of the thinking intelligence.

[Recall that the subliminal being resides on the edge of the obscure subconscious within us, and is in tune with the superconscient, i.e. universal and transcendent influences and powers. From the subliminal percolates up many positive influences. Now we know it also serves a role in establishing our basic survival capacity, and then in the development of the surface consciousness (Sense Mind) and then the Thinking Intelligence.]

This also corroborates Sri Aurobindo's enormously significant and powerful claim *the Conscious-Force (Chit)* -- involved, hidden, concealed, dormant in material forms -- *awakens and emerges as living, conscious beings*. The Subliminal is in essence an instrument of Chit, compelling this emergence of consciousness through increasingly higher forms of mentality.]

Emergence of Error of Ignorance

And yet, Sri Aurobindo points out, while this emergence of mind in life brings a great increase in consciousness compared to the instinctive life, it also brings an increase in the range and capacity for Error. Misinterpretation of facts, misapplication of knowledge, miscombination, misconstruction, and misrepresentation all contribute to human error, and thus to our essential Ignorance.

Ego as Source of Ignorance, Falsehood, and Evil Key

Sri Aurobindo then shifts gears and explains the role of Ego in each of the three ascending, ever-worsening forms of darkness – Ignorance/Error, Falsehood, and Evil. This is one of the key elements in the chapter.

Ignorance -- He says that Ignorance takes shape when the human ego focuses on things that merit *its own self-oriented needs*, creating an almost inexhaustible distortion of truth, one that leads to Error in mind's thinking.

Falsehood -- Sri Aurobindo then tells us that out of this distortion and error-prone tendency of Ignorance, comes a separative, personal, vital/emotional attachment to them, which is *Falsehood*.

Evil – When on top of an exclusive mental view that is Ignorance and a separative vital insistence on it that is Falsehood is added a primitive,

unrestricted action, uncensored with truth or what is right, there arises a power of *Evil*.

[Or to put it on a scale, Error comes from Ignorance, Falsehood from Ignorance (i.e. the emotionalizing of error-prone belief of Ignorance), and Evil comes from acting on one's emotionalized Falsehood with malice and ill-intent. All are influenced by Ego. E.g. I believe that a certain race is lazy, based on my own prejudiced opinions or point of view (a product of Ignorance). Ego has an influence there. I then revel in that fact through the joy of expressing that error-prone statement to others (Falsehood). My emotionalized contact with others only reinforces my prejudiced view. I then go out and try to wipe out that people based on my false, emotionalized, error-prone belief. Evil then is a product of my wrong idea, emotion, will and action.]

Source and Nature of Ego

Having raised the issue of the separative Ego, Sri Aurobindo further considers its source and nature. He shows how ego is there at the level of each of Ignorance, Falsehood, and Evil. [He addresses the overall subject of Ego elsewhere -- e.g. in the chapter 'The Ego and the Dualities,' Book 1, Chapter VII.]

Ego and Ignorance -- Sri Aurobindo first reminds us that Ego is the result of a separative existence that divides us from all other beings. As a result, at the level of our mentality, there is an almost inexhaustible distortion of truth, which is the basis of our Ignorance. [If I see things only from the perspective of my separative self -- divided from others, and not in touch with the totality of truths of life -- I am receiving limited information into my Mind. Ignorance is the result.]

Ego and Falsehood -- The Ignorance is in turn enhanced as the Ego compels our vital emotions to support its limited, narrow, error-prone, distortion of truth, bringing about Falsehood. In essence, the Vital Ego takes to vital assertions, impulses, and desires; to self-justification and self-affirmation; and further degrades into a satisfaction, growth, strength, and greatness of itself in its opinions and beliefs. ["Ego is formed by self-affirmation of the vital." (Karmayogi)]

Ego and Evil -- When that ego-pull on one's narrow knowledge and emotions expands further into hatred, dislike, violence, opposition, oppression, intolerance, aggression, cruelty, and treachery -- in essence, dark forms of action and physical movement -- then the doors to Evil have been opened.

EXPRESSIONS OF EGO THROUGH- (i.e. of separative existence)		
Ignorance (Mental Ego)	Falsehood (Vital Ego)	Evil (Physical Ego)
Limited knowledge, distortion of Truth; Error prone tendencies	Vital assertions, impulses desires; self-justification, affirmation; self-satisfaction, greatness	Hatred, dislike, violence, opposition, oppression, intolerance, aggression, cruelty, treachery, etc., which are physical.

Utility of Ego on the Way to True Secret Self of Non-Ego

Having demonstrated the harmful effect of Ego in establishing our Ignorance, Falsehood, and Evil, Sri Aurobindo then, as he is apt to do, indicates the *utility* of Ego in the wider scheme of things.

He tells us that Ego is the first necessary means by which we distinguish ourselves from others and the mass; otherwise, we would not have a unique identity, a sense of our own existence. Or to paraphrase: the life/vital Ego is a machinery of Cosmic Nature for the affirmation of the individual to disengage himself from the indeterminate mass substance of subconsciousness. **[From this, we can conclude that Ego is a means by which the Many emerges from the One. By disengaging from the mass, an infinite variety of individualities are enabled. Then in the course of evolution, the Ego based individuality is replaced with True Individuality.]**

Sri Aurobindo then goes a step further, perceiving the ultimate endgame in this process. He says that the Ego is a lower expression of the deeper Being and Self we are on the way to becoming and realizing. Ego is a translation or substitute of the true secret Self. **[The opposite of identifying with Ego is identifying with our Psychic Being, our Evolving Soul, our True Self. It is a harmonic connection with others and life, which is opposite of the Ego's separative nature.]**

Liberation from Ignorance, Falsehood, and Evil through Inner, Soul Movement

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that in order to overcome Ignorance, Falsehood and Evil, we must overcome the influence of Ego. And we do that by replacing the outer, life-personality with the *inner* or true vital being, which begins to overcome the drive of the vital ego.

He says that when we connect with the evolving soul within, we are able to discern the mind's and the heart's and the vital's darker movements, including its tendencies toward Ego, and its separative and selfish ways. Through its Inner Guidance, we tend to have more harmonic relations with others and life, instead of being separative from them. **[From that deeper poise, our mind is less exclusive and open to**

the influences of other perspectives, thereby overcoming our Ignorance; we are less prone to take pleasure in those limited beliefs and viewpoints, overcoming Falsehood; and we are not prone to act on those emotionalized falsehoods in ways of malice or ill-feeling or intention, overcoming Evil.]

Through the Psychic Connection, we develop the sense of Oneness with others and life, and begin to overcome Ego which is the source and support of our exclusive knowledge (Ignorance), Vital Attachment to it (Falsehood), and Physical actions that are detrimental to others (Evil).

Ego, Ignorance, Falsehood, Evil Completely Overcome through Eternal Self and Transcendent Divine

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that to completely eliminate this triune of darkness, we need to not only connect to our Psychic Being, but to experience our eternal Self and cosmic being, and further to realize the transcendent Divine. As a result, we become instruments of Its light and power, enabling us to permanently overcome the ego sense, and thus eliminate ignorance, falsehood, and evil in our nature.

Beyond that requires an opening to the Supramental Truth Consciousness and Force that can transform all parts of our being; enabling us to develop a Supernature.

Or to paraphrase Sri Aurobindo here: The first step of self-realization is to enthrone the soul, the psychic individual in place of the ego. The next step is to become aware of the eternal self, which liberates and universalizes. The third step is to know the Divine Being, the transcendent, the Cosmic Being. We thus become channels to his Shakti, and act according to its dictates or her light and power within us. We thus become one with others by knowing our psychic nature, universalizing, and opening to the transcendent Divine. Beyond that, an ultimate truth consciousness must change all parts of our nature; enabling us to become an instrument of the Supernature.

IGNORANCE, FALSEHOOD, AND EVIL

<i>Item</i>	<i>Definition, Expression</i>	<i>Roots</i>	<i>Predominant Plane(s)</i>	<i>Example</i>
Ignorance	Limited and/or wrong understanding; Distortion of Truth; Error	Due to exclusive nature of surface consciousness of Mind	Surface Mind; Mind influenced by vital and physical urges	"Bill isn't a good cook because he is of Italian descent."
Falsehood	Personal, Vital attachment to one's Ignorance (limited and/or false knowledge)	Takes root in the vitalized mind of desire and sensation; in the separative ego	Vital Mind, Vital	"It's good that people like Bill aren't hired. This makes me happy."
Evil	Physically acting on Falsehood with negative intent.	Takes root in vital will and physical consciousness of separative ego	Lower Vital; Physical	X acted and did what was necessary to prevent Bill from getting the cook position.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Some Ideas Inspired by this Chapter

--Truth, i.e. true knowledge, can only be known from our deepest consciousness, culminating in the Psychic being. Whereas when we are on the surface, we are left baffled at what is true; gazing out on shifting sands.

In the Psychic, the true self and evolving soul we are open to the universal influences; the superconscient that brings us all of the necessary knowledge and reveals life's deepest principles. One of those is Truth, including its movements and laws. From the Psychic being we also know peace, silence, harmony, knowledge, wisdom, goodness, beauty, love, joy, infinity, and timelessness. Constant consecration will take us there.

--Ego cannot discriminate between true good and bad or evil, as it constantly takes one for the other. Only the Soul, the Psychic entity can.

--Goodness is doing what is true in each circumstance.

--Truth is not a mental rule, but a Spiritual one. It has an extraordinary flexibility based on conditions.

Mind says this is true and this is false, but someone else sees it the opposite. A third person sees it in-between. A fixed mental rule cannot be applied as it is a shifting target. However, a spiritual rule has a broader, more inclusive Truth that embraces the needs of each situation. When we move to Spirit, we are in identity with that Truth and its correlative principles, giving us that discriminating consciousness.

--One's actions or inactions based on our Ignorance can lead to unintended consequences of falsehood and evil.

E.g. a woman is smitten by a handsome man, who turns out to be a bad person who almost ruins her family. We believe X is the solution when it is X, Y, and Z, causing the machines to seriously malfunction. We believe a certain person is proud and haughty, when he proves to be a good man, and we've lost a vast financial opportunity to be connected with him. There are infinite ways we express such Ignorance in our lives. We are even Ignorant of our Ignorance!

--Unless we conquer our Ignorance, Falsehood and Evil will persist.

Our Ignorance opens the door to falsehood and evil; whether Ignorance of the facts, Ignorance of the Truth, Ignorance of the current conditions, Ignorance of where things are headed, Ignorance of others' nature, Ignorance of our own nature, Ignorance of our deeper consciousness and the spirit, etc. Acting from out of those Ignorances attracts negative circumstance that we can measure as Falsehood and Evil.]



Reality and the Integral Knowledge

(Book 2 Chapter XV)

Intro to Book 2 Part 2

In the first group of chapters (Part 1) of Book 2 Sri Aurobindo primarily focuses on the nature of the Ignorance. In the next group of chapters, addressed here, (Part 2) of Book 2 he will focus even more intently on the means of overcoming the Ignorance, and how we can attain an Integral Knowledge, ushering in a Divine Existence for ourselves and the world.

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on the relationship between the Omnipresent Reality and the Integral Knowledge. Since the Reality is all things, seen and unseen, with each plane being a different expression of that Reality, knowledge of this All would give one an Integral Knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that to gain that Integral Knowledge one must know all of the dual pairs of the Reality -- including the One and the Many, the Unmanifest and the Manifest, the Infinite and the Finite, Timelessness and Time, etc.; -- and perceive the complementary relationship of each dual pair.

He tells us that even the seeming duality of Knowledge and Ignorance must be seen in its complementarity, as they are fundamental parts of the process of unfolding of Truth in the Reality.

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain what specifics we need to consider and comprehend in order to attain an Integral Knowledge. He tells us that an integral knowledge demands an exploration of all possible domains of consciousness and experience -- outer, material, objective, including matter; as well as inner, subtle, subjective, including life/vital, mind, and spirit. An Integral Knowledge then is a knowledge of the truth of *all* sides, dimensions, aspects of existence.

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that to rediscover the Integral Knowledge that has been hidden, absorbed, involved in the Involution -- taking the form of Ignorance -- we need to connect with our Inner Self, i.e. our

Psychic Being. That would enable us to be more in touch with the truth of things, which would take us to the Supramental heights.

He concludes by refocusing on the Ignorance, providing us with the essential forms the Ignorance takes. He also describes how overcoming them would enable us to attain an Integral Knowledge.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Nature and Experience of the Integral Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that an Integral Knowledge is a knowledge of the truth of all sides of existence, both separately, in the relation of each to the all, and the relation of all to the truth of the Spirit. In essence, this integral knowledge is the power of Truth consciousness, i.e. of Supermind.

He goes on to say that through the truth consciousness of Supermind, we perceive an Integral Knowledge as the One in the Many, the Infinite in the finite, and the timeless Eternal in eternal Time.

[One in the Many – In each particular of a matter I perceive its relationship to the One from which it emerged. E.g., though I perceive myself as a husband, I also perceive myself as a man, an individual that enables me to be a husband. Same when I perceive myself as a writer or artist. In the Integral Knowledge, the Truth Consciousness, Supermind, I perceive these profound relations, and thereby see each and everything in its right and ultimate perspective.

Infinite in the Finite – From out of the smallest thing can emerge vast results because it is there invoked in even the smallest thing as potential. E.g., a tiny atom emerges, vast atomic power. By changing the smallest attitude, I can evoke a response that brings me the biggest sale of my life. Etc. In the Integral Knowledge, the Truth Consciousness, Supermind, I perceive this potentiality and emergence.

Timeless Eternal in Eternal Time – In any moment, I can perceive past, present, and future in the Present, in the Eternal Now. In each moment, I can attract in a second result that would have taken years into the present, thereby overcoming time. Etc.]

One final intriguing and somewhat elliptical comment Sri Aurobindo makes here is that an integral knowledge presupposes an integral Reality. We will pursue this matter later on in the chapter.

The Origins of Ignorance, Its Relation to the Integral Knowledge, and Overcoming It

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to discuss the relationship between the Integral Knowledge -- actually the absence of it -- and our essential Ignorance born of creation.

First, *he reminds us what Ignorance is*. He says that it is a self-oblivion of Being; the experience of separateness in the multiplicity; a separation of the being from its own integrality and entire reality. It is losing touch with the Oneness that is contained in each thing.

Second, *he explains the origins of the Ignorance in terms of the Integral Knowledge*. He tells us that the origins of Ignorance is a limitation and involved action of the Divine Integral Knowledge. Moreover, that Ignorance must be replaced with an integral consciousness, where we identify with the original Truth of things.

The Reality is the All Consisting of Dual Pairs

Now Sri Aurobindo turns his attention to the nature of the omnipresent Reality (the Absolute, the integral Brahman), and how it relates to the Integral Knowledge; as well as to its opposite, the Ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo begins by telling us that the One and the Many, the Form and Formless, the Being and the Becoming, the Finite and Infinite are not so much opposites of one another, but complements; i.e. two faces of the same one Reality. **[Thus, the Reality is simultaneously both sides of the dual pairs. It is both the One that is the source of the Many, and the Many itself. The same for the form and formless, finite and infinite. It even goes beyond that each of these dual pairs are inextricably One with one another, as well as to their Source.]**

To drive home the point how the reality is all things, the All, he tells us says that not only affirmations, but negations as well are expressions of the Reality, Brahman. **[All in the Unmanifest and Manifest are Brahman; even the darkness and the negative; even the trivial and finite. All are different expressions of the one Reality. I.e. every plane of existence or non-existence, e.g. matter or spirit are simply different expressions of the same omnipresent Reality.]**

The Reality Knows Truth of Unmanifest and Manifest Existence

Sri Aurobindo then moves on and focuses on the Reality in terms of Truth and Knowledge.

He begins by saying that the fundamental Real must necessarily contain Truth and Knowledge that includes, traverses all existences – including the individual, the universe, and all that is beyond the universe. **[The Reality contains the integral Truth and Knowledge of unmanifest and manifest existence.]**

Or to put it another way, the Integral Knowledge, Truth already exists in the Integral Reality.

The Reality Contains Both the Knowledge and the Ignorance

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates that Brahman not only contains the Integral Knowledge and Truth, but also the Ignorance. [Since Brahman is the All, it contains that which is positive *and* negative; thus, the integral Knowledge *and* the Ignorance.]

Knowledge and Ignorance Are Complements

In fact, he says, the Knowledge and Ignorance (as well as any of the other dual pairs of reality) are actually not opposites; are not in opposition, but actually depend on one another, and are therefore *complements*. [Recall that in previous chapters, Sri Aurobindo said that the development of Knowledge actually *depends* on the Ignorance (!); that without the Ignorance there would be a limited, static knowledge. To allow for infinite variation and multiplicity in creation, for the widest play of life that can lead to the most varied discovery (that brings Delight), Ignorance is allowed to be, even sanctioned.]

Perceiving Levels of Reality that Enable an Integral Knowledge

Now going beyond the complementary aspects of the Reality, Sri Aurobindo focuses on its various planes and dimensions, and how we can only truly attain an Integral Knowledge when we perceive the Truths of all of these.

First, he reminds us that there are different orders of Reality, i.e. it is multi-dimensional. Then he goes on to explain the various dimensions of existence that make up that Reality, and which we need to know the truths of to have an Integral Knowledge.

He tells us that the objective, outer, and physical state is one dimension. Another is our subjective movements and inner experiences, which Sri Aurobindo says are as real as our outer experiences and the outer reality. Thus, we must know not only the nature and process of (physical, objective, outer) matter, but also the nature of the (inner, subtle, subjective) vital and mental existence. Further still, he says we must know the supra-subtle subjective dimension of Self and Spirit, which is the fundamental, source reality of existence. He says we can come to know it through an inner range of experiences, which too are part of the Reality.

Thus, an integral knowledge demands an exploration of all the possible domains of consciousness and experience; outer, material, objective, including matter; and inner, subtle, subjective, including life/vital, mind, and spirit. An Integral Knowledge then is a knowledge of the truth of all sides, dimensions, aspects of existence.

[All aspects of existence comprise the Reality. Knowing all of these (including their integration and unity) is to have the Integral Knowledge.]

-Knowing what matter is and its properties and principles would give us the objective, physical, outer knowledge. Science and other disciplines and fields are certainly tackling these.

-Knowing our psychological makeup, our relation to others, and the principles and workings of life would give us the Knowledge at that plane. Attaining to logical thought, seeing right relations of things, etc. can give us the Knowledge of our mentality, of Mind.

-Connecting to, and applying the spiritual aspects of existence, having the wide range of spiritual experience would enable us to attain that Knowledge.

It would then be even greater to continually perceive the interrelation of all of these aspects and dimensions of knowledge, giving us a great power in life to know, to consider possibilities, to make decisions, to act, etc., enabling extraordinary outcomes in our lives. In this way we would have gained not only an Integral Knowledge but an Integral Power in life.]

Rediscovering the Integral Knowledge of the Integral Reality through Connection with Inner Self

Now Sri Aurobindo indicates that though the Ignorance and Knowledge are complements in Truth formation, we can do one better by consciously moving directly to the Integral Truth. He says that if the integral Knowledge already exists in the Integral Reality, it can be uncovered or rediscovered by us.

How then do we gain the Integral Knowledge and Truth directly? As before, he says we discover it through our Inner Self. **[When we connect to the Psychic being, our mind rises to intuition and supramental perception where we are able to perceive the integral Reality, and thus the integral truth of things.]**

The consciousness of the Integral Reality is the Truth Consciousness (Supermind).

The Various Ignorances and Their Reversal into an Integral Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo then takes up the subject of the various ways we express our Ignorance in life, which when reversed enables an Integral Knowledge.

Among the things he says we are Ignorant of are-

- the Absolute (the Reality and its origin of things)
- the spaceless, timeless, immutable, immobile Timeless self.

- the self, the Spirit's becoming
- our universal selves. the cosmic self and existence
- our eternal becoming in time
- our oneness with the world, instead of ego separation.
- our inner existence beyond the surface
- our psychic entity, and time beyond death
- mind life, body, and their true relation to self within and to superconscient, supramental above.
- the way we act, wandering in a maze of error

(This subject is addressed in full in Book II, Chapter XIX, "Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge.")



The Aim of Life; Four Theories of Existence

(Book 2 Chapter XVI)

Summary

This chapter can be divided into three parts. The first focuses on presenting an integral theory of existence, including the nature of the Reality and its component planes and principles. The second targets four theories of what we consider "existence," and what he considers the essential one, which he calls the "Integral." The third centers on the three stages of Spirit's progressive self-expression and aim in life, with the last one enabling his Integral theory of existence to be realized.

A. In the first part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo continues his focus on the Reality (that he targeted in the previous chapter), and now goes on to present an Integral View of Existence (i.e. the Reality).

Specifically, he explains-

- the nature of the Reality in its ultimate, Supreme status
- how It extended Itself to a Becoming from a Being
- how together and in their integral relationship Being and Becoming account for existence, the Reality
- how the Reality formulates into an Upper and Lower Hemisphere of principles/planes
- how the upper hemisphere consists of principles/planes of Existence, Conscious-Force, and Delight (Sat-chit-ananda); how the lower is Mind, Life, and Matter; with Supermind in between
- what the lower principles/planes of Mind, Life, and Matter are, and how they relate and affect one another
- how the principles of the lower hemisphere (Mind, Life, Matter) fell into a lapse of being compared to the upper hemisphere principles
- how Mind, Life, and Matter's limitations can be overcome by bringing the powers of the upper hemisphere to bear.

B. In the second part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo explains four theories of Life:

(1) *the Supracosmic* – That the Supreme (spirit) beyond this world is the only reality.

(2) *the Cosmic/Terrestrial* – That the material universe is the only reality.

(3) *the Supraterrestrial* – That the material plus other planes beyond it, including the spirit are the reality. That Life is temporary, leading us to heaven or hell, or similar. Where there is no deep understanding of the relation among them.

(4) *the Integral* (or synthetic, composite) - It rectifies the previous three, integrating the best of them, but going far beyond. It is in essence the Individual, the Universal, and the Transcendent aspects fully realized. It is the integral Reality. It is this last theory life that Sri Aurobindo views as fully true and integrally complete.

C. In the third part of the chapter Sri Aurobindo explains the three stages of Spirit's progressive self-expression and aim in life:

(1) The involution of spirit in the Inconscience is the beginning.

(2) An evolution in the Ignorance with its play of the possibilities of a partial developing knowledge is the middle. (This is the current stage we are in.)

(3) The deployment of the spirit's self-knowledge and self-power of its divine being and consciousness as the culmination.

It is in this third stage that the Integral aim of life described earlier (synthetic, composite; Individual, Universal, Transcendent together) is realized.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Nature of the Reality and Perceiving It by Knowledge by Identity

Sri Aurobindo says that before we examine the principles and processes of the evolutionary ascent of consciousness to an Integral Knowledge, we should restate the theory of integral existence that is the Reality (Brahman, the Absolute).

Sri Aurobindo begins by reminding us that the Absolute (Brahman) is the original support, and secret Reality of all things. **[I.e. it is the source of creation, but is also the secret nature of all force and forms in creation.]**

He reiterates that the Reality **[before creation; in its unmanifest state beyond all things]** is indefinable, indescribable, ineffable to mental thought and language. However, it is self-existent and self-evident to Itself. **[Mind cannot know the Reality and its essence and nature, including it being the Undefinable, the Infinite Supreme, let alone its**

extended nature of being all things (i.e. the Unmanifest and Manifest in unity; the Being and the Becoming). However, Brahman Itself can know Itself.]

And yet Sri Aurobindo reminds us that a spiritual Knowledge by Identity can seize and perceive this Reality.

[-Supermind *is* that capacity of Knowledge by Identity that we can enjoin. It is the plane from which we can perceive the many-sided, integral knowledge of any object; in this case, the integral, unified nature of Brahman. (That all is Brahman, including all planes; *and* they are integrally tied together; various aspects the normal human mind cannot fathom.)

-It is interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo often had this supramental capacity, and thus is able to glean the integral truth of the Reality, which he describes in all its facets throughout this *The Life Divine*.]

The Reality that Extends from a Being to a Becoming

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on that which is/has extended from the original status of the [unmanifest, undefinable] Reality. He reiterates that all realities/planes of existence are a bringing out of something that is eternal and inherently true in the original Reality/Brahman/Absolute. [I.e. that all planes from Existence (Sat) down to Matter and back up are various expressions of that same one inexpressible Reality; and also bring out a unique expression of that which is eternally and inherently true in that Absolute; that Brahman.]

Sri Aurobindo thereby reminds us that the Reality manifests itself as both a Being *and* a Becoming. Being is the *fundamental* reality; whereas Becoming is the *effectual* reality; a dynamic power and *result*; a creative energy and *working out* of the Being. [Being is the Source essence of the Unmanifest, while the Becoming is the effect result, the expression of, the power of, the dynamic of the Being expressing in the cosmos, the manifest universe.]

Truly Knowing the Becoming (of the Reality) by Perceiving the Being

Now Sri Aurobindo further explores the dual aspect of the Reality as both the Being and a Becoming.

He begins by stating that theories that only allow for the Becoming [i.e. manifest life] as an explanation of the Reality as insufficient, only half-truths. That all views of existence that stop short of incorporating the Transcendence [in essence here the Being] are incomplete accounts of the truth of being, about the real nature of the Reality/Brahman.

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that not only is there a Being that complements the Becoming, but one can only wholly and truly know the Becoming when we know the Being behind it; i.e. perceive the

Supreme and its Infinite and Eternal nature behind the Becomings of life. [The material scientist only perceives the Becoming in the physical or subtle physical universe. He does not explore the Being, whether it exists, let alone what its nature is. Even when he tries to fathom the makeup of the becomings of life, he cannot truly know it, because he does not perceive the timeless, infinite aspects of it that it gets from the Being that is its source, as well as locked in it as potential.]

Perceiving the Spiritual Aspect of the Reality as Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on those planes of the Reality that are the starting point of the involutory process on the way to creation. (It is what we perceive spiritually.) He says that the Reality unfolds and is expressed spiritually by us as not only a Being (the pure existent, Sat), but as a Conscious-Force (Chit), and a Delight of being (Ananda). (All told, Sat-Chit-Ananda). Moreover, this secret truth, these first planes out of the Reality, underlie the whole manifestation. They are its source and basis. [I.e. from out of the Being/Existence, comes a Conscious-Force that will be the basis of the energies and forms that will be the basis of life in the universe. And the purpose of that process is for those forms to discover the dynamic delight/Bliss of the Being.]

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that Satchitananda is at once impersonal and personal. It is *impersonal* as the source of all truths, forces, powers and existences, but *personal* as the Conscious Being, All Person of whom all conscious beings are the selves and personalities.

Seven Principles/Planes of Existence

Now Sri Aurobindo reiterates his involutory and evolutionary view of existence. He indicates that the Involution is the starting point, and out of it comes the Evolution. [I.e. there is Involution from Being that culminates in the inconscience of matter, and then there is the Evolution from inconscience matter and forms to its ultimate potential as formations embracing and becoming Spirit.]

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on the Involution, and indicates that in the descent, seven principles emerge that can be distinguished; seven gradations of the manifesting consciousness. Moreover, they can be divided into an upper and lower Hemisphere of the perceptible Reality; four in the upper (Sat-Chit-Ananda) and Supermind, and three in the lower (Mind, Life, and Matter).

The Upper Hemisphere

Now Sri Aurobindo goes into it a little deeper. He says that the first three principles (of the upper hemisphere) -- Divine Existence (Being), power of the Divine Consciousness (Conscious-Force), and Divine Delight of existence -- are the *original* and *fundamental* principles (He

also indicates that these are universal states of consciousness which we can rise to in the evolution.)

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that a fourth principle of Supramental Truth Consciousness emerges, that is associated with and is an extension of these three. Out of Supermind will manifest a unity of forces and forms in an infinite multiplicity. [I.e. through the Supramental action working on the Conscious-Force, the planes of the lower hemisphere will be created in infinite multiplicity and diversity.]

The Lower Hemisphere

Sri Aurobindo then explains that there is also a lower hemisphere of principles/planes that emerge in the Involution, which are readily recognized as Mind, Life, and Matter.

[-I.e. out of the consciousness and action of the upper hemisphere comes the lower hemisphere principles of Cosmic Mind, then Energy/Life, and then Matter.

-Note that we are stating that these planes exist in the Involution; essentially before creation. However, they are there too in our universal existence in the Evolution. There is everywhere around us a plane of cosmic Mind, as well as a lane of Life that is Energy.

As beings in the universe, we are aware of Matter, but not so of the cosmic (Mind) that emerged from Supermind that is there behind all creation, as is the energy that emerged from Cosmic Mind.

We are locked in our little box of consciousness to perceive these seven planes. Though we can see matter in our bodies and in the physical formations around us, we do not experience the Life/energy, only "life" as our animated life forms and their interchange and interaction. Likewise, cosmic (Mind) is only experienced as the mentality in ourselves and in others.

In sum, the seven planes are there in the Involution and Evolution, but in the latter, we only experience it through the filter of our own limited reality. The ultimate goal is to experience all of these planes in full in the evolution, and bring them in the details of our lives, of life in the universe. It culminates when we bring the aspects of the Upper hemisphere (Sat-Chit-Ananda) into life; i.e. we bring out in all the details of existence its currently involved divine Being, Conscious-Force, and delight.

Upper Hemisphere:
Existence/Being (Sat)
Conscious Force (Chit)
Delight (Ananda)
Supermind
Lower Hemisphere:
Mind
Life
Matter

How the Lower Are Powers of the Upper Hemisphere that Lapse into Divided Existence and Ignorance

Now Sri Aurobindo goes on to explain how the three principles/planes of the lower hemisphere are actually powers of the superior principles. [I.e. Matter is a power of Being; Life/Energy of the Conscious Force; Mind of Supermind (and the Psychic being, not targeted here) of Delight.]

He then goes on to explain that the lower planes become a lesser formations and powers of the upper because they lose the consciousness of the higher in their formation. More specifically he says this happens when they manifest in a separation from their spiritual source. As a result, they undergo a phenomenon lapse into a divided existence, which creates a state of limited knowledge which is exclusively concentrated, which in turn leads to a state of cosmic and individual Ignorance. Moreover, at the point of Matter, the consciousness is completely lost resolving into a state of inconscient and nescience.

Interrelationships of the Principles of the Lower Hemisphere (Mind, Life/Energy, Matter)

Sri Aurobindo then more specifically focuses on how this lapse occurs. He does so by explaining the interrelationship of the planes of the lower hemisphere -- Mind, Life/Energy, and Matter.

Relations of Mind and Supermind

He begins with Mind and its relation to Supermind. He says that it is a derivative power; a luminous shadow thrown by the divine supermind. [Supermind can perceive the integral truth of a thing, is in an inherent unity with all other aspects, and also has an inherent power for that idea to manifest as Real. Mind on the other hand knows a Part, and has little or no association and unity with other aspects of that Whole of Truth of that matter, nor any direct power for manifesting any of the truths, the very part knowledge it knows. And yet Mind comes from Supermind; is a lesser, derivative aspect of it.]

Relations of Mind to Life and Matter

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on Mind, Life, and Matter in relation to one another. He says that Mind uses Life and Matter as means of its expression. [E.g., I have the goal of bringing about better customer relations in my organization. This is of Mind. I then use the various ways my employees interact with the customer (Life/Vital) and the specific physical products (Matter) to make it real. The Supreme does the same as it has Real Ideas for something to come about in creation; uses Life and its interactions of forms and forces for it to come about; and physical manifestation of those forms to carry out the intent.]

The Nature of Life/Energy to Matter

Now Sri Aurobindo explains what Life is. He indicates that it is a creative urge of Matter. [In the universe, matter has a hidden, creative urge involved in itself, which seeks to and then takes shape as animated life and interaction of the vital forms in that life.]

He also indicates that Life a form of the Divine energy. [I.e. the final operation of the Conscious-Force is Energy (at rest). When it moves it begins to take shape as material forms in creation. In essence, that Energy IS Life.]

Moreover, the Energy/Life uses matter as an instrument for its manifestation. [The Energy has an intent it inherited from the Conscious-Force and the Real Ideas behind it, which is carried out by material objects (matter) that emerge from it. It is only more fully carried out through the emergence of Vitality, Mind and Spirit in individuals in humanity.]

Overcoming the Limits in Consciousness of the Lower Hemisphere by Bringing in Aspects of the Higher

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the inherent limits and unconsciousness of Matter, Life, and Mind, and how only through their association with the upper hemisphere can that lapse be overcome.

First, he tells us that Matter, Life, and Mind are built upon the Inconscient, and seem to be originated and supported by it. [Inconscient is the unconsciousness of existence, which is there fully in matter, and less so increasingly in animate Life, and Mind.]

Then what is the way out of the lapse into inconscience? He says that as the higher powers [of the upper hemisphere] penetrate Matter, Life, and Mind, the strength of the Inconscient gives way.

In fact, he says that Matter, Life, and Mind overcome their limitations by a descent of their *corresponding* power in the Higher hemisphere. E.g., Mind overcomes its limitations through the descent of the Supramental Truth consciousness from which it is a reflection. (Matter from Existence, and Life from Consciousness-Force.) [As the higher

powers descend, the hold of the unconscious on life on the physical, vital, and mental gives way.】

Sri Aurobindo then discusses this dynamic in the context of the overall Evolution. He says that the higher planes/principles of Sat-chit-ananda and Supermind have to be realized in the forms of the manifestation to enable the evolution.

He also tells us that in fact Sat-chit-ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) actually exist in both the Being and the Becoming. In other words, it is involved in Matter, Life, and Mind of the lower hemisphere. And so, when these three higher formations unhide themselves in creation, evolution takes place. 【Thus, evolution occurs two-fold in terms of the upper and lower hemisphere. Sat-chit-ananda descends into the lower Mind, Life, and Matter, and Sat-chit-ananda also emerges from its involved status in Mind, Life, and Matter. It is a dual movement of emergence that enables the Evolution.】

He then adds the following wonderful insight:

Matter is a result of Energy (Life) which is itself Consciousness. Therefore, Matter is a form of Spirit.

Four Theories of Life

Now in what we can call the second part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo addresses four theories of Life or existence. They are (1) the Supracosmic; (2) the Cosmic/Terrestrial; (3) the Supraterrestrial; and (4) the Integral Reality (or synthetic, composite) that embraces but goes beyond the previous three.

Let's examine what he means by each:

The Supracosmic

In the Supracosmic view of things, the spiritual reality that exists beyond all things is alone real. 【This is the traditional view of those who believe that all the movements and forms of life in the universe are an illusion -- like Shankara -- with only the Supreme consciousness and reality being ultimately real.】

The Cosmic/Terrestrial

The Cosmic-Terrestrial view considers only the material universe as real. 【In this view, there is no spiritual source of things; no Supreme consciousness. The only thing real is the material. Even the forces of the universe, like waves or even thoughts and emotions are ultimately only formations of the physical. Thus, thinking is just a chemical and electrical reaction of sort, and feeling like love are just stimulations in the heart and such. In this view, since only the material is real, you

might as well make the best of (material) life because that is all there is. Thus, the Supracosmic and the Cosmic/Terrestrial view are on opposite poles from one another.】

The Supraterrestrial

The Supraterrestrial view admits the reality of the material cosmos of the Cosmic/Terrestrial view, but also accepts that are planes beyond the material, including the spiritual. Yet in this view, there is a very limited understanding of the spiritual planes, including what occurs between lives, and the purpose and meaning of existence relative to the spiritual Source. In this view, there is only a temporary duration of a human life on earth and then we go to heaven. Why we go there, what purpose it serves in relation to its life in existence is poorly understood. 【This is a certain melding of the Cosmic/Terrestrial with the Supracosmic views. It can be found in various religious teachings of existence, in different forms, like Christianity's test that we must pass in order to go to heaven or otherwise go to hell. Overall, the Supraterrestrial is a view somewhat closer to Sri Aurobindo's understanding in that it accepts both the material and other planes of existence, yet it is riddled with holes and unanswered questions.】

The Integral

Sri Aurobindo concludes that the ultimate theory of existence is the Integral. It is in essence the perception of the omnipresent Reality and truth, which includes the best of the three previous theories, but goes far beyond them. It acknowledges the spiritual source, the Transcendent of the Supracosmic view. It includes the material existence in the universe of the Cosmic/Terrestrial view, and embraces the acknowledgement of the higher planes and a life for us beyond this world of the Supraterrestrial view. However, it integrates them and goes far beyond in connecting and integrating all planes of the Reality in all its aspects.

Sri Aurobindo ultimate perceives this Integral view, the view of the omnipresent Reality that is a blending of the Individual existence, with the Universal existence, with the Transcendent existence. Integrally together, they make up the Reality.

【-We can see that from several perspectives. From the view of the Transcendent, it wishes to see its attributes manifest in the universe, which the Individual can make happen through his elevation of consciousness. He thus serves the universal need, which serves the transcendent one.

The Divine has thus rendered this material universe so that the Infinite consciousness can manifest all its spiritual attributes in our lives.

-From the perspective of the individual, he discovers his true divine self, and is able to serve the universal movement of the evolution of

consciousness, which the transcendent sought to manifest when it creates a universe of forces and forms from out of itself.

The Infinite Divine is thus fulfilled when we, its creation, evolve to become divine in every aspect of our being.

Our great cosmic insight then comes as in the understanding that we are on a path of spiritual realization that progressively occurs in this life and continues in lives to come.】

Realizing the Integration of the Individual, the Universal, and the Transcendent in Our Lives

Now Sri Aurobindo discusses how we have lost the connection to this Trinity of being, and thus are unable to perceive or partake in the Integral theory of existence.

He ironically begins by indicating that the three aspects – the Individual, Universal, Transcendent that make up the Integral Reality - - is the cause of Man’s Ignorance. He tells us that the multiplicity of the three poises allows for a division of consciousness, an Ignorance, in which the Many ceases to be aware of its essential Oneness. That the convergence of the three enables is indispensable for the *fullness* of the self-expressing Spirit. 【The transcendent divides itself into universal forces and forms; the universal into infinitely variable forms, including diversity of humans and potentials in life. Thus, the Supreme has moved out of its Supreme identity through the universal and the Individual to allow for greatest variation and multiplicity. Though it allows for Ignorance, it also enables the greatest variety of experience of ascendance to higher consciousness and the spirit.】

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that Man can overcome his Ignorance by awakening to his Soul, i.e. his true Individual self, enabling him to awake to and realize the Universal and Transcendent. 【I.e. realizing the latter two in Himself, but also enabling the universal to fulfill its purpose, which itself realizes the transcendent intent.】

Three Stages of Spirit's Progressive Self-Expression in Life

In a third part of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo describes how the triune connection of the Individual, Universal, and Transcendent – i.e. the Integral view of Life that has been lost – can be regained and reunited. He does this by describing three successive and progressive stages of the spirit’s self-expression in existence, with the last fully enabling the Individual, Universal, and Transcendent -- the Integral Aim of Life -- to be fully realized.

The first stage has been the involution of spirit in the Inconscience is the beginning. [In other words, the Existence, Conscious-force and Bliss of the upper hemisphere progressively decreases, is involved, in the descent of the involution on the way to Matter in a created universe. They together as Spirit are fully absorbed and involved in the inconscience of material existence. Thus, in this stage the Spirit is fully involved, waiting to come out in the evolution.]

The second stage of the Spirit's self-expression occurs in the evolution -- with its play of the possibilities -- from the Ignorance through a partial developing Knowledge. [This is fundamentally the current stage and state humanity is on in. The sat-chit-and ananda that had been involved in the first stage has begun to come out through the play of possibilities in life. Currently we have only a partial developing Knowledge, not its integral truth understanding.]

The third and culminating stage of the spirit's expression occurs through the deployment of the spirit's Self-Knowledge and Self-Power. [-In the final stage, the Spirit is active in the world, and individuals embodying it can practice its truth methods and ways, giving us great power in life. That integral knowledge and power is Supramental, with ultimate capacity to elevate the world.]

In this final stage of the spirit's Self-Knowledge and Self-Power, the Integral aim of life, which is embodiment of the Individual, Universal, and Transcendent, is fully realized.] **Key**

We can perceive of **the Reality** in many different ways, from various viewpoints, from multi-dimensional perspectives. Among them are:

- **Individual, Universal, Transcendent**
- **Being & Becoming**
- **One & Many**
- **Form & Formless**
- **Absolute & Relative**
- **Involution & Evolution**
- **Upper & Lower Hemisphere**
- **Finite and Infinite**
- **Time & Timelessness**
- **Inconscient & Superconscient**
- **Ego & Psychic**
- **Good & Evil**
- **Objective & Subjective**



The Progress to Knowledge -- God, Man and Nature

(Book 2 Chapter XVII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo begins by restating the process of the Involution and the Evolution, especially as it relates to Satchitananda.

Sri Aurobindo reminds us that in the involutory process, Sat-chit-ananda (Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight) is hidden, absorbed in nature. That consciousness is thereby also hidden in Man, which is the source of his essential Ignorance.

How then can Satchitananda be brought back and flourish in human existence in the evolution so that Man's Ignorance is overcome?

He says it can happen when Man gains the True, Integral Knowledge of the nature of existence: of his own True Spiritual Individuality, as well as the Universal (cosmos) and Transcendent (Divine) nature.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on how Man must become aware of and realize the Universal (cosmic consciousness). Moreover, since out of the Universal, emerges a Collective Consciousness, or Group Mind, man's destiny is to play a role in its elevation and perfection. That in turn is made possible by his own elevation of consciousness, of his tri-dimensional Self (individual, universal, and transcendent).

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that Man must overcome his limited, ego-self, and discover his True Individuality and Soul, his psychic being, which can culminate in his Spiritual Individuality.

He then concludes that from this state of Spiritual Individuality, rooted in the Soul, the Psychic Being, Man accedes to an Integral Knowledge of his Individual, Universal, and Transcendent Selves. That enables him to overcome the various Ignorances, and in turn gives Man the power to evoke the involved Existence, Conscious-Force, and Delight from the planes of life; fulfilling not only his own destiny, but that of the universal plane, and indeed the transcendent Divine.

Here are the main points in detail:

Evolution's Ultimate Aim is to Realize Satchitananda in Life

Sri Aurobindo begins this chapter by describing the big picture of the Involution and Evolution, and our purpose and role in it. He indicates that the Involution begins with the emergence of an Existence/Being, Conscious Force, and Delight from out of the Infinite, unknowable Brahman.

He then tells us that at the point where involution ends, the evolution begins as inconscience in Matter; where Sat-Chit-Ananda is fully absorbed, involved. **[The Evolution moves from the material inanimation and nescience to a consciousness in life to mind where it is more clearly aware of itself, continuing upward to reveal the hidden and buried Existence, Consciousness, and Delight.]** Thus, our ultimate aim and goal is to grow into our true spiritual being – thereby attaining Sat-chit-ananda (Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight) in life. Or as Sri Aurobindo also puts it: for the individual to live, possess, be, know, and express alone his divine universality and Supreme infinity in Knowledge is Man's divine culmination.

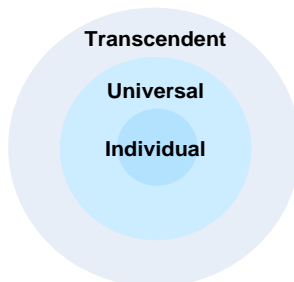
Man Must Gain the Integral Knowledge of the Unity of the Individual, Universal, and Transcendent to Realize Sat-chit-ananda in Life

Sri Aurobindo indicates that for this to happen, Man must understand, have a real knowledge of his True Individuality, the universal (Cosmic) and the Transcendent, and play a role in their fulfillment.

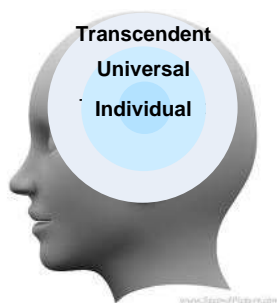
Let's backtrack a bit. He begins discussion in this area by indicating that Man perceives three principle categories; (1) himself, i.e. individual soul; (2) God -- that invisible reality and occult Infinite; and (3) Nature -- the cosmos, the world, other individual existences.

Moreover, Man does not perceive the true nature of each, let alone their inter-relationship.

Sri Aurobindo then shapes these three categories into his own view of the Reality – which is in essence the Integrative view he revealed in the previous chapter; i.e. the existence of and the integral Oneness of the Individual, the Universal, and the Transcendent.



Moreover, he indicates that it is Man's destiny to gain the integral knowledge of his True Individuality, of the Universal (Cosmic) plane and principle, and of the Transcendent, in order for him to evolve to his ultimate possibility, to fulfill his destiny of bringing out the Existence/Being, Conscious-Force and Delight in life. This is a key to the chapter. It is therefore essential that Man knows each in their completeness, their fullness, and that all three meet in his consciousness, becoming integral and one. **Key**



Knowing the Reality as the Unity of the Individual, Universal, and Transcendent

Sri Aurobindo then once again backtracks to discuss how society has come in their own limited way to an understanding of the Supraterrestrial.

He begins by saying that the quest of Man for God is the most ardent and thrilling of all quests. In that quest so far, Man has come to know God in an infinite variety of ways (which is magnificently summarized in the areas of the chapter this is discussed).

He goes on to say that religions, philosophies, and sciences express different sides of a single Reality. However, each side does not make the whole, let alone the integral truth of the Reality.

He then reiterates that the highest conception of God is that of Brahman, the Absolute, Soul, the Truth of Being. Moreover, it is the realization of this integral truth of being [of the perception and integrative realization of integrative All of Brahman] where Man is heading; where Nature and Cosmos (the universal) is leading.

Therefore, to put in layman's terms, Man's high goal is to attain the complete knowledge of and unity of himself, nature, and God. [I.e. the knowledge and realization of what he calls the Individual, the Universal, and Transcendent.] This will be Man's highest state; a total triune knowledge that will overcome his Ignorance born of creation. **Key**

The Cosmic (Universal) Consciousness that Creates the Collective Consciousness/Group Mind **key**

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the Universal part of the equation [The Reality/Brahman = Individual + Universal + Transcendent (and their Integration.)]

First, he reminds us of the relationship between the Individual and the Universal. He indicates that the individual is part of the Cosmic Being; yet this cosmic consciousness remains secret and subliminal to him. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo embarks on revealing the Universal principle/plane to us is greater depth, especially as it relates to its formation of the collective consciousness in society.

He says that Universal, the cosmic consciousness creates collective powers of consciousness; i.e. a collective consciousness, or group-mind. They are in essence large subjective formations of cosmic Nature. He then goes on to say that the collective consciousness even has subconsciousness (i.e. that which it is not outwardly conscious of).

The Individual's Relation to and Effect on the Collective Consciousness (Group Mind) **key**

Now Sri Aurobindo ties the individual's role in with the group-mind, the collective consciousness. He indicates that it is through the individual that the collective consciousness gets organized.

Moreover, the collective, mass-consciousness, life, action, can be extraordinarily effective if it finds individuals to embody, express, bring light to, organize, and lead it.

Also, looking at it from the side of the individual in this dynamic, he says that the perfection of the collective can only come about by the perfection of the individuals who constitute it. As the individuals become more conscious, the collective it belongs to becomes more conscious. Therefore, to accomplish this, the individual must find his all of his selves -- the Individual Self, his Universal Self, and his Transcendent Self.

Individuality of Man and the Spiritual Individual **Key**

Individuality

Sri Aurobindo tells us that if the human being is to have an effect on the collective, as well as on his own being, he will need to develop as an Individual. That occurs through the freedom and independence of the person; to express what is unexperienced in the mass; to stand apart from the crowd; and to go beyond the common mentality to know the truth. In this way, he becomes individualized. [What Karmayogi refers to as the "True Individual."]

He goes on to say that the great evolutionary periods of humanity have taken place in communities where the individual is active and alive mentally, vitally, and spiritually.

The True, Spiritual Individual

And yet Sri Aurobindo tells us, Man is capable of going beyond his Individuality to a *Spiritual Individuality*, which is the highest realization of Self and Soul. That has the greatest effect on himself and on the collective consciousness.

He explains that Man originally begins in Ego, so he can separate himself from others. And even if he develops Individuality, there is still an Ego-sense behind. However, when Man goes within and discovers his True Self, his evolving Soul, which has descended from the Transcendence, he realizes a variety of spiritual qualities that enable him to be truly Himself; a true, Spiritualized Individual. Or to put it another way, he becomes the Spiritual Individual when he discovers the Divinity within, the True Self and Soul.

[-From that poise, he perceives infinite possibilities; deep knowledges; profound truths, etc. of life that enable him to have Insight into life, and therefore make decisions that truly come from Himself, that alter his own life and that of the collective in profound ways.

-Through his Spiritual Individuality, Man also realizes his Universal Self and Transcendent Self, and their integration, and is therefore able to help in the process of bringing the Existence/Being, Conscious-Force, and Delight to the surface of Life.]

Going Within, Man Overcomes His Various Ignorances, and Gains Knowledge of His Individual, Universal, and Transcendent Self, Bring Out the Satchitananda in Life Key

Finally, Sri Aurobindo ties this all together in terms of Man's Ignorance that changes to Knowledge, the main focus of this second part of *The Life Divine*.

He says that when Man moves from the surface and the material, and goes within to the depths, culminating in his True Self and Evolving Soul, he gains a vast knowledge and power to affect life – his own and that of the collective and its consciousness. In particular, that Knowledge takes shape as a reversal of the essential Ignorances of Man. When he moves within-

-he overcomes his *constitutional* Ignorance by perceiving that he is more than a mind, a life, and a body, but that he has an evolving soul [the *psychic being*] and an eternal, immutable Self.

-he begins to overcome his *temporal* Ignorance and is able to perceive the timelessness beyond time; to perceive past, present, and future in

the eternal Now; to see the span of his existence beyond his life and death.

-he overcomes his *psychological* Ignorance by seeing that his surface waking being is only a small part, and that there are hidden subconscious, subliminal, and superconscious parts.

-he overcomes his *practical* Ignorance of wrong-doing, suffering, falsehood, and error that is the cause of all life's confusions and discords; replacing them with right consciousness, right action, and right being.

-he overcomes the *original* Ignorance as he sees that his Self is the Self in the cosmic consciousness as the Divine Reality behind.

[This analysis is taken up in detail beginning with the chapter 'Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge.']

As a result of overcoming these Ignorances, Man-

-becomes one with Nature and the Cosmos, and perceives the Transcendent behind them.

-perceives the integration of his individual Self, the cosmic (universal) Self, and the Transcendent.

-perceives the Lord of all beings acting in the cosmos, and he, as Self, is participating.

[By connecting to his Soul, Man overcomes his various Ignorances, and develops a Knowledge of his Individual, Universal, and Transcendent Self. That enables him to be a great instrument for enabling the Existence/Being, (Sat), Conscious-Force (Chit), and Delight (Ananda) that are embedded, involved in the planes of being to emerge, creating the basis of a Divinized existence and life on earth.] Key of chapter



The Evolutionary Process -- Ascent and Integration

(Book 2 Chapter XVIII)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo focuses on Evolution and its process of unfolding.

He begins by telling us that there is an upward evolutionary progress; an ascent; an increasing organization and expression of consciousness from grade to higher grade. It is a progressive movement from Matter to animated Life to Mind.

He then indicates that it is the involved Conscious-Force (Chit) and its awakening that enables the ascent and evolution among the planes.

And yet this upward movement is initiated by the Force of superior planes Above that energize the Conscious-Force, enabling the planes (matter, animated life/vital, mind) to emerge on the surface.

Sri Aurobindo also reminds us that unlike Science, which sees only external causality, the true cause of Evolution is the emergence of the involved Conscious-Force from out of its involved state.

He then focuses on the relationship and relative consciousness of the individual planes - matter, vital/living substance, conscious/mental substance - that emerge through the movement of the involved Conscious-Force, as well as their individual limitations.

He also indicates that since there are limitations within each plane as they ascend, there is scope for each of them to be integrally *perfected*. In the evolution that which can perfect each and integrate all can occur by connecting to and making use of the Supramental consciousness and power.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo tells us that by connecting to the Psychic Being (Evolving Soul) within and the Supramental Power above, we can perfect and integrate the current planes (of the lower hemisphere that we partake in), and release new ones, enabling us to lead the Evolutionary process.

Here are the main points in detail:

What Enables the Ascent Amongst the Planes

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the Evolutionary process in creation. He says that there is an upward evolutionary progress; an ascent; an increasing organization and expression of consciousness from grade to higher grade.

Awakening of the Involved Conscious-Force that Enables an Ascent to Higher Plane(s)

If this is so, then what is the cause of this movement?

Sri Aurobindo reminds us that there is a secret, concealed, indwelling Conscious-Force of the Divine in every plane: in Matter, in Life, and Mind. He indicates that the Conscious-Force is there to begin with (in the universe) in Matter, which then progresses, makes its way up the higher gradations, manifesting first as Life and then as Mind.

[For Man it is a movement from the Physical Body to the Vital existence to the Mental existence. For the Universe itself, it is a movement from Matter to animated life and life forms, evolving then to mentality. From the perspective of Brahman, the All, it is an enjoining of the planes of Matter, Life, and Mind. (Brahman being both the upper and lower hemisphere in integral unity.)]

The Influence from Above Awakens the Conscious Force Enabling the Movement to Higher Plane(s)

And yet Sri Aurobindo argues that this movement upward amongst the planes [and subplanes] does not come about simply by the involved consciousness emerging on its own. Rather there is a pressure from a superior plane Above, where the new power is dominant, enabling the involved higher plane to emerge from the lower. As a result of the Higher plane descending into the lower, the involved Conscious-Force in that being is energized, intensified, developing a new principle of action. Through this process, there is progressive movement; an evolution of consciousness occurring from principle to higher principle, from grade to higher grade. (key)

[E.g. if a vital-like pre-human is on the cusp of evolving further, there is a pressure from the corresponding (higher) plane above – such as a certain capacity for reason – which then awakens the involved Conscious-Force compelling that ability to reason – i.e. a capacity or subplane of Mind -- to emerge in that individual.]

The Inner Force, Not the Outer Process Enables the Increasingly Higher Planes

Sri Aurobindo now goes on to explain the difference between the common and scientific view of evolution, and his own. He says that the external, material, scientific view is that outer processes cause the evolutionary transition, but he says that the Evolution, including the progressive difference among the planes, are due to the workings of the inner Force. [The Darwinian view is that the outer compulsions alone force the evolution to progressively higher states, which in essence enables an increase in consciousness. In other words, consciousness comes out of an evolution out of matter. Sri Aurobindo says almost the reverse; that an indwelling, involved consciousness is what compels the outer change.

Actually, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the corresponding higher plane Above releases the indwelling Conscious-Force, enabling the planes of animated life and then mentality to come out.

Science thus sees the outer cause alone; Sri Aurobindo the inner and cosmic.]

The Higher the Involved Plane/Principle, the Higher the Outer Plane/Principle Emerges

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that there is a progressive emergence of the inner Conscious-Force, which corresponds to the emergence of progressively higher planes on the outside. Through the emergence of the Conscious-Force there is a stride from one principle of being to a different, higher principle. [I.e. from Matter to Life to Mind. Actually, it includes the various sub-stages/planes in between these. Note that Karmayogi has identified at least 12 planes – three each for the mental, vital, physical, and spiritual - though it can be sub-divided much further.]

Higher Planes/Principles Emerging Have New, Dynamic Character Because of Conscious-Force

Sri Aurobindo then continues to focus on the relative consciousness of the planes that emerge through the movement of the involved Conscious-Force.

First, he reminds us of the nature, order, and transition of the planes. Matter of course is the foundation plane/principle, which is then transformed into, evolves into the vital, living substance, and then further into conscious, mental substance.

He adds that there are real, radical differences among these planes; so much so that each one seems to be a new creation; a miracle of metamorphosis, rather than something predictable, quietly passing from state to state.

Finally, he explains that the reason there are these dramatic differences in the emerging planes is because the inner, Conscious-Force that awakens and evokes them is inherently creative. [This is because the Source, Creator power is inherently creative.]

The Limits of the New Planes, which Can Be Integrally Perfected through Supramental Consciousness (key)

Now Sri Aurobindo moves in another direction in the chapter; focusing on the limitations of the planes emerging in the evolution, as well as that which can make them individually and integrally perfect.

The Vital and Mental Emerging from Matter, Physical are Not Perfect

First, in addressing the limits of the planes, he says that though their emergence from Matter is a progressive improvement, yet they still have their individual, limiting qualities. Though the vital and mental improve on the physical and matter, transforming it in *substance*, they are still not perfections and full, perfect transformations of it. That is because the life nature is still bound to death, and mind evolving is still under the limiting influence of matter and the vital in Man.

[The Domination of Our Physical/Material Being

We know that matter does not change of its own volition. The stone doesn't change because it wishes to do so. And that physical nature, which expresses as in the form of our own physical body inherits that fixed nature of matter, limiting are various capacities of being.

In fact, each of the planes of our being are held back by the bedrock of our physical/material makeup.

Our life force and VITAL being cannot continue on indefinitely because the physical substance in which it dwells is unable to maintain itself, decays and eventually dies. Thus, the life plane is subject to the limitations of the material substance of our body.

The MENTAL consciousness cannot fully know The truth of things and lives in ignorance because the mind lives on the surface of life, seeing the world through the material senses of the physical body; the eyes that see, the ears that hear, dominating our thought processes, keeping us from rational thought and knowing the true truth of things.

Even the SPIRITUAL nature is held back by the physical/material layer of our being because when one rises through elevation of consciousness, thereafter the physical being and its fixed, unchanging nature pulls one back down to our old ways, our limited, fixed habits, to the predictability of routine. As a result, the spiritual experience some fades, we are forced to try once more.

Only through intense development of our consciousness, including coming in touch with our Deepest Being and by opening to the Spiritual Force can we overcome the regressive physical/material domination

over us; over the its stranglehold over the planes of our nature; releasing us into an entire new world of infinite consciousness and infinite possibilities. This is one aspect of the integral yoga that Sri Aurobindo asks of us in order to make the transformational change.]

Supramental Consciousness Enable the Integral Transformation of Mind, Vital, and Matter.

And yet, he argues, the perfection of each and integration of all together must be part of the process for the evolution. Only then can the evolution be integral and complete. Then how can that come about? Sri Aurobindo reasons that there must be an original creative power, a deeper occult Reality that *can* enable this total perfection and transformation of the physical, vital and mental. He concludes that it is the original, creative, evolutionary plane -- the Supramental Consciousness, this gnostic power -- that can perfect and transform these planes. This would in effect enable Man to change, to evolve from his current status as a mental being into Supramental Being.

Through Soul and Supermind We Perfect, Integrate the Planes, Release New Ones, and Become the Leader of the Evolutionary Process (key)

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates the way we can develop the supramental consciousness so that its power can integrally transform matter, the vital, and the mind.

He says that when we connect to the Soul within, Mind is able to rise to Supermind. That also has the effect of intensifying the involved Conscious Force within, enabling a greater perfection and integration in the already emerged planes of our being. (It also has the effect of opening the doors for even newer planes to emerge in the evolution.)

Now with a constant connection to the soul within and the supramental force and power above, we rise in consciousness, which enables the perfection and integration of mind, life/vital, and matter. Again, also new planes, such as spiritualized mind, emerge.)

Thus, Sri Aurobindo concludes that the *double opening to the Psychic within and the supramental Spirit above is the Secret of the new evolution*. Becoming conscious of the process, we become the leader of life, *advancing* the evolution in creation.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Ascent and Integration Process

In Human life when we ascend to a higher plane, it is also necessary to integrate that higher plane with the lower. If e.g. I decided to improve

my health because that would be good for me (a mental rise in consciousness), I still have to gather my will (of the lower plane vital) and actually make the effort (of the physical plane) to have an integrally realized ascent. By going up (ascent), I need to descend into the lower planes to perfect them all. This is the process of evolution.

Since we have evolved into the mental plane, and can evolve still higher to the spiritual, this same process would hold. I.e. when I rise to spirit, there is a vast scope to implement it in all of the lower planes of our being. If I have the experience of deep peace, it needs to descend into my mind in the form of stilled thoughts, into my vital as a stilled heart free of negative emotions, and into my physical as peaceful health and well-being. In Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga it is the supramental power that not only can be an experience of the spirit, but it can penetrate the mental, vital, and physical planes of our being so they too are perfected. It is the ultimate form of ascent (to the Spirit) and integration. And when we connect with the psychic being more often, we can access the supramental moreso as well, facilitating this dynamic; this process of ascent and integration.

DIALOGUE:

Evolution from Below and Above

In this chapter, 'The Evolutionary Process -- Ascent and Integration' Sri Aurobindo addresses the issue of how one plane or principle emerges from the previous one. E.g. Vital Life from Matter, and Mind/Mentality from Vital Life. Of course, there are infinite gradations of planes principles in between, as there are planes above mind to spiritual mind and higher.

My question is about the process. He seems to indicate in the chapter that there is an urge from Above that in turn energizes the involved Conscious Force in the form that then compels the higher plane to emerge -- e.g. to mentality from animated life. As a result, the form then takes the next step in the evolution. Let us for analysis sake label these as 'A' for Above, B for Involved Conscious Force, and C for the new plane emerging. Thus, in my initial understanding of the Sri Aurobindo's presentation in the chapter is that: 'A beckons and energizes B which creates C.'

My questions then are several. First, is this the right order of things? Second, are there not at least two other factors at play here. Let me focus on this second point:

Is it not true that the involved plane itself in the form has also been effected/energized (say e.g. the involved plane of Animated Life/Vital plane) -- and it is now compelled to come out on the surface. And second, is not also true that the form is interacting with other forms and society, compelling the form's/being's evolution. In my equation,

we would then add the variables of E and F to account for these two additional factors: E being the inner, involved, hidden plane that is urged to come out on the surface (at the compulsion of the Conscious Force), and F the external pressure of the world, from other forms to change, progress, and evolve.

Let us take a hypothetical case. I will use the famous scene in Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. There we see a pre-human simian environment where one group of apes is fighting against another for dominance. At one point in their struggle, a particular ape sees a large bone on the ground, tests it out, and realizes it can be used as a weapon to defeat the enemy camp of apes, which he and his compatriots actually carry out, thereby overcoming the enemy. He has made a certain leap in mental understanding in relation to the material world. He may not have made an evolutionary change to an entirely new plane or principle, but it is still a substantial progress, and could be viewed somehow as a kind of subplane growth.

As expressed in the chapter, Sri Aurobindo seems to indicate that there is a compulsion from Above (Real Ideas, Intention of the Divine? Supermind, Mother?) that energizes the involved Conscious Force in the ape, which compels him to evolve a new principle on the surface, which we can say in this case is a new, more utilitarian mentality. This is the A, B, and C indicated above.

But what about the (E) hidden, involved principle in him – in this case, the latent mental capacity to understand the value of a tool -- that has been dormant and is now ready to come out. Has not the conscious Force (that itself has been energized from above) stimulated thus INVOLVED sub-principle, this particular capacity of mind within him? Also, has not the pressure of external circumstance (the war between the clans and the discovery of the bone), i.e. F, exerted a pressure for the new principle to come out.

In other words, are not all of the factors, A-F, at play? And if so, what is the process and order, if there is indeed one. And are there still other variables to consider? I was unable to glean the answer to this question from the chapter, though a thorough rereview would certainly reveal more.

I therefore offer this question: what is the true nature of the process of evolution as presented by Sri Aurobindo in this chapter?

Though it is a philosophical issue, actually metaphysical in part, it is also leads to infinitely practical applications. (We can come to an answer from the practical side leading to a metaphysical understanding, or the other way around; or both simultaneously.)

(Garry Jacobs, author of 'Lecture's on Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine,' responds:) Roy has raised very thoughtful questions about the process of evolution. In Kubrick's movie, factor A is also present. It is the

presence of the monolith that stimulates the ape to evolve, not just the compulsions of competition with other apes. Naturally, if there were not within the ape, the latent capacity to master tools (B), it would not have happened.

When the Divine manifests in Supermind it simultaneously acquires three statuses (transcendent, individual and universal). These correspond to A, B and F.

B (the involved conscious force) & E (hidden inner plane) seem the same to me. *It is the interaction of the descending Force from above with the involved Force below through the action of universal nature that leads to evolution. **Key***

It is like three handed clapping or a symphony performing a symphony of three complementary aspects. The Divine whole which has differentiated and separated itself into three aspects (transcendent, individual and universal) evolved back towards unity by the mutual interaction of its three aspects.



Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge

(Book 2 Chapter XIX)

Summary

At the outset of this chapter Sri Aurobindo summarizes what we have learned about the Evolution from the previous chapters. He then returns to the central focus of Book II -- explaining in detail the various (seven) forms of the Ignorance, and their reversal into their corresponding (seven) Knowledges.

In summarizing the previous chapter, he reiterates the notion that the Evolution of our being occurs through our ascent to a higher consciousness, but also requires the descent of the Spirit. He also reminds us that the Evolution occurs through the heightening of the Conscious-Force into increasingly higher formations of planes of being in creation. He indicates that the Evolution continues and will culminate in the Spiritual and Supramental manifestation.

Sri Aurobindo then describes in detail each of the Seven Ignorances -- the Practical, Constitutional, Psychological, Temporal, Egoistic, Cosmic, Original -- including their cause, i.e. what it is in our being that fixes each; the particular way out for each (through our higher consciousness); and how a now replaced Ignorance with an Integral Knowledge would present itself. This is the major focus of the chapter. **Key**

(Along the way, Sri Aurobindo further discusses the nature of our inner being, including the subconscious and subliminal parts as a way out of one or several of the Ignorances, as well as the movement to a new poise of experiencing timelessness in time.)

Finally, he describes how replacing the seven Ignorances with the seven Knowledges will transmute the current earth existence steeped in Ignorance into the Divine Life of the Truth-conscious spirit. This dynamic will also enable the True Individual, the true spiritual being to emerge, -- individual yet universal, universal yet transcendent --, no longer tethered to the separative Ignorance.

Here are the main points in detail:

Summary, Review of the Nature and Process of the Evolution

Sri Aurobindo begins with a review and summation of what we have learned about the Evolution from the previous chapter and elsewhere in the book, though he offers a few new insights.

Evolution Occurs through the Ascent Amongst the Planes, and the Descent from the Spirit

Harkening back to what we have learned in the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo explains that there is a dual movement in our Evolution. He says that there is an evolution upward from where we are to our highest consciousness, but there is also a descent downward of the Spirit into our being. The two together enables the Evolution to our highest consciousness and possibility.

Evolution is the Heightening of the Conscious Force through the Planes of Being

Again, hearkening back to the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo reiterates what the Evolution is in terms of the Conscious-Force. He states that "All evolution is in essence a heightening of the Force of Consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest; from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into the spirit."

The Evolution Culminates in the Spiritual and Supramental Manifestation, and Divine Existence

He also tells us what the ultimate goal of the Evolution is. He tells us that it is our growth from a mental into a spiritual and supramental manifestation. An evolution from a half-animal humanity into a Divine being and a Divine Life.

How the New, Evolutionary Consciousness Would Express

Then how would this new nature of the being express itself? He says there would be a new spiritual height, wideness, depth, subtly, and intensity of consciousness; in terms of its substance, its force, its sensibility. There would be an elevation, expansion, plasticity, and integral capacity of our being. There would be an assumption of mind and all that is below mind into a larger existence.

The Nature of and Overcoming the Seven Ignorances **Key**

But how do we get there; how do we arrive at this new, evolutionary consciousness? It is by evolving from Ignorance to a state of being of Integral Knowledge.

With that in mind, now Sri Aurobindo explains each of the Seven Ignorances, including those things in our being that fix each, and the particular way out into an integral Knowledge for each through our higher consciousness.

-The Practical Ignorance

Its Nature

We are unaware of what is going on, how to act in life, what will happen or what to do next. Plus, we are ignorant of how we can consciously use our thought, will, an action as expression of the Divine spiritual reality to develop ourselves and act in life. As a result, there is error, falsehood, and other negatives. E.g. we misread a situation, coming to wrong conclusions, and all the problems that follow.

The Way Out

If our *self-knowledge is made complete in all its essentials*, our practical ignorance which in its extreme figures itself as wrong-doing, suffering, falsehood, error and is the cause of all life's confusions and discords, will yield its place to the right ... right consciousness, right **action and right being**.

[We actually can do this by overcoming the Constitutional Ignorance, which is not knowing the parts of ourselves, including our true being and self, and its relation to the becomings of our lives.]

The New Nature

As a result of overcoming the Practical Ignorance, we develop a large and luminous movement of divine living. The conditions are union with God, unity with all beings. It is a life governed and formed from within outwards in which the source of all thought, will and action shall be the Spirit working through the truth and the divine law.

-The Constitutional Ignorance

What It Is

The crux of our Ignorance is the constitutional, which is the Ignorance of our human makeup, which has many parts like physical, vital, mental, with each pulls us in their own direction. We are not aware of our total self, which is limited by the plane we inhabit and the predominant principles of our nature.

What Causes It

The preoccupation of the mental intelligence with the material existence as shown through the senses and with life is a special stamp of the constitutional Ignorance.

[Our mind is dominated by surface consciousness, including the senses and the influence of the lower, vital consciousness within. It is also the cause of the Practical Ignorance, with all of its limits of our being including the inability to perceive the spiritual dimension and power at our disposal.]

The Way Out

We must liberate our mental selves from the domination of materialized mental intelligence of the surface and vital influences, and enter into a freer, finer and nobler play of mental existence.

There are in us dormant or invisibly and imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind that are closer to the spiritual nature -- e.g. light, intuition and revelation.

As we grow in mind to these spiritual dominions and in proportion as our mind asserts our selfhood and independence against the tyranny of life and matter, we grow in stature.

Then we shall possess the true constitution of our being and we shall have conquered the Constitutional Ignorance.

[By perceiving the wider truth through these spiritual dimensions of mind, we will overcome the limits of our being of living on the surface and the influence of the materialized mental intelligence in the Constitutional Ignorance. In addition, through these means we can more fully overcome the limits in the Practical Ignorance – of ignorance of what is happening, what to do, the tendency toward error and falsehood, etc. and the inability to experience the spiritual dimension as an added power of consciousness in our lives.]

-The Psychological Ignorance

Constitutional and Psychological Ignorance Related

The conquest of our constitutional ignorance cannot be complete, be integrally dynamic if we have not conquered our psychological ignorance, for the two are bound together.

What It is

Our psychological ignorance consists in a limitation of our self-knowledge to that little wave or superficial stream of our being which is the conscient waking self. And yet behind it is an occult existence, an energy of our secret being without which the superficial consciousness and activity could not have existed or acted. In essence, we are ignorant of the planes of our greater and inner existence,

including the superconscient, subconscious, intraconscient, and circumconscient.

The Way Out

We need to bring in the higher undeveloped lights and potentials in our being and get them consciously and normally into play. For this, we must be able to draw freely from those ranges of our being to which they are native but are at present subconscious or rather secretly intraconscient and circumconscient or else superconscient to us.

We can enter into these realms in two progressive ways: (1) We can enter into these inner and higher parts of ourselves by an inward plunge or disciplined penetration and bring back with us to the surface their secrets [from the subliminal being]. Or, (2) achieving a still more radical change in our consciousness, we can learn to live within and no longer on the surface and be and act from the inner depths and from a soul [the psychic being] that has become sovereign over the nature.

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Sri Aurobindo then describes in detail the hidden realms of our being, including the subconscious which is a drag on the consciousness and the Intraconscient and Circumconscient (i.e. the Subliminal within), and Superconscient which are far more positive elements. [Opening to these, we break the reigns of the psychological Ignorance.]

--The Subconscious

Three Aspects

The subconscious is below the level of mind and conscious life, inferior and obscure. It includes (1) the dumb occult consciousness, dynamic, but not sensed by us, which operates in the cells and nerves and all the corporeal stuff and adjust their life process and automatic responses. (2) It covers also those lowest functionings of the submerged sense-mind which are more operative in the animal and in plant life. (3) It extends to a hidden and hooded mental substratum into which past impressions and all that is rejected from the surface mind sinks and remain there dormant and can surge up in sleep or in any absence of the mind, taking dream forms, forms of mechanical mind action or suggestion, forms of vital reaction or impulse, forms of physical abnormality or nervous perturbation, forms of morbidity, disease, imbalance.

Its Drag on Our Consciousness

It sustains and reinforces all in us that clings most and refuses to change, our mechanical recurrences of unintelligent thought, our persistent obstinacies of feeling, sensation, impulse, propensity, our unconscious fixities of character.

How to Become Aware of, Control it

Only by drawing back into the subliminal or by ascending into the superconscious and from there looking down and extending ourselves into these obscure depths that we can become directly and totally aware and in control of the secrets of the subconscious physical, vital, and mental nature. This awareness, this control is of the utmost importance.

Controlling It to Enable Our Progress

To penetrate there, to bring in light and establish control, is indispensable for the completeness of any higher life, for any integral transformation of our nature.

--The Subliminal

The *subliminal* still more potent and valuable element in our being. It includes the action of the inner intelligence and sense-mind, the inner vital, even an inner subtle physical.

Our surface being has been formed with this subliminal help.

Our surface responses to physical existence has the support of the activity of these veiled parts.

Our surface responses are often responses from the subliminal, which is modified by the rendering of our surface mind.

But it also throws up influences to our mentality and vitality not connected to the outside world, but that which lives for itself.

It extends into an *enveloping consciousness* which receives power from universal Mind, Life, and Matter-forces, which secretly affect our existence.

--The Superconscious

In the *superconscious* beyond our present level of awareness are included the higher planes of mental being as well as the native height of supramental and pure spiritual being. **[The other aspect is the inner existence of the depths; the subliminal being. Living in these, we break the reigns of the psychological Ignorance.]**

-The Temporal Ignorance

Its Nature

Sri Aurobindo tells us that we now live from moment to moment in time. In addition, our entire view of our existence is limited to our life in the present body between a single birth and death; to our corporeal existence. And this is so because we are limited by our physical memory when it comes to the past, not really knowing the full nature of the

past, including the original past of previous birth(s). Likewise, our regard does not extend farther out into the future; including future happenings. [E.g. I project my current condition and believe such and such will happen in the future. But it is an Ignorance compared to what actually will occur fir myself in the future.]

We don't realize that in fact our True Self lives forever, through previous births, in the current life, and in births to come. In other words, we are Immortal in our True Self. This is one expression of the Temporal Ignorance.

Moreover, behind the succession of births there is a timeless, eternal existence that is our True Self as well. This is another expression of the Temporal Ignorance.

What Causes It

This limitation of our temporal consciousness is intimately dependent upon the preoccupation of our mentality with the material plane and life in which it is at present acting. As a result, we do not see beyond our current existence of the current time.

The Way Out

If this preoccupation with the material plane and of the current existence is relaxed or put aside; if an extension of the mind is brought about; if there is an opening into the subliminal and the superconscient; and if an opening to the inner and higher being is created, it is possible to realize our persistent, timeless existence in time. [I.e. we can perceive our *immortality* of our true essence that exists I and crosses many lives, yet feel that immortality of self in this life.]

Then Immortality in its fundamental sense does not mean merely some kind of personal survival beyond bodily death. Rather it is the spirit's timeless existence. This is a true immortality. And yet to experience that immortal self, we have to identify with that self that is there within us. In other words, to experience the time-immortality we need to identify with *our soul, our psychic being and true self within*.

[How then can we come in touch with the soul, our immortal self? Sri Karmayogi indicates that if we constantly consecrate, open to the Mother, we will progressively develop an inner life, culminating with the connection to our deepest part, our self and psychic being.]

[In sum, we replace our temporal ignorance by going beyond our focus on our current material existence, and connect with our true, inner self, which is actually immortal, existing before, during, and after this life.]

Constant Consecration > Connects to Psychic > Perceive Timeless, Immortal Self

-The Egoistic Ignorance

It's Nature

The ego is a falsification of our true individuality by a limiting self-identification of it with this life, this mind, this body. It is a *separation from other souls*, which shuts us up in our own individual experience and prevents us from living as the universal individual. It is a *separation from God*, our highest Self, who is the one Self in all existences and the divine Inhabitant within us.

[We are ignorant of the fact that we are One with the universe that we are a universal Self. Instead, we experience our separate, egoistic self. We therefore think everybody is separate and focus on our needs only; not aware that everybody is part of us and we all come from and are part of the same Oneness]

The Way Out

As our consciousness changes into the height, depth, and wideness of the spirit, the ego can no longer survive there. ... In that case the being breaks out of its imprisonment in a separate individuality, becomes universal, assumes a cosmic consciousness in which it identifies itself with the self and spirit, the life, the mind, and body of all things.

Or it breaks out upward into a supreme pinnacle and infinite and eternity of self-existence independent of its cosmic or its individual existence. As a result, the ego collapses, losing its wall of separation, into the cosmic immensity.

Going inward into our inner being and ascending upward beyond mind proper, we break out of ego, separateness, open to the cosmic forces, consciousness, and open finally to the transcendent Absolute.

[We can connect with the spirit in these two ways and thereby break the bonds of ego. Another approach is by taking to practical methods of the Heart, including having Goodwill for everybody, as well as by practicing Self Givingness towards others. Doing so will not only create harmonic association with life and thereby break down the ego, and as a result negate the Egoistic Ignorance, but will allow for the two spiritual openings Sri Aurobindo has given]

-The Cosmic Ignorance

What It Is

We are ignorant of the true spirit, the Being; the immutable Self; and how to enable the Being, the Spirit to enter into the Becoming of life. Also, we are also not confined by what we "think" we ourselves are. We are not aware that our being is greater than the cosmos, that it includes the Being, which means we can become immortal.

What It Is Replaced By

The cosmic Ignorance is replaced by the cosmic truth; which is (1) the knowledge of the spaceless, timeless, immutable Self, the Being and (2) and how to enable the Being to enter into the Becoming of life (rather than just the knowledge of our becoming without Being in space and time).

We can realize the cosmic truth of the Being, as well as our immortal nature by reaching the Psychic within, our True Self Being, and from there connecting to the Superconscient.

-The Original Ignorance

What It Is

We are ignorant of the truth of the Absolute, which is the source of the spiritual Being as well as the Becoming of the universe we live in. [The Absolute, Brahman is the source of the spirit and the universe.]

What It is Replaced With

The original Truth; which is the knowledge of the Absolute of ALL things, which is the source of the spiritual being and the becoming of the universe we live in.

We can discover the Original Truth after reaching the Psychic being within. It is the start of the path of Yoga, which leads to supramental perception of the reality. This Integral Yoga begins in earnest by surrendering one's very being, purpose and life to the Divine Spirit to the divine Mother; to the Supramental Force and Power.

[And through this ultimate knowledge and power, we become the ultimate creators in life; like the Ishwara/Creator who manifest the universe from its divine source. In fact, it is the Divine intent for each of us to be Creators of the Infinite just like the Ishwara itself.]

Seven-Fold Knowledge Enables Divine Life on Earth and Emergence of the True Spiritual Individual

Sri Aurobindo ends by indicating that a change from the mental to the spiritual and supramental way of being would-

-transmute the life on earth of Ignorance into the divine life of the truth-conscious spirit.

-enable the true individual, the spiritual being to emerge; individual yet universal, universal yet transcendent; no longer tethered to the separative Ignorance.

[According to Sri Aurobindo to overcome the Practical Ignorance of not knowing what is truly going on in our lives, what we should do next, and where we stand in the scheme of things, we would need to overcome all the other Ignorances. I.e. we would need to consciously experience all of the parts of our being, commune with the Divine, and be one with, in identity with the omnipresent Reality itself to truly know how to carry out our moment to moment lives in the Light. That is the evolutionary challenge before us.]

<i>Ignorance- Nature/Cause/Way Out</i>
Practical -We are unaware of what is going on, how to act in life, what will happen or what to do next. As a result, there is error, falsehood, etc. E.g. we misread situation, coming to wrong conclusions, and all the problems that follow. Plus, we ignorant of how we can consciously use our thought, will, an action as expression of Spirit to develop ourselves and act in life. -Solution is for our self-knowledge to be made complete in all its essentials
Constitutional -We don't know the various parts of our being and their interplay. We don't perceive our total being. -It is caused by the fact that we live on the surface of life, dominated by the surface mind and the physical and vital nature. -Solution is to move toward higher and deeper realms of (spiritual) mind; e.g. intuition.
Psychological -Our knowledge is limited because we only perceive the conscient waking self. We are ignorant of the planes of our greater and inner existence, including the superconscient, subconscious, intraconscient, and circumconscient. -The way out of our lack of knowledge, ignorance is to draw from these influences
Temporal -We have a limited view of time, living from moment, are not aware of the past and the future. Moreover, we don't know that we are immortal beings living from birth to birth as the psychic being, and beyond that there is a timeless, eternal existence that is our true True Self as well. -It is caused by mind's preoccupation with the physical plane of existence.

-The way out is to get in touch with our true self, our Soul and Psychic Being

Egoistic

-We have a false identification with ourselves, live separate from others, the world and God; which is the domination of the Ego-sense on our being.

-As we develop our consciousness by overcoming other Ignorances we identify with all; whether by opening to the spirit above or within.

Cosmic

-We are unaware of the divine Being and the universe that emerged from it, and how it is an expression of it.

-We can realize the Being through the Psychic and therefore the superconscient opening. In that way we can bring the Being into the Becomings of our lives.

Original

-We are ignorant of the Absolute that is the source of the Being, the Being, and the universe that is the body of the Being. We are unaware of this omnipresent Reality, this All that everything are different forms and expressions of.

-By an opening in the psychic we connect to the supramental and from there perceive the true nature of the Reality, the All.



The Philosophy of Rebirth

(Book 2 Chapter XX)

"Rebirth is as inevitable as birth. It enables an incomplete being in a body its promise of completeness and its spiritual significance."

Summary

Previously Sri Aurobindo referred to our ability to have a view of our existence that is beyond just this life; that is even beyond our other births. It is the view of the persistence of the Spirit within us that transcends all time that we can get in touch with. This is the Psychic entity.

In that light he begins an exploration into the nature of Rebirth; in particular, what fundamental purpose it serves in the cosmos.

He begins with the statement that Birth is the first spiritual mystery of the universe. Death is the second, and Life is the third.

He goes on to say that neither birth and death are the beginning nor the end of life. There is more to be included. That there is an "unknown before" before birth and an "unknown hereafter" after death. Furthermore, our previous lives must be included in the scope of our Before and After.

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to say that there must have been something that enabled our current development of being; that there must have been a *past, a cause* to that development. He reasons that if a soul enters this life with a certain development of personality, it must have prepared it in other precedent lives here or elsewhere.

He indicates that there is indeed a Soul; it is real. He also says that this Soul is timeless, eternal. Most interestingly, he reveals that the Soul is two-fold. There is an *evolving* Soul of Personality that exists in life in the individual, sustains beyond death, enters into another birth, etc. in its evolutionary quest. There is also a companion Soul that is *immutable, unchanging*, that is the embodiment and spark of the Eternal Divine.

Now Sri Aurobindo addresses why the growth in consciousness of the individual human implies the necessity for Rebirth. He indicates that because of the involution, we have our origins in the nescience, and

therefore it takes an evolutionary process through multiple births to overcome that and reestablish the essential Oneness of the creator. This is perhaps the key to the chapter.

Next Sri Aurobindo focuses on the planes of being that the Soul of Personality takes form in its journey through multiple births. He says that through multiple births there is an upward, progressive, ever-higher movement of the Soul of Personality among the physical, vital, mental, and supramental planes.

Sri Aurobindo then reveals the highest, spiritual consciousness we, our Soul of Personality can realize in its journey through multiple births. He says that a constant or repeated rebirth of the individual into an earthly body is necessary for the *spiritual* evolution (of planes beyond our current mentality to spiritualized Mind, including intuition and culminating in Supermind).

Throughout the chapter Sri Aurobindo subtly indicates that in man's evolution in consciousness that occurs through multiple births he is participating in a wider evolution of the Spirit in life. That there is a Spiritual Evolution occurring as the Divine, the Supreme has manifest a universe of forms, of planes, and that the spirit is progressively infusing them to enable their highest possibilities. Moreover, it is through man's evolution of consciousness through multiple births that enables this wider movement of the Spiritual Evolution of the physical, vital, and mental planes of life to take place.

Here are the main points in detail:

Birth, Death, and Life

Sri Aurobindo begins with the statement that Birth is the first spiritual mystery of the universe. He goes on to say that Death is the second, and that Life is the third.

Now Sri Aurobindo asks us to consider the scope of our existence; what it entails. Does our existence just consist of our birth and the life we live thereafter in the physical body? Does it also entail the death that follows? He answers that birth and death are not the beginning or the end of life. There is more to be included.

What is and Where is Energy/Life

Before addressing that issue, Sri Aurobindo asks us to consider what life is, and what its source is. He tells us that Life is an inherent power of energy. And that energy creates matter. **[Life is not just existence in the universe, but actually preexists matter. The final operation of the Conscious-Force is the emergence of Energy. That Energy is Life itself, When the Energy/Life moves, is activated, it formulates itself into matter. Life forms and what we consider life in the universe emerge from that.]**

What is Before Birth, After Life?

Now Sri Aurobindo returns to his focus: if there is something before Birth and after Life. He tells us that there is an "unknown before" before birth and an "unknown hereafter" after death. But what is it? What were we before death and after life?

He also asks if this Before (birth) and After (death) is predominantly physical and purely vital, or is it more predominantly spiritual and mental?

Growth of Soul of Personality as Reason for Rebirth

Sri Aurobindo then begins to make the argument that our previous lives must be included in the scope of our Before and After. That is what is before life and after death.

But then he asks: what would necessitate the existence of previous lives (i.e. rebirth)? Sri Aurobindo explains it by first examining our present existence. He says that there must have been something that enabled our current level of development. That there must have been a *past cause* to that development. He reasons *that if a soul enters this life with a certain development of personality, it must have prepared it in other precedent lives.*

[What enabled me to be who I am in this life, even at birth, occurred because of development of character or personality in previous births. Only through previous births could a Personality be in my being that I am now furthering in this birth.]

The Dual Nature of the Soul

All of this naturally begs one to ask what is this being or soul or something that is in us that carries forth this development?

Sri Aurobindo begins to address this issue by indicating that there is indeed a soul; that it is real. He tells us that this Soul is timeless, eternal (i.e. without beginning, and endless in the future).

Perhaps most interestingly, he reveals that the Soul is really two-fold. He says there is evolving Soul that exists in life in the individual, sustains beyond death, enters into another birth, etc. in its evolutionary quest. It is mutable, changing. He calls this the changing Soul of Personality. (Key)

He indicates that there is also a companion Soul that is immutable, unchanging, that is the embodiment and spark of the Eternal Divine.

[The first is what Sri Aurobindo will refer to as the Psychic entity and Being; i.e. the *Evolving* Soul. The second is the Spark of the Eternal in the Individual; i.e. it is the Jivatman.]

Changing Soul of Personality that Moves through Successive Births (Mutable) vs. the Spiritual Person (Immutable) (Key)

Now Sri Aurobindo delves further into his distinction between these dual Souls that the individual embodies (and is capable of consciously experience).

(1) *Changing Soul of Personality* – He tells us that there is a Personal Individuality not dependent on the material body. This Human Personality survives the death of the body, and moves between other planes, and then back to the material universe enjoining another body, and so forth in an evolving movement.

Thus, this Changing Soul of Personality incurs birth and death through successive bodies; i.e. by constant or by repeated rebirth into the forms of nature. It goes through variation and mutation in each birth. It exists out of time, as well as in time in the universe. [Again, the Changing Soul of Personality is the Psychic Being, the Evolving Soul.]

“As the soul of personality, he is himself part of that long development of the soul-experience in the forms of nature; his own evolution must follow the laws and the lines of the universal evolution.” [This is somewhat of a paraphrase]

(2) *Spiritual Person (Immutable)* -- And yet behind the Changing Soul of Personality -- upholding the streams of its variations, mutations -- there is a Spiritual Person, a spark of the transcendent, of Satchitananda’s that is unchanging, immutable. It is what we normally think of as the Soul (Jivatman).

“As the spiritual impersonal person, he is one in his nature and being with the freedom of Satchitananda who has consented or willed his involution in the Nescience for a certain round of soul-experience, impossible otherwise, and presides secretly over its evolution.” [This is somewhat of a paraphrase]

The individual has a soul and an evolving soul; the former the spark of the Divine, the latter the deputy of the former. It is this evolving soul (Psychic Being) that takes its birth in the individual, and gathers the experience of the individual in its journey through existence. After death, this evolving soul takes on the body of other individuals to continue its journey towards ever higher states of being. It enters a particular individual to absorb those new experiences that will enable it to grow.

Growth of Consciousness as Reason for Rebirth (key)

Now Sri Aurobindo addresses why the growth in consciousness of the individual human implies the necessity for Rebirth. He indicates that because of the involution, we have our origins in the nescience, and

therefore *it takes an evolutionary process through multiple births to overcome that and reestablish the essential Oneness of the creator.*

“Because of the involution, a plunge into oblivion where the oneness is lost and therefore the play of separateness, of divided mind occurs, there requires a progressive movement in the evolution which means it takes more than one body to make that journey.”

Sri Aurobindo then reminds of what is the highest and final aim of our growth of consciousness in the evolutionary process that these rebirths necessitate. He indicates that it is two-fold: to discover our cosmic Self and Consciousness, as well as realize the supreme Reality.

In that way, rebirth becomes the means for this dynamic to unfold for the individual. In other words, *to realize cosmic Self and the Reality in our being, which are the heights of our consciousness, one birth is insufficient, necessitating multiple, successive ones.*

Growth of Soul of Personality through Multiple Planes (key)

Now returning to the individual, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the planes of being that the Soul of Personality takes form in its journey through multiple births. He says that through multiple births there is an upward, progressive, ever-higher movement of the Soul of Personality among the physical, vital, mental, and supramental planes.

He thus indicates that births take place from lower life forms to human forms, and can progress even beyond the human. [Life forms are increasingly organized and developed in an ascendance of the physical to vital to mental to supramental planes. As the Soul of Personality, i.e. the evolving soul or psychic being, develops through multiple births, it takes on more and more of the higher planes (as well as a further perfection of the lower one). Thus, in humans, we are not just material and vital as in lower life forms, but more mental, with the potential to become supramental. Thus, the Soul of Personality evolves itself among the planes that the various form themselves takes shape in. E.g., the Soul of Personality becomes more rationally mental, or absorbs those energies and knowledges in a more rational human being. It can further grow as that individual grows.]

Our Spiritual Evolution through Rebirth (key)

Finally, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the highest, spiritual consciousness we, our soul of Personality can realize in its journey through multiple births.

He says that a constant or repeated rebirth of the individual into an earthly body is necessary for the *spiritual* evolution, not just the ordinary human kind, for the soul has not finished what it has to do

merely developing into humanity; it has still to develop that humanity into its highest possibilities.

What then are those further developments? He says they lie in higher forms of our mentality, or in planes beyond our common mentality.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that mind itself has other powers as yet only imperfectly possessed by the highest types of human individual. Thus, it is inevitable that we undergo a prolonged evolution towards such possibilities, which can only occur through multiple births. [A single birth may not be enough to come to higher, spiritual planes of mind.]

Speaking of the ascent to Supermind, Sri Aurobindo says (slight paraphrase): "If Supermind also is a power of consciousness concealed here in the evolution, the line of rebirth cannot stop even there; it cannot cease in its ascent before the mental has been replaced by the supramental nature and an embodied supramental being becomes the leader of terrestrial existence."

Rebirth is the birth of the individual soul from form to form until it reaches the human level of manifested consciousness which is its instrument for rising to yet higher levels, higher possibilities; to incorporate powers of spiritual mind, Supermind, and beyond.

Nature's Growth and Our Rebirth

Sri Aurobindo widens the scope of the discussion to include the evolution of life itself, beyond our individual evolution.

He compares and relates this process of growth of the individual in us to that of Nature. He indicates that just as Nature develops from stage to stage and in each step takes up a new form and development, so too we do the same in our lives, and we do so through multiple births.

[By "Nature", we mean "Life" here, not mere material physical, i.e. Mother Nature. Nature/Life is evolving from the material/physical, to the vital (animated life) to the mental and spiritual/supramental planes. This is the evolutionary principle of Nature. (We even see the same in society.) Since we are part of that Nature/Life, we are also evolving amongst these planes. We do that through multiple births, as the Soul of Personality journeys through this process.

A question; Does Nature/Life undergo growth through multiple births, or is it more likely that we through our growth through multiple births, as a Soul of Personality do that for Nature/Life?]

Man's and the Universe's Evolution in Consciousness (i.e. the Spiritual Evolution) Facilitated by Rebirth Process (key)

Sri Aurobindo then widens the purpose of rebirth among individuals to enable a spiritual realization of the universe itself.

"The individual is a persistent reality and eternal portion or power of the Eternal. Moreover, his growth of consciousness is the means by which the Spirit in things discloses its being."

[The Spirit is evolving in creation at the physical, vital, and mental level; and it is through man and his psychic being and rebirth that he becomes an instrument for this spiritual evolution of the cosmos; for the spirit in things to take root in creation.]

The Emerging Psychic's evolutionary destiny is to unite the individual, universal and transcendent – to become the individual center of the Divine Ishwara, which means to become God the Creator in life. (Garry Jacobs)

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Rebirth of Our Evolving Soul Enables Its Continuing Progress

We have a soul, which is the spark of the divine. Its deputy is our True Self -- our evolving Soul, also known as the Psychic Being. It is called the evolving soul because it is progressing through many births in its journey through time. It seeks to gain the essence of our experience for its own growth. Or to put it another way, as we grow, so does our evolving soul.

Since we cannot make all of our progress in one single lifetime, our true self, psychic being, evolving soul leaves us at death, rests for a while, and is reborn into another being thereafter. It garners the experience of the person for its own Nourishment, leaves the form, rests in the ethereal planes, and then is reborn into another person to continue its journey of discovery and progress. Rebirth is therefore the method by which our True Self, psychic being, evolving Soul makes its own progress.

What benefit will we get from connecting to our True Self? When we come in touch with our evolving Soul, we more readily perceive our true purpose and meaning in life. We will also perceive what aspects of our being need to change. If we then make those changes, we will evolve in consciousness, which will also benefit our evolving Soul in its journey of discovery through multiple births. Also, by moving from the surface of life and into the depths of our being, culminating in this psychic entity, we feel a deep oneness with others and the world around us, and are guided by its inner influence at important points in our daily lives.

In addition, by connecting with our evolving Soul within, our mind expands and experiences continuous descents of intuitions and

revelations of truth, which also gives nourishment to that inner True Self. It is also a means by which we can permanently change our nature into a supernature; as our mental, vital, and physical parts are perfected and divinized from within and by the action of the spiritual Force from above. We can progress further still and attain psychological and physical immortality in this life.

The path to make that happens requires the most profound conscious effort to evolve ourselves -- i.e. a yoga -- which will not only help us attain a supernature that is attuned to the deepest spiritual values, such as oneness, love, delight, truth, but will give deep knowledge and spiritual sustenance to the evolving Soul in its journey through time.

Ultimately, when we have attained our highest consciousness, then our True Self, evolving Soul can remain with us in this life forever. We become realized and immortal beings, a member of a New Species of human, who can become the harbinger of a new Divine Life on Earth.

How the Psychic Being Partakes in the Spiritual Evolution of the Universe

The Divine has become the universe. However, it has yet to perfectly become so. Therefore, from a cosmic perspective there needs to occur further evolution of the spirit and life. I.e. for each of the physical, vital, and mental planes of being to be infused with the attributes of the Divine Source and thereby realize its ultimate possibility. This is the Spiritual Evolution.

Most interestingly, the individual through his inner being partakes in that universal process. It occurs through the movement of the evolving soul, the psychic being in us. It seeks to elevate the physical, vital, and mental planes of the person and the life around them, thereby collaborating with the general movement of the Spiritual Evolution in the universe.

However, it cannot be accomplished in an individual in one single birth, as only a certain amount of progress can be realized in one incarnation. The psychic thus leaves after death, rests in the ethereal spheres, and then enters another individual to further the growth and consciousness at the physical, vital, and mental levels through that person. In this way, through multiple births, each psychic being, also known as a Soul of Personality, collaborates with the universal and transcendent intent of furthering the Spiritual Evolution in the cosmos. Through this process the Divine attributes are able to permeate and saturate the physical, vital, and planes of existence, releasing their ultimate consciousness, fulfilling the intent of the transcendent Divine.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

On Birth and Death:

Birth and death are not life's beginning and end, but are rather intermediate stages in occult processes of life.

On Remembering Past Lives:

-The Mother seemed to indicate that when a person remembers past lives, it is a moment when that person in the past life was in touch with their True Self, their evolving Soul and now the person in the present is in touch with that moment. Thus, if we are in touch with our Psychic Being in this life we can experience the powerful experience that last person had when he or she was in touch with their inner being. E.g., I suddenly feel roman emperor Marcus Aurelius deep within me because he had a powerful experience in his life that nourished his evolving soul then. In that sense, we shared the same evolving soul in Its journey through time to find fulfillment.

-Rebirth is not however an individual being reborn as another individual. E.g. John Smith dying and the personality of John Smith entering the next person. It is instead the movement of an evolving soul, a Soul of Personality through various individuals. E.g., the psychic being of Napoleon later entering that of Sri Aurobindo.



The Order of the Worlds

(Book 2 Chapter XXI)

"The existence and influence of other worlds are a fact of primary importance for the possibilities and for the scope of our evolution in terrestrial Nature."

Summary:

Sri Aurobindo begins the chapter by reiterating the relationship between the Individual, the Universal, and the Transcendent (which is the 'All-Soul').

He then focuses on the relationship between the individual and the "All-Soul." He says that the individual soul lives here by the All-Soul and depends on it; that the consciousness of the individual is determined by the One; the All-Soul.

In the heart of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo explains the planes, worlds, forces of the supraphysical [i.e. beyond the material] existence. He indicates that there are larger planes of being and consciousness that penetrate and envelop the physical plane with their invisible presence and influences.

Also, within these planes he indicates that there are *beings* who have taken form embodying a subtler substance than ours; a supraphysical form-matter tangible only to our subtle sense. Moreover, they often enter into secret communication with earth existence, including us.

Sri Aurobindo indicates that it is possible to enter into these supraphysical worlds and know something of their secrets. How can we do this? When we move our center of consciousness inward, we develop a subtle sense and have intimations of them and their actions and processes.

He says that we can receive help or guidance, or harm or misguidance from these beings. These forces can be illumined and eminently helpful to us, or asuric and diabolical. In fact, he says that the progress of earthly life can seem to be a vast field of battle between the two types of force.

On the positive side, he says that these supraphysical spheres has been the liberation of Life and Mind out of Matter, and its last effect has been

to assist in the emergence of a Spiritual consciousness. In fact, the existence and influence of other worlds are a fact of primary importance for the possibilities and for the scope of our evolution in terrestrial nature.

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on how we connect to the supraphysical through our inner being, the subliminal, enabling the evolution of our consciousness.

Here are the main points in detail:

The Relationship Among the Individual, the Universal and the Transcendent (the All-Soul)

Sri Aurobindo begins by returning to the theme of the triple nature of existence: The Individual, the Universal, and the Transcendent.

He first writes of the relationship between the individual and the universal. He says that the universal precedes the individual, and gives it its field, is that in which it exists cosmically. **[The Universal is previous to, and provided the field of existence for the individual to function in.]**

And yet he reminds us, the universal has its origins in the Transcendence; the All-Soul.

The Relationship Between the Individual Soul and the All-Soul

Now Sri Aurobindo begins to tie these elements together in terms of that which was addressed in the previous chapter about the soul.

He says that the individual soul lives here by the All-Soul and depends on it. Also, that the consciousness of the individual is determined by the One; the All-Soul. **[Perhaps we can interpret this as that the Soul of Personality has its origins and determining power in the Reality, Brahman, the Infinite consciousness, the One, the All-One.]**

The Plunge of the All-Soul into the Inconscience of Nature, and Ignorance through the Individual

Sri Aurobindo then reminds us again of the plunge of the Spirit, the One, the All Soul in the Involutionary process, and how that relates to the makeup and nature of the human individual. In particular, he says that the One, the All-Soul, the All-consciousness first accepts the veil of inconscient Nature; has willed to plunge into the inconscience of Matter. **[In the involution, the universe begins in dumb, inconscient matter, with the Spirit and consciousness fully absorbed and hidden.]** As a result, the Individual, born in that cosmic reality, in that universe, inherits the inconscience, which takes the form of his veil of Ignorance in his existence in life.

The Planes and Beings/Forces/Powers of Supraphysical Existence

In the next several pages, Sri Aurobindo takes a very different turn and explains the planes, worlds, forces of the supraphysical [i.e. beyond the material] existence. This will later tie into the ongoing discussion on the nature of the Soul and the dimensions and planes it crosses in its evolutionary journey through multiple births.

He begins here with the remark that there are larger planes of being and consciousness that penetrates and envelops the physical plane with their invisible presence and influences. However, we are not aware of the action of these powers, forces, and influences on us.

Then he focuses on the non-embodied beings who occupy these spheres. Here he begins by saying that there are beings who have or taken form embodying a subtler substance than ours; a supraphysical form-matter tangible only to subtle sense. Moreover, they often enter into secret communication with earth existence.

Now he indicates the similarity of some of these beings in a variety of nations. In particular, he indicates that there are supraphysical beings, forces, and powers that are strikingly similar in various countries and ages. [E.g. Greek and Hindu Gods.]

He also indicates that these are not illusion, but are insistent, real, organic in their presence, and with an action that can too constantly be confirmed to dismiss.

From Depths and Spiritual Mental Heights, We Can Intimate these Supraphysical Planes

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on our relation and interaction with these supraphysical planes and forces. He indicates that it is possible to enter into these worlds, and know something of their secrets. [In Sri Aurobindo's epic poem 'Savitri,' he goes through a number of them in Book II, "The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds".]

How can we do this? When we move our center of consciousness inward, we develop a subtle sense and have intimations of them and their actions and processes. Having spiritual and psychic experiences gives evidence of the existence of these higher worlds, freer planes of existence. He indicates that Mind's view of the supraphysical planes is limited, translating these realms into his own (limited) forms and images. However, from the depths, culminating in the psychic being to the rise above Mind to intuition and supramental perception we have the subtle capacity to perceive these supraphysical realms and the beings, forces, powers that reside there.

The Influences of the Supraphysical Planes on Us

Another question is how these supraphysical planes influence the world, including we humans. Sri Aurobindo tells us that these other worlds penetrate and envelop the material universe and earth nature with their influence.

Would then be a positive or negative influence? He says that we can receive help or guidance, or harm or misguidance from these beings. These forces can be illumined and eminently helpful to us, or asuric and diabolical. [Mother recognized several of the latter that have great negative sway over the world.] Thus, we can be instrumentalized by them for good or evil.

In fact, he says that the progress of earthly life can seem to be a vast field of battle between the two types of force. [The Mother recognized two or three great asuric forces in the universe, of which perhaps only one still remains. She confronted one that she said was the force behind the Germans in WWII that goes back to God of the Old Testament, and was later the asuric force behind Christianity. It still remains in some form, seeking to create havoc for the world. The other two titanic forces have been overcome. This is described in various places in the Agenda (of Mother).]

[These sorts of supraphysical forces attempt to or actually block the evolution. These forces can enter our own lives, causing us to act wrongly and recklessly.]

The Normality of these Supraphysical Forces at their Own Level

We see how these supraphysical forces can influence us on earth, but what about their existence in these non-physical planes? In terms of the darker side forces, Sri Aurobindo responds that those life impulses, which are to earth-nature inordinate and out of measure and appear here as perverse and abnormal, find in their own province of being an independent fulfillment and an unrestricted play of their type and principle. What is to us divine or titanic, Rakshasic, demoniac, and therefore supernatural is, each in its own domain, normal to itself and gives to its beings that embody these things the feeling of self-nature and the harmony of their own principle.

Unique Workings, Ordering Principles of these Supraphysical Forces

Then Sri Aurobindo addresses the issue of why there is such a wide variety of unique forms of these supraphysical forces and planes of being. He explains that that each of these domains has their own unique principles, a different scale of being, and therefore adopt a different system and ordering of principles. They thus each have a particular reason for existence. That in turn explains the reason why each has a particular hold on us.

The Utility of the Supraphysical Planes in Our Lives

Now Sri Aurobindo goes a little deeper into the utility the supraphysical planes serve in our lives. **Key**

He reiterates that these realms must have an effect and significance.

He says that its first effect has been the liberation of Life and Mind out of matter, and its last effect has been to assist in the emergence of a spiritual consciousness. In fact, the existence and influence of other worlds are a fact of primary importance for the possibilities and for the scope of our evolution in terrestrial nature. **key**

[Recall how Sri Aurobindo explains that there is an involved Conscious-Force in all things. Through a compulsion from Above, -- i.e. from certain aspects of these supraphysical planes -- there is an energizing of the involved Conscious Force compelling a new, corresponding plane to emerge. E.g. a more rational plane of mind to emerge from a lower, sense-oriented plane or aspect of mind in that individual, collective, or species, etc. This is certainly an aspect of the positive role these supraphysical planes play in the evolution, and therefore in our lives.]

The Relationship between the Subliminal and the Supraphysical Planes in Our Evolution

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on how we connect to the supraphysical through our inner being, the subliminal, enabling the evolution of our consciousness.

Widening Our Consciousness to Perceive Supraphysical Workings in Our Lives

First, he indicates that when we develop and enter our subliminal consciousness within or enlarge our consciousness beyond the scope of physical contacts [i.e. from sense mind to spiritualized mind], we become aware of this higher action, and of these higher worlds, freer planes of existence.

Role of the Subliminal Self in Connecting to Supraphysical Planes, Enabling Our Evolution

Sri Aurobindo then reminds us that the Subliminal Self [which culminates in the psychic being] plays an important role in the Evolution, as it is the conduit through which the higher planes and principles can work on us and overcome our lower nature and evolve it into a higher nature. The subliminal is the conduit by which the individual connects with the superconscient.

Developing the Subliminal Self

Earlier he indicated that we make contact with these supraphysical planes through an opening within to the subliminal, as well as an opening beyond mind proper to spiritual mind of light, intuition, and beyond. Now he indicates that these two can work in tandem. In particular, by moving into the subliminal depths (culminating in the psychic), our mind moves beyond sense mind, even rational mind to the spiritual planes of mind culminating in Supermind. This is a point he has mentioned quite often before.

Subliminal Realization and Actions of Higher Planes on the Conscious-Force within Enable the Evolution **Key**

Finally, Sri Aurobindo reiterates that the Evolution comes through a double movement within. "An action from within and an action from above can overcome the predominance of the material formula, diminish and finally put an end to the power of the Inconscience ... substitute the Spirit for Matter ..."

[The double movement is-

(1) The influence of the superconscient/transcendent Above, which stimulates the involved Conscious-Force in our being, enabling us to overcome the dominating influence of the inconscient, and allowing for further evolution amongst the planes.

(2) Our coming in contact with the subliminal (culminating in the psychic) Within/Below, which gives us a deeper consciousness and an opening to the spiritual planes of Mind, that together overcome the fixed, limiting influence of the material inconscient that dominates our being.

This theme of the Above and the Within/Below is a theme he has been highlighting in recent chapters.]

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The Benefit of the Supraphysical Planes in Our Lives

We live in a material consciousness, where the possibilities of perceiving a greater life are limited. However, we can go within, which will give us a greater perception of those possibilities. In addition, these other realms that are hidden and occult to us, give us intimations of a much wider existence, which will aid us in life in perceiving the much greater possibilities of existence. We will see that the invisible is as important as the visible as a means of moving life, and of what life offers. The power of the invisible spirit, and all of the other subtle formation of it, lesser or equal will open us to possibilities beyond our own experience, beyond the limits of a material, empirical view of

things. The Other Worlds have their own purpose and principles of being, positive and negative, but they also serve to help us broaden and deepen our view of what Reality is and what we can accomplish, embody, and discover in life.

Also, these planes can give us guidance and serve a positive role of influence in our lives.

Extra:

Why Matter is Spiritual

There is a reference in the chapter of why Matter can be considered spiritual, or even Spirit itself. The argument Sri Aurobindo presents is basically as follows: All that emanates from the Absolute is spiritual. Energy emanated from the Absolute. Since matter is a product of energy, then matter must be spiritual.



Rebirth and Other Worlds; Karma, the Soul and Immortality

(Book 2 Chapter XXII)

Summary

In this fascinating chapter Sri Aurobindo addresses the relationship between soul and death; the stages between births, i.e. rebirth; as well as rebirth's purpose in terms of the evolution of our True Self, our Psychic Being in its journey through time. The chapter also extends and coordinates many of the themes addressed in the previous two chapters.

Rebirth and the Psychic Being

Sri Aurobindo begins by revisiting the topic of rebirth again and indicates that it is the inner soul, the psychic being that survives death. He then reiterates that rebirth of the Evolving Soul enables development of the spirit and completion of the evolution of the being. Sri Aurobindo then goes and explores the "Intermediary Zone" between births and the assimilation of our mental, vital, and physical experiences. He explains the process of the exhaustion & ridding of mental, vital, physical qualities, while retaining the essence of Personality.

He then raises the question of what would determine the character of the New Birth. Sri Aurobindo says that the character of the new birth would be decided by the Soul itself.

Sri Aurobindo then discusses how the Psychic Being, the Soul of Personality prepare Itself for the new birth. He says that the Psychic Being prepares for itself whatever is needed for the next step in its evolution, the next formation of personality; the next step in growth of the being towards its destined self-unfolding in Nature. Once that is determined, then in each return to earth, the Person, the Evolving Soul makes a new formation, builds a new personal quantum suitable for a new experience, for a new growth of its being.

He then explains how the growth of consciousness of the individual fulfills the evolutionary needs of the psychic being in that new birth.

Soul of Personality

He also delves into the difference between the Psychic Being (the Soul of Personality) vs. our temporary personality that we ordinarily experience in our lives.

Sri Aurobindo then discusses the advanced formation of evolution of the Soul of Personality. He says that the greater the variety of formations that have existed in the past and can be utilized, the richer and multitudinous the accumulated buildings of experience; the more the essential result of capacity for knowledge, power, action, character, and manifold response to the universe can be brought forward and harmonized in the new birth.

He also indicates that there must be a final resort of the evolving spirit to a plane of *pure Psychic existence* in which the highly developed energies of the past would be assimilated, waiting there in repose for future rebirth.

Karma and Rebirth

Sri Aurobindo then addresses the issue of Karma in relation to rebirth. He says that it is not the sole determinant of the need for rebirth as the Tradition believes. He says that it is our self, our soul (the evolving psychic being, soul of personality) that fundamentally determines its *own* evolution.

He also indicates that the more we go within, the more we feel the soul's power of choice -- gaining us complete control over outer circumstances through our evolving psychic being connection, enabling it to become the master of Its Nature, instead of being subject to karma. Or to put it another way, Soul's choice cancels Karma.

Immortality

Finally, Sri Aurobindo raises the issue of Immortality. He indicates that true immortality would be the experience of the *eternity of the spirit* in our lives; whereas the physical survival would only be a relative, a temporal sign of the Spirit's victory here over death and matter.

Here are the main points in detail:

Evolving Soul/Psychic Being that Undergoes Rebirth

Sri Aurobindo revisits the topic of rebirth again and indicates that it is the inner soul, the psychic being that survives death. It is this Soul-person, [**Soul of Personality**] the psychic being, not the mind, that survives life and is the traveler in its journey between death and life.

And yet for this rebirthing process to take place, there must be a sufficiently developed psychic personality; an individuation of the psychic person in the first place. [**I.e. there needs to be a developed**

Soul of Personality for the process to unfold. Perhaps we can say that person with a "child soul" would not have a developed enough Soul of Personality, Psychic Being for the rebirthing process to unfold. Perhaps this indicates that many if not most have not the developed Soul of Personality that would continue to develop through additional births.]

Rebirth of the Evolving Soul Enables Development of the Spirit and Completion of the Evolution Key

Next Sri Aurobindo returns to the subject of why rebirth takes place, which he discussed extensively in the earlier chapter 'The Philosophy of Rebirth.')

He says that Rebirth is not merely a machinery for the persistent renewal or prolongation of an unchanging personality, but as a means for the evolution of the Spirit being in Nature. I.e., the repeated births of an ascending soul in human form (the evolving soul, the psychic being, the Soul of Personality) enables the individual to further engage in and complete its human evolution.

"The new birth is not a mechanical continuation from the last. Rather there is a discarding of past strong vibrations of the personality, of the physical, vital, and mental motives. We are liberated from this for the soul to continue its journey."

(In addition, since the human evolves through this process, then in general, i.e. from the perspective of the universe, this Rebirth process enables the earthly existence to move to progressively higher grades.)

[Since we are not only Individual beings, but also universal ones, when we evolve through our Soul of Personality through the rebirthing process, we help the universe evolve.]

Intermediary Zone Between Births and the Assimilation of our Mental, Vital, and Physical Experiences Key

Now Sri Aurobindo delves further into the relationship between the before birth, after death intermediary existence and our human life. For one, he indicates that this post-mortal state of the soul corresponds in something to the development of the being on earth; that together they exist as part of one complex system of evolution.

More particularly, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the relationship between the intermediary realm and the planes of our being here on earth, concluding that the intermediary zones have an affinity with our mental and vital being. In particular, there is a need of an interval in this zone for the assimilation of the completed life experience -- physical, vital, and mental -- or the working out of what has been discarded, and then a preparation for the new embodiment of a birth on earth.

Then Sri Aurobindo probes more deeply into each of these three realms of being and experience and how they are assimilated in the intermediary zone on the way to a new birth.

Sri Aurobindo begins this discussion by indicating that there are many planes of levels of world-existence, and the soul has to pass through them to reach its natural home. [In other words, in the after-death experience of assimilation Man must pass through supraphysical planes that correspond to his actual experiences at those planes on earth in order to reach the destination point in these realms, before it is determined that another birth is in order.]

Sri Aurobindo then comments on the relationship between our mental, vital, and physical existence and our beings existing in the corresponding intermediary zone.

Mental – He indicates that the image making power of the human mind can be a creative force in life that would enable the mental being to continue to live in the other mental realms in the intermediary existence.

Vital – He reminds us that there are also true vital worlds, native habitats of the universal Life-principle that exist that our vital being can inhabit between births. He tells us that we may be held there for a while because of the vital character of the influences that have shaped our life.

Physical – he indicates that this same dynamic may also occur in terms of our physical being and passing through the true physical planes; through true worlds of supraphysical nature.

[In essence, after death, between births the different planes of our being are deposited, assimilated, and perhaps live on in some form at the corresponding intermediary zone/plane. Thus, e.g. our exceptional mental capacities in life are assimilated and possibly live on in those supraphysical mental planes. The same, with the vital and physical of our being and their corresponding elements in the supraphysical.]

On the other hand, Sri Aurobindo reminds us that we would only consciously dwell in mental and spiritual worlds if we have a certain level of mental and spiritual soul life on earth.

Thus, the direction we have after death -- the place, period, and character of our self-experience there -- is determined by our life experiences. (key)

Exhaustion & Ridding of Mental, Vital, Physical Qualities, While Retaining the Essence of Personality

Now Sri Aurobindo delves further into the process by which the aspects of our being in life are assimilated in the intermediary zone after death, and possibly be readied for a new birth.

He says that in each stage of the process of the ordinary mental man moving beyond death to the intermediary zone there would be an

exhaustion and getting rid of the fractions of his formed personality-status, temporary and superficial, that belonged in the past life, casting off all the mind and vital sheaths he embodied in life.

And yet the Essence of the personality and its physical, vital, and mental experiences would remain in latent memory or as a dynamic potency for the future. **Key**

In order to understand how this occurs, Sri Aurobindo next focuses on the nature of our inner, subliminal being.

Storing What Our Consciousness Realizes in the Subliminal **key**

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the active power of our consciousness in our life emerges from our subliminal being. Then how does that consciousness find its way into the subliminal in the first place?

He says that all that our consciousness realizes in the course of our lives is constantly sent back to the subliminal being within to be stored up, developed, and remerge in stronger forms hereafter. **[to reemerge stronger in future births where the evolution continues.]**

Thus, our Essence and Being grows by a subliminal (or intraconscient) assimilation and absorption of its results of past becomings across each life. It also develops of output of potentialities of future becoming and growth of our being.

[The consciousness of the individual of each birth is stored in the Subliminal, which is carried forward into the Intermediary zones between death and life as an Essence, which will be carried forth into the next birth.]

Keep in mind however, that though the subliminal will store up and contribute whatever is needed of itself in terms of consciousness for that person in each birth, it will not itself help develop the new person in the next iteration birth.

Preparing the Coming New Birth

What then determines the character of the New Birth?

Sri Aurobindo says that the character of the new birth would be decided by the *Soul itself*.

Just as the mental, vital, and physical have their assimilation and resting places, so does the Psychic Being; the Soul of Personality accumulated. Therefore, from its psychic resting place in the Intermediary Plane, the (evolving) Soul would draw back into itself and await its new stage in the internatal evolution.

Needs for Growth and Evolution of the Person (the Soul of Personality) in the Intermediary Zone(s) and the New Birth (key)

But then how then would the Psychic Being, the Soul of Personality prepare Itself for the new birth? What would be the basis of its future actions in new births? Sri Aurobindo answers that the Psychic Being prepares for itself whatever is needed for the next step in its evolution, the next formation of personality; the next step in growth of the being towards its destined self-unfolding in Nature. **[Based on the latest status of the Psychic Being, there is a determination by itself of what would be a further evolution of its being, the next step of growth of its own soul of personality in its evolutionary journey.]**

Once that is determined, then in each return to earth, the Person, the Evolving Soul makes a new formation, builds a new personal quantum suitable for a new experience, for a new growth of its being.

Growth of Consciousness of the Individual Fulfills the Evolutionary Needs of the Psychic Being in that Birth

Then how would the Psychic Being's aspiration for further evolution in a new birth be fulfilled in that birth? Sri Aurobindo answers that a constant development of being of *cosmic* experience of that individual into a new **[further developed?]** personality in a new birth is the method. **[I.e. as that individual has profound experiences of a cosmic and personal nature in that birth, he fulfills the reason his Soul of Personality has taken birth in his body. Furthermore, as he grows as a person, the Psychic Being (Soul of Personality) too grows. As a result, these newer consciousness experiences and knowledges are stored in the subliminal, and are then upon death passed on to the intermediary zones (including the psychic realm) awaiting further assimilation and possibly rebirth of that Psychic entity into a new body.]**

The Psychic Being (the Soul of Personality) vs. our Temporary Personality

Now Sri Aurobindo takes a step back and considers how the Psychic Being (Soul of Personality, Evolving Soul) is different from our ordinary existence. He says that the psychic entity within, its representative, the spiritual individual within, is the True Person that we are. But the normally perceived "I" is only a formation, a *temporary personality* of this Inner Person. **[We think we are ourselves; this individuality we normally experience; this outer person that we know as our own being. But that is a transient self, not the True Self we truly are, the evolving person and Soul deep inside that has taken birth in this body to absorb our higher experiences so "it" (i.e. the Truer "I") can evolve through time.]**

Sri Aurobindo indicates that our normal experience of personality [in a given birth] is only a temporary mental, vital, physical formation, which the Being, the Real Person, the Psychic Entity puts forward on the surface. Thus, it is not the self in its abiding reality.

Advanced Formation of Evolution of the Soul of Personality Key

But what then of the accumulated experience of this Psychic person, this Soul of Personality. How is one birth affecting another? How are the cosmic experiences of the individual accumulating across births, if at all?

Sri Aurobindo answers that the greater the variety of formations that have existed in the past and can be utilized, the richer and multitudinous the accumulated buildings of experience, the more the essential result of capacity for knowledge, power, action, character, manifold response to the universe can be brought forward and harmonized in the new birth.

Or to put it another way, the more numerous the veiled personalities mental, vital, subtle-physical that combine to enrich the new personality on the surface, the greater and more opulent will be that personality and the nearer to the possible transition out of the completed mental stage of evolution to something beyond it.

Therefore, such a complexity and gathering up of many personalities in one person can be a sign of a very advanced stage of the individual's evolution.

Intermediary Plane of Pure Psychic Existence

If such a great, positive accumulation of growth and evolution of the Personality is possible, then one wonders if there is some ultimate formation in the intermediary zone where the experiences can be assimilated, but now at a penultimate higher level.

Sri Aurobindo answers that there must be a final resort of the evolving spirit to a plane of *pure Psychic existence* in which the highly developed energies of the past would be assimilated, waiting there in repose for future rebirth.

[I.e. there is not only supraphysical intermediary planes of mind, life, and the physical, but also a psychic/spirit realm where the Soul of personality can rest, waiting if necessary further rebirth.]

Universal Energies, Logic of the Infinite Determine

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that the next stage of the development of the evolving soul, the psychic being is not purely dependent on that soul being, but other factors that come into play. To this point, he indicates that that since the action of the cosmic Energy is complex,

there is also the effect of circumstance, the need of the being, and the intention of the cosmic Power in determining the future action for the psychic being, the soul of personality.

[When the personality has assimilated and is considering a new birth, the universal energies including circumstance and the cosmic forces and needs play a role in determining (beyond its own self-aware needs and intentions) if and how the new birth of the Soul of Personality would take shape.]

He then clarifies the point about the impact of cosmic forces and says that there is a logic that the Infinite divine follows, and it has a bearing on the future direction and growth of the Psychic entity and soul. In particular, it is Conscious-Force (Chit of Sat-chit-ananda) that also determine the nature of our rebirth.

Beyond Karma as Sole Determinant of Rebirth Key

Now Sri Aurobindo takes on the traditional view that the rebirth is solely determined simply by the Karma of the previous life/lives.

He begins with the statement that the mechanical law of karma cannot be accepted as the sole determinant of circumstances, and the whole machinery of rebirth and our evolution. That it is not the sole and absolute determinant of the life-workings of the cosmos, and hence of rebirth.

[Though there is a limited truth to the Karmic view of life, it is also overly simplistic. E.g. if I am not wealthy in my life it is not because I am not a good person, but because I lack skills, or having other missing qualities that enable one to prosper. Thus, simplistic view of life of doing good or bad and being rewarded on that basis alone is just as foolish as the notion of God in his heaven is taking inventory of us and seeing which side of the ledger we are drawing more points. In other words, to truly understanding who we are we have to perceive our nature or past nature at many levels – physical, vital, mental, and beyond.]

There is of course also the position we are put in in life so that we can grow in consciousness; out of the Ignorance to the Integral Knowledge across births, and the necessary circumstance good, bad, or in-between that will enable us to move to the next higher level(s).]

He reiterates that it is our self, our soul [the evolving psychic being, soul of personality] that fundamentally determines its own evolution, and that the law of karma is only one of the processes it uses for that purpose. [That the movement from Ignorance to Integral Knowledge is determining. And we may add that there is a movement to further embody the cosmic determinates that is part of our evolution – such as peace, harmony, knowledge, goodness, love, delight, etc.]

Spirit that Cancels Karma key

Sri Aurobindo on a sidetrack reasserts, as he does throughout the book that karmic results are not inevitable. He indicates that "what is written" is cancelled when we take to the Spirit. [That the expected inevitable outcomes of our past positive and negative deeds – i.e. "what you sow is what you reap" – is overcome when we open to the Spirit within in the psychic or the spiritual Force above.]

Thus, Sri Aurobindo concludes that our Spirit is greater than our karma. That though Karma and Consciousness-Will (Chit), working through mind, life, and body are two instruments, the latter is a greater instrument.

Garnering the Power of Soul in Our Lives

How then can we overcome karma through Spirit? He says that the more we go within, the more soul's power of choice is increasingly felt. [I.e. from the depths, we garner the soul's power of insight and its consciousness that has the effect of vibrating out and cancelling the effect of past negative actions, while enhancing positive ones. It is the choices of the inner soul that spread out on their own, and removes all obstacles to our growth and evolution in life.]

In this way, we gain complete control of the outer circumstances through our Soul of Personality, evolving psychic being connection, enabling the Soul Being if it wills to, to become the master of Its Nature. In that way we overcome the limits and drag of Karma.

True Immortality Key

Finally, Sri Aurobindo brings up the subject of Immortality. After all, we are addressing the issue of rebirth, which it would seem to be overcome when there is immortality. Would that mean that Immortality means that the individual, the Soul of Personality no longer has a need for rebirth, as he can remain immortal in that one physical person.

Sri Aurobindo responds by first indicating what Immortality truly is. He indicates that the true immortality would be the eternity of the spirit; whereas the physical survival could only be a relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the Spirit's victory here over Death and Matter. [In other words, immortality is the never-ending experience of the soul of Personality in that birth, not merely the endless physical survival of the physical body in a birth.]

He then goes on to explain this integral, multi-sided, true Immortality: "This consummation of a triple immortality, -- immortality of the [physical, vital, and mental] nature completing the essential immortality of the Spirit and the psychic survival of death, -- might be the crown of rebirth and a momentous indication of the conquest of the

material Inconscience and Ignorance even in the very foundation of Matter.”

In fact, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the true immortality would necessarily be the never-ending diminution of the body, but the will of the person to remain in the body as long as desired.

“The true immortality would still be the eternity of the Spirit; the physical survival could only be relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the Spirit's victory here over Death and Matter.”

[If there is immortality of the Soul of Personality, the Psychic Being, then we can perhaps conclude that the need for rebirth would end. But would it reside in an immortal body, or can it exist without it?]

ADDITIONAL POINTS:

Our Double Soul: The Eternal Self and the Psychic Being

There is a secret divinity of Self in us that is imperishable; it is unborn and eternal. The psychic being, which is the spiritual representative in us, is reborn in the being. It is this inner person, this Individual that survives after death, and pre-exists before birth. It is a constant rendering of the eternity of our timeless Spirit in terms of time. [This last sentence is pregnant with subtle meaning.]

Growth Out of Ignorance to the Spirit

Ultimately in birth and life there must be growth out of ignorance to a spiritual stature leading to a final passage to an immortal consciousness, knowledge, strength, beauty, divine purity, and power. This process also *includes and demands* Rebirth

Evolutionary Process and Rebirth

The logic of the evolutionary process is dynamically related to the process of rebirth. [The evolutionary process in Man, which is for the ascent of consciousness, requires multiple births for it to occur.] key

Rebirth and Evolution of Spiritual Being

The rebirth takes place for the evolution of the spiritual being in Nature. key

Holding Areas Between Births

For the discarding of the old and the preparation of new forms, the soul must dwell for some time between the two births somewhere other than in the material plane; in these other worlds.

Psychic Being's Assimilation and Preparation for the New Birth

In the cycle of rebirth, the individual soul, [the Soul of Personality], the psychic being prepares for itself (or the Divine prepares for it) whatever is needed for the next step in the evolution, for the next development of personality, organized out of the requisite experiences of the past, present, and future energies.

The Individual Being's Current Status Determines

The development of one's physical, vital, mental, spiritual, and supramental being determine the nature of our rebirth.

All that the person/soul was and did in the past must be the creator of all that he is now and experiences in his present, and all that he is doing in the present must be the creator of what he will be and experience in the future.

Absence of Memory of Past Lives

The absence of memory of past lives is not a proof that rebirth doesn't exist.



Man and the Evolution

(Book 2 Chapter XXIII)

Summary

Sri Aurobindo begins this chapter by reasserting that an evolution of consciousness is occurring through the unfolding of planes of being from physical to vital to mental.

He also reaffirms how this occurs by indicating that at the outset of the evolution there is an Involution of Spirit expressing as a dense inconscience of matter, hiding the universal Consciousness-Force, which then emerges in new formations (vital, mental, etc.) due to the influence from Above.

He then asks whether an evolution of consciousness beyond Mind can occur in Man. He wonders since mental man has still to evolve out of himself the fully conscious being, a divine manhood, or a spiritual and supramental supramanhood.

Thus, he asks whether it is truly possible to move to these spiritual and supramental heights, evolving a fundamentally new plane of existence beyond the mental.

His concludes that there does not seem to be anything in *Nature* that would indicate an evolution to Supermind, but it is only out of *Man* can this new, infinitely higher spiritual grade, type of formation, being emerge.

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that since Man is conscious and capable of conscious decision and imaginings of possibilities, he can become self-aware that he is a limited being, and can evolve a consciousness beyond his own.

Thus, he can willfully rise in consciousness and discover the spiritual depth within and the supramental heights above, furthering the evolution.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that when the evolving soul is realized, when Man comes in touch with the Psychic Being, it enables the consciousness to emerge in the Evolution, fulfilling its ultimate spiritual and supramental possibilities.

Here are the main points in detail:

What the Evolution Is

Sri Aurobindo begins with the assertion that an evolution of consciousness in Matter is a constant developing self-formation, and culminates in revealing the indwelling Spirit. He indicates that this evolution of consciousness from matter to life to mind, culminating in Spirit is the keynote, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence.

The Evolution of Consciousness in Forms to Man

Then how does this evolutionary process take place?

As in earlier chapters, he indicates that at the outset there is an Involution of Spirit, in a dense inconscience of matter, hiding the universal Conscious-force. [From out of the Infinite, it loses its consciousness, while retaining the force, as the energy coagulates and forms as inconscient, unconscious Matter. In it however, is an involved conscious-force that can come out, evolve planes and principles of being out of Itself, through the influence of the Above, culminating when the Spirit emerges in the forms, the divinization of man in a new body, culminating in a divine life on earth.]

Sri Aurobindo then describes the early stages of the forms in creation in the evolution beyond the material. He tells us that the Consciousness [of the original consciousness-force] is at first rudimentary, mostly a half-subconscious or just conscious instinct. [This can be seen in primitive life forms.]

The Consciousness then develops slowly until it takes shape in more organized forms of living Matter. /2[I.e. animated life forms.] The Consciousness then reaches its climax of intelligence and exceeds itself in Man.

Evolution from Mental to Spiritual Man, and the Passage to Integral Knowledge key

What then comes beyond the mental in the evolution? Sri Aurobindo says that mental man has still to evolve out of himself the fully conscious being, a divine manhood, or a spiritual and supramental supramanhood, which shall be the product of the evolution.

In essence, he says, that transition will mark the passage from the evolution in the Ignorance to a greater evolution in the Knowledge. [I.e. as a result of a more direct relationship with the object of knowledge through spiritual mind – silent, illumined, intuitive, supramental – man gains the direct integral Knowledge of any matter.]

Emergence to Supermind?

Though Sri Aurobindo acknowledges our capacity to move beyond the mind of sense, and rational mind to the spiritual planes of mentality, he asks if it is truly possible to move to the supramental heights. [I.e. where knowledge is integral, direct from the object, complete, with a propensity for its full manifestation as Real in the world.] He thus asks whether the evolution will truly take us to the far greater status of Supermind, in which we garner a Divine-like Knowledge. **Key**

It Appears at First that There Cannot Be a Breakout Beyond Mind

Taking the contrary view, Sri Aurobindo raises two points:

First, he indicates that the Mind that has arisen through and beyond Life seems to be caught in its circles; cannot go outside its own cycle, remaining always essentially the same. [There is no indication that anything will evolve beyond Mind, since it has been that ways for hundreds of thousands of years.] Second, he observes that all of the facts show that a Type can vary within its own specification of nature, but there is nothing to show that it can go beyond it. [such as from Mind to Supermind. In other words, why would something as different as Supermind evolve out of the mentality we see in humans.]

How Forms Are Developed through Conscious Force by Real Idea that Can Lead to the Emergence of Spirit in the Mind **Key**

To counter this argument, he goes back and retraces the inner process by which evolution takes place. From that evolutionary process of unfolding, we will then be able to perceive the possibility of how a new formation and type like Supermind can emerge from Mind.

He begins this by reminding us that the various gradation and types of being came into existence by the action of the original Consciousness-Force. That by the power of the Real Idea contained in its purpose and action, Consciousness-Force has been building Its own significant forms and types in creation for the purpose of containing and expanding outward the indwelling Spirit into universal existence. [All planes, physical, vital, mental, and beyond are being evolved out of the essential Conscious-Force of Satchitananda, taking on these various forms and types, which are in essence unique principles and embodiments of that original Consciousness and Force.]

He tells us that there is a graduated necessary succession in the evolution, first in Matter, next Life in Matter, and then the evolution of Mind in Matter.

Spirit Unlikely to Emerge through Operations of Nature, but Only through Man *key*

And yet while these are observable phenomenon in nature, he tells us there is nothing there that would indicate that out of these would *specifically* come a supramental existence.

“If a supraphysical being is to appear in the terrestrial creation, it must be a new and independent manifestation. But there is no sign of any such intention in the operations of Nature.”

He therefore concludes that it is only out of Man can this new highest spiritual grade, type of form could develop.

The Development of Human Mind and Its Conscious Understanding and Will Can Enable Further Evolution *key*

He then goes back to his developing argument, and indicates that Mind IS in fact a dramatic departure from the animated life and material existence that came before.

“It must be observed that the appearance of human mind and body on the earth marks a crucial step, a decisive change in the course and process of the evolution, not merely a continuation of the old line. Up till this advent if a developed thinking mind in Matter evolution had been affected, not by the *self-aware aspiration, intention, will or seeking* of the living being, but the subconsciously or subliminally by the automatic operations of Nature.”

Thus, he concludes that Man the being has become aware and aware of himself. That there has been made manifest in Mind of man its *will to develop, to grow in knowledge, to deepen the inner and widen the outer existence, to increase the capacities of the nature.*

In other words, in Man, the substitution of a conscious for a subconscious evolution had become conceivable and practical. Thus, he can willfully rise in consciousness, and discover the spiritual depth within and the supramental heights, furthering the evolution.

(“In Man, change (reversal) of consciousness is inevitable.”)

Through Man’s Conscious Self-Awareness of His Own Limitation, He Can Evolve a Higher Supernature. *Key*

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that if man is conscious and capable of conscious decision and imaginings of possibilities, he can become self-aware that he is a limited being, and can evolve a consciousness beyond his own.

This leads to Sri Aurobindo's ultimate conclusion that if a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our human birth into Matter, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution. He is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit. Therefore, he must be surpassed

and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of creation.

The Connection with Our Psychic Being that Enables the Evolution

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that when the evolving soul is realized, when Man comes in touch with the Psychic Being, it enables the consciousness to emerge in the Evolution, fulfilling its ultimate spiritual and supramental possibilities.

[The Evolution is the "Reversal of Consciousness," which occurs when we shift from the separative Ego state to the Psychic Being within.

When we are in touch with our psychic being, we feel harmony with others and the world, we feel deep silence and richness, we experience continuous intuitions of knowledge, we feel love and joy on a continuing basis. This furthers our development, as well as the world around us: hence furthers the Evolution.

By practicing Consecration (opening to the Mother and Her Force), Non-Reaction to the intensities around us, Taking the Other Person's Point of view instead of fixating on our own, practicing Self-Givingness instead of selfishness and ego, we move to the Psychic, the Evolving Soul, with all of its divine attributes, and thereby further the Evolution.]



The Evolution of the Spiritual Man

(Book 2 Chapter XXIV)

Summary

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo takes us on a journey of the evolution of life. He assumes the role of a silent Witness Consciousness observing these developments.

He describes an empty material existence without any seeming purpose, as well as forms emerging out of it that also only seem to serve the needs of Nature. Then the subtler consciousness of Mind emerges, at first following the needs of the vital and physical life, but then progressing further as a thinking entity. Then without precedence like mind, emerges the Spirit.

He tells us that Spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original Involutionary element and factor. Evolution is then inverse action of the involution.

Sri Aurobindo also tells us that there is a hint in each plane of what is to follow. He explains that the next plane emerges because it is already involved in the previous one.

Now moving toward the heart of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo describes several decisive steps needed for the emergence of the spirit in Man; to enable his Spiritual Evolution.

1. The first is a separating from thought in Mind the life-movements in the Vita and body sense in the Physical being.
2. A further, second step is the experience of Self, which then spreads to universality and transcendence
3. The third step in the emergence of the spirit for the individual is the realization of the Supramental Consciousness.

Now Sri Aurobindo changes course and indicates that there are four ways that Nature has followed in an attempt to open the inner being, the Spirit in the individual; to enable the Spiritual evolution. They are: (1) Religion, (2) Occultism, (3) Spiritual Philosophy, and (4) Spiritual Experience and Realization. He explains each of these in great detail,

revealing their strengths and weaknesses; strengths in helping bring the spiritual evolution forward, but weakness in its inability to have that decisive power to enable the spiritual Evolution.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo describes several types of spiritual-oriented individuals; the sage, the seer, the devotee, the saint, one who has connected to his True Self and cosmic consciousness, and finally one who has realized the supramental in life.

Here are the main points in detail:

From Empty Material Existence to Animated Forms to the Emergence of a True Mentality

Sri Aurobindo has written the first part of this chapter as a narrative of how the silent Witness consciousness perceives the unfolding and evolution of life on earth, beginning with matter. [It is almost like a poetic vision of what transpired.]

At the outset of his narrative, he describes an empty material existence. It is then imbued with animate forms that too seem to have no apparent purpose other than following the will of Nature.

Then a consciousness, a new and greater subtler vibration arose, a thinking Mind, and came to the surface of life.

At first it only appeared that Mind only served: aware of itself, but that's all.

Though Mind at first served Life, it eventually made Life and Matter its servant. Thus, a truer mental being emerged to forge and formulate human existence.

It was a defiance of the reign of Nature.

Emergence of Spirit from Mind

(The narrative-like remarks continue) To the silent Witness consciousness, it was more surprising still to see the emergence of Spirit from Mind, for there seemed to be no precedent for it, just as there was none for Mind when it emerged from animate Life.

And yet, Sri Aurobindo informs us, at each stage a hint is given to what can or will come next. In inconscient Life [essentially matter, the physical], there were hints of sensation; a movement beyond pure material substance. Then from sensation there arrived moving and breathing Life. And from Life there was first sense-oriented Mind [dominated by the inputs of the five senses], which would be a preparation of thinking Mind.

And so, just as Mind emerged from Life, Spirit emerges from Mind.

Thus, we see the dynamic where the limitations of the current state presuppose the next one. [E.g. if something is fixed, as in matter there is something pushing it out of it, such as the arrival of sensation and then animated life forms. It should also be pointed out that there are not simply four planes, but many subplanes or strata of planes among the major ones that emerge.]

Evolution to Next Plane Due to Its Potential Involved in the Previous One

Sri Aurobindo then explains that a next plane emerges because it is already involved in the previous one.

“Matter could not have become animate if the principle of Life had not been there constituting Matter and emerging as a phenomenon of Life-in-Matter. Life-in-Matter could not have begun to feel, perceive, think, reason, if the principle of Mind had not been there behind life and substance, constituting it as its field of operation and emergent in the phenomenon of thinking life and body. So too spirituality emerging in Mind is as sign of a power which itself has founded and constituted life, mind, and body and is now emerging as a spiritual being in a living and thinking body.”

Spirit as New, Unique Plane Beyond Mind

Now Sri Aurobindo changes course a bit and focuses on the role of Spirit itself. He says that what is necessary to posit first is the existence of Spirit as something else than Mind and greater than Mind. Adding several corollaries to this claim he adds that spirituality is something other than mentality, and that the spiritual being therefore is something distinct from the mental being.

Spirit as Final Outcome because It is the Source

Then Sri Aurobindo focuses on how the Spirit as the end goal of evolution mirrors the source Spirit at the start of the involution. He tells us that Spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original Involutionary element and factor. (Evolution is then inverse action of the involution.)

Decisive Spiritual Step 1: Separating from Thought, or Life-movements, or Body Sense Key

Now in the heart of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo describes several decisive steps, movements in the emergence of the Spirit in Man. The first involves any of three types of separation movements that help Spirit emerge; whether separating from thought in Mind, or separating

from life-movements in the Vital, or separating from the body sense in the Physical being. He explains:

“There can be a decisive emergence [of Spirit] in which the being separates itself from thought and sees itself in an inner silence as the spirit in mind. Or the being separates itself from the life movements, desires, sensations, kinetic impulses and is aware of itself as the spirit supporting life. Or it separates itself from the body-sense and knows itself as a spirit ensouling Matter.”

Decisive Spiritual Step 2: Experience of Self, which Spreads to Universality and Transcendence Key

Sri Aurobindo now indicates that as a result of discovering the silence behind the mental, vital, or physical being, we become aware of Self, spreading itself into universality, surpassing any dependence on any natural form or action, extending itself upward in transcendence. [It is to perceive the Psychic Being, through which we not only experience our True self, but our Universal and Transcendent selves.]

Decisive Spiritual Step 3: Supramental Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that a further step in the emergence of the Spirit for the individual is the realization of the Supramental Consciousness.

He reminds us of its nature. He tells us that in Supermind there is an inherent, intrinsic, self-existent consciousness which knows itself by the mere fact of being; which knows itself through a self-identity or direct connection with the object of knowing; and which discovers in itself something that is not merely of life or mind or body.

Three Decisive Steps in the Emergence of Spirit in Man

- Silence of Being by Separating from the Physical, Vital, and Mental Nature
- Experience of Self; True Individuality to Universality to Transcendence
- Realization of Supramental Consciousness

Four Historic Stages of Development of the Spiritual Man

Now Sri Aurobindo shifts direction and indicates that there are four ways that Nature has followed in an attempt to open the inner being, the Spirit in the individual: (1) Religion, (2) Occultism, (3) Spiritual Philosophy, and (4) Spiritual Experience and Realization. He will describe in detail the necessity and the expression of each of these

progressively higher movements toward s the spirit, with the last -- Spiritual Experience and Realization -- being by far the most critical.

He also indicates that these stages are necessitated by Nature because they relate to something true or necessary to the total aim of Her evolution. [I.e. in order to fulfill the Decisive Steps of his Spiritual Evolution as explained in the earlier part of the chapter, Life has chosen these instruments -- Religion, Occultism, Spiritual Philosophy Knowledge, and Spiritual Experience and Realization -- to get there.]
Key

Let's then briefly go through each of the four:

1. Religion

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the first power that enables us to make the decisive steps of a spiritual evolution is Religion.

He tells us that Faith is indispensable for in human endeavor; whether in practical matters, like the safety of an area, or quality of the food, etc. That also includes spiritual faith.

Religion therefore gives us a faith in a Supreme Being; a Spiritual Reality, an Infinite omnipotent, omniscient spiritual Reality. It tries to awaken a faith in That. It is a greatness of religion to do so.

However, religion tends to only give rules, laws, guidelines, rituals, etc. that are a part in understanding; that are distant from the experience of spirit. Religion is in essence trying to create a codebook for spiritual realization. But no one can reach God, the Spirit by following any rules.

Religion has civilized us, helped us live together more harmoniously; but it has offered little for us in terms of experiencing the Spirit directly. Religion gives a basic moral code like don't steal, don't kill, don't covert another's wife, etc. but not the experience of the Spirit.

On the other hand, in its original inspiration Religion, in the creators of the religion, had an inspiration that there is something more to life on earth; that there is something greater in the universe; beyond the visible world. The founders of the religions had these experiences.

On the other hand, many of the founders do not know how to explain the spiritual experience in an integral way. The founder had faith, a spiritual touch, but did not have an integral realization. Followers of the original inspiration may have love in the heart, asking others to have faith, etc., but he may only offer rules and practices. The rules then spread and therefore the rules become more fixed, limited, eventually have no power. Now science steps in and perceives this surface view and says that all of this is merely superstition, and offers practical strategies of living instead. Be a good man, be an honest man. Forget spirit. It is because the Mind over modern man, of the Scientist does

not recognize spirit. As a result, Science becomes the leader in the world, and religion is looked on with suspicion, even contempt.

On the other hand, the genius of Indian religion is that it accepts that each person has a unique path to God; that there are infinite paths to the Spirit, to the One. It is open to all possibilities of experience, of pathways, even though each one may only be one side of the truth; whereas other religions are fixed in a limited, specific view of the Spirit. That is why the spiritual experience was there in Indian religion for thousands of years.

Religion and Integral Yoga

How can religion relate to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and Mother? They said they did not come to found a religion, but for spiritual evolution. How do we then relate to them through something that could be called religious?

First, they indicated that as long as you belong to the religious tradition you cannot tread the path of Integral Yoga. Yet we make new traditions. E.g. for devotees there is Prosperity Day, hourly meditation, make offerings, do book service, we have Life Divine book itself, soft speech, honesty, cleanliness, and so many other things. They can all be a help, can help us be receptive to the Spirit, but none of them is spiritual experience. They are each good to do, but it is our connection to the source, the divine, Mother behind those actions that is paramount in these activities. That is spiritual experience. To feel that. To connect with the unseen Reality. The Spirit. Mother's Consciousness. To make that effort. That's then the purpose of "our religion" in terms of Integral Yoga.

In sum, Religion can help us move toward spiritual experience, but cannot be a substitute for it.

2. Occultism

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the second power that enables us to make the decisive steps of a Spiritual Evolution is Occultism.

Occultism is to discover that the real powers in the world are not external, material, but are subtle, invisible. Life is a power; that created animated forms out of the inconscient material world. Mind is a power; out of which thoughts and ideas creates so many things. However, occultism has discovered that the powers of Life and Mind we are using is quite superficial. That the real power we have is infinitely greater than these two. That power is in the inner planes of our being; the subliminal; and in the powers beyond that in the transcendent.

Occultism and Integral Yoga

What about what we need of Occultism in the Integral Yoga? One is to experience the phenomenon that there is a correspondence between the inner and the outer. That our outer problems are reflections of our limits of consciousness inside. Thus, if I change the inner, the outer will correspondingly change.

E.g. if I am having serious problems on the outside, I can change my inner consciousness, which will affect the negative outer, causing it to evaporate. That is an occult power we have to change, to alter life around us through inner, subtle means.

Another aspect is to know that anything we want to achieve we can do from within through inner power; instead of mere outer change and action. Occultism is therefore that inner power we have to affect the world. Every time we make life respond to us, we are using an inner occult power. Inner-Outer correspondence is thus the Occult power behind the phenomenon of Life Response, sudden good fortune.

Life Response is not quite spiritual power; but occult Life power from within. A power to alter the conditions of Life from within. And yet to know we can evoke life from within is a Spiritual Knowledge. Thus, we can learn all the methods that can evoke life response to fully harness that inner, occult power. This is the Knowledge that we need.

In turn that inner occult power and experience prepares us for experiencing the Spirit directly, as it shows there is subtle power at our fingertips, and its source is from within. We can now use it to connect to our True Self, and to the transcendent Reality, the Spirit.

3. Spiritual Philosophy, Knowledge

Spiritual philosophy is not so much experience of the spirit, but a mental examination of the nature of, the ways, the purpose of Spirit. Metaphysical, religious philosophies have been created to help us understand existence.

E.g. Life Divine and elsewhere, Sri Aurobindo has given us ultimate knowledge; telling us about the Divine and the divine future, the involution and evolution, process of creation, and among many other things. It is the mental knowledge of the truth of our being and future, as well as the ways we can evolve to realize it.

Yet Sri Aurobindo tells us in that knowledge, that Mind; that mental understanding cannot realize Spirit, only our spiritual experiences can. He says Mind cannot perceive the spirit, which is Infinite. It can only see the finite. Or Mind and its knowledge – including spiritual Knowledge -- can see one form of the Spirit, and think it is everything; is the true nature of the Reality; when it clearly is not so.

Thus, the experience of Mind can bring a knowledge, even a great spiritual knowledge, but it is not spiritual experience. Experiencing

spiritual Knowledge -like Gita, Upanishads, the works of St. Augustine, or Patanjali, or Sri Aurobindo, is not having the experience of Spirit. Understanding brings mental satisfaction, not spiritual realization. They can be aids to spiritual experience, but not the thing itself.

Sri Aurobindo tells us also that Mind's logic is that of the finite; but the Spirit's, the Divine's logic is of the Infinite. It perceives and creates the true truth at every moment. Thus, we should not (through Mind) judge the Infinite by the logic of our finite understanding. It will escape us. In other words, Mind cannot grasp the Unknowable.

4. Direct Spiritual Experience, Realization

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the highest means of enabling the Spirit to emerge in life, to further the Spiritual evolution is direct spiritual experience and realization.

Spiritual experience is an aid and step and path to the spiritual Man. E.g. sitting in meditation, spiritual consecration, prayer evoking a result, peace inside, light coming in the mind, love in the heart or nerves, sweetness filling the body, joy everywhere, are spiritual experience. Yet they are not the Spirit itself.

Beyond experience of the spirit is Realization of the Spirit. E.g. it is the rishi who has connected to the Divine Reality or the saint who has experienced and realized his Psychic Being. It is the individual who has experienced the Individual divine within, the Universal/Cosmic Divine without, and the Transcendent divine beyond all things.

Spiritual Evolution **Key**

Actually, Sri Aurobindo indicates that this is just the starting point for what he calls the Spiritual Evolution; which culminates in the Realization of the New Man; of becoming the Supramental Being; the new, Divine Species.

Spiritual Evolution is not just about our own evolution; but the Evolution of the Divine through the Spirit within us. The Psychic Being is the Spirit within us, and when it comes to the surface we enable the Spiritual Evolution.

How then can we make the Spirit come out? It is through the act of Consecration. Consecration then is to self-offer our being in every detail of our lives so the Spirit evolve in us; so our True Self, our Psychic Being within comes out, enabling not enabling our own evolution, but the evolution of the Divine. When we fully surrender all our activities, thoughts, feelings, etc. to Mother, the Divine Will and our will becomes one. Her Intention, Light, Love, etc. becomes our own, which enables the Spirit, the Psychic Being within to come out, furthering the Spiritual Evolution.

Experiences/Realizations of the Sage-Seer, Devotee, the Saint, Liberated Self/Soul, Supramental Ascent/Transcendence

Sri Aurobindo goes onto describe the various levels one can be at in relationship to the Spirit. I.e. different types of spiritual status for the individual:

He says that the *sage and seer* lives in harmony, knowledge, etc. through stillness or as illuminations of thought or intuitions of knowledge without thought, all the way up to supramental perception.

The *devotee* is one who lives in the spiritual aspiration of the heart. Its self-offering and seeking. [E.g. a follower of the Mother, longing to be close to Her and her influences is an example of this type. The experience is of the higher emotions but also the supra-rational life experiences.]

The *saint* is moved by the psychic being and inner heart powerful to govern the emotional and vital being. [A deep connection to the true self and soul within that translates as feelings, behaviors, actions of the heart towards others and the world.]

The highest spiritual type is *the liberated man* who has realized the Self and Spirit within, entered into the cosmic consciousness, is in union with the Eternal, and accepts life and action and utilizes the Power in life and action. [The individual who has connected to his psychic being, and is open to the cosmic and supramental influences to guide behavior and action can be thought to be of this type.]

At its furthest stage, this liberated man has a total liberation of soul, mind, heart, and action, casting them all into the sense of the cosmic Self and the Divine Reality. Beyond this is the supramental ascent and the Transcendence. [One who has gone through the psychic, spiritual, and supramental transformation, becoming on the way to becoming a new, spirit-based human species, can be thought of an example of this ultimate spiritual type.]

Reasons for Various Spiritual Stages

Sri Aurobindo sums up the reasons for the variety of stages and formations of the ascent of the spiritual man

"In the evolution of the spiritual man here must necessarily be many stages and in each stage a great variety of individual formations of the being, of the consciousness the life, the temperament, the ideas, the character."

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS:

First Steps of Connecting to Spirit

First half-lit connections to spirit: Initially there can be an initial limited spiritual connection; such as when the psychic pressures the mental and vital parts, or a formation mixed with mental aspiration of vital desire or enthusiasm, perhaps influenced by a high belief or self-dedication or altruistic eagerness mistaken for true spirituality. Thus, these first half-lit connections to spirit are inevitable.

What Spirituality Is

Then what is true spirit? "Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter in contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits our own being ..."

Why the Tendency for a Spiritual Retreat from Life

The spiritual retreat from life: Sometimes the limitations of our physical, vital, and mental beings become such an impediment that the spiritual urge becomes impatient and tries to reject life, mortify the body, to seeks its own separate salvation, departing perhaps into pure spirit outside life or even separate from one's physical being.

Individual and Collective Spiritual Development

The individual development must precede the collective spiritual development.



The Triple Transformation

(Book 2 Chapter XXV)

Summary

Two chapters back, in 'Man and the 'Evolution,' Sri Aurobindo indicates that Man is the first to make *conscious* evolutionary change. He can thus consciously rise up out of his Ignorance, -- his divided nature, his contradiction with the world, -- and acquire an Integral Knowledge, thereby becoming the ultimate, Supramental Being.

How can this be done?

Sri Aurobindo offers the yogic method of what he calls 'The Triple Transformation.' It begins with the *Psychic* transformation, where one moves within and discovers the soul, which in turn opens the person to all manners of individual, universal, and cosmic experiences, including a profound harmony and joy.

That movement continues with the *Spiritual* transformation where Man rises above his mentality, experiences the planes of spiritual mind, including silence, illumination, intuition, cosmic consciousness, as well as the Light descending and transforming the individual parts of the being.

This process culminates in the *supramental* transformation where all aspects of the being -- from mind to the vital and even to the physical -- are transformed into their ultimate supramentalized status, even as life instantaneously brings to fruition as real in the world the very knowledge the spirit in the mind has opened to. (I.e. Knowledge and Power fused.)

As a result of completing this process, the individual shifts from his divided nature into a Harmonic one, furthering the Evolution, leading to arrival of Supramental beings and existence; a Divine Life on Earth.

Here are the main points in detail:

Man's Inherent Ignorance and Related Limitations

Sri Aurobindo's indicates that Man is born an ignorant, divided, conflicted being; a product of the original inconscience (i.e. unconsciousness,) inherent in Matter that he evolved out of.

As a result, he does not know (amongst others) the nature of Reality, including its source and purpose; his own nature, including the parts and integration of his being; what purpose he serves in life; what his individual and spiritual potential is; and the true, integral relationship that exists between spirit and life.

He indicates that only when Man attains a Supramental nature that all of these forms of ignorance, division, and contradiction will be overcome.

The Triple Transformation that Overcomes Man's Limitations

To overcome his current limitations and realize his supramental nature, Sri Aurobindo indicates that Man must embark on a three-step process of self-discovery in which he uncovers his Divine nature. He calls this the "Triple Transformation." The three steps are the Psychic, the Spiritual, and the Supramental transformations. **[It is the ultimate form of personal evolution and transformation; a summation of the ultimate stages of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga that culminates in a supramental consciousness and a divine life on earth.]**

The process generally follows consecutively:

(1) *the psychic change*, which is the conversion of our current surface nature into a soul-based existence emanating, radiating from within.

(2) *the spiritual change*, which occurs through the descent of the higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the being: descending into mind to vital/life to matter to inconscience.

(3) *the supramental transmutation*, which is the crowning movement of our evolution; the descent of the supramental consciousness into our entire being and nature.

Next, we will go through each of the three in detail.

(1) PSYCHIC TRANSFORMATION

The first step in the triple transformation process is a movement within, away from the surface of life, to the depths, culminating in the discovery of his Psychic Being **[the Personal Evolving Soul]**.

From that poise our nature changes and we experience life in the following dramatic ways:

True Purpose Known

From the psychic we begin to glean our true Purpose in life, as well as his universal and transcendent purpose. The Psychic knows it has come for a purpose; to awaken to the Truth of the Divine. It itself seeks to know the Truth of existence through its birth in Life, and connect and understand its connection to the Divine, and how to serve It.

[The psychic has entered us in its journey of spiritual discovery across births. When we come in touch with our central being, we sense what our ultimate individual purpose is, since the psychic/we tandem are here for certain reasons, to learn from certain of our experiences. In addition, from the psychic we also perceive our universal role; that we are here for some wider purpose and that we can use spiritual capacities to fulfill that purpose. We also recognize that the universal reflects the intentions of the transcendent, the divine source of things and thus we sense our role and purpose of it in our lives.

Looking at it from the perspective of the Psychic, it knows it has come on earth for a purpose. It has come here to awaken to the Truth of existence, of the Divine and serve the Divine.]

Spiritual Aspiration

Spiritual Aspiration is the most central characteristic of the psychic. It is never comfortable with being satisfied, with being secure. It always wants to move towards the Truth, toward the Divine.

Oneness and Unity with Life

In the psychic we have direct experience of the Oneness and Unity of creation. For the psychic Itself, it is one and in harmony with everyone and everything. It knows no conflict. In whatever comes out, it creates a harmony with whatever is.

[-From the surface consciousness we perceive things as divided and in contradiction. However, from our deepest poise in the psychic being, we do not feel separation from others and life, but a oneness, sympathy, and unity, which gives us a truer view of existence, and is thus a way out of our Ignorance on the way to an Integral Knowledge.

-The psychic is in total harmony; is a center of harmony. It's not in conflict with anybody or anything. Wherever the psychic comes out, acts, etc. it creates a harmony. It's never angry, or disturbed or resentful.

-From the Psychic Being one cannot help but want to create harmony and oneness with everything and every person one encounters. The Psychic itself is thus perpetually in harmony with everyone and everything. It is never angry, disturbed, resentful.]

True Individuality

From that Psychic Center, we also experience our True Individual nature.

[Our normal outer, surface consciousness has little development of true individuality. One merely behaves without real thought, or apes others, too often following the herd view of society around us. However, when we connect to the psychic being, we feel a deeper sense of things, and thereby think and behave in ways that are individualistic and unique. Since the psychic is the spirit within us, we experience not just individuality, but true spiritual individuality, with a far more profound insight and capacity of being.]

The true individual thinks he can achieve something great in life and does so, when the rest of the world thinks he is mad. He not only has an aspiration to accomplish or become something in life, but also the courage to make it real, and further still a willingness to sacrifice everything for a value he holds dear.

The True Individual is also what Sri Aurobindo calls the "Soul of Personality." A complete self-determination emanating from the evolving soul, Psychic Being within, rather than outer determined.

Truth Perception

The psychic has a discriminating knowledge of the Truth that we do not have on the surface. It knows the truth when it sees it. It always knows the truth. It has the discrimination to always know what is right and what is wrong; what is good and what is bad; what is true and what is false. (When the connection to the psychic being is made, the psychic supports, guides, and rules the nature; exposing all parts of us to the Truth, lighting all parts of the being, evaporating the limitations of our nature.)

[Also, from the Psychic Being one sees the value and truth of each and every person, and each and every thing.]

Sanctions Things for Personal Growth

The psychic, the soul, the True Self always gives us what we need to grow as a person. It sanctions the good that comes to us and even the bad, such as an enemy or a great ordeal both of whom can actually be the means of our further personal growth. Mother says the psychic is not interested in a pleasant life, but in progress; in discovering the Divine.

Inner Guidance

From the Psychic Center, we also come in touch with an inner Guide that constantly indicates what actions to take, and what to avoid. It is a "divine light of guidance."

[Truths emanate and percolate up from the psychic being to our conscious mind, giving us direction of how to act, behave, what to avoid, etc. It is the "Inner Guide."]

Delight/Bliss and Surrender

By connecting to the transcendent divine from the psychic depths, we experience a deep pleasure and bliss (Ananda), compelling to want to surrender to the Divine Will and Intent.

[Connecting with our evolving soul, we open to the Ananda, Bliss of Sat-Chit-Ananda, which is ultimate experience of Joy and Delight in being alive.]

Elevation of the Heart

Through the Psychic Poise we connect to the Spirit through the heart, where it experiences the All-beautiful, Blissful, Good, the True, the spiritual Reality of Love. Its intentions are always totally pure, selfless. It spontaneously acts in a way that is Self-Giving.

[Through the psychic connection we experience deep positive feelings towards others (goodwill), take to actions of goodness for others, express our gratitude towards others and life, and otherwise feel deep, warm affection towards all people around us.]

When you are in touch with the psychic you feel peaceful, you feel happy, you feel full of trust, benevolence, and close to Mother. There is an inexpressible Joy, for no reason at all. (MSS)

Cosmic Consciousness

From the Psychic Poise, we have a connection with the cosmic forces and occult movements of universal Nature.

[From the psychic we perceive the subtle workings of Life, its movements, grasp its principles and laws, and thus have a great power over it, to master it from within. We develop a great power to make life respond to our intention from within.]

Spiritual Attributes

The psychic seeks all the spiritual attributes, the essential real Ideas, including harmony truth, goodness, joy, and beauty. That's what the Psychic wants. That is its mission. In every act, and every situation.

(The Mother indicates that all that creates peace, faith, joy, harmony, wideness, and ascending growth comes from the Truth. They all come from the Psychic. On the other hand, restlessness, doubt, skepticism, sorrow, discord, conflict, selfishness, narrowness, inertia, discouragement, despair comes straight from the Falsehood. None of these come from the Truth, from the Psychic.)

The psychic only seeks one essential thing, which expresses as several. It seeks Truth, it seeks Harmony, it seeks Beauty, it seeks Beauty. In every act, in everything it encounters it seeks these things in life.

Psychic Transformation Realizations

- True Purpose Known
- Spiritual Aspiration
- Oneness and Unity with Life
- True Individuality
- Truth Perception
- Sanctions Things for Growth
- Inner Guidance
- Delight/Bliss and Surrender
- Elevation of the Heart
- Cosmic Consciousness
- Spiritual Attributes

Nature of the Psychic Being Itself (review)

Now Sri Aurobindo returns once more to describe what the Psychic Being itself is (as opposed to its qualities and how we experience of it); not only to express its glory, but to indicate the limits that exist at that plane to bring about an integral transformation of the individuals. **[That is achieved through the further steps of the Spiritual and Supramental transformation.]**

He begins by reiterating that not only is there a mental, vital, and physical personality developing in us, but a Psychic Soul-personality as well. **[I.e. our normal human personality vs. Personality of Soul.]**

He also reminds us of the process by which the Psychic Being interacts with our human selves. He indicates that the Psychic gathers the essence of our mental, vital, physical experiences and assimilates it for the further evolution of our existence in Nature. Moreover, this Soul of Personality does not emerge in us full-grown and luminous, but evolves, passes through a slow development and formation -- in this life and in births/lives to come.

[Let us also be reminded that Sri Aurobindo has told us that it is through the evolution and emergence of the Psychic Being in Man that the Evolution of life on earth toward a new supramentalized species will occur.]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY:

-Psychic Key to the Evolution

It is Sri Aurobindo's fundamental premise that the Evolution occurs and is fulfilled through the realization of the Psychic Being. As the Psychic evolves so does the universe, creation. The Psychic Connection is the key to the evolution

-Consecration and Other Inner Methods that Forge a Connection with the Psychic Being

One wonders if there is a way to facilitate the connection with the Psychic Being. Taking up Sri Aurobindo's challenge Sri Karmayogi advocates constant Consecration of all aspects of our life and being to the Mother, to Her Force, which not only brings life's conditions under control, evoking powerful positive response, but over time forges a clearer and clearer link to an inner consciousness, culminating in the Psychic Being.

The more we consecrate, the more we forge a connection to the Psychic Entity. In addition, there are other inner methods that will further forge a link to the Psychic. One is to practice non-reaction to life's intensities, which strengthening the inner ties to the Within. Likewise, taking the other person's point of view moves us away from our surface consciousness, our ego, and opens our being to harmonic connection with others. These along with practicing Self-Giving forge a connection to the depths within, culminating in the Psychic connection, realization, and transformation.

Limits of the Psychic Transformation

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the limits of the Psychic Transformation. Though that process brings us in touch with the Evolving Psychic Entity, the Soul of Personality – enabling us to experience all its marvelous qualities – there are limits to this change.

1. Difficulty of Connecting to Psychic Being

For one, it is hard for a person to make contact with the psychic, because the veil between the person and it is thick. I.e. there is a great

distance between the outer, surface consciousness of Man and these deepest depths within. Thus, it is hard to penetrate to it and make contact with it.

In addition, because we live on the ignorant surface of life, we are only dimly aware of the psychic presence to begin with. Our normal, surface consciousness doesn't detect its movements, including the guidance welling up from the Psychic entity. In fact, the outer nature can be said to *oppose* our making connection to these inner depths.

2. Difficulty of Receiving Guidance from Psychic Being

Another problem is that as the Psychic Influence and Guidance rises to our conscious surface being, it does not arrive pure from the depths. It gets filtered, altered, and absorbed as it rises, leaving the remaining points of guidance weak or twisted.

(Indeed, Sri Aurobindo indicates that when trying to connect to the Psychic, there can be an occult mental, vital, and subtle-physical intervening action. I.e. by not going fully within to the psychic, we might instead make contact with the inner being, releasing a "subliminal ignorance," which could lead to a large ego movement or other problems of admixture with the surface being.)

3. Mind Attached to Vital Needs Prevents Acceptance of the Psychic Influence

A third problem concerns the Psychic's ability to truly influence and regulate our lives. Sri Aurobindo indicates that this Soul of Personality cannot control the human mind and the actions that issue from its thoughts because our limited human mentality is compelled to obey the vital ego, and its needs and preoccupations. **[Though the higher consciousness influences rise up when connected to the psychic, the mind is fixated and attached to the vital and physical needs of the being (wants, desires, attitudes, opinions, prejudices, etc.) which prevent the psychic guidance and influences from penetrating the heart and mind.**

For all these reasons a further "Spiritual Transformation" will be necessary, which can overcome the limits and blockages in our consciousness that prevent the Psychic from being fully realized; from having a full impact on our lives.]

(2) SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

A further stage of transformation beyond the Psychic change is the Spiritual Transformation. There is a natural progression from the psychic to the spiritual transformation.

Why is it needed? For one, as we have noted earlier, the Psychic change is not able to overcome the dense, limiting human consciousness, which prevents us from making contact with the psychic, and if we do its influence is reduced, filtered out and even negated.

Also, Sri Aurobindo introduces the fact that for all its great capacities and realizations, the Psychic Transformation is not able to transform the *mental* plane of our being, which is still dominated and influenced by the lower vital and physical consciousness. [E.g. our thoughts and opinions are overwhelmed by our lower vital attitudes, such as certain dispositions of attitude, preventing the Psychic influence from fully taking hold in our nature.]

He indicates that only a Spiritual Transformation can expand our mentality to its higher, spiritual heights and planes, ridding itself of its lower influences, opening the mind to the Integral Truth and Knowledge.

Ascent and Descent in the Spiritual Transformation

Sri Aurobindo then discusses how the Spiritual Transformation unfolds through an ascending and descending movement via higher, spiritual domains of Mind.

First -- as a result of undergoing the Psychic change -- there is an *ascent* to the ranges of Spiritual Mind (silent, illumined, and intuitive mind) to overmind (cosmic, universal consciousness) to supermind (truth consciousness). This is an opening to what is above us.

There is then a *descent* of Spirit or its powers essential and necessary for the permanent uplifting of the plane of our being. In the descent, the Light; the presence or power or stream of knowledge pours in waves or currents into our minds. He describes it this way:

"A Knowledge above descends constantly, manifesting in the mind's silence. There are also intuitions and inspirations, revelations of a greater sight, higher truths and wisdom. As a result, a new consciousness begins to form; a mind of a high wide self-existence thinking, or an illumined, or intuitive or Overmental consciousness with new forces of thought or sight, and a greater power of direct spiritual realization."

New Cosmic View and Influence of the Impersonal Divine

Sri Aurobindo goes on and explains how this new, spiritualized Mind creates a new, cosmic view of things. He indicates that at its highest, the Mind is drawn toward the Impersonal Divine; it feels something of a Supreme Truth, Good, Beauty, Purity, or Bliss. There is a pressure from this Impersonality that seeks to mold the whole mind into a form of itself.

From Sage of Mental Thinker to Spiritual Sage

Sri Aurobindo further explains that this higher mentality can develop into the mind of the sage as mental thinker, and further still as spiritual sage who has gone beyond the abstractions of thought and the beginning of *direct* experience, to a point where the mind becomes pure, large, tranquil, impersonal. [Sri Aurobindo himself was the very embodiment of this.]

He then indicates that the spiritualized mind once achieved tends to go on upwards, becoming aware of the unchanging Self, the pure Spirit, the formless Infinite and the nameless Absolute. [It connects to Sat, and beyond that to the omnipresent Reality, Brahman, the Absolute.]

Blissful Experiences in the Descent

In addition to the purer, spiritualized mental experiences, Sri Aurobindo indicates that in the Spiritual Transformation there is a flood of bliss of ecstasy. Such experiences repeat until they become normal, at which one has near fully secured the Spiritual Transformation and change.

(3) SUPRAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the completion of the transformation of the individual requires the supramental change. This is the Supramental Transformation. Just as the psychic transformation has to call into the spiritual to complete it, so too the spiritual transformation has to call the Supramental to complete it. It is the most integrative and radical change; so much so that the human mind cannot easily perceive this possibility, as it goes beyond past spiritual principles and experiences.

In the supramental change, the Consciousness and Force that were lost in the involution of consciousness from an infinite Reality that began in creation as matter are reintegrated in the being.

In terms of Mind, he has ultimate knowledge that is matched by a power for its effectuation. I.e. whatever he perceives, he is able to manifest as a living reality (reflecting that same power in the original Reality and Being from out of which the universe manifest).

The Supramental is essentially a complete transformation of the mind, the heart, the emotions, and the physical body.

In terms of life, he perceives the integral unity of spirit and Life; that spirit is the source of life, and that life is a manifestation of spirit in an ongoing, endless, integral process. This Oneness also expresses as an All-inclusiveness, that all things are to be embraced, and serve their role and purpose in life, reflecting the nature of the reality itself. To

perceive this is to experience the Marvel of existence; to have the Vision of Brahman

Sri Aurobindo tells us that the supramental transformation culminates in the physical change in the very cells of the body, ushering in a new form of human, devoid of the functioning it now exhibits, replaced by their spiritual equivalents. The physical is thus the ultimate transformational change.

Sri Aurobindo concludes that at this point, a Gnostic, Supramentalized being is fully realized. It is the culmination of the conscious evolutionary change Sri Aurobindo envisioned two chapters back in 'Man and the Evolution.' It is the fulfillment of the spiritual man culminating in a supramental being and existence.

[It is interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo does not explain the supramentalized nature in detail here in this chapter, saving it for the next to last chapter called "The Gnostic Being."]

THE PHYSICAL, VITAL, AND MENTAL INDIVIDUAL

In the midst of this infinitely profound process of transmutation of the human individual, Sri Aurobindo tells us there are three essential types of persons: the physical, the vital, and the mental.

He says that the *physical* type person the body dominates mind, will, and action. This person is mainly occupied with his corporeal needs, impulses, life-habits, mind-habits, and body-habits.

The *vital* type person on the other hand is concerned with self-affirmation, self-aggrandizement, enlargement of being, satisfaction of ambition, passion, impulse, desire, the claims of ego, domination, power, excitement, battle, struggle, adventure. His nature is more active, stronger, mobile, turbulent, chaotic, but also kinetic, creative than the physical man.

Finally, the *mental* type person subordinates to his mental self-expressions, aims, interests, ideas, or ideals.

ESSAYS/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Opening to the Mother to Facilitate the Triple Transformation

The triple transformation requires a stupendous yogic effort. It is to find the Psychic Being, then burst open to the spiritual heights of Mind, and then a descent of supramental force enabling a transformation at all levels -- mental, vital, and physical. Yet we can also devise a somewhat easier, though parallel version of this, which though less transformative would certainly enable growth and evolution in the individual. It is (a)

aspire for the divine consciousness; (b) a rejection of all wanting influences in our being (3) and an opening to and surrendering to the spiritual force in the form of the Divine Mother.

In his article, 'The Mother,' Sri Aurobindo lays out this approach for the devotee/sadhak of his path. I suppose the net result of Aspiration, Rejection, Surrender followed to the see, with sincerity and intensity, is in fact the Triple Transformation.

I would take it a step further. Because the Triple Transformation is an ultimate form of change for the human individual, our own efforts alone cannot possibly succeed. After all, even Sri Aurobindo struggled mightily to make a connection with the psychic, although it is now that much easier for us as a result. (The same in the case of the Mother.)

The simplest method of all then is to simply, constantly remember the Mother, which is to say to regularly open to the Supramental Force and Power in the details of our lives. By "consecrating" the activities, problems, challenges, limitation of our lives, that Force does in fact-

-compel us to move to the depths, culminating in the Psychic Being
-does open our limited mentality to the planes of Spiritual Mind, including intuition and above

-and does by its very nature call in the Supramental power to transform all planes of our being; from our limitations of the mind to the limited emotions, needs and attitudes of the vital, to the limitations and decay of the cells of the physical.

Whereas Sri Aurobindo indicates that the Key to the Evolution is the connection to the Psychic Being that expands the Mind to the Spiritual heights, culminating in the descent of the supramental power in the planes of our being, we can simplify this by constantly opening to the Divine Mother, which will facilitate all of these processes.

Emergence of the Psychic Personality and the Triple Transformation

The Soul and Psychic Being are different.

The Soul is the individualized poise of the Supreme OUTSIDE of Manifestation.

The Psychic Being is the individual poise of the Supreme WITHIN manifestation, that is evolving progressively. It is the evolving Soul. It is evolving progressively from unconsciousness to subconscious to conscious to supramental consciousness.

The Psychic plays a vast role in the creative process in life. It eventually comes to understand that it is the Ishwara (the Creator) in creation. It becomes a center of consciousness of the Divine Creator; of the Divine creative consciousness.

Moreover, it carries out the will of Ishwara (the creator aspect of Sat (in Sat-Chit-Ananda).

It unfolds uniquely in each individualization, through infinite variation and possibility.

How then does the Psychic Being emerge?

The Psychic Being starts as a Spark. Then it evolves and becomes a Flame, and eventually becomes an Entity.

As it grows in a form of conscious being, it develops a Psychic Personality. It develops a mental, a vital, and a physical personality as expressions of the psychic being.

As it develops through multiple births, it begins to have the power to push aside the surface personality. It pushes aside the ego, and begins to express itself through mental, vital, and physical being of the person. This is the development of the Inner Personality. The Psychic Personality.

From our side, we partake in the Psychic Transformation. First we have to discover the psychic; be awoken to it. Secondly, we have to consecrate and surrender so that the powers of the psychic can increasingly take over the actions of our outer nature.

When we can say that our mind really reflects the truths, or knowledge, or faith, or sincerity of the psychic, then the mind is under the influence of the Psychic Personality.

Further still as the mind is fully taken over by the Psychic personality, the ego disappears in the mind, and it is the psychic that thinks and acts in the individual's being, and what we say has the truths of the psychic.

This is the Psychic Transformation at the mental level. It also has to occur at the vital and physical levels.

The psychic change is the first step in Transformation, as it is followed by the Spiritual and Supramental Transformations.

The Psychic Transformation is to be one with the Psychic Being. The Spiritual Transformation is to be one with the Spirit. Thus the eternal, transcendent spirit must come down into our being. The mind, vital, and physical become expressions of the Eternal. One becomes an instrument of the Eternal Self.

The third transformation is the Supramental. Eg the limited Mind transforms into its parent Supermind. Mind breaks life down into endless parts, but sees only one or a few parts. Supermind sees them all, one and integrated. Sees the parts and the whole simultaneously. It is the unity and oneness behind all aspects. As a result the Mind is supramentalized. Vital and Physical supramentalization follow.

(Garry Jacobs, somewhat paraphrased)

(additional from Garry Jacobs)

Roy has very rightly described the process as far as I know it up to the psychic transformation. Beyond that my own understanding is limited.

A clear distinction is yet to emerge between the spiritual and supramental transformation. The spiritual realization is to be conscious of the infinite freedom and eternity of the spirit in ourselves and everything at the highest levels of our being.

The spiritual transformation should be to have that same consciousness in mind, vital and physical. To know the Self or Spirit everywhere and in everything here not just in trance or the unmanifest.

What then of the supramental?

Knowing the Self or spirit in all things is not the same as knowing all the movements of Nature as the conscious Divine Will and Force acting in the world.

The supramental reunites Being and Becoming, Spirit and Nature. As the spiritual realization knows the eternal spirit, the supramental must know the Spirit in Nature or rather Nature as form, force and action of spirit. To know the Divine acting in all things.

For that to be known from above in supermind is supramental realization of the oneness of spirit and nature, no longer as separate principles.

For it to be known in mind, life and body is for the structures of these instruments to be transformed so our knowing, perceiving and sensing of the Divine Ishwara in life, expressing as the conscious force of shakti replaces mind's limited superficial experience in all things.

This is my understanding but it needs to be confirmed and corrected by a more careful study.

That would still give us only intellectual knowledge. True integral knowledge can only come by psychological experience through an evolutionary transformation of our human consciousness as He explains in the last para of Reality and the Integral Knowledge. We may find further clarity in the last three chapters of Life Divine.

The supramental transformation is not just a transformation of our knowledge. It is also a transformation of our force of being. When it comes in the body, it will mean the Supramental Knowledge Force acting directly in and through us without the interference or intermediacy of human nature. The Divine acting directly in and through the human instrument.



The Ascent towards Supermind

(Book 2 Chapter XXVI)

Background

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo continues on the theme of the potential movement out of Ignorance to Integral Knowledge that is addressed in Book 2 of 'The Life Divine'. Let us keep in mind that by Ignorance he means a separative consciousness, in which we are divided from others, divided from life, divided from Spirit; even divided within ourselves among the planes of our being, including our surface consciousness and our deeper one; and so forth.

Thus, in order to overcome these limitations Sri Aurobindo has suggested we undertake the Triple Transformation. That begins with a move to a deeper poise within, culminating in the psychic being where we will begin to shift away from experiencing our existence through division and contradiction, but rather through harmony and unity. This bringing forth of the Psychic Entity, the True Self is the fundamental means of furthering the Evolution in the world, on the way to a Divine Life on Earth.

In this chapter Sri Aurobindo will indicate that the more we make the psychic connection, the more our mind will expand, furthering the movement to a harmonic condition in all aspects of our existence. In fact, the more our mind expands into its spiritual dimensions, the more we perceive every aspect of existence – life and spirit, ourselves in relations to others, among the planes of our being -- at increasing levels of harmony.

Thus, in the chapter he will describe each of the levels of spiritual mind, - from exceptional insights that come without the need of engaging in mental logic (Higher/Silent Mind); to having visions or lights of truth and knowledge (Illumined Mind), to intuition of knowledge without thought (Intuitive Mind), to having; a universal view and sense of things (Overmind); culminating in integral knowledge, perception, and truth of things, matched by its capacity to instantaneously become real in the world (Supermind).

Sri Aurobindo tells us that this movement within and the opening above in the spiritual planes of Mind is the guiding path we will take in the Evolution. This is the means by which we will move from the

separateness of the Ignorance to the Harmony and Unity of the Integral Knowledge.

Then we are also reminded that Life emerge out of Matter billions of years ago, and Mind out of Life in the last billion or two. However, for the evolution to go further, we will need to systematically rise through the higher, Spiritual planes of Mind. And as we emerge in this yogic journey, we will increasingly shift from a life of division, contradiction, and separateness to one of harmony and unity. This will be the systematic movement, the Evolutionary path that will enable the Supramental, Gnostic Being to emerge, and a Divine Life on Earth to follow.

However, before Sri Aurobindo begins an explanation of each of the spiritual planes of Mind, its benefits, and limits on the way to Supermind in this evolutionary process, he begins from the other direction, by discussing our native inability to perceive the workings of Supermind: (ep)

Summary

Sri Aurobindo begins the chapter by telling us that there is a problem in discussing or knowing the Supramental because the ordinary human Mind cannot perceive its workings and powers. In fact, as he has mentioned before, only a spiritualized mind can perceive it. However, few have ventured even there; and so the rarified supramental plane has not really been mapped out for us to follow.

Thus, in the main body of the chapter Sri Aurobindo describes in detail each of the various planes of spiritualized mind leading up to Supermind; including Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, and Overmind: what they are, how they function, their power in comparison to one another, their power in relation to Supermind, their limitations of each, and so forth. He indicates that we would need to move sequentially amongst these planes to finally arrive at the Supramental plane and change.

Included here is also a detailed analysis of Supermind itself, including the Gnostic/Supramental Consciousness that one can arrive at from that plane.

In discussing Supermind, he reminds us that it is a plane beyond the Inconscience and Ignorance contained and originating in Overmind; that it can only be known through spiritualized mind; and that the involved supramental nature will need to emerge along with the supramental descent for the Supramental change to occur.

Sri Aurobindo then discusses the relationship and dynamics amongst all planes in the evolution. He reiterates that there is an upward movement amongst the planes, but also descents of assimilation, which can cause the ascent to be unstable.

He then goes on to explain the limits that prevent the Supramental change -- including limitations of both the human surface as well as the environmental consciousness. He then explains that the ultimate obstacle to the supramental transformation is in the underlying nescience of creation.

In an important point, he indicates that the spiritual mind planes and Supermind above them are not just gradations of Knowledge, but of Energy/Substance of Spirit, of Conscious-force.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the new Supernature that will emerge from the transformation; both for individuals and for the world-nature. He reminds us that the key that will enable this to occur is through our *surrender* to the Supramental Force, the Shakti, the Divine Mother.

Here are the main points in detail:

Difficulty of Perceiving the Supramental Change

At the outset of the chapter, Sri Aurobindo reminding us that the Triple Transformation culminates at the *supramental* level. And yet, he notes, there is a problem in discussing or knowing it because the ordinary human Mind cannot perceive the supramental workings and powers. In fact, (as he has mentioned before) only a spiritualized mind can perceive it. However, few have ventured even there, and therefore the rarified supramental plane has not really been mapped out for us to follow. [though Sri Aurobindo himself pioneered in this area through his own supramental experiences and expressions, as would Mother, and some others to follow.]

Detailed Explanation of the Planes of Spiritual Mind

Thus, Sri Aurobindo, in the heart of the chapter, begins an extremely detailed explanation of the movement upward amongst the planes of Spiritual Mind, culminating in the Supramental change. These planes - - from Higher to Illumined to Intuitive to Overmind -- are not only to be established to lesser or greater degree before making the Gnostic, Supramental Transformation and change, but they will help us when we try to map out and identify the even greater supramental plane and change.

In going through the planes of Spiritual Mind, Sri Aurobindo explains the nature of each plane, its benefits, and its limits. He then goes on to describe the supramental change, and the various issues that arise related to embodying that plane in our being on the way to becoming Gnostic or Supramental beings.

1. HIGHER (SILENT) MIND

Sri Aurobindo begins this great effort by describing the first plane above logical, rational thinking mentality -- Higher Mind.

Beyond Logic/Spontaneous Knowledge – Sri Aurobindo tells us that in Silent Mind there is no logical step-by-step workings of our mentality to reach a conclusion, as in the higher forms of human rationality and logic. There is no deducting or inferencing, no building or concatenation of ideas with idea. Instead, Silent Mind exists above the reasoning process, where a spontaneous *inherent* knowledge of things is revealed.

Higher Wisdom, Power of Truth -- Moreover, what comes in Silent Mind is a self-revelation of an eternal, higher Wisdom; of spiritual Ideas containing the power of Truth; of Eternal truths. [Normal logical Mind has no movement towards veritable truth of being, a kind of cosmic wisdom, but merely builds up an argument from an idea. Silent Mind is in direct touch with an eternal, higher Wisdom and power of Truth]

Mass Ideation – Also, Silent Mind is less a single idea formation of a thing or matter trying to look into the totality of it, but a *mass* ideation, which is a basis of an *All*-knowledge. Thus, in Silent Mind there is great *totality* of truth known and experienced at once, or all together, in a *single* view. [In Supermind, this occurs without thought. In Silent Mind, the mind is normally in a silent state, and the All-knowledge that comes is perceived by mental thought.]

Integral Whole of Truth -- Though in Silent Mind there is an apprehending perception of the relation of idea with idea, it is not in terms of logic -- i.e. the building up of an argument -- but in their relationship is developing and revealing the *integral whole* of truth. [In ordinary logical Mind, there are particular ideas building up to some potential understanding. In Silent Mind, one perceives the relationship between ideas as a means of garnering the *integral relationship* between them within the totality of Truth and Wisdom to which they point or belong.]

Will, Force for Idea to become Real in World – So far, we see the attributes of Silent in in terms of ideas, truths, knowledge, Truth, Wisdom, etc., the things we normally associate with human mentality, even if it is of a much higher order. But what of its relationship to other parts of existence, to Life itself? Sri Aurobindo says that Silent Mind also relates to *Will*, to the *making real in the world* the truths it mentally perceives. In particular, that the idea or truth not only comes into the mind, but into the life of the individual and the world as a *force to be accepted and worked out*. There is a need and will for the ideas, Truth, Wisdom, et al to be made actionable and realized in life, in the world. [In Supermind, that Will for the effectuation of the idea, truth *is* realized in the world.]

Higher Consciousness Effect on Mental, Vital, and Physical Planes -- Thus in Silent Mind, there is not only the experience of knowledge in the mind, but also the experience of its idea-force in the Vital/Life as well as the physical planes. In effect, what we experience through Silent Mind is an elevation of consciousness into the mental, vital, and physical levels.

Silence as the Source that Enables It to Happen -- Of course, this idea-force to transmute our being depends on the receptivity of our own individual mental, vital, and physical nature; or the nature of the same of life around us. It will be limited particularly by the recalcitrant parts of our being; of our physical, vital, and mental nature.

Thus, in order for the light of Silent Mind to penetrate and to overcome the hold of the Ignorance and other limiting aspects of our being [wanting attitudes, beliefs, opinions, emotions, physical makeup, etc.], a quietude, a controlled passivity, a silence of the mental, vital, and physical needs to be established. [In other words, to experience Silent Mind best, we need to have a silent mind; and a quiet emotional/vital being!]

Supports for Creating a Silent Mind -- Then how do we establish this mental silence? Once again, Sri Aurobindo reminds us that the movement within to the psychic being will be very helpful in this regard, as it inhibits the revolt of the lower parts, enabling the idea-knowledge and idea-force to penetrate our mental and vital/physical being respectively.

Creates Superior Consciousness, Truth of Existence – Thus overall Sri Aurobindo indicates that experiences and realizations in Silent Mind changes the whole being with a new, superior consciousness. It prepares the being for a superior truth of existence.

Relation between Logical and Silent Mind -- Silent Mind is the parent of our conceptive mental ideation. [Silent Mind gets to the whole of a Knowledge, where Logical Mind builds toward it through reason. But that reason is a lesser method, even as it points towards the reaching of that mass-idea, or totality of knowledge about a matter.]

Limits of Silent Mind: (1) Thought Oriented; (2) Resisted by Mental, Vital, Physical Planes – Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that despite the enormous benefits of rising, being in, experiencing silent Mind, it has its limitations. For one, it is still dominated by thought; even if it is a luminous thought-mind. [The higher planes of spiritual mind function without the need of, or the interference of thought.] Second, Sri Aurobindo indicates that for us to move beyond the nescience, the ignorance and connect to an integral knowledge of things, the power and idea-force of the Higher mind is not enough. It is because the Idea of silent mind is greatly diffused and resisted by the limitations of the mental, vital, and physical planes. E.g., it is up against the massive

formed ideas of mind, the vital prejudices and compulsions, and the physicals fixidity, rigidity, etc.

2. ILLUMINED MIND

Sri Aurobindo then indicates that an even greater power of spiritual mentality beyond Silent Mind is needed to make our way towards and eventually map the ultimate capacity of Supermind and bring about a gnostic, supramental race beyond the current human.

Beyond Thought to Spiritual Light -- He tells us that unlike Silent Mind, Illumined Mind does not involve thought. Instead there is the experience of spiritual Light; i.e. a downpour of inwardly visible Light. Or to put it another way, in Illumined Mind there are illuminations of the spirit without thought.

Beyond Thought to Vision – In addition to, or another way of describing the Light of Illumined Mind is that there is Vision at that plane. We have in our mind's eye without thought a direct inner vision of knowledge, information, inspiration, phenomena, etc. [E.g., suddenly I perceive how a new invention might look, as it appears in a flash, as an inner vision of what is possible.]

Ardor, Ecstasy of Knowledge Experience – Often this Light, this Vision comes as a fiery ardor of realization and a rapturous ecstasy of knowledge. At this plane, there are "lightnings of spiritual Truth," as when Archimedes in his tub suddenly and wildly called out after seeing the solution in his mind's eye vision, "Eureka, I've Got It." Thus, this ardent, ecstatic experience of the spiritual sight has an emotional aspect. It is experienced in the heart as an emotivized, spiritual-like inspiration and sensation; not just as a mental realization.

Life Power to Become Real – Thus Sri Aurobindo points out, this light, vision, illumined inspiration that comes has a Life power; has a life force of possibility, potentiality in it. It is a truth-knowledge in that light and vision that also has an urge and power to manifest and become real in life. [At least to the point where we make it real; for in Supermind, the Truth knowledge tends to manifest and become real on its own.]

Transformative Power – There is the dynamics of illumined mind experience, there is sometimes a vehement, almost violent impetus of for change and transformation. [In the knowledge that comes from the light, vision, illumination of Illumined Mind, there is a force and power for positive change and progress.]

Deeper, Not Surface Perception of Observed Object – But then what about the knowledge itself; how does it stand in terms of its relationship to the truth of things. Sri Aurobindo tells us that unlike ordinary mind, which has a surface interpretation of the observed object, in the spiritual light and vision of Illumined Mind there is a deeper perceptive response from the very *substance of consciousness*. [There is a connection to the deeper consciousness of things, which brings with it

profounder and higher truths inbuilt into the knowledge that comes through light, vision, illumination.]

Truth through Spiritual Sight, Not Thought – Sri Aurobindo then goes further to this point and indicates that thinking only creates a *representative* image of Truth, whereas the spiritual sight, the light, and vision of Illumined Mind, *Truth itself, the very substance of Truth comes through*. In Illumined Mind, deep truths of things present themselves directly, and does so without the churning of thought.

The Illumined Mystic – Sri Aurobindo then goes onto explain that there are certain individuals who readily have such experience and realizations. He says such light, vision, truth-site, et al come readily and fully to the illumined mystic, which is in contrast to the spiritual sage and mystic whose spiritually mental experiences are predominantly in Silent Mind.) [Sri Aurobindo himself alternately functioned from both in his writings, particularly in *The Life Divine* and in *Savitri*. It also expressed in all aspects of his waking life. Thus, he was simultaneously the spiritual sage and illumined mystic. Sometimes, the knowledge and life experiences went even higher still to intuition of knowledge without thought, overmentalization (cosmic consciousness), and supramentalization.]

3. INTUITIVE MIND

Nearer Knowledge by Identity -- Sri Aurobindo now indicates that there is a power of consciousness that is even nearer to true identity with the object; even closer, where the consciousness of the subject and object meet. [which is fully the case in Supermind.]. It is Intuitive Mind. Here consciousness of the subject (the perceiver) meets with the consciousness of the object. [I.e. it is closer to the dynamis of Supermind, where I the knower fully know (am in identity with) the multi-sided truth of the object of knowledge or thing under consideration. Here what is known is direct and in identity; though not, total, integral.]

Intimate Truth Perception -- In Intuitive Mind, one looks into itself directly and perceives the truth of truths. It is an *intimate* truth perception. It in fact sees, feels, and vibrates with the truth of the object.

Revelation, Seizing Significance, Certitude, Inspiration -- He goes on to say that Intuitive Mind is not only the *revelation* of truth, but one seizes the *significance* of that truth, and there is therefore an overwhelming *certitude* in that knowledge. As a result of these, one is *inspired* by the experience.

Effect on the Vital and Physical Consciousness -- In that light, Sri Aurobindo tells us that Intuition transfers not only the mind of thought, but the heart and life and sense and physical consciousness; bringing a greater integrality and perfection of these. It brings a radiant

movement into the will, feelings, emotions, life impulses, sense, body-consciousness, etc.

Relationship to Supermind -- Then as he has done with the other planes of spiritual mind, Sri Aurobindo compares Intuitive Mind to Supermind. He indicates that Intuitive Mind is a projecting blade, edge or point of a far off Supramental light and truth entering. It is thus what he calls a modified and delegated supramental. [When I have an intuition of something, I garner an exact knowledge of one edge or point of the total truth of the object. That part truth is perfect in itself, but not seen connected to the All of that truth, and the integral relations of each part to the whole as in Supermind. Thus, we can think of Intuitive Mind as a first sighting of a distant galaxy, where we perceive only the first stars that our environment lets through, though it is an intimate, direct seizing of those (limited number of) stars. This is then a metaphor for how the truth of any object of knowledge is perceived.]

Greater Power than Higher and Illumined Mind – How then does Intuitive Mind compare to the spiritual planes of mind below it. Sri Aurobindo indicates that Intuitive Mind is more than conception of Higher Mind or light of Illumined Mind. In Higher Mind, reason still play a role, though bathed in a state of mental silence, whereas in Illumined Mind, reasonable knowledge comes in through illumination and flash and then the mind may judge that knowledge. In Intuitive Mind

In the Intuitive Mind and its intuitions, one fully observes what comes in without tending to judge it. It is just there, absorbed, accepted, with its significance known. It is revelation of truth pure and simple (though not quite the many-sided, integral identity as in Supermind). Thus, Intuition has all the powers of reason, including the logic and right relation of things, but without having to resort to it, as it garners that truth through by its own superior [more direct, purer] process.

Limits to Overcome Our Subconscious, Inconscience- Again, as in the other planes of spiritual Mind, Sri Aurobindo addresses the limitations of Intuitive Mind. For one, he indicates that such intuitive capacity and experience may not however be able to permanently alter the subconscious of our being, or deeper still the fundamental inconscience (which in fact Supermind is capable of transmuting).

Other

A sea or mass of "stable lightnings."

A transformation of the mind into the substance, form, and power of Intuition.

4. OVERMIND (Universal Consciousness)

Universal/Cosmic Consciousness -- Beyond the plane of Intuitive Mind is the highest of the planes of spiritual mind – Overmind. This is the plane and power of cosmic/universal consciousness; that of Cosmic

Mind. It is a plane from which one has global knowledge. It is the plane where thoughts originate, coming down into life and our being as universal mind waves; waves from the cosmic immensity. All that is revealed seems to come from the universal consciousness, not from one's self (even emotions, sensations seem to come from the cosmic consciousness.)

From Ego Sense to Universal Self -- Overmind (universal consciousness) like the others of spiritual mind are capable of descending into our being. When it does, the ego-sense is completely overcome. All sense of individuality disappears, and instead there is a cosmic perception of a boundless universal self. Now we identify with the All. We perceive that all is a play of cosmic forces.

Largeness, Plasticity, Possibility -- In the universal consciousness of Overmind in which we experience a universal self, there is a boundless largeness felt; a vast plasticity; and a field of multiple possibilities.

Identify with Others -- Steeped in this plane of Overmind, one experiences and feels an identity with other's consciousness, as if they, their life were part of one's self; an inclusion of other beings in one's self.

Delight – He tells us that in Overmind there is a more manifold (variety of, diverse of) delight of being. And that delight is not confined to the person or body, but can be felt at all points of its universal consciousness. [Perhaps meaning that to whatever one turns one's attention, one feels delight; or that there is at that plane delight everywhere in the universe.]

In Relation to Spiritual Mind Planes -- Like the other planes covered, Sri Aurobindo compares this Overmental planes to the others. He tells us that Overmind is highest status of the spiritual Mind. It in fact takes up the three spiritual-mind planes below it (Higher, Illumined, and Intuitive Mind) and adds a universal wideness, as well as more manifold Delight of Being. Also, in particular, the previous plane lower in the scale of spiritual mind – Intuition - is seen as only an introduction to this higher spiritual overture expressed and experienced in Overmind.

In Relation to Two Hemispheres of Being -- Sri Aurobindo in earlier chapter describes the upper hemisphere of Sat-Chit-Ananda; Supermind in the middle as an intermediary plane; and then the lower hemisphere below that of Overmind, Intuitive Mind, Illumined Mind, Higher Mind, Mind proper, etc., downward into the vital and physical being. Overmind is thus the highest power of the lower hemisphere.

Limits of Overmind in Terms of Unity Consciousness, to Supermind, to Affect the Inconscience -- Sri Aurobindo indicates that though its basis is the perception of cosmic unity, its action is still of division. By enabling the separate possibilities to develop in full, it only enables each

to be complete in its own separative existence, yet loses its unity with other existences.

[Thus it is the plane of the Gods, where each one focused on its own self, not bothering with the others. Sri Aurobindo also said: "Krishna is not the Supramental light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya; he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards the Ananda."]

Sri Aurobindo says that Overmind would enable e.g. the evolved spiritual individual and community to work out its own independent existence, it is does not have the supreme power of unity to take in all the diversities as in Supermind. [In cannot meet the Indian motto of "unity in diversity." It might give full expression to the play of all diversities and possibilities, but not in their integral union with one another, as well as the totality from which they all originate.]

Thus, though Overmind is the final and highest movement of the spiritual transformation, it is still but a delegated light of Supermind, of the supramental Gnosis.

Sri Aurobindo also indicates that Overmind is not a power of dynamic transcendence. Only Supermind has a direct power of transcendence, as it is the supreme self-determining truth-action.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that Overmind, - or realizing the overmental consciousness fully in our being, - cannot wholly transform the Inconscience in us, as a degree of Nescience would remain. Supermind however can. In addition, Overmind (universal consciousness) can relate the individual mind to the universal, but it cannot lead Mind beyond itself. [Again, only Supermind can.]

[Again, we are reminded that Sri Aurobindo told the Mother early on that they wanted the Supramental descent and transformation, not the Overmental (which was not enough), to secure the Final Victory.]

[Overmind can see the truth of all the parts involved, but is not able to see the Integral Truth reconciling all the truths of the parts.

Good and evil are not reconciled in the Overmind. According to the highest truth of Overmind, evil has to be destroyed, not transformed. Perhaps, if Supramental Truth had acted during the period of Mahabharatha, a greater reconciliation could have happened, at least partly or fully transforming the evil forces. - Senthil R. Murugan]

5. SUPERMIND (Truth Consciousness)

The Supramental Transformation

Sri Aurobindo indicates that the Supramental change is the next evolutionary stage beyond Overmind. It goes beyond the Spiritual Transformation that culminates in Overmind and enables the ultimate Supramental Change (of the Triple Transformation).

Beyond the Inconscient and Ignorance Contained in Overmind

In further indicating the difference between Overmind and Supermind, he indicates that there is still a pulling down of the Inconscience in Overmind in the Involutionary process. And yet in Supermind there is no calling in of Inconscience, unconsciousness to any degree. Similarly, in Overmind and below there is still Ignorance, i.e. lack of perfect integral knowledge, which again is only resolved in Supermind.

Beginning to Know Supermind through Spiritual Mind

Now Sri Aurobindo asks, "how can we come to know and experience Supermind"? He reminds us that the Supramental has been experienced by a very few, and it has also not been mapped out. So how can we know and grasp it so that we can make the supramental change?

He tells us that the supramental cannot be grasped by any personal endeavor and aspiration of mind, which is an instrument of Ignorance, of Nature. In addition, though the psychic and spiritual transformations are within our mental conception, the supramental transformation is beyond it. That is because it has a radically different awareness of things, which our mentality cannot perceive.

Therefore, Supermind can only be known via spiritualized mind. [I.e. Silent, Illumined, Intuitive, Overmind.] And yet even there we can only begin to trace the lines and understand Supermind.

The Involved Supermind in Nature + Supramental Descent Enable Supramental Change

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that the Supramental change of the whole being takes place when the involved Supermind in Nature merges to meet and join with the supramental light and power descending from Supernature. [Did the supramental descent of 1956 that the Mother ushered in change this dynamic? I.e. Supermind is now less involved in Nature and not more fully impacted as it descended into the earth's atmosphere as a result of that "Golden Day."]

Supramental Nature and Experience Combined

Sri Aurobindo also adds that unlike the spiritual transformation, the Supramental nature and transformation is a perfect integration and consummation of spiritual nature and experience. [What does this mean?]

RELATIONSHIP, DYNAMICS AMONGST PLANES IN EVOLUTION

Movement Upward Amongst Planes, Descents, Causing Unstable Ascent

Now Sri Aurobindo turns his attention to the dynamic of the ascent amongst the planes in the evolution. He tells us that there is not a simple ascent amongst these planes. There is also a descent and integration. Thus, the movement upward is somewhat ragged, spiral-like. [E.g. due to an understanding in my mind I decided to change my attitude, and do so. In that case, the movement was upward at the mental level (ascent), but then it had to be done (the change in attitude) at the vital/emotional level (thus, a decent). This dynamic occurs not just I the individual, but amongst the planes of life.]

He says that there are even descents from the higher plane when one is passing through lesser mind -- e.g. intuitions as one is going through Higher Mind, or moments of universality (of Overmind) when in the intuitive stage. [E.g., I may be practicing reduction of thinking, enabling Silent Mind to function with clearer insight, while at the same time there are sudden intuitions of truth coming into me, with knowledge that requires no thought. This seems like a pure descent, without an ascent that evoked it.]

He adds that there is also a further complexity due to the need of integration; i.e. for every ascent, there is a descent of the higher consciousness into the lower, which the Ignorance resists. As it descends into mind, heart, etc., the transformation of these parts is uneven, as all the lower planes are bound up with one another.

Lower Plane is Lesser Formation of Higher

In a related comment, Sri Aurobindo indicates that any given plane depends for its existence on the workings of its higher planes. E.g. intuitive mind and its intuitions, on Overmind and Supermind. [Perhaps we can say the lower is a lesser formation of the higher.]

The Limits of the Surface Consciousness on Transformation

Sri Aurobindo now focuses on the difficulties in individual transformation in relation to the outer consciousness. First, he tells us that there is also a disparity that develops between a changed inner being and an outer surface being that is slower to change. [We may develop a deeper, inner poise, but the surface consciousness, that

which is absorbed in the inputs of the senses or the influence of the lower physical and vital/emotional nature are resistant to the inner change.]

The Limits of the Environmental Consciousness on Transformation

Then there is also the effect of the environmental consciousness; i.e. the relationship we have with the outer world and others, the world influences that is hard to transform. This makes the personal outer change that much harder. [If the outer atmosphere or the influence of others is negative, or in any way holds back higher consciousness, then it puts a damper on our ability to change fully.]

Thus, eventually the environmental consciousness will need to be steeped itself in the spiritual light and substance as well. In other words, for there to be the integral change, all aspects will need to be changed. [i.e. the world, society, and others will also need to change.]

Ultimate Obstacle of the Underlying Nescience that Supramental Transformation Overcomes

Now Sri Aurobindo looks into what is the underlying cause of our inability to be transformed. He reminds us that it is ultimately the substance of the Nescience that is the biggest obstacle. It is the cause of our incapacity, decomposition, and death. He therefore tells us that it needs to be transformed into the substance of the superconscience. And then only the Supramental can conquer the Nescience. Or as he puts it, only luminous imperative can conquer the dark Necessity. The supramental change of the entire being is what overcomes the Nescience; is the great Changing State.

Higher Planes Act on Lower in the Evolutionary Process

Now Sri Aurobindo addresses the question of how can a particular plane of being (and therefore all planes) be fully transformed. He tells us this happens by a process by which *the higher plane organizes the lower*; i.e. *the ascent/descent dynamic*.

E.g. in the process of evolution, we know that Life emerges from Matter when it is sufficiently organized; i.e. developed enough and ready to move to the next highest plane. In the same way, Mind emerges from Life when it is sufficiently organized. And yet Life can only receive its full organization when Mind (the higher plane above it) can act on it.

He goes on to say that this same 2-way process is also seen between Mind and Spirit (and even ascending among the planes of spiritual mind). [The higher consciousness plane purifies and perfects the lower. E.g. Mind can bring order to the emotions of the Vital, and Spirit can bring calm and clarity to the Mind.]

Thus, Sri Aurobindo concludes that there is this non-perfect, complex, integrative movement between the planes in the ascent and the descent.

(He also reminds us that there is this 2-way complexity of movement as one ascends toward Supermind in the spiritual transformation.)

Spiritual Mind Planes & Supermind are Not Just Gradations of Knowledge, but of Energy/Substance of Spirit, Conscious Force

Sri Aurobindo now goes back to the planes of spiritual mind, and speaks of their overall quality. While reiterating that there are four steps of that ascent - Higher, Illumined, Intuitive, and Overmind, - there is also the summit of Divine Gnosis, i.e. Supermind.

Most interestingly, he says that these are not just planes that enable a way of knowing, but are grades of the *substance and energy* of the spiritual being, of the Consciousness-Force.

Moreover, when they descend into our being, not only is our thought and knowledge effected, but the substance and grain of our being is touched, penetrated, and remolded.

And while all the planes are fundamentally the same energy and substance, as we ascend there is a finer spiritually concrete substance; a greater luminosity; a subtler, sweeter, purer ecstatic energy and delight.

[Thus, in Supermind there is not just an ultimate integral, truth Knowing, a sweetness and delight, but an ultimate power of energy and substance to create things as real in the world.]

Conversely, when we go down this scale, Consciousness is diluted. I.e. the lower the plane, the lesser the Light, and Delight; and the lesser the quality of energy and substance.

[Supermind = Knowledge + Its Power of Realization key

The Knowledge that the true spiritual individual possesses is not just a multi-faceted understanding of the situation or the ways of life, and beyond, but a simultaneous POWER for its manifestation as real on earth. It is an understanding and its instantaneous accomplishment in the world.

This is Sri Aurobindo's view and is fully realized in our being when we move beyond our surface mind, our logical mind, and even intuition, and land in Supramental perception.

When we call Mother, the integral Knowledge and understanding comes instantaneous to it actually being accomplished in Life. In this way, Mother, the channel of Supermind is beyond any conception of spiritual Truth and Being ever devised by Man.]

NEW SUPERNATURE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE WORLD **Our Potential Supernature, Divine Gnosis Embracing Self, the Universal, and the Transcendent**

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on the outcome of the triple transformation, the ascent to Supermind, et al, whose outcome is the *development of individuals with a Supernature*.

He begins by reminding us that we have a triple nature in potential: individual, universal, and transcendent. And we realize that supernature when we open ourselves to those higher influences. When we do, we gain evolutionary power to move ourselves and the world forward. **[We become true Individual, Universal, and Transcendent Beings.]**

In this way, Man becomes the instrument of a greater Light of Consciousness and a great action of Force.

All told, this would enable the emergence of a Supernature of Divine Gnosis, replacing our current consciousness, including its essential Ignorance.

Surrender to Supramental Force, Shakti to Realize the Supernature

Then how does one attain this Supernature? He says that for this great transformation to come about, all parts of the being must be *surrendered* to the higher light and truth of the Spirit; to the supramental Shakti and Power. As a result, all our limiting habits, impulses, needs, desires, and limitations of the physical, vital, and mental plane of our being will be overcome. Therefore, we would no longer be subject to the laws and difficult path of universal Nature (of Prakriti); instead living a life guided by the only-positive power of Soul/Spirit (Purusha).

Intervention from Above + Our Complete Surrender Enables the Change to the Supernature

The key in this process is the Supramental. To help us better understand it, Sri Aurobindo tells us that it works simultaneously in two directions. (1) There must be at least this intervention from above, from these higher planes; (2) plus, a submission and surrender of our current condition from below to make it the supramental transformation possible. If this is established, the supramental transformation can occur rather quickly, and the Supernature established.

"In the place of the Nature of Ignorance with the individual as its closed field and unconscious or half-conscious instrument, there would be a Supernature of the divine Gnosis ..."

Establishment of an Individual and Environmental Supernature

Sri Aurobindo now describes how this Supernature can expand from its realization in individual(s) to a formed operative power *in the world*. He tells us that it is not enough for individuals to make this change, but to establish the supramental Conscious-Force as the *operative power in the terrestrial workings of Nature*.

This means not only the arrival of the gnostic individual, but a *gnostic Nature in life* would arise. The result of this would be to overcome the fundamental and environmental Inconscience, replacing it with an environmental superconsciousness. [By "environmental" Sri Aurobindo is referring to influences of the atmosphere, whether visible (such as the workings in society), or the invisible, subtle movements influencing and affecting outcomes in life.]

Together, the individual and environmental/atmospheric Supernature would establish the basis through which a Divine Life in terrestrial nature manifests. [This is covered in the final chapter "The Divine Life."]



The Gnostic Being

(Book 2 Chapter XXVII)

"Supramental nature sees everything from the standpoint of oneness and regards all things, even the greatest multiplicity and diversity, even what are to the mind the strongest contradictions, in the light of that oneness; its will, ideas, feelings, sense are made of the stuff of oneness, its actions proceed upon that basis. ... the supramental, the divine life is a life of essential, spontaneous and inherent unity." (MSS)

Summary

NATURE OF THE Gnostic INDIVIDUAL

In the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo described the states of spiritualized Mind one can experience in the spiritual transformation, leading to and culminating in a supramentalized transformation and supernature.

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo goes into further detail, explaining the supernature of such an individual, whom he refers to as a "Gnostic Being." He addresses in general what this Supramental Being's nature would be like, and then in considerable detail explains how this Gnostic Being expresses his supramental supernature. Among the ways the gnostic being expresses it are through-

Integral Truth Knowledge, including-

- the capacity to perceive the right relations between the parts of any truth
- a complete identity with that integral truth of things
- an integration of Knower, Knowledge, and Known
- the capacity that leads to right dealings with life
- the ability to know directly the truth of things (Truth Consciousness)
- an Integral Knowledge that has also has Will and Power for it to manifest as Real.

Oneness, including-

- oneness with all aspects of being
- oneness with others, including care for their good and well-being
- an inner oneness between the individual and the outer life experienced.
- having a World consciousness and action
- being at one with the individual, universal, and transcendent purpose and action
- being one with the Divine Intent
- being one with all planes of being, enabling one to become the master of life
- having universality and cosmic consciousness

Delight-

- by knowing and living one's purpose
- in one's relations and experiences with life movements
- in one's relation with others
- within one's own self and being
- as a result of the shift from pain and suffering to their opposite
- within the various planes of one's being
- in communion with the Divine
- in love of God

Development of Personality and Self-

- in an ascending scale, having gone beyond Manners, Behavior, and Character to Personality and Spiritual Individuality

A Wide Freedom, including-

- freedom that sees beyond laws, restrictions, and mental standards
- the reconciliation of freedom and order

Realizations in the Vital Plane of His Being, including-

- higher vital expressions, such as universal connection of love with others
- diverse experience giving the full sense of life

Realizations in Physical Plane of His Being, including-

- overcoming the limits of physical consciousness, including the drag of the subconscious
- the responsiveness of the physical body to the Spirit
- the supramental effect on the body
- the restoration of the intuition of the body
- the right physical perceptions, including its right relation with things
- the body's capacity to be flooded with the supreme energy of the consciousness-force

NATURE OF THE GNOSTIC COLLECTIVE LIFE

In the latter section of the chapter and on into the next and final chapter, Sri Aurobindo focuses on the gnostic *collective life* that would emerge from a preponderance of gnostic individuals.

Unity in Diversity

He says that in that collective existence there would be unity, yet within a great diversity. Thus, there would not only be an absence of suffering and problems, but divergences, multitudinous thoughts, feelings, and actions would express as a unity of a luminous whole.

Gnostic and Non-Gnostic Together

He also indicates that both gnostic and non-gnostic individuals will live together in this new, Divine existence.

Living for Sake of Divine

He concludes that ultimately gnostic individuals and the collective life will exist for the sake of the Divine. It will be a means of bringing not just Supramental consciousness into the world, but also the complete manifestation of Satchitananda (Existence – Consciousness Force – Delight) into all aspects of Life.

Here are the main points in detail:

Introduction to the Nature of the Gnostic (Supramental) Being

In the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo began to discuss the emerging individual who has acquired a supernature, which he refers to as the Gnostic (or supramentalized) individual. In this chapter, he says that the Gnostic individual would be the culmination of the Spiritual man,

signifying the evolution from a consciousness of Ignorance to Integral Knowledge.

INTEGRAL TRUTH KNOWLEDGE

Complete Integral Knowledge of Truth

He begins with a generalized statement that the (supramentalized) Gnostic individual is one who has passed beyond the Ignorance to the Integral Knowledge.

What is an Integral Knowledge? It is the knowledge of the Truth of things: the truth of all (of all existence taken as a whole), and the truth of each thing. It is complete self-knowledge in all things, and in all moments.

[The gnostic individual continually has an integral knowledge of what needs to be known; in its totality of truth and in the truth of each aspect.]

Right Relations Between Parts

And it is not just a totality of truth and the individual parts one garners directly from the object, but the *right relationship* among those things, the parts. [E.g. I may know all aspects that solve a particular problem, but I also see how each individual thing fits in with every other.]

Identity with the Integral Truth

Moreover, this integral knowledge and truth of things is garnered *directly* from the object or thing under consideration. I.e. he is One with, in Identity with that truth. [There is no separation between one's own conscious awareness of the object or matter, and the object's or matter's actual knowledge and truth. As a result, one knows it perfectly and integrally; in its totality and its detail.]

Integration of Knower, Knowledge, Known

Sri Aurobindo also tells us that this Integral Knowledge by Identity in essence formulates as an integration of the three aspects of cognition; of *knower, knowledge, and that which is known*. [I.e. I the knower have the integral knowledge of the known. I don't have to go through mental formations, logic, et al to have knowledge of the known. I simply know. The knower simply knows what has to be known. The subject (knower) and object (known) are therefore One; are in identity with one another.]

Not Intellectual, Ideative; but Light of Consciousness

Thus, for the gnostic being, the intellectual seeking to try to know the object one normally experiences in life is replaced by supramental *Identity* with it; a gnostic *intuition* of its contents. Thus, there is nothing to formulate, to reason, to think through as in ordinary mind. There is nothing ideative; observing, that which forms ideas. There is simply Identity and Knowledge of consciousness.

[Mind thinks in order to come an understanding of the object of knowledge. In this Supramental Truth consciousness one simply *knows without thought*; is one and in identity with it. The Gnostic Individual experiences it as an intuition of the all and the parts that is simply there in toto in his mind as is necessary.]

Truth Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo indicates that this capacity to directly know the integral truth of things, of the object, of a matter is having "Truth Consciousness;" or the "Supramental Truth Consciousness," or Supermind.

Integral Truth Knowledge that Leads to Right Dealings with Life

Sri Aurobindo then moves in another direction, and relates this truth perception of the gnostic individual to the field of *action*; in particular, the power of this integral truth to produce *right actions* in life.

He tells us that for the gnostic being there would not be ignorance leading to wrong will, decisions, and actions, but rather automatic, spontaneous self-expressions of Integral Knowledge and Truth, which in turn lead to more enlightened dealing with the opportunities and difficulties of existence. [I always know the integral truth of things, and as a result always do the right thing that leads to or attracts the perfect best outcome.]

[notes: --The Gnostic Being is one who is based in the Truth. He may not have the complete truth of everything, but he has absolute access to the Truth and can know the Truth in any situation.

--The Gnostic individual will know the Truth in any situation through a progression of increasingly higher spiritual planes of mind - from Silent to Illumined to Intuitive to Overmental, culminating in a supramental apprehension of the Truth.

--The Supramental Gnostic Being will then be able to help society attain the same knowledge consciousness from Silent to supramental Truth knowing. Also, the attainment of the higher supramental Truth consciousness by the Gnostic Individual will reduce the conflict and strife perceived by normal humans through their usual limited planes

of knowing. This will increase harmony in the lower levels of creation among humans.

--For the Supramental Gnostic being there is only Truth, no scope for anything but Truth (compared with the Gnostic Being at the Silent to Overmentalized spiritual planes of knowing).]

Integral Knowledge Has Will and Power of Action to Manifest It as Real in the World

Also, through truth consciousness there is not merely the attainment of integral knowledge and truth through identity, but also a *manifestation* of them as something *real* in the world.

For this to occur, there needs to be a *force of action*, not just a knowledge. In the supramental consciousness there is not just the knowledge, but the *Will for its formation, manifestation*. Thus, when there is the experience of the integral truth knowledge, there is an inbuilt *Will for action of its deployment*; which gives a *Power for its effectuation as real in the world*.

In sum, the fully developed gnostic being has a supramental truth consciousness where there is not only a perfect knowledge of the object, but it is fused with a Will for its formation, manifestation. *I.e., out of the Will would come an Action for its Material Formation*.

In this way, Knowledge would be embodied in the Will, and Will embodied in Action.

Supramental Process for the Gnostic Individual:

Integral Knowledge > Will for Its Manifestation > Perfect Action

[E.g. let's say I have an aspiration to create a new form of Internet communication tool. When I open to the supramental power, there is an integral knowledge of how to do that thing, in totality and in its parts; which also comes into me as a driving will to make it real through action. The gnostic individual continually experiences this dynamic.]

[Note that a gnostic being at the silent mind to overmental levels not only has a lesser truth knowledge than at the supramental level, depending on the plane, but also a limited or non-existent power for that Truth to also manifest as real in the world. It may this have the Knowledge but not the Will and Power of its material or other manifestation.

E.g. I have the complete knowledge of the Internet tool coming to me as an Intuition, but I don't have the will to create it, and the power to truly make it real. The supramental gnostic individual has Truth Knowledge, will, and Power fused. Whatever the supramental gnostic being knows, it has the power to accomplish.

Also note that the supramental/gnostic individual has the power to *hold back* the knowledge and truth; from it moving to will and action, depending on circumstance, the person(s) involved, etc.】

ONENESS

Oneness with All Aspects of Being

Another expression of the Gnostic, Supramental being is continuously having the sense and experience of Oneness -- whether with life, with others, or even amongst the various parts of one's own being.

The gnostic individual even perceives oneness in what is ordinarily perceived as contradictions, conflicts, dualities in life! I.e. he sees the emerging unity behind the outer division. *Thus, where others see contradiction and conflict and duality, he perceives complementarity on the way to a higher harmony.*

That Oneness also extends to embracing *all* manners and expression in creation; to the endless multiplicity and diversity of existence. Thus, this supramental individual would *constantly, spontaneously be in harmony with*, even integral unity with, whatever comes into his purview. 【The gnostic individual embraces all things, not only what one likes as in ordinary human existence. It is because he perceives the necessity of *everything* in the unfolding, and therefore is not separated from it. He feels the need to be part of it. Thus, all and everything is valued. This is a further embodiment of his Oneness with all in the world.】

New Harmonic Principle in Life; Divine Life on Earth

As such gnostic, supramentalized individuals have these experiences, a dominant *principle of harmony* would impose itself on the life of the Ignorance. The ultimate outcome of this would be the arrival of a new Supramental, Divine Life, consisting of an essential, spontaneous, and inherent unity. 【Harmony and oneness would become the experience and modus operandi of humanity. Increasingly taking to that point of view would enable a supramentalized Divine Life to take hold.】

Oneness with Others; in their Good and Well-being

Sri Aurobindo then really focuses on the Gnostic Being's Oneness with others. He says that in his consciousness he would regard all beings as *beings of his own self*. Thus, he would have a spontaneous sympathy with all in the world. As a result, there will be no contradiction or strife between one's own good and the good of others. One would do and

work for and dedicate one's self to the well-being of others, just as one would do for one's own self.

Inner Oneness with Outer Life

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on how the Oneness overcomes the divisions we experience with the outer world in general; not just other individuals. He indicates that in the gnostic life, the inner and the outer, the self and the world, would be One. In this way, the perceived antimony between the inner and the outer is overcome.

[This can express in a number of ways. E.g. through this oneness, he can feel that from within he has a *power over the outer life*, as he sees it as an extension of himself, or his inner being as extension of it. It can also express as being in tune with the *right flow of life*, rather than working against it. Likewise, he can feel that those outside himself are not really so, as they are really part of himself, of that one continuous, undivided stream of existence.

Thus, for the supramental gnostic consciousness, the inner and the outer essentially disappears; i.e. there is no difference between the two, creating an ultimate Oneness. E.g. you could feel another's physical pain from a distance, or suddenly know someone is in the process of calling you by phone from another part of the world, or feel their joy, or impact their lives in a positive way, say by broadcasting good-will from within.]

World Consciousness

As a result of that universality and oneness with the outer life, the gnostic individual develops within him a *World consciousness and action*. [E.g., he is able to relate to, to have knowledge of the forces, conditions, issues, potentialities of the world; including a power to affect them; or bring them about from within himself or through perfectly correct outer action.]

Oneness of Individual, Universal, and Transcendent Purpose & Action in One's Being

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that the Individual and the Universe are simultaneous and interrelated experiences of the same Transcendent Being. [through an intertwining of both, we experience the transcendent]

He then explains how we practically experience that relationship. He indicates that the gnostic Individual would extend its sense of higher, divine Self to the Universal; embodying and working for its purpose, will, and action; and go beyond that to identify with the Transcendent and its intent, will, and action.

Thus, the gnostic/supramental individual embodies all three aspects of the Reality simultaneously: his true Individuality, his Universality, and his identity with the Transcendent. In the Supramental being, they are harmonized and fused. [Eg I experience my true self, psychic being, and as a result take to values and actions that are for the benefit of society, ultimately reflecting the transcendent will.]

Oneness with and Fulfillment of the Divine Intent

Continuing on the theme of Oneness, Sri Aurobindo tells us that actions of the gnostic, supramental being would originate from and obey the Supreme Self and Spirit's divine governance of Nature. [There is an intent that the Supreme (the Divine, the Transcendent) has and wishes, and the gnostic individual would live in the light of those wishes and intentions. He would be an instrument for them.]

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that the gnostic person would see his own natural being as the becoming and manifestation of the World-Mother. [World Mother being the shakti, cosmic force; the supramental power that is carrying out the Divine Intent. We collaborate with the wishes and actions of the Divine Mother. We do that fully by connecting with our psychic being within, and then Surrendering our will to Her's, following Her intentions.]

Thus, when the Gnostic individual acts in the world, the motive to act will be *in concord with the truth of the circumstances*, which are one with the Divine Will; the Divine Mother. [He will always act in the right way as he is in harmony with, even surrendered to the Divine Will; to the will of the Divine Shakti that is the Mother.]

Thus, the gnostic being would have a Gnostic consciousness of Truth-Will [of being one with the Truth that is trying to manifest through the Divine Intent/Will]. Or to put in another way, ultimately there will be a complete unity of the will of the Gnostic individual and the will of the Eternal. (ep)

Oneness with All Planes of Being to Become the Master of Life

One of the other great aspects of this supramental existence for this supramentalized, Gnostic individual is his ability to navigate amongst the planes of being, giving him great power in life; including a vast knowledge of their power and influences.

As a result, he will garner a full power over the physical world -- including the physical, vital, and mental planes that infuse our material universe -- enabling perfection of the material existence. [This can be taken several ways. E.g., Man knows some of the laws of the material world, such as basic mechanistic cause and effect, how to physically survive, etc. But if he also inherits a subtle knowledge of the vital/life, psychological and mental qualities of existence, he can apply that

knowledge and gain full mastery over the material world. E.g., if one knows how to master one's emotions and attitudes, one can suddenly draw good fortune from the surroundings; meaning one's level of success or health or happiness dramatically improves, enabling one to become Master of the World.]

Universality and Cosmic Consciousness

Next Sri Aurobindo addresses the fact that the Gnostic Individual will acquire a universal, i.e. a Cosmic Consciousness. He tells us that cosmic consciousness is the capacity to relate to and identify with the universal plane, the universe itself from within one's self. He says that this Gnostic person would have a sense and feeling that all objective life is part of his own subjective existence. That the universal plane would be felt taking place within himself, making him a universal being.

[He would have the ability to know all things, all knowledge and feelings of individuals necessary in that moment, etc.

One would therefore be able to take actions that affect a multitude, to bring about benefit to any collective, which is part of his universal experience. E.g., he could bring about rain in drought conditions within himself, or affect world events through various inner spiritual movements. He could do this all from within, as he perceives the whole universe reside inside him]

DELIGHT

Delight as His Purpose, Fulfillment; in Life Movements, in Relation with Others, and with Self/Being.

In addition to a vast and powerful knowledge, truth of action, and oneness of being within and without, the gnostic individual would express a profound Joy and Delight. [Ananda; bliss]

Delight is His Purpose, Fulfillment

One aspect is that his very purpose and fulfillment of being would be experience Delight of Existence. In fact, there would be no other essential aim except to experience that delight.

And how does one experience that delight? That occurs most powerfully by being conscious of one's Inner Being, the Psychic/Soul entity, delighting in that soul connection. [In fact, for the gnostic individual essentially seeks not results in life other than the joy of experiencing his psychic entity within and the Divine above, and do whatever is necessary in life based on that. That is Surrender of his life, purpose, and being.]

Delight is His Experiences of Being; in His Relation to Life Movement; and in Interactions with Others

Delight is then the essential reality of the gnostic individual, his essential experience and way of living.

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that all the movements of his life would be for the experience of Delight.

Moreover, he would equally experience this delight of spirit in himself, as well the delight of the Divine in all aspects of life and in all beings.

[One could therefore say that the supramentalized gnostic being has an integral bliss of being; of his own inner, psychic being; in the life movements he experiences, and in his relationship with others.]

[E.g. when this person lives his day, he sees the unfolding of life experiences as a divine symphony, where each thing serves a purpose. He thus experiences Delight in the unfolding of the details of life. Each act (or non-act) brings joy, has deep significance, enabling one to perceive the astonishing oneness and evolutionary unfolding of existence. The experience of sudden synchronicities, "life responses" and other supra-normal phenomenon would heighten his experiences, and thus his Delight of Being.]

Delight in Love of God

Another aspect is the experience of the Divine's own Delight. Sri Aurobindo indicates that the gnostic individual would experience the Delight of God, and therefore the Love of God. That Love would then *spread* throughout his life and being.

"Love will be for him the contact, meeting, union of self with self, spirit with spirit, a unification of being, a power and joy and intimacy and closeness of soul to soul, of the One to the One, a joy of identity and the consequences of a diverse identity. It is the joy of an intimate self-revealing diversity of the One, the multitudinous of the One and a happy interaction in the identity that will be for him the full revealed sense of life."

Pain, Suffering, et al Changed into Ananda/Delight

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on Delight in terms of its opposite -- the pain and suffering of life. He indicates how through the gnostic individual these vital and physical difficulties are reversed, giving the body immunity, serenity of being, deliverance from suffering, and therefore the experience of the total Delight of being. [ep]

Delight at the Mental, Heart, Vital, and Physical Levels

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to discuss how the Delight will be experienced at each of the four planes: the mental, the heart, the vital/emotional, and the physical.

In the *mind*, there would be a calm of Delight as a result of spiritual perception. [From planes higher spiritual planes of mind, including silent, illumined, intuitive, universal and supermind one would know the truth more readily, directly, without hard churning of thoughts, and thus there would a kind of calm settled in that is experienced as Delight.]

In the *heart*, there would a passionate Delight as a result of universal union with all, love of all, and sympathy for all. [Self-givingness, compassion, affection, generosity are related experiences of the heart center. When we offer these, experience these, we feel an intense, passionate Delight as a result.]

In the *will and vital*, there would be the experience of the energy of Delight as a divine life power in action, or beatude of the sense touching the Divine; a sense of universal harmony and beauty. [There would be an energized delightfulness as a result of experiencing the divine power in life or experiencing the Divine in our emotions and senses; or by experiencing harmony with others or the beauty of existence.]

In the *body*, there would be an ecstasy pouring in; the beauty and glory of objects. [The body would experience ecstasy in the senses, in the physical substance. Also, we would experience delight in experiencing the true depths, responsiveness, and beauty of physical objects.]

Delight/Bliss in Communion with the Divine, Brahman

Finally, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the culmination of the supramental being and manifestation in the ascent would be the Bliss, Ananda of the experience of the Divine, Brahman. It would be an embodiment of this beatific existence, in which there would be a fundamental Delight of being.

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY AND SELF

Joining of Impersonality and Personality

Sri Aurobindo now focuses on the essence of who we are, and therefore what would be experienced by the supramental being relative to these qualities.

He indicates that there are two aspects to who we are; *an impersonal essence*; as well as the *normal persona* and experience we have of ourselves.

The *impersonality* of the individual is the person as Being, the non-ego, universal. [In essence, the soul]. On the other hand, the individual *personal* is an outgrowth of the impersonal, and is his form of self in the changes of Nature; his expression nature-status, nature-action; his personal expression of what is impermanent.

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates that in the supramental being, these two are *joined*. The impersonality that is soul realization and the individual personality become inseparable parts of the same reality, not separate or opposite. [He has found his psychic being, experiences the delight, bliss, oneness, etc. that issue from it and feels its influence in all his experiences, connections with life and others.]

[Manners, Behavior,] Character, the Personality, and the Person

Sri Aurobindo now delves into the issue of the makeup of "human personality." [By "personality," we don't mean the recognizable outer temperament of a person, but the level of development of that individual's character and nature.]

He indicates we can perceive types or levels of development of human Personality that range from *non-individuality to individuality*. Specifically, they are five: a person of Manners, of Behavior, of Character, of individualized Personality, and the True Spiritual Individual (the Person). [The supramentalized gnostic being is the last of these. Most humans are for the most part in the first three levels.]

The person of *Manners* has no developed character. He merely does what others do; his nature follows the herd view of things; of what he believes is the mannerly way to live, behave.

Above this is the person of *Behavior*. He may act of his own volition, of his own compulsion, but we do not see a more fully formed character in this individual. He just acts as he wishes, not based on other's opinions, yet without any great guidance of character.

Above this is the *Character* of the person born of Nature with certain identifiable, fixed qualities. There is far more of a sense of self than the person of Manners or Behavior. [This is an individual whose nature and character we can more readily identify. There is thus a settled, fixed, recognizable quality to his Nature. Has a somewhat at least "unique character." He has a familiar nature by others who know him well.]

Above this is the *Personality* of the person. This is a person who expresses his individuality; who might take to decisive or bold action, or willingly meets challenges, or is a pioneer taking things in new directions. And yet his spiritual center and individuality is not yet formed.

Finally, above all is *the Person*, i.e. the true Spiritual Individual, who is all of Self, universal, and transcendental. The Person is the Gnostic being whose individuality emanates from his spiritual essence. [It is the

individual in direct connection with his Evolving Soul. He takes his individualistic cues from within, from his psychic being, giving his understanding and actions in life an extraordinary power of effectivity. He, the Person, is the true Spiritual Individual.]

Manners	Behavior	Character	Personality	The Person
>> Higher, More Developed in Consciousness; of Individuality; of Self >>				

[In the above scale, the gnostic individual would be the Person; the True Individual who takes his cues from his true self, his psychic being, his evolving soul within.]

WIDE FREEDOM

Infinite Freedom

At the outset of the book, Sri Aurobindo speaks of the Human Aspiration that remained unfulfilled. That includes the freedom to be all he can be. Here in this chapter, he tells us that the gnostic individual would have the experience, wideness and plasticity of an *infinite* freedom.

Freedom from Laws, Restrictions, Mental Standards

Continuing along those lines, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the gnostic individual lives a life of infinite freedom because his will is ruled by no law, no restriction, no mental standards. [I.e. he sees beyond the limited view, the conforming view, the limitations of truth that the mind perceives, etc. He sees into life beyond the ways of the limited mind, the limited values and current truths of society.]

As a result, the need for virtues, edicts, dharmas, ethics, restrictive laws disappear as our lives, and is instead guided by the self-flow of the spiritual Nature. [This higher, spiritually born perception sees beyond these constrictions. He thereby opens to and lives a life of ultimate freedom of possibility, behavior, and action.]

Reconciling Freedom and Order

Finally, Sri Aurobindo reminds us that though there is ultimate freedom for the gnostic being, there is still order to his world and his view of things. In fact, where the average person sees freedom and order as contraries in one's life, the supramental person see them as native to one another other, joining into a Oneness. [This can be taken in several ways. The randomness of things; the extreme wide freedom the gnostic individual experiences have its own ever-changing, but stable order. There is a knowledge deep inside what can be considered chaos that is of the organization and intention and unfolding of things. The gnostic individual sees all with purpose so that within the wide possibilities

afforded by a freedom view, there is a meaning and even cosmic Intention. Also, from a cosmic view, there is freedom in the world, yet within the determinism (the "order") of the Infinite Divine's Intent.]

REALIZATIONS IN THE PLANES OF ONE'S BEING

Now Sri Aurobindo takes us on a tour of how the Gnostic individual would have a new, unprecedented relationship with each of the planes of Spirit, Mind, Life, and Matter. He indicates that there would be a Divine influence and pressure of the Divine in every center of his consciousness (essentially the mind); in every vibration of his life force (the vital); in every cell of his body (physical). Even in the spiritual planes of his being, including his inner self, and the spiritual planes above mind, would there be a Divine influence and pressure.

[Actually, Sri Aurobindo focuses mainly on the Vital and the Physical aspects of the supramentalized, gnostic person. Perhaps it's because he has spoken so much of the mental plane of the person in previous chapters, especially the last one 'The Ascent Towards Supermind' where he explained in great detail the planes of spiritual mind have (culminating in Supermind) that a gnostic individual would express.]

The Vital Being

[*Background*: Just a reminder that the vital plane or being in us is the seat of the life force in us; is the center of our feelings and emotions; is where our positive and negative attitudes take shape; and the plane where our energies intersect with others and life.]

High Not Low Vital Expressions

Sri Aurobindo first focuses on the Vital aspect of action in the life of the gnostic individual. He tells us that he does not act for the power, satisfaction, enjoyment of his mental and vital ego, but instead act for the highest and fullest expression of consciousness in his life. [I.e. the highest (heart-centered) expressions of the vital existence would be such things as -- caring for the well-being of others, showing compassion. being self-giving, having feelings of gratitude, utilizing one's energies to create success, and optima benefit for all others one interacts with.]

Universal Connection of Love with Others that Brings Ultimate Joy

One critical aspect of the vital being is the capacity to connect with others. Sri Aurobindo indicates that for the supramental person there would be the contact, meeting, and union of self with self; of spirit with spirit; a power and joy and intimacy and closeness of soul to soul.

Diverse Experience of Love that Gives Full Sense of Life

He further explains that this experience of Love and Joy is a dynamic one; experienced through a diversity of individuals; in what he calls "an intimate self-revealing diversity of the One." As a result, that multiplicity of connection would reveal for him the full sense and fulfillment of life.

The Physical Consciousness, the Subliminal Being, and the Body

Effect of Subconscious

Now Sri Aurobindo turns to the physical plane of our being. [Actually, he focuses on the "physical consciousness;" not the material substance of our body. This is the inner influence that is having a subtle yet profound influence on our nature and way of being.]

He begins with a discussion of the subconscious. [which can be thought of as a buried aspect of physical consciousness.]

He says that ordinarily we are aware of our conscious being, but not of our subconscious being. There lurk positive and negative influences: negatively there is the pessimism, habitual, dark nature, tendency towards fixating illness, the storage of cast off wanting influences, the seat of bad dreams and connection to untoward vital and other influences and forces; while positively there is the subliminal influence that is connected to the superconscious that sends up positive ideas from below.

Sri Aurobindo says that the gnostic individual would become conscious of the subconscious being and its dual influence. Through the supramental control, the subconscious would be penetrated with its light and action, transforming their lower aspects and bringing out the higher. [This could mean not only its control, but also the ability to completely overcome and transmute its dark influences, while accentuating the influences of light.]

Effect of Inconscious

Deeper still; or at the more fundamental core of our physical consciousness affecting our nature is the *inconscious*, with its fixed, habitual, obscure, obstructionist, unconscious, ignorant, lifeless, conscious-less nature. It too will be transformed; even to its opposite superconscience. [The inconscient is the plane that is most closely associated with the fixed nature of material reality. It is the core inflexibility and Unwillingness that supports the subconscious and our physical consciousness. It is the bedrock of Unchange.]

Responsiveness of the Physical to the Spirit

Now Sri Aurobindo focuses on what would overcome the limits of the Physical consciousness. He says that when we are open to the

superconscient influence, Mind would be open to the universal and transcendent influences, and therefore have a power over the physical consciousness.

In further describing its influence, Sri Aurobindo says that the truth of the Real Idea of the Spirit [i.e. the cosmic determinates and values like peace, harmony, truth, goodness, love, delight, etc.] would come through the superconscient and thereby govern all, enabling the body to overcome the Physical consciousness influence and thereby become a perfectly responsive instrument of the Spirit. [The body would reflect all these spiritual aspects, and act and respond as such.]

Supramental Force Enables Greater Well-being, Higher Capacities of the Body

Turning to the aspects of the *physical body* itself (rather than the physical consciousness) Sri Aurobindo tells us that the spiritual light and force will create for the gnostic individual what the body deeply craves for -- including greater duration, health, strength, physical perfection, bodily happiness, liberation from suffering, and ease. He says that when the supramental Force acts in the body of the gnostic individual, these spiritual qualities of the superconscient can be established.

Liberation, Restoration of Subliminal, Intuitive Aspects of Body

One other key element of the subconscious is the *subliminal being*. It sends up *positive* influences, giving a kind of intuitive influence from within. However, it is covered over or obscured in the normal human.

And yet Sri Aurobindo indicates the supramental force will liberate and restore the obscured and spoiled intuitive instincts of the body of the gnostic individual, enlightening them and supplementing them with a greater conscious action. [The subliminal would then more clearly and directly send up helpful positive suggestions as "Inner Guide" to our waking consciousness, giving us an intuitive capacity from within the body suggesting the right thing, the right action to take, etc. Also note that the subliminal contains the psychic being as its essential essence.]

Right Physical Perception, Reaction Relation to Things

Continuing along these lines, Sri Aurobindo indicates that the gnostic change "... would institute and maintain a right physical perception of things, a right relation and right reaction to objects and energies ..."

Body Flooded with Supreme Energy of Consciousness-Force

Then Sri Aurobindo focuses on the *cosmic, spiritual energy and force itself* that would take over or replace the current functioning of the

physical. He indicates that the whole being would be flooded with a supreme energy of Consciousness-Force (Chit), which would meet, assimilate or harmonize with itself all the force of existence that surround and press upon the body. [The Conscious-Force is Chit of Sat-chit-ananda. In the involutory descent, it is absorbed, more or less completely in matter. In the evolution, it progressively is restored, especially when we move to the influence of the light and supramental action. The gnostic individual would restore the conscious-force embedded in the body, including the subconscious elements that are both helpful and harmful.]

No Longer Identified with Body Consciousness

Finally, Sri Aurobindo mentions at one point in this overall discussion that the supramental person will cease to be identified with the body-consciousness. [Perhaps here he is referring to the obscure physical consciousness, rooted in the subconscious and inconscient, but also to the limits of the physical substance in the consciousness of our being.]

Additional Points:

Dual Movement of Transformation: from Above and Below

Sri Aurobindo indicates that in the supramental realization in the individual not only does the supramental force come down into the person transforming him, but that the supramental power will emerge from below in matter. It is thus a dual movement of transformation.

Dual Aspects of Being Disappears

Also, the dual aspects of reality will disappear; i.e., the inconscient and superconscient will disappear and simply become the supramental consciousness.

THE Gnostic COLLECTIVE LIFE

In an important conclusion to the chapter, and one that connects with the next and final chapter ('The Divine Life'), Sri Aurobindo indicates that when a certain threshold of supramentalized, gnostic beings come to the fore, there will be the development of a *gnostic, divine collective life*.

[Sri Aurobindo indicates that the supramental transformation embodied in the Gnostic Individual does not mean that everything in the world and the universe will likewise be transformed, supramentalized. However, the supramentalized individuals will radiate a light and truth that will change and divinize the whole earth.]

Sri Aurobindo then describes a number of the qualities that are likely to arise in this new divine race of humanity as follows:

Unity in Diversity

First, he indicates that this new Gnostic race would express in infinite diversity of types; not a single type of individual. [The purpose of creation is to allow for an infinite multiplicity and diversity of beings, forms, forces. That holds true for an ultimate Divine-like race of supramental beings as well.] Moreover, he indicates there would be an extreme unity amongst those beings.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo tells us that this new existence, this gnostic race is the fulfillment of the law of Supermind, which is unity fulfilled in diversity. [An extreme unity amongst the individuals, yet each expressing unique diverse, qualities. It is a powerful expression of the famous Indian dictum of "Unity in Diversity."]

Absence of Suffering, Problems

Then Sri Aurobindo addresses the issue of suffering, conflict, and problems in this new race.

First, he takes up *suffering*; addressing its cause. He says that the cause of suffering in Man is due to the incomplete Conscious-Force in the physical, vital, and mental parts due to refusing, or inability to assimilate or harmonize contacts of the universal Energy. The gnostic individual however has overcome these limits, and so suffering is greatly diminished in him and the race of his type of being.

Likewise, *problems* do not exist for the Gnostic being and the society that issues from them, for problems are of the mental ignorance seeking for knowledge, which the Gnostic being does not have. [The supramental individual does not experience problems, as his consciousness does not produce them in the first place, because he lives in Truth; and if there are any, they are not really experienced as problems per se, but more like opportunities.]

New Gnostic Collective Existence Reflects Qualities of Gnostic Individual

Sri Aurobindo then focuses on the collective life of the supramental race. He indicates that the higher, supramentalized nature of the gnostic beings would determine the group life of gnostic beings. E.g., this divine, collective life would have the same unity, truth, and other attributes of the gnostic individual.

Divergences, Multitudinous Thoughts, Feeling, Actions as Unity of Luminous Whole; of Truth Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo goes on to address the issue of the multiplicities of thought, belief, action, etc. in the new collective existence. He says that collective gnostic life, all divergences [from the norm?] in itself would be opulences [experience as something special, a delight]. Thus, multitudinous thought action and feeling would be perceived and experienced as a unity of a luminous whole; i.e. reflecting the indwelling supramental Truth Consciousness experienced by each individual.

Gnostic and Non-Gnostic Live Individuals Together in this Divine Life

Sri Aurobindo surprises us a little -- though it makes perfect practical sense -- that there would be a mixture of gnostic beings who would still remain in touch with the mass of those still of a lesser consciousness; and yet who will receive the higher lights and influences of the gnostic beings in them. E.g., there might be the rise of a new and greater order of mental beings, who are partly or directly intuitive if not fully supramentalized at all planes, who associate with the gnostic individuals. Thus, Sri Aurobindo posits the Supramental being could create a unity with the mental world, and even make peace and integrally connect with those still in the Ignorance (i.e. who do not have the integral knowledge consciousness as do the supramentalized individuals.).

Gnostic Life for Sake of Divine

Ultimately, Sri Aurobindo tells us the gnostic life will exist and act for the Divine in itself, and in the world; i.e. for the Divine in the world. [That gnostic collective existence and life would be a means of fulfilling the Divine purpose in the world.]

Ultimate Evolution to Satchitananda

Finally, Sri Aurobindo tells us that there is a level of consciousness even beyond Supermind, which the gnostic individuals can move towards.

"At the higher end of the evolution the ascending ranges and summits of Supermind would begin to rise towards some supreme manifestation of the pure spiritual existence, consciousness and delight of the Satchitananda."

The complete Gnostic being would thus be the complete manifestation of Satchitananda [Existence – Consciousness-Force – Delight].



The Divine Life

(Book 2 Chapter XXVIII)

Summary

In this chapter, Sri Aurobindo describes a new collective existence where individuals who have partially or fully attained the gnostic, supramental consciousness become the pioneers of a new Spirit-based Society. This is his vision of a future Collective Divine Life on Earth.

Inner Life of Gnostic Individual

Taking up what he covered in the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo begins with a description of the inner life of the gnostic individual; that he helps bring the spirit being into the becomings of life; that he realizes spiritual knowledge, force, power, and delight of being; that he is universalized and transcendentalized; and in general, develops a Supernature in terms of knowledge and action.

Gnostic Individual's Connection with Others

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to explain how these gnostic, supramentalized individuals would have perfect relations with this perfected life around them.

Focusing on the gnostic individual's relations with others, this being would (a) not insist on his own truth, accepting the truth of others; (b) know how to live in the field of life in terms of action, including leading others and when to subordinate himself; (c) feel a closeness and intimate oneness with others; (d) have a unifying and harmonizing knowledge that would easily blend his existence with that of the collective; and (e) in sum, live a life of unity, mutuality, and harmony.

Limits of Current Collective Existence; and Need of Spiritual Change

Sri Aurobindo then examines the current reality and indicates that this existence cannot be the basis of this new collective life. He says that Spirit - not the current mind and mentality - can harmonize our mental, vital, and physical existence. Moreover, there are severe limits to the current collective life, the modern methods, to enable a perfect society.

He indicates that neither the current scientific formula, nor a perfected economic society, nor democratic existence, nor varying structure of governance, nor religion are enough to create the higher, perfected, Divine Society and Existence that the world is moving towards. It is the *Spiritual Change of individuals* that alone can transform the race and bring about this new perfected Divine Life on Earth.

Difference Between Old and New Collective Spirit-based Life

Next, he asks: How would this new spirit-based collective life be different from the current life? Among the ways, there would be-

-*the end of conflict*, replaced by the unity of the gnostic individual and the gnostic, supramentalized collective life.

-*the end of the old mental life*; of the mental idols, the constructed principles and systems, and the conflicting ideals.

-*the end of war and strife*.

-*the end of suffering* for the individual at all planes of life.

As a result, Life would be a constant miracle. There would be a total fullness in living; an ecstatic and joyful and rich Life Divine.

Here are the main points in detail:

THE INNER LIFE OF THE GNOSTIC INDIVIDUAL

Sri Aurobindo begins by once again describing the nature of the consciousness and inner life of the new gnostic (supramental) individual.

Fostering the Being into the Becomings of Life through Higher Consciousness, Originating in True Self/Soul

First, he pans back and reminds us of the cosmic context for the emergence of this divine individual. He tells us that Being (Sat) -- the Pure Divine Existent -- is unfolding itself in time; is Becoming in Life. **[Thus, the Being is also Becoming.]**

Moreover, the emerging gnostic individuals partake in this cosmic process through their own elevated consciousness. More specifically, as the supramental individual develops an inner consciousness and life, and experiences the Being evolving in his own self, he enables the Being to more readily manifest in the world in time; in the Becomings of life, which is Its Cosmic Intent.

Realizes Spiritual Knowledge, Spiritual Force and Power, Delight of Being, and is Universalized and Transcendentalized

Now Sri Aurobindo moves forward and reiterates several aspects of the gnostic individual's inner life, which in fact enables him to play a vital role in bringing the spirit Being (Sat) into the unfoldings, the Becoming of life.

(1) Spiritual Knowledge

The first expression of the gnostic individual's inner life is his Spiritual Knowledge. It is to be wholly and integrally aware of oneself and of all the truth of one's being. In essence, it is having an intrinsic self-existent consciousness. **[Having risen to the planes of spiritual mind and supermind, Knowledge readily pours in, and as a result he is integrally aware of the truth of himself, of his true nature, of the truth of the universe, the self, the soul, the transcendent, etc. It is essentially to have the 7 Knowledges of being that Sri Aurobindo speaks of throughout the Life Divine, replacing the 7 Ignorances.] (ep)**

(2) Spiritual Force and Power

The second way the inner life of the gnostic individual is through the expression of an integral force out of self-awareness of his own true nature. That in turn mirrors the original Force arising out of Consciousness. Moreover, this personal spiritual Force will be intrinsic/inherent in his nature, automatic in its action, self-existent, and self-fulfilling.

[The spiritual Force, being native to him, will arise spontaneously, producing only the good, and that which is right and fulfilling.]

(3) Delight of Being

The third expression of the inner life of the gnostic is to fully experience and realize Delight [Ananda] in his life. **[Delight comes through constant self-discovery of his higher nature and that of life; of the constant connection and guidance of his True Self within; and the constant mutuality and harmony of experience and heart-based feelings with others.]**

(4) Universalized

The fourth way the inner life expresses for the gnostic, supramental individual is through the experience of universalization. It is to-

-feel all selves as one's own self **[One widens from being an individual to being in other selves that one feels communion with.]**

-be in the being of all, and to include all in one's being **[Feel one's own soul and experience the souls of others within one's self]**

-feel all delight of being as one's own. [E.g. when another experiences joy, say due to a positive outcome in their lives, one feels that joy as if it were one's own.]

-carry all action and experience in one's self and feel it as one's own [E.g. there are universal, world, societal movements at work, and one can identify with it from within; even collaborate with it; nurture it to success.]

(5) *Transcendentalized*

Fifth, beyond even being universalized, the gnostic individual will be transcendentalized. That occurs by-

-transcending, exceeding the consciousness of the body, life, and mind [One experiences spiritual realities beyond these planes, identifying with various forms of superconsciousness; with God, the Divine, the Supreme]

-not being identified with Life but to transcend it; being filled by the Self and Spirit, not upon Life

-having the consciousness of the timeless Eternal Being

-transcending even the formula of the universe

-entering the supreme divine Reality, feeling oneness with it, to live in it. [It can be to experience Satchitananda, and even beyond to the Reality that permeates all; a transcendent realization. There are many ways to realize the transcendent; as personal or impersonal divinity, as liberation from this existence, as ultimate sweetness and bliss of connecting with the divine, as merging and losing one's self with divinity beyond this life, as surrender to that power and being etc.]

Character of a Supernature

Finally, on this subject of the inner life of the Gnostic Individual, Sri Aurobindo indicates that this person will have in general the character of a Supernature, especially as it relates to Knowledge and Action Amongst the ways the Supernature expresses are-

-*wholeness of sight and action* [He perceives the totality of things, not just small parts, and in in each context makes integrally correct decisions that lead to perfect outcomes.]

-*unity of knowledge with knowledge* [He sees not only the essence, totality and multi-faceted parts of a thing, but sees the integral relations of a knowledge with other knowledge. Rather than seeing the differences between things, he also sees their harmonic knowledge connection, enabling him to develop a fantastic harmonic capacity to know and perceive, and therefore to decide and act in life.]

-*reconciliation of all that seems contrary* [Again, he reconciles knowledges or life movements that seem to be at odds on the surface,

but are actually complementary when perceived from a deeper consciousness.]

-identity of Knowledge and Will acting as a single power in perfect unison with the truth of things. [He simply knows the totality, essence, the parts, and the unity of the parts without thought, which also has an inherent Will and energy and capacity to manifest that knowledge as real in the world. Often the knowledge and its material realization come together. It is a supramental movement for a supramental being who is able to evoke such results.] (editing point)

GNOSTIC INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR RELATION WITH THE DIVINE COLLECTIVE LIFE

Moving to the heart of the matter, Sri Aurobindo shifts his attention to the relationship between the gnostic individual and an emerging gnostic society.

He first reiterates how a new collective existence would be based on gnostic individuals who have developed and live the inner life described above.

Perfection of the Gnostic Individual and His Perfect Relationship with Life Around Him

But what of this divine life; how would it take shape?

For one, he tells us that it is perfect life, a life of perfection. And that perfection can only be based on the Spirit, the Reality within gnostic individuals.

In what way is there perfection? He says there is a perfection of the individual. There is also further perfection of the spiritual and pragmatic relation of the individual with all around him. *[Mentally vitally, psychologically, physically, spiritually; in attitude, motive, emotion, thought, association with others, decisions, actions, beliefs etc.]*

The result is that new world is born; a change in the total life of humanity is brought about: a new collective life and existence of the earth-nature comes to the fore.

And yet Sri Aurobindo posits that for a complete, fully realized version of this to occur, many gnostic individuals would be required; forming into a new kind of human being and race; creating a new common life superior to the present individual and collective existence.

GNOSTIC BEINGS WHO EXPERIENCE AN INDIVIDUAL, UNIVERSAL, AND TRANSCENDENT EXISTENCE

In lieu of this new existence consisting of gnostic beings in a collective gnostic existence, Sri Aurobindo reiterates that this supramentalized

person has more than an individual existence, but a universal and transcendent one. **[This is a common theme across *The Life Divine*.]**

Thus, Sri Aurobindo again explains the relationship between our individual, universal, and transcendent existence. He reminds us that beyond our Individual being is our Universal being, which is our secret Depth. And beyond that is our Transcendent being, which is our secret Self. He then goes on to describe the Oneness of being the gnostic person will experience reflecting this triune reality.

Gnostic Individual Initiates not through His Own Ego Self, but by through His True Individuality, Universality, and Transcendence

Sri Aurobindo then tells us that this triune nature of the gnostic individual overcomes the separate Ego in him, which is what normally compels him to initiate action in life. The gnostic person is instead moved to initiate through his universalized individuality, his universal self, and his transcendent self. **[He initiates action in life based on the influence of the inner, subliminal and psychic influences within, and the universal and transcendent currents that are guiding and determining his life. In normal life, we initiate action based on our needs, wants, urges, etc. The gnostic individual moves to action based on the superconscious influences that are descending or appearing in his consciousness, not the influence of the lower, separative ego.]**

Living in Depths Enables Realization of the Triple Nature

Sri Aurobindo then again asks how an individual can embody these three aspects and influences of being. He says that it occurs by moving away from the external consciousness and living in the depths where one's discovers one's true multi-faceted existence. Living in the depths enables us to reach our own individual true self, to be universalized, and to be transcendentalized. As a result, we connect to and live by our own true Truth, as well as the universal and transcendent Truth.

THE GNOSTIC INDIVIDUAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

Sri Aurobindo tells us that a fundamental way the gnostic individual experiences this supramental existence is through Oneness with others. He offers several specifics:

No Insistence on One's Own Truth; Accepting the Truth of Others

He says that in interacting with others in this new existence there would be no ego-insistence on one's own personal idea of matters and concerns, and no push or clamor of his own personal will and interest. Instead, there would be a common Truth that would take shape through

the interactions and associations of the individuals one associates with, enabling a multiplicity of inputs and knowledges related to any matter. This gnostic being would thus feel his harmony with all other truth of being around him, with the whole gnostic life around him.

There would be a universality and plasticity which saw and expressed the One in many figures of itself, and worked out the oneness in all diversities as the inherent law of the Truth-Consciousness and its truth of nature. In essence, unity would occur within a great diversity. [Harkening to India's, as well as Sri Aurobindo's dictum of "Unity in Diversity."]

Action, Leading and Ruling

In the field of action, the gnostic individual would know how to lead and rule, and how to subordinate himself. And yet both would be an equal delight.

True Happiness

This harmonic life creates a life of true happiness, a harmonious and beautiful life.

Intimate Oneness, Fulfillment in Others

In the divine being, there will be a close mutual consciousness, an intimate oneness with others. One is fulfilled when others are fulfilled.

Unifying, Harmonizing Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo points out that a unifying and harmonizing knowledge based on the principles of oneness and integrality is what reconciles the individual gnostic existence and the collective life.

Unity, Mutuality, Harmony

In sum, a unity, mutuality, and harmony would be the inescapable law of this collective gnostic life. A gnostic community would contain gnostic individuals living in a state of unity, mutuality, and harmony.

Greater Individual Who Connects with the Divine Reality

Sri Aurobindo also reminds us that a greater collectivity is dependent on individuals who know their True Self and come in contact with the Divine Reality.

SPIRITUALIZED INDIVIDUAL, NOT CURRENT MENTAL MAN, SOCIETY WILL ENABLE THE DIVINE COLLECTIVE LIFE

Sri Aurobindo now goes on to explain the deficiencies of our current mentality and collective existence to perfect life, and the need for the emergence of spiritualized, supramentalized individual and collective existence to bring that about.

Spirit, Not Mind Can Harmonize Mental, Vital, Physical Existence

He tells us that the current Mind of Man cannot harmonize the complexity of his mental, vital, and physical nature. That it is only the intuition and self-knowledge of an awakened Spirit, of an evolved Supramental being that can do this.

This inadequacy of Mind extends to the functioning of civilization:

He says that Man has created a system of civilization which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding.

[Issues and problems are so enormous in life and the Man cannot grapple with them. The complexity is so great, and Man cannot see through to harmonic solutions, as the Mind and emotions of the vital being see only a part, one reason being that it is limited to what one is attached to; i.e. the pressure and influence of the individual and collective ego.]

Or to put it another way, the blossoming of the world is currently supported by a limiting ego, vital, etc., when it needs a wider, deeper truth -- to enable it to harmonize. Thus, Sri Aurobindo concludes:

"A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth of life that can successfully replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past ..." [The Supramental is the unity consciousness that can resolve the complexity and contradictions of life and bring about this needed unity, mutuality, and harmony of things necessary for this stage of the evolution.]

Limits of the Collective that Needs Guidance of Conscious Individuals

Sri Aurobindo know ventures into an area that touches on the nature of the development of society. He says that the way the society, the collective now evolves is subconscious to it. [It unfolds without a conscious element guiding it, as it just seems to meander and go forward, and go forward through movements it is not conscious of. Therefore, there needs to be some sort of conscious guiding force.]

He then tells us that the collective itself needs to formulate and express itself through the *individual* to become conscious. [Gnostic individuals would be the most conscious hence give the collective the clearest guidance it needs; and have the ability to deal with all issues, and

resolve all problems through a higher view of things that creates harmony oneness, and unity in the process.】

Limits of Modern Social Methods to Perfect Society

Sri Aurobindo then goes on to examine the current domains of life, and indicates that like our limited minds, these domains of society too are inadequate to give conscious guidance for the emerging world. He indicates that neither the current scientific formula, nor a perfected economic society, nor democratic existence, nor varying structure of governance are enough to create the higher, perfected, divine society and existence that the world is moving towards. He goes further and indicates that even religion itself, for all its insights into the nature of the spirit has not fundamentally changed human life and society. 【Man remains essentially as he is, even with the inputs of religion, which indicate the limitations of its insights.】

Spiritual Change (of Individuals) Alone Can Transform the Race

Sri Aurobindo therefore concludes that only a total spiritual direction can transform humanity; that only a full emergence of soul, of supramental Supernature can bring about this evolutionary miracle. And this can only occur as a result of a radical change in the nature of the individual.

END OF THE LIMITS OF THE OLD LIFE MAKING WAY FOR THE NEW

End of Conflict in the Unity of the Gnostic Individual and Collective Life

As Sri Aurobindo moves to the conclusion of his great metaphysical work, he indicates that since Gnostic beings will live in a consciousness where all contradictions are cancelled or fuse into one another in a unified self and world-knowledge, there will be no conflict between his spiritual individual life and his collective divine life. 【There would be a perfect harmony and balancing of himself, his being, and the unfoldings of life through the collective.】

End of Old Mental Life

As a result of this new way of living, the old ways of life would disappear; such as the mental idols, the constructed principles and systems, and the conflicting ideals.

End of War and Strife

In this new gnostic life, there would naturally be an end of war, political strife and all the negative that issues from it.

End of Suffering at All Planes of Our Being

There would be the end of the reactions to success and frustration, vital joy and grief, peril and passion, pleasure and pain, the vicissitudes and uncertainties of fate and struggle. **[All mental, psychological, vital, and physical suffering would thus cease.]**

Constant Miraculousness; Fullness of Life

The new life would be a constant miracle. There would be a total fullness of life; a Life Divine.



Bonus Thoughts and Essays

Process that Brings About the Supramental Divine Life on Earth

By Roy Posner

We live in Ego, Ignorance, Time, and Finite. It is because we live on the surface of life. When we move to the depths, - culminating in the Psychic Being, the evolving soul, - we shift from Ego, Ignorance, Time, and Finite to Oneness, Knowledge, Timelessness, and Infinity.

How does this happen? From the psychic we tend to shed our preference and opinions; give up our own viewpoints, adopting others'; and are still, not reacting to the intensities of those around us. Thus, when Ego breaks down, we garner more knowledge of the truths of life, and now behave and act in ways that are in tune with Timelessness, attracting infinite-like results, overcoming limits of space and time.

Also, from the Psychic Being we more readily open to the divine Mother, to Her Supramental shakti, enabling the progressive transformation of our nature and the divinization of life around us.

As a result, we become ultimate Creators through that Force, mirroring the original creator (Ishwara) who used Supramental power to evolve this universe. Thus, we each become ultimate Creators in creation, bringing about a Supramental Life on earth, embodying the spiritual qualities, the Real Ideas of the divine Reality in our being and the details of life. They are Silence, Peace, Truth, Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, Harmony, Love, Beauty, Joy, Timelessness, and Infinity.

The journey within to the Psychic Being, and from there opening and surrendering to Her Force above is the dual process of the Integral Yoga of transformation that enables a supramental Divine Life on earth.

Individuality and the Manifestation of Infinity

By Garry Jacobs of Mother's Service Society

[This is a detailed explanation of how the Infinite Source Consciousness became the Finite reality of the universe; and how each form, including each of us can realize that infinite potential in our lives, embodying all spiritual aspects of the Divine – peace, harmony, wisdom, goodness, love, joy, timelessness, infinity, etc. - and thereby become a True Spiritual (Gnostic) Individual.]

THE INFINITE AND MAN

The Mystery of the Finite from the Infinite

To mortal, limited beings living in ephemeral, physical bodies in a transient, material world of visible and tangible finite forms, the existence of an invisible, insubstantial, infinite, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, universal and transcendent Divine is a wonder of wonders beyond conception.

But Sri Aurobindo says the greatest mystery is not the existence of God. A still greater wonder is *how an insubstantial Infinite and Eternal Spirit could create the finite, temporal material universe we live in*. How can the Infinite conceal itself in such a manner as to appear finite?

The problem arises because the Infinite cannot create anything outside of itself, for there is nothing beyond that Infinite, so where shall it create a world? Nor can it create anything that it is not already, since it is already the All and more than All, so what shall it create? Furthermore, creation means creation of form and that means creation of limitations and boundaries that define the form. Since Infinity has no boundaries or limitations, how can it take form?

The manifestation of Infinity as finite form in space and time is the mystery of mysteries which Sri Aurobindo unravels in *The Life Divine*.

Infinite of Quantity and Qualities

The Absolute, Brahman, the Omnipresent Reality is Infinite. It is infinite not just in quantity. It is also infinite *in qualities*, as well as in the dimensions of space, time, property, color, texture or design. It is Infinite in each of these dimensions and there is infinity of dimensions – dimensions of consciousness, knowledge, energy, force, power, form, beauty, love and ananda. Thus, the Absolute is an Infinity of Infinities. It is Infinity to the power of Infinity, Infinity -- ∞.

Infinite became Universe for Sheer, Active Delight

Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Infinite and Eternal Absolute did not create the universe. It *became* the universe for the sheer delight of self-manifestation, of becoming in Space and Time. The unmanifest Pure Existence experiences itself as a static bliss. Manifestation adds to that the Self-experience of active Delight. If we can speak of a goal at all, its goal is to experience the infinite delight of a progressive manifestation in endless Space and eternal Time, in which it is at once the creator, the creation and the act of creating.

Dual Aspects of the Infinite (the Reality, Brahman)

Brahman is the Omnipresent Reality which includes both the Absolute and the relative, the Infinite and the finite, the One and the many, the Eternal unity and the temporal universe. *This manifestation did not commence at a particular point in time.* Its manifestation in Time Eternity is a natural counterpart to its unmanifest existence as the Timeless Eternal. The entire manifestation is an evolutionary adventure of consciousness and delight in Time. The entire universal manifestation is evolving through time. The soul too evolves progressively as the Psychic Being. He says that even the Divine Being, the Ishwara is evolving.

Man as Form, Representative of the Infinite Who Contains It

What possible relation can this Infinity and this manifestation have to insignificant mortal man? What possible relevance can this knowledge of the Infinite have to our lives on earth? When rightly understood, the implications are momentous. The practical power of this knowledge for accomplishment in life is without limit. For man is not merely the small separative, limited ego which he thinks he is. *The Individual too is a form or representative of the Infinite Eternal.* While becoming the universe, the Divine retains at all times its essential divinity. It is at once the Transcendent Godhead, the Cosmic Being and the Spiritual Individual, which are forms it assumes for the purpose of its manifestation. *Each individual is in its inmost psychic being a portion of that Infinite, a portion but not a part or a proportion. Each individual contains within itself the whole Divine, the Absolute.* For the Infinite is indivisible. It resides fully in each of the forms it creates. As a consequence, *each individual has the potential to get in touch with the Infinity within itself and to wield the same creative power and process by which the One has created the universe.* Thus, a precise knowledge of that process is of the greatest value.

PROCESS OF CREATION

Creation of an Individual Form by the Divine Projecting an Aspect of Itself, but Holding Back All the Rest

Being Infinite and therefore indefinable, how does the Infinite All create something out of itself? It does so *by projecting forth an aspect of its Infinite being and holding back all the rest.*

The Spirit is like white light which contains all the possible colors of the spectrum (an infinite number of different wavelengths), yet when we look at it, we do not see the colors. Color manifests only when most of the wavelengths of white light are held back and a small portion of the wavelength spectrum is reflected. An object appears blue because the substance of the object absorbs all colors except blue and reflects only the blue. When all the wavelengths of light are absorbed by an object, it appears black, like the unconscious. That unconsciousness is only an appearance, because the entire consciousness lies hidden within it. *Spirit, which is featureless and formless, is like the white light in which we cannot see anything, and it manifests its hidden contents in the same way, by holding back the All and projecting only one aspect at a time.*

When Jane Austen wrote *Pride & Prejudice*, she concentrated on *one aspect of herself*, her capacity as a writer, and one aspect of consciousness, her ideas of love and romance. She conceived a love story in which a courageous young woman of strong and independent character wins the heart of a wealthy nobleman and rises to the grandeur of high society. While writing this story, *the author pushes away from her mind her thoughts on other themes and other aspects of her life and relationships.* So deeply may she be absorbed in the conception and writing of the story that she may forget for a time other interests, responsibilities, people and events. So intensely did the actors who played the part of Darcy and Elizabeth in the BBC version of the movie concentrate on the parts they played, that they came to fully identify themselves with the characters they portrayed. They actually came to feel themselves like these characters and fell in love with one another.

The Divine creates the same way, by concentrating on one aspect of its infinite existence and withholding everything else in the background.

Divine Creates through Supermind via Processes of Self-Conception, Self-Limitation, and Self-Limitation

Supermind is the Divine's power for manifesting the Infinite by a process of Self-conception, Self-limitation and Self-absorption. By this process of creation, the Spirit gives form to different aspects of itself.

By Self-conception, the Spirit projects truths of itself as Real-Ideas, which are powers or vibrations of the Self-Conscious Being. This is akin

to the way Jane Austen conceived the general theme and story line of her novel. By Self-limitation, it holds back other aspects of itself, like the other wavelengths of white light, so that each aspect can manifest as a distinct vibration. Then Austen fashioned from her own personality and personal experience specific characters and events through which to manifest the theme of romantic love.

By Self-absorption, the Infinite Consciousness of which each aspect is an expression conceals or absorbs itself within the form it manifests, hidden from view within each form as the Individual Divine. By concentrating solely on the unique attributes of each character, the people in Austen's story acquire their own distinct and separate personalities. Each of these characters and events is a creation of the author's creative consciousness, which is its source and the very substance of which they are composed.

COSMIC DETERMINATES

The Capacity for Infinite Variations of Forms and Characteristics in Creation through Combinations of Real Ideas

Since the Absolute is Infinite, it must be capable of *an infinite number and variety of determining vibrations*. Let's explore this possibility.

From the Life Divine we know that the Absolute objectifies itself as Sachchidananda, (Existence, Consciousness, Bliss), from which all creation is derived. That Existence (Sat) reveals itself to the evolving soul as Atman (Self), Purusha (Conscious Being), Iswara (the Divine or God). Consciousness (Chit) extends itself as Knowledge and Will. Bliss (Ananda) expresses itself as Beauty, Love and Joy. Other essential powers and attributes of the Spirit include Silence, Peace, Infinity, Eternity, Freedom, Truth, and Goodness. He calls these the *fundamental spiritual determinations of the Infinite*. *Each of these has the capacity to combine with any of the others to form new determinates, which can in turn combine with one another and with the fundamental determinates to create other determinates.*

Jane in *Pride and Prejudice* manifests Goodness, which is formed by uniting Knowledge and Truth; while Elizabeth manifests goodwill for her sister, which is formed by uniting Goodness with Will.

Furthermore, each of these determinates can also differentiate itself as *subject, object and experience* (as knower, object of knowledge, and act of knowing; as lover, beloved and act of love; etc.). Each of these combinations of determinates represents a unique vibration of Being, a potentiality of the Infinite Absolute, which seeks to manifest itself for the sheer delight of existence.

Darcy as the Lover beholds the Beauty of Elizabeth's fine eyes, finds Love welling up within him, and feels the ecstatic Joy when his Beloved accepts his second proposal. In this manner, the Infinite can formulate

an infinite number of possible combinations of determinates seeking to manifest themselves in infinite Space and Eternal Time.

This explains the capacity of the Infinite to manifest an infinite variety of characteristics and forms.

Why We Experience the Opposite of Spiritual Determinates

But it does not fully explain our own experience. For in life we often encounter qualities that appear to be the very opposite of the spiritual determinates – ignorance, falsehood, suffering and evil. Man has always wondered why and how these contradictions of the Spirit exist. Do they too come from the Infinite? Sri Aurobindo explains that while the spiritual determinates exist absolutely in the Absolute, their opposites do not. They are like shadow and darkness, which do not really exist as things in themselves. A shadow is formed when light falls on an object from only one direction. You can dispel a shadow by bringing more light; you cannot add a shadow to anything. Darkness is perceived when light is absent. You can add light, but you cannot take away darkness.

The negative attributes we experience are limitations and distortions of the spiritual determinates created by self-absorption of Divine Consciousness through Involution by the action of dividing Mind. This involution creates Ignorance and Ego, which are mechanisms for distorting the appearance of the spiritual determinates so they appear as their opposites.

We find many such negative qualities in the story, which are created *by the suppression or partial concealment of a spiritual determinate.* Darcy's Pride is the tarnished egoistic version of the psychic quality of Dignity, an ennobling characteristic of high cultural aristocracy. His domineering interference in Bingley's relationship with Jane is the egoistic expression of a spiritual attitude of consciousness responsibility, which he expresses when he gives up his selfishness and saves Lydia and her family from complete disgrace. When Dignity and Responsibility express through the ego, they appear as lower or even opposite qualities. Darcy's pride offends others and discredits his own character. His domineering interference disrupts and destroys relationships between other people, which his capacity to assume consciousness responsibility for the problems not his own saves others and restores harmonious relations.

INDIVIDUALITY

Uniqueness of Each Form in Creation

Through this projection of spiritual determinants and their distortion by Ignorance and Ego, the Absolute is able to manifest a universe of create diversity.

However, Infinity by definition is without limit, so it can never be exhausted. This manifestation of an Infinitude of Infinities in a finite world of space and time still poses a problem. You might say the universe is simply too small and limited for the manifestation of Infinity ∞ . Some additional mechanism is required. The key is Individuality or uniqueness.

Each form, each being or soul represents a unique combination of determinates, a unique vibration of the Infinite Being. As every human being has a unique set of fingerprints, each soul represents a unique vibration of Being.

Darcy's pride, Wickham's charming falsehood, Elizabeth's impertinence, Collins' sycophancy, Mrs. Bennet's nerves, Mr. Bennet's aloofness, Mrs. Gardiner's self-restraint, Lady Catherine's vanity, Lydia's shamelessness, Mary's pedantry, Jane's goodness, and Charlotte's practicality represent vibrations of that Being in various degrees of purity and distortion. Still this is an oversimplification. *For each soul is in fact a microcosm of unique vibrations in combination.* Apart from a rich man's self-importance, Darcy has traces of goodness, truthfulness, clumsiness, domineering will, a master's kindness, a brother's affection, a lord's generosity, a friend's concern, a man's passion and a lover's idealism. He is himself a profusion of human qualities, *a unique combination of all the basic characteristics of human nature, the society and class from which he comes.* All these elements that add to the complexity of personality add to the capacity of the Absolute to manifest infinity.

Infinite Combinations and Influences; Complexity and Uniqueness

Furthermore, each of these souls has the capacity to relate, interact and creatively combine in experience with every other unique soul, creating *an infinite combination of influences and relationship.* Oversimplifying again, we might quantify the potential combinations that can be formed from the world's current population of 7 billion as 7×10^{18} possible interactions at any instant in time. The interactions of Darcy, Bingley, Caroline, Lady Catherine, Lady Anne, Collins, Mrs. Hurst, Wickham, Georgiana, Mrs. Young, Mrs. Reynolds, Colonel Foster, the Gardiners, the Hursts, the chambermaid at Lambton, Elizabeth and her family with one another represent only a few of an infinite number of possible combinations.

Space and Time add additional dimensions of complexity and uniqueness. Each point in space and each moment in time is an infinitesimal drop in the infinite and eternal ocean of the Absolute's self-experience. Each point in boundless universal Space is unique and each of these possibilities can occur at any, many or every different point in space, once or any number of times in any sequence. Each moment in

Eternal Time is also unique and each of these possibilities can occur at any, many or every different moment of time or any number of times in any order.

So we see Darcy and Elizabeth, two souls, meeting at the first Meryton ball where she accidentally overhears Darcy call her 'tolerable'; at the Meryton dance where she refuses Darcy's offer to dance; at Netherfield Hall when she goes to care for Jane; at the Netherfield ball where they do dance; at Rosings and on its grounds; in the Hunsford parsonage where he calls on her twice and proposes; twice again at Pemberley; twice at Lambton Inn; and finally at Longbourn. Each time the situation is slightly altered, their own thoughts and feelings are different and the action is unique. During their first meeting, Darcy is stiff, aloof and provoked when Bingley calls him stupid. At the next dance, she has already decided she does not like him, while he is already drawn to admire her fine eyes. At Netherfield Hall, she is bewildered when he invites her to waltz. When he stares at her in admiration, she is sure he means to silently mock and condemn, further aggravating her dislike. When he comes to propose at Hunsford, she is furious with him, having just learned from Fitzwilliam of Darcy's successful efforts to separate Bingley and Jane.

There are other unique circumstances surrounding each of these events. He is 27, she 21, not the reverse. She has a vulgar mother; he is parentless with a sister that needs a guardian and a domineering aunt trying to marry him to her own sickly daughter. Both, importantly, are not yet married nor too old or disinclined to wedlock. They met at the time of the French Revolution, not 50 years too early for such a marriage between the classes or 50 years too late for it to have any particular significance. The setting is evolutionary England, not Revolutionary France, where even their meeting is highly improbable. Wickham, Collins and Fitzwilliam are potential rival suitors hovering about, whose very presence prompts Darcy to propose. Each of their meetings is unique in its circumstances, its action and the disposition of the characters. The atmosphere of each of these places has its influence on their self-experience. When Bingley prods Darcy to dance with her, he calls her 'tolerable'. Caroline catches him staring at Elizabeth's fine eyes. He frowns on her muddy shoes and petticoat when she walks to Netherfield after the rains. In reply to Caroline's inquiry, he observes his sister is about the same height as Ms. Bennet. She feels an irresistible urge to taunt him during their dance at the Netherfield ball when she discovers that Wickham has not come. She teases him when he approaches her playing the piano at Rosings. When he proposes so clumsily, she calls him the last man on earth she would ever marry. Space and time are ultimately important when she visits Pemberley with the Gardiners. Had they departed just a few minutes earlier or had he arrived a few minutes later, they may never have met again. Later he calls on her at the inn precisely at the moment she is overwhelmed by the news of Lydia's elopement and confesses all to

him. As the experience of Darcy and Elizabeth varies with each place, moment, circumstance and event, the whole experience of the universe can be described as the subjective Self-experience of the Divine.

So too, each soul is capable of an inner self-experience of the various aspects of its own being – ideas, thoughts, feelings, sensations, and movements as well as spiritual experiences. Elizabeth laughs to herself when he calls her 'tolerable'. She keenly observes the silent coolness between Darcy and Wickham during their chance meeting on the road at Meryton. Anger rises when she believes Darcy had prevented Wickham's attendance at the ball. In spite of their angry confrontation at Hunsford, he wishes her health and happiness before he departs. The following day she observes the budding flowers announcing the start of Spring. She feels herself humiliated and absurd when she reads his letter and is ashamed of her own genius. They are both startled speechless by their unexpected meeting at Pemberley. Elizabeth falls from the heights of anticipation to the depths of despair in a single day when she reads Jane's letter at Lambton Inn. By an accidental word, Lydia reveals the secret of Darcy's noble intervention to save the family.

Moreover, each individual is evolving in time from ignorance to knowledge or knowledge to greater knowledge, so that *we are never the same from one moment to the next*. Early in the story Elizabeth is an unselfconscious member of the Bennet family, accepting but not reflecting on her own psychological inheritance or that of her parents. Mrs. Bennet's attempt to compel her to accept Collins' proposal is a turning point. When she refuses, her mother rejects her and says she will never speak to her again. Reading Darcy's letter at Hunsford, Elizabeth discovers that she never knew herself till then. She realized how blindly and foolishly she had been taken in by Wickham's charms and falsehood. She recognized the 'genius' (genii) within herself that took great joy in unjustly condemning and abusing Darcy. Still she makes excuses for Wickham and suppresses information about his character. But when she learns of Lydia's elopement, her vital falsehood is nakedly exposed to herself. She recognizes that in her which clung to what she knew to be untrue, bringing ruin on her own family. This transition from blissful ignorance to mature self-knowledge marked a progressive evolution of her consciousness from subconscious vitality to mental self-consciousness. Darcy underwent a parallel but more radical transformation from offensive and arrogant self-conceit to magnanimous goodness and self-effacing self-giving. He confesses that in abusing her, she had taught him a hard and painful lesson in self-awareness, but one that prompted him to drastically alter his attitudes and behavior. Their evolution adds marvelous new dimensions to the manifestation of spiritual determinates in their personalities and lives.

And their world too is evolving. The French Revolution has stirred the aspirations of the lower classes in society. Wickham dares to attempt to elope with Georgiana. Collins dares to introduce himself to Darcy.

Lydia has no fear of eloping with Wickham. Lady Catherine condescends to call on Elizabeth at Longbourn to press her case. Georgiana's governess, Mrs. Young, dares to conspire against Pemberley. Sir Lucas presumptuously offers to introduce Caroline at court. Mrs. Bennet does not fear to insult Darcy to his face. Tectonic shifts in the relationship between the classes alter opinions, attitudes, motives and actions at all levels of the society.

The Play of Life

Space and Time form the field or playground for this infinite, never ending quest for the delight of self-manifestation. *The interaction of each unique evolving soul with itself, other souls, each moment, act and event, with the evolving world of forms and forces in which it lives and with the Transcendent Eternal from one unique, infinitesimal moment to another, from one infinitesimal point to another, through myriad infinitesimal acts in boundless Space and Eternal Time is Lila [the Play of Life].*

Universe of Significance Revealed in the Infinitesimal

The ultimate secret of that manifestation is concealed in the infinitesimal. A thoughtless word overheard at a dance, circumstances compelling a change in Gardiners' holiday destination, Elizabeth's humiliating disclosure during a moment of distress later regretted, Darcy's fortuitous arrival in time to save his sister and to meet the woman he loved, Lydia's unintentional revelation of Darcy's presence at her marriage. These are the minute details of which our lives are woven, each concealing and occasionally revealing a universe of significance, for the entire Infinite resides in them all. Illusions of quantity and quality mask the Infinite in the infinitesimal.

FROM KNOWLEDGE TO POWER

Infinite Power of the Finite

To know the significance of the infinitesimal is to discover the power of the Infinite. All that we see as finite, limited, ignorant and impotent is in reality a frontal appearance of the Infinite. Behind every finite appearance lies an infinite potential. It means that every individual, every circumstance and every moment possesses infinite possibilities.

A Conscious Creative Power of the Infinite Gives Purpose and Evolutionary Direction of Things

But what sort of possibilities? If anything can happen at any moment, does it mean that we live in a world of pure chance? A world governed by pure mechanical chance in which nothing is predictable and anything can happen by chance would be a world of chaos. Yet, in spite of the

appearances, *that manifestation is not random or whimsical. It is a manifestation with a purpose and an evolutionary direction.* Infinite possibilities might be the action of an inconscient force acting randomly, but *infinite potentials are the expression of a conscious creative power.* The Infinite potential we speak of is an infinite potential for creation. The Infinite we are describing is a *conscious* Infinite, an Infinite that has the capacity to become *whatever it wants to become*, to manifest *whatever it chooses to manifest* at any and every moment.

We Are Each a Representative, Delegate of the Infinite, with Potential to Become a Unique, Individual Expression

And what does this omnipotent creative will have to do with us and our lives? Are we mere objects of the Infinite's creative imagination, playthings for its amusement? Sri Aurobindo says otherwise. He says *we ourselves are part of that creative Infinite. Every soul, every individual is in its inmost being a part and portion of that Infinite, its representative, its delegate.* Our very being is a portion of its Being, our personalities are richly woven fabrics composed of myriad colorful threads of that Being, vibrations of Being which are true aspects of Spirit. These same threads are the cosmic determinates of which the entire universe is constituted. *And the Divine's purpose and goal is to manifest or realize some aspect of its Infinite power and glory in each individual, to give birth to the Divine in man.* Each person is a form of that one Individual Divine which lives within each of us, yet is at the same time *a unique Spiritual Individual*, a unique combination of threads and fibers, an original manifestation of the Infinite. Therefore, he says, why do you want to worship God when *you can become God?* He asks us *to discover that the Individual is the Infinite.* For that Individuality to emerge, we must cease to identify with the ego.

The Power to Manifest the Infinite in Our Lives

Momentous consequences follow. *We each possess the creative power of the Infinite to manifest Infinity in our own lives.* We are each the creator of our lives. *We are the determinate of our own creation.* The Infinite possibility he speaks of is not an infinite chaos, but an infinite power for accomplishment. The creation is not a creation of chance but a creation without any limitations.

What then, determines the manifestation of the Infinite in our lives and how can we determine what it manifests? Our view of the world determines how we experience the Unknowable. He says that the Unknowable manifests itself according to the values of our human consciousness. *It is our choice of values, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, aspirations and subconscious urges that determines what comes to us in Life and how we experience it.*

Conscious Choice to Direct Our Lives

Yet we have the power to alter that choice at every moment, to choose differently. The first essential step is to recognize that the life we lead, the circumstances we experience, the problems we face are not inevitable. They are only a rendering of the Infinite in terms of our consciousness and, if we will, we can change that representation. In what way, with what effect? In any way and with any effect. *Because our lives are a frontal representation of the Infinite, we can make of our lives whatever we choose.* But first we must recognize and accept that we are the determinate. Then we must discover that we have the power to change that determination. Still further, we must experience that by such a change, the circumstances and events in our lives can be altered to any extent, that anything is possible. Finally, we must make the decision to change our view to change our lives. We must rent the veil of finite Nature to reveal the Unknowable.

Overcoming Our Limited Consciousness that Enables Us to See the Utility of All Things for Our Growth

How shall we change that view? *In order to reveal the Infinite in the finite, we must discard the mind's ordinary, superficial egoistic view of life and replace it with a non-egoistic regard.* The Unknowable appears to the divided ego as a life of limitations and dualities. We view life in terms of the opposites – good and evil, right and wrong, like and dislike, success and failure. But that is only the ego's limited, narrow response to Life. *When we widen our view to embrace the totality of existence, the Unknowable reveals a greater truth behind the dualities.* We discover that *all that comes to us, comes for our progress; every problem contains within it an opportunity, every evil directs us toward a greater Good, every error points toward a greater Truth, if only we give up the limitations of the ego. Life brings to us circumstances and reactions perfectly designed to awaken our consciousness and facilitate our progress.*

The ego expresses in everything we are and all we do. It divides the totality, distorts the reality. It generates competition, conflict and contradictions in place of universal harmony. We overcome ego physically by withdrawing egoistic initiatives, such as the desire of Mrs. Bennet to gloat in triumph over Jane's superiority to Lady Lucas' daughters, which drove Bingley away from Netherfield, and her insistent demand that Elizabeth marry Collins, which drove Collins and the entail into the arms of Charlotte. Egoistic initiative inevitably leads to an equal and opposite reaction, as Lady Catherine's initiative to prevent Darcy from marrying Elizabeth actually facilitated and expedited that very act she sought to prevent. When we withdraw initiative, contradictions and conflicts vanish. Darcy, who took egoistic initiative to interfere with Bingley's engagement to Jane is prompted by

this knowledge to reverse his attitude and take a non-egoistic initiative to arrange the engagement of Lydia with Wickham.

Overcoming Ego through Non-Reaction; Withdrawing Opinions and Preferences

We overcome ego vitally by withdrawing reactions of all types. Anything that disturbs, aggravates, annoys or provokes is a reaction of the ego that generates its own opposite reaction from life. Darcy's false pride attracted Wickham's false scandal and Elizabeth's wrongful prejudice. His refusal to dance with Elizabeth led him to later beg for the opportunity thrice before she was finally compelled to accept. His calling her tolerable led her in turn to later describe him as the last man on earth she would ever marry. When we withdraw our reactions, opposition disappears. When he took her hard lessons to heart, she found him quite amiable and pleasing. When she fully accepted her vital complicity in Lydia's elopement, the family's honor was restored.

We overcome ego mentally by withdrawing our opinions and preferences. That is what Darcy did when he overcame his sense of class superiority and selfishness. When we withdraw preferences, problems are transformed into opportunities. The woman who had spurned him so violently appeared at his very door and welcomed a renewal of his proposal. Mr. Bennet's sincere recognition of his own irresponsible conduct got three daughters married within a few months at no expense to himself.

More than anything, Darcy wanted to win Elizabeth's approval and her love, but he was too manly and sensitive to ask for it. In pursuing the wayward and disgraced Lydia to London, hunting down the scoundrel Wickham and negotiating with him, paying off his debts and purchasing an army commission for him –equivalent perhaps to a year's income for Darcy – these are, indeed, mortifying acts for anyone, let alone one so proud as Darcy. Yet he did it for her. And as an ultimate act of self-giving, we desired that his deeds be kept secret. That one small request on top of all else confirmed his transformation from an ordinary selfish man to an extraordinary individual. The single act of rejecting the claims of ego for credit, recognition and reward was sufficient to open the floodgates of the Infinite for a single moment and let one short phrase escape from secrecy. Thus, Lydia inadvertently disclosed to Elizabeth that Darcy was at her wedding. In time the whole secret of his magnificent generosity comes out. At that moment Elizabeth is assured of her future status as mistress of Pemberley and Darcy of the emotional fulfillment he so deeply longs for.

Mastering the World from Within Ourselves

We search in the wrong place for answers to the secret of our lives. It is there right before us in the smallest and apparently least significant

details. Our perfection is not measured in our conduct at moments of social importance when the eyes of the world are upon us, but in our attitudes to the smallest acts and least important persons. For what looks small and least important to our egos is Infinite. As Ganesh won the race around the world by circling his parents while his brother circled the globe, we need not travel the world to accomplish, but to master the world within ourselves.

Evolution of the Spirit

By Garry Jacobs of Mother's Service Society

[This is a detailed explanation on how the evolution of consciousness/spirit occurs according to Sri Aurobindo and Sri Karmayogi.]

The Indian Spiritual Tradition

Indian spiritual tradition held that the goal of each individual soul is to achieve moksha or liberation from the suffering and ignorance of life in the world, so that it can return and merge back into the blissful unity of undifferentiated Spiritual Oneness with the Transcendent. The method of traditional yogas is to withdraw and detach oneself from the surface being by an inner concentration by one of the faculties or parts of being the body, prana, heart, thoughts or mind, etc. Mental concentration leads to a complete quieting of the surface thoughts and eventually reveals the manomaya Purusha, the conscious witness being in the inner mind whose light of awareness and will are reflected in the activities of the mental nature. Persistent practice leads to a progressive separation from the surface mind and identification with the inner Purusha. Continued practice leads from the Purusha of the mental part to identification with the jeevatma, which is the central soul of the being behind all the parts. Further concentration and detachment leads to the withdrawal of the consciousness into the Superconscient and, if taken far enough, an irreversible dissolution of the soul in the One.

Aim is Evolution of Consciousness in the Universe

In contrast, Sri Aurobindo holds that the aim is an evolution of consciousness in the universe, rather than an escape from life and manifestation. This is commonly understood to mean *the evolution of the evolving soul in nature through many lives* from a tiny spark into an entity and eventually into a Psychic Being that is mature and powerful enough to come to the surface to influence, express through and direct our outer personalities and actions. He says that the realization of the psychic is the first step in the process of spiritual evolution, but actually it is only one aspect of the process.

Action of Comprehending Supermind in Creation Process

[Here is the process by which forces and forms came to be in creation.] Satchitananda is the undifferentiated Transcendent One. In Comprehending Supermind, it extends itself as an all-containing, all-pervading equal concentration of Cosmic Consciousness populated with forms of itself, which that consciousness pervades. The Consciousness is at once the field, the forms and the self-experiencing consciousness.

Action of Apprehending Supermind in Creation Process

In Apprehending Supermind, the Divine Consciousness projects itself into each of these forms of itself and assumes the *unique vantage point of each of its forms* (which becomes the spiritual individual). All these *individual* centers are projections of the same Consciousness which resides within each of them as the Individual Divine.

Simultaneously it becomes the all-containing, all-pervading universal consciousness, the Universal or Cosmic Divine, the field in which differentiation of form takes place.

When the manifestation transitions into the Ignorance, the Cosmic Divine becomes the Cosmic Being. The Spiritual Individual becomes the Ego and the Individual Divine becomes the Purusha which stands above and behind the creation.

Traditional View of Goal of Spirit

The tradition yoga seeks to release the embodied soul immersed in Ego so it can merge back into the Purusha escaping from manifestation but leaving the universal nature or Prakriti unchanged. Ego-Prakriti-Purusha is the formula of tradition.

Spiritual Evolution and the Psychic Being

The psychic evolves in the subliminal, a universal plane, at the intersection where the Subconscious, Superconscious, Circumconscious and Intraconscious meet. The psychic represents the merging and integration of these divided states into a unified state of being which is at once aware of its unity with all other beings in the universe as well as its unity with the Transcendent One.

Spiritual Evolution and the Supramental Being

Spiritual Evolution involves a progressive development of all three aspects – individual, universal and transcendent – and their gradual unification into a single embodied Supramental Being which is at once individual, universal and transcendent. By this process the spiritual individual is transformed into the Supramental Iswara. Psychic-Shakti-Iswara is the formula of Integral Yoga.

Evolution from Ego to Psychic; Cosmic to Supramental; Purusha to Ishwara

This wider view of Spiritual evolution can be described as the transformation of ego into psychic, the transformation of cosmic nature into supramental nature, and the transformation of the Purusha into the Iswara.

Mr. Bennet [in *Pride and Prejudice*] residing in the library represents the Purusha or transcending witness poise of the Divine. He is withdrawn and aloof, allowing freedom for the play of nature, Prakriti, represented by Mrs. Bennet, who ignorantly pursues her every whim.

Their children are the souls lost in nature, acting out the impulses of the surface ego. Elizabeth takes after the false Wickham, then Lydia elopes with him. Mr. Bennet feels and acts as if he were powerless. The family is completely out of control.

Events in the story compel Mr. Bennet to discover and exercise his true power over the family and his wife. When he asserts himself, he reveals himself as the creator, the Iswara. His wife, Prakriti, readily submits to his will and comes under control. The psychic emerges in Elizabeth and becomes an evolutionary instrument, leading to the elevation of the entire family. Lizzy becomes Mistress of Pemberley. Mr. Bennet establishes himself as not only Lord of Longbourn but esteemed guest at Pemberley. Three daughters are married and the family prospers.

By this process, the witness Purusha evolves into the Supramental Iswara, Lord of All Creation. Cosmic Nature evolves into the Iswara's Consciousness Force, the Supramental Shakti. The Psychic Being is transformed by the descent into the Supramental Being in the physical body. That Individual Being is a meeting point and center for the Shakti of the Iswara which stands behind it. At a still further evolutionary stage, the force or power of consciousness (Shakti) is reunited with the force or power of being to become the Supreme Iswara in which all distinction of Being, Consciousness and Force disappear. This highest status is not a return to undifferentiated oneness, for the Supreme Iswara embodies both the unmanifest One and the manifest Many. It is the conscious creative Being of the Infinite Absolute manifesting infinitely from its infinite storehouse of potential in the Non-Being. Thus, the final separation is removed between the Manifest and the unmanifest; the One and the many; the Infinite and the finite; Being and Consciousness-force; individual, universal and transcendent; Superconscient, inconscient and subliminal; God and universe. All are unified yet all continue to exist in the Infinity of the Omnipresent Reality.

The Integral Yoga Process

Sri Aurobindo and Karmayogi indicate that there is an outer mind and an inner mind. The outer is our normal consciousness. Through the inner mind, one can reach the transcendent Spirit, which can occur through intense meditation or other means, as occurred for the ancient Rishis.

However, we do not want to be lost in moksha/liberation apart from life. We want to experience the spirit IN LIFE. How can we do this?

Behind the inner mind is the Subliminal being, which sends up positive influences that guide us, as it is in touch with the superconscious throughout the seen and unseen universe. Deeper still is the Psychic Being, the evolving Soul and True Self within; behind the Heart in that center of being. From the Psychic, the integral yoga and its ensuing transformation can begin; though it is ultimately realized and fulfilled at the Supramental plane. How to arrive at the Psychic Being to begin this process?

Sri Aurobindo and Karmayogi offer consecration. When we consecrate, our consciousness moves to the subliminal and deeper still to the Psychic Being, which then causes our mind to expand to Supermind and its consciousness. Now we receive the benefit of that plane continually, including its Force, which evokes the infinite into the finite, and perceive the true nature of Reality, which is the Vision of Brahman.

Beyond consecration is Surrender; of our Psychic Being, as well as our very purpose of being to the Divine Mother. This accelerates and deepens the above process of evolution and transformation, enabling us to become true Supramental, Gnostic Beings at all planes.

This is how I understand the Integral Yoga process just now.

Sri Aurobindo's Multi-Faceted Dream for Humanity

The great seer and sage Sri Aurobindo imagined five steps that would usher in the evolution and transformation of humanity, enabling what he called a Divine Life on earth.

The first was the emergence of Asia into prosperity and cultural influence. That has surely begun, especially in the past decade or so. Her influence upon the thought of the world is bound to grow by leaps and bounds in the years to come.

The second was the prosperity and emergence of India. That too is well under way. For until she attains economic wellbeing, she cannot ascend to her rightful role as the spiritual Guru of the world -- another of the five steps Sri Aurobindo dreamed of.

Another mighty step towards a spirit-base Divine life on earth is the emergence of Human Unity, which is presaged by world alliances, culminating in world governance. The European Union (EU) is perhaps the first step in that direction in that it creates an alliance and unity of closely aligned nations. In the EU, disparate cultures are aligned to create a single entity that unifies all of them. Even the states that make up the USA is not really such an alliance. In the USA, the coming together of the individual states actually provided them with an identity, whereas in the EU the identify of each nation is nearly fully formed, and yet they are slowly willing to unify for a higher meaning and purpose.

Other such regional unifying alliances, along with a World Parliament and perhaps a world army would be further steps in the march towards the Unity of Nations and the Unity of the World.

There is also a spiritual component to Sri Aurobindo's vision. One is for India and one for the individuals of the earth. For India, she can rediscover the great spiritual wisdom of the ancient Rishis -- perhaps the greatest spiritual knowledge and experience ever known to Man -- and apply it to the economic, social, and cultural life of her people. In that way, India can become a living experiment of the power of the spirit. If she succeeds, she can take her rightful place as the Guru of the World.

Finally, disparate individuals around the world can begin to come to know the spirit in their own individual lives; discovering it within in the depths of their being by opening to and surrendering to the descending Force above, and then applying it in the details of their lives. In that process, such individuals will invariably transform all aspects of their being -- mental, psychological, vital/emotional, and physical -- and develop capacities to quickly attract good fortune from the world around. When a cadre of such new-type humans emerge in the world - - especially when they have made what Sri Aurobindo calls the ultimate "Supramental change," where the descending Force and Truth Consciousness has permeated and transformed all aspects of their being -- then they will create the fifth and final condition for a divine life on earth to come about.

The emergence of Asia, the prosperity of India, the movements towards World Unity, the spiritual emergence of India and Her ascent to become the Guru of the world, and the full blossoming of transformed spirit-oriented individuals are the intervening steps that can usher in a Divine Life on Earth and fulfill Sri Aurobindo's multi-faceted dream for humanity.



Other Books by Roy Posner

A New Way of Living

The Miraculous Phenomenon of Life Response

A Life Response Reader

Life Response in Work

Essentials

Inspirations

The Journey



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7-fold Ignorance
7-fold Knowledge

A

Absolute (The-)
Accomplishment
Achievement
Aim of Life
Ananda
Apprehending Supermind
Arguments
Ascent
Aspirations in Life
Attitude
Auditory

B

Being (Existence)
Being and Becoming
Bhagavad Gita (or Gita)
Bliss
Brahman

C

Calm
Causal
Causality
Character of Life
Chit
Collective Consciousness
Collective Existence
Comprehending Supermind
Concentrated Effort
Conflict
Conscious Force, Conscious-Force
Consciousness-Force
Consecrate
Consecration
Constitutional Ignorance
Contradiction
Contradictions are Complements
Cosmic Ignorance
Cosmic Planes

Cosmology
Creative Process
Creativity
Creator

D

Deepest Purpose
Delight
Depths Within
Descent
Destiny
Determinism
Discipline
Disease
Diversity
Divided Beings
Divine Consciousness
Divine Intent
Divine Life
Divine Reality
Divine Source
Duality

E

Eastern
Ego
Egoistic Ignorance
Ego-sense (or Ego sense)
Emotions
Energy
Essence
EU
European
European Union
Evolution
Evolution and Involution
Evolutionary Process
Evolving Soul
Exclusivity
Exclusivity of Mind
Existence (Being)

F

Faith
 Falsehood
 Fate
 Fear
 Finite
 The Finite
 Fixed Nature
 Fixidity
 Form of Force (or Forms of Force)
 Free Will
 Future into the Present

G

Genius
 Gita (or Bhagavad Gita)
 Gnostic Being
 Good and Evil
 Group Mind

H

Habits
 Harmonic
 Harmony
 Human Aspiration
 Human Intellect
 Human Makeup

I

Illness
 Illuminations (or Illumination)
 Illumined Mind
 Immortality
 Inconscience
 Inconscient
 India
 Individual, Universal, Transcendent
 Individualism
 Individuality
 The Infinite
 Infinite and Finite (or the Infinite and the Finite)
 Infinite Consciousness
 Infinite Divine
 Infinite Potential
 Infinity
 Inspiration
 Instantaneous Miraculousness
 Instinct
 Integral Knowledge
 Integral Yoga
 Interest
 Internet
 Intuition (or Intuitions)
 Intuitive Mind
 Involution
 Involution and Evolution
 Ishwara

J

Jean Valjean
 Joy

K

Karma
 Karmayogi

L

Les Miserables
 Levels of Mind
 Life Response
 Life's Problems
 Light
 Lila
 Logic
 Love
 Lower Hemisphere

M

Material
 Matter
 Maya
 Maya – lower
 Maya – higher
 Mental
 Mental Planes
 Metaphysical
 Metaphysics
 Mind
 Mind Planes
 Miraculous (or Miraculousness)
 Money
 Mortality
 Multiplicity

N

Nature
 Nature of Existence
 Nature of Reality
 New Humanity
 Non-Fiction

O

Objectivity
 Object
 Occult
 Occultism
 Omnipresent Reality
 The One
 One and the Many
 Oneness
 Openness
 Opinions (or Opinion)
 Opportunity (or Opportunities)
 Original Ignorance
 Original Thinker (or Original Thinking)
 Overmind

P

Pain
 The Parts
 Patience (or Patient)
 Pessimism
 Philosophy
 Physical Consciousness
 Pioneer (or Pioneers)
 Plane of Supermind
 Planes of Mind
 Play of Life (Lila)
 Positive and Negative (or Negative and Positive)
 Power of Perception (or Powers of Perception)
 Practical Ignorance
 Prakriti (or Nature)
 Pride and Prejudice
 Principles
 Principles of Life
 Problems of Life
 Process of Creation
 Process of Growth
 Progressive Movement (or Progressive Movements)
 Project (or Projects)
 Prosperity
 Psychic Being (or Psychic Entity)
 Psychic Transformation
 Psychological
 Psychological Ignorance
 Pure Existent (or Pure Existence)
 Pure Reason
 Pure Thought
 Purusha (or Soul)

R

Rational Mind
 Rationality
 Real Idea (or Real Ideas)
 Reality (The-)
 Reason
 Religion
 Revelation (or Revelations)
 Revelation of Knowledge
 Right Relations of Things
 Rishi (or Rishis)
 Routine (or Routines)

S

San Francisco
 Sat (Existence, Being)
 Sat-Chit-Ananda
 Science
 Scientist (or Scientists)
 Self-Absorption
 Self-Awareness
 Self-Conception

Self-Consciousness
 Self-Giving, Givingness
 Self-Limitation
 Sensation (or Sensations)
 Sense
 Sense Mind
 Senses
 Separative
 Separativeness
 Sevenfold Ignorance
 Sevenfold Knowledge
 Silent Mind
 Simultaneous Time
 Soul
 Soul of Personality
 Space and Time
 Spiritual Dimension of Life
 Spiritual Force
 Spiritual Individual
 Spiritual Mind
 Spiritual Philosophy
 Spiritual Reality
 Spiritual Transformation
 Spiritualized Mentality
 Subconscious (or Subconscience)
 Subconscious
 Subject
 Subjectivity
 Subliminal (or Subliminal Being)
 Substance
 Subtle
 Subtle Plane
 Suffering
 Superconscious
 Supermind
 Supernature
 Supramental Being
 Supramental Perception
 Supramental Plane
 Supramental Transformation
 Supramental Truth
 Supra-Normal Experiences
 Supraphysical
 Surface
 Surface Being
 Surface Consciousness
 Surface Mind

T

Technology
 Temporal Ignorance
 The Ascent
 The Descent
 The Human Aspiration
 The Reality
 The Spiritual Individual
 The Triple Transformation
 Theory of Creation

Transcendent Purpose
Transcendent Reality
Triple Transformation
Truth
Truth Consciousness
Truth Knowledge

U

Universal Consciousness
Unity
Unity in Diversity
Universality
Upanishads
Upper Hemisphere
Vedanta

V

Vedas
Vision (or Visions)
Visionary
Visual

W

Wealth
Western
The Whole
Witness
Witness Consciousness
WWII

Y

Yoga