

Sri Aurobindo's Path to The Future



by Roy Posner

Beyond Surface and Sense

If Sri Aurobindo has given us a vision of where humanity is headed -- i.e. towards a Divine Life on earth -- then what is his path that will take us from here to there? If we are ignorant, divided beings, seeking to rediscover our unity, as Sri Aurobindo believes, then what is the path that will take us from our current state of division, duality, conflict, and contradiction to the state of oneness, perfection, and unity?

Before we answer that question, it would be helpful to know why we were born divided, ignorant beings in the first place. In *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo indicates that an Infinite Consciousness and Being wished to extend its own Delight into a universe of forms. Interestingly, it did so by *withdrawing* its own highest consciousness in those forms. It did so to enable the greatest variation and multiplicity in creation; which in turn would allow for the greatest variety of experience of Delight when we humans overcome our divided nature and discover its higher equivalent.

In this involutory context we were born divided, ignorant beings, yet capable of becoming its opposite.

Still the question remains; how do we move from our divided nature to a higher, unified consciousness? How do we overcome our inherent Ignorance born of creation and evolve in consciousness so that we can become realized beings, and forerunners of a new spirit-oriented humanity? Is there a process we can follow? A path from here to there? Sri Aurobindo indicates that we begin this transition by changing the way we perceive the world -- i.e. the state of our *mentality*. He indicates that we have a limited perception of life because of the way we perceive it.

If we examine our thought processes in the course of a day, we will notice that we tend to live on the surface of life, and as a result are heavily influenced by the sense data streaming in through our five senses. As a result, the information we perceive as the truth of things is actually inherently flawed, exclusive, and incomplete; as what we see and hear may be leading astray from the integral truth that is presenting itself. Such sensory data leads us to partial or error-prone understanding, precipitating wrong-conclusions, leading to poor decisions, supporting wrong actions that end in flawed or failed results.

As indicated, we open ourselves to the barrage of sense input in our minds because we live on the surface of life. Living on the surface accentuates the mind's acceptance of sense-based information, with all of its limitations. In other words, through surface and sense we are driven away from the *logic-based, rational* capacities of mind, where we begin to experience a somewhat fuller and more complete knowledge, where there is more understanding and

insight, leading to better decisions, right actions, that are more likely to end in relatively successful outcomes.

When we live on the surface dominated by sense inputs, we reinforce our inherent divided and dualistic nature. Instead of perceiving the truth of relationship of things, their harmony and purpose, we perceive things in simplistic dualities of pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, good and evil, and other conflicting and contradictory perceptions and sensations of life. On the other hand, if we move away from the surface, from the influences of the senses on mind, and move to a deeper poise within, then these divisions and dualities of life begin to recede in our consciousness. As rational and logical thought replaces sense-based thought, we begin to see the right relation of things, the multi-faceted truth of things, the right perception of the becoming and flow of life. This naturally supports greater understanding, insight, and knowledge, which supports better decisions, actions, and results.

And yet, as we shall see when we move to a deeper poise our understanding not only takes shape as rational thought, but also through higher, spiritual-oriented means, including cognition of knowledge through light, as intuition of knowledge without thinking, and supramental perception, where one is in complete identity with the object of knowledge.

Beyond Ego to Our Secret Self

Moving away from the surface of life also serves another purpose, which is related to the first. Moving from the surface to the depths of our being enables us to move from the perceptions of *selfish* self, i.e. our *ego*, to a freer, more open, and more aware self. As we withdraw from the surface, to the inner consciousness inside ourselves, the outer ego-sense that separates us from the world, from others, that sees the world from a selfish perspective, withdraws, melts away, revealing a Truer Self. That Greater Self sees, experiences the world in a wider scope; taking in the myriad of possibilities in the atmosphere instead of just its own; opening up to, and being in tune with more of the possibilities unfolding in the atmosphere at any moment in time; opening us to the will and inputs of others; and opening us to the universal forces, powers, and suggestions. In other words, as we move from the surface to the depths, our ego sense of separateness retreats, revealing a new found Vast Scope of existence, in which we are open to and perceive the infinite possibilities and potentials of life. [ep]

Consecrated Living

But this is but the first achievement on the path; for there are other, greater milestones to be reached. Immediately, we are confronted by a serious roadblock; which is how do we *maintain* this inner status? While we may be able to retreat from the surface and plunge within into the depths of our being on occasion, -- no mean accomplishment -- we will find that our normal nature will *resist and fight back*, trying to regain its lost territory. Our "physical consciousness," as well as the deeply recessed unevolved *subconscient* parts within will resist, throwing us back to the surface of life; back into ego, into time-bound life, into sense-bound mind, leading to the whole sad play of ignorance and falsehood once again. Somehow we need to make a more *permanent* connection or bridge to our deeper parts.



To that end Sri Aurobindo suggest that we need to change our *reference* in life. Rather than live for our own selves, for our own needs and desires, we change our reference in life to the Higher Will and Purpose. The method for accomplishing this he calls "Consecration." When we come upon an act or event or circumstance in life, we can learn to open ourselves to the Higher Power, to the Force to offer to It the control and outcome of these situations in life. As we shift toward such consecrated living, we move from a

fundamental faith in our *own* abilities and capacities to bring about the best fortune, to a faith in the workings of the Higher Power and Force. As we move from faith in ourselves to faith in the Force, we begin to move away from a self-driven life; which has the effect of gradually breaking down the ego's grip over our lives. In tandem with movements away from the surface, there is gradually established a clearer, a stronger, a more permanent connection between our normal human consciousness and our newly discovered inner consciousness. As a result, we find it easier to make the connection to our deeper parts on a regular basis. We can more easily and more often focus our consciousness in the depths of our being, enabling us to experience all of the staggering benefits in life that issue from being centered there.

When we consecrate events, acts, and routines of life to the Force, not only does life respond abundantly, positively, and miraculously on the outside -- a fascinating discussion in of itself -- but we shift our reference to the Higher Power, which has the effect of relaxing the grip of selfish-self and ego on us, which in turn break down the barriers to the within. If the consecration reaches a certain level of intensity, or is organized to a certain threshold in our lives, then we have reached a new milestone in life in which we begin to connect with our deepest part, the Psychic Being, the personal evolving soul within. At that point we have begun the second leg of our journey on the path that Sri Aurobindo has laid out before us.

The Personal Evolving Soul

The personal evolving soul takes shape in us when we have made a certain amount of inner and outer progress in life. Our original spark of the Divine, which is popularly understand as "the Soul," is extended, takes on a new dimension, and becomes an *evolving* soul; dependent on *our* progress for *its* evolutionary progress. We can say that when we are born a Psychic Being enters us and continues its long journey through many bodies to acquire greater and greater soul substance. It in essence seeks further growth through our growth. When we have made a certain degree of progress, the spark soul develops into a personal evolving soul. At some point if we have made the right progress, it formulates into a more distinct entity that we become conscious of it. If we live a life steeped in regular and ever-growing consecration to the Force, then at some point it is likely that the Psychic coagulates into something that we recognize; that we experience it as a real essence of being within ourselves.

When we are stationed in the Psychic Being we are far removed from the surface of life. We are far from a mental existence focused on sensory input; far from the ego-sense of the surface, and its separateness, its ignorance, and falsehood; far from the limited sense of self. We are now in a domain that is vast, not limited; infinite, not finite; timeless, not time-bound; unified, not separative; universal and transcendent, not merely individual in nature. When we connect to this region, we have made the decisive turn that can take us further along the path to our ultimate evolutionary spiritual destiny.

When we have touched this region, our life begins to change in many other ways. For one, we now have a new-found Friend, an Inner Guide, which sends up signals to us suggesting which actions we are taking are false ones, which behaviors are wrong-headed, and which parts of our nature need to be examined, changed, or shed. In that sense the personal evolving soul has become our Inner Guide in life. In addition, as we connect with the Psychic region, we experience that we are not merely a *limited self*, rooted in ego and separateness, but we are actually a vast *spiritual Self*, with great spiritual capacities in life; that we are a part of, not divided from, great universal and transcendent currents, powers, and properties. Also along those lines, we begin to perceive that we are not just an *individual* spiritual Self, but we are also a Universal and Transcendent Self, capable of universal actions, that can affect others, society, institutions, the world, and the universe. We even perceive that we are the very instruments of the will of the universe, and of the transcendent Will of the Divine.

We begin to see and experience the fact that in the big scheme of things we serve a universal and transcend role in fulfilling the evolutionary purpose of the cosmos.

As we move beyond little self, and open the portals to True Self, the personal evolving soul, we begin to experience other vast changes in our being. For one, we begin to know things in quite unexpected ways. We experience new forms of cognition, where knowledge comes to us not only through the hard mental thinking processes, but through sudden and unexpected illuminations and intuitions of knowledge. We now begin to know things because they simply appear in our minds; complete, unexpected, on their own. The object of knowledge that we were consciously or subconsciously seeking to know and understand, begin to simply appear in our thoughts. Who would have expected such a dramatically different way of perceiving the world?

At that point we are far from the ignorant half-truths, misunderstandings, errors, ignorances, and misinformation that we acquire when we experience life solely through mind filled with sense-input, as a result of living on the surface. We even begin to move beyond the mind's higher capacities for logic and rational thought (which in of itself certainly gives us clearer, more accurate, and fuller understanding and insight into life than the lower functioning of sense-based mind). Now however we begin to move beyond thought itself. We have reached that point where knowledge begins to simply descend into our thoughts and mind on their own. This comes in part as a result of our previous opening to the universal forces and powers through the connection to the Psychic Being, which enables descents of knowledge to come into us from the universal plane of Mind.

At this juncture on the path we are rapidly moving away from our old mode of existence -- of experiencing the divisions and dualities of life -- to a new modality, where we perceive and experience the *unity* of everything we encounter, which has the effect of opening us up further to greater vistas of life, to the enormous scope of life that was formerly hidden; to its infinite *potentials and possibilities*. As we increasingly experience our vast Self within, we feel more connected to a universe and a Godhead of possibilities. At that point we are rapidly moving away from our divided nature, toward our Unified and Infinite nature, which Sri Aurobindo understood as our True Being, which is our ultimate evolutionary status in life.

Surrender

As we more frequently embody to these vast possibilities, we more clearly perceive that an ego-based life can no longer be the basis of our existence. Because we have made contact with the overwhelming attributes and dimensions of the personal evolving soul within, and seen and felt the enormous causal power of the Divine Force to affect life around us when we open to It, we begin to seriously perceive that our life needs to move in another direction; that only a life *surrendered* to the Higher Will and Force is a life worth living.

At this point on the path our days take on a new quality. We sense that our very purpose for existing is to be an instrument of the Higher Will. Along the way we experience the *ecstatic pleasure* of giving ourselves to this power. Even as we lose faith in our old selfish will, we develop an almost inviolable faith in the utility, purpose, and right actions of this Higher Will and Force. For everything we do in our daily lives is now self-surrendered to this Will and Force, as we experience the reality that everything that issues from this arrangement works out perfectly, abundantly, infinitely, miraculously.

Also, as we surrender our daily existence to the Divine Will and Purpose, there is an even greater solidification of our connection to our personal evolving soul within. The greater the frequency and intensity of the surrender, the more we become one with our True Self centered in the Psychic; with its myriad of benefits, not the least of which is the feeling and sensation of a great Delight of being.

Eventually the connection with the Psychic Being is so great that we move from merely experiencing the psychic and its myriad of benefits on occasion to a permanent realization of this psychic nature. We perceive our True Self, our Psychic being, as our real and only essence. In addition, our relationship with the spiritual Force becomes even more active, easier to engage, creating quicker results, leading to even greater effectivity in our lives. Sri Aurobindo calls this vast change and orientation of our nature and being to the True Self the "Psychic Transformation." This is the first great and decisive change that will eventually transform our nature from a divided being to an ultimate spiritual and supramental nature.

Spiritual Transformation

The path as we understand it so far is: -- to move away from the surface of life to the depths within; to consecrate actions and events and movements in our lives to the Divine Force, and see its causal power to make life respond; to discover the personal evolving soul in the deepest depths within; to tend this Psychic opening and experience its wondrous qualities of Delight, Universality, Guided existence, descents of light and intuitions of knowledge, and others; to shift the focus of our lives to a Divine-centric existence through the surrender of our entire being to the Supreme; and to complete the Psychic change so that it is the dominating influence of our existence, which we recognize as our True Self.

In return for living such a life, the various parts of our human makeup are also deeply affected. We have already spoken of the change to our *mental* consciousness, where we have moved within, and, therefore, away from the sense-based functioning of mind to logical and rational mind; and further still to spiritual mind, where knowledge comes on its own, without thought, as descents of light and intuitions of the object of knowledge we seek. This is truly a radically different way of interacting with, perceiving, and knowing the world. It gives us a vast power of understanding, insight, knowledge, and wisdom that enables right action in life.

Moreover, this change in orientation of Mind has the effect of dissolving the staggering Ignorance that we are born to and live in. We move from the *exclusive* nature of Mind, which accepts one truth, leaving out the remainder, to an openness and acceptance of the *many-sided* truth and knowledge of things; of the *whole* truth that is emerging at any moment. We have severed our relationship with the sense-based workings of mind, fortified by living on the surface of life, supported by ego which causes us to perceive only the small parts of the emerging truths and knowledge, and have acquired a greater, more *integral* understanding insight, knowledge, and wisdom.

In that process of moving to the higher spiritual functionings of mind, we also begin to see the *right relation of things* in life; whether it be the relationship of things unfolding around us, the right relation between ourselves and that environment and others, or even our true Nature in terms of our whole nature, and our true Self in relation to the universe and the transcendent Divine.

In addition to this dramatic change to our mental functioning, to the way we acquire knowledge, and perceive the world, there are the effects on our vital/emotional and physical parts. For example, our vital/emotional being begins to be transformed from its normal lower inclinations of desire, pleasure, sensation, need, and selfish attachment to correspondingly more subtle, refined behaviors and capacities. We experience a shift from our negative attitudes and sentiments to higher attitudes and behaviors, such as vital patience and calm, and concern and self-giving towards others.

There are even the beginning of great changes at the physical level, as we are able to overcome our fixed habits, the need for intense stimulation and attachment, and our reflexive reaction to pain. We even learn how to prevent and overcome physical illness, as we understand their subtle nature, their relationship to our psychological state, to a lacking

energy, and other factors. At a further point we begin to perceive that it is possible to even control the body's processes of decay and death (though at this point on the path we do not as yet have the power to make that understanding a lived reality).

Along the way we have begun to perceive and understand the subtle workings of life; including its hidden patterns and rhythms that were formerly occult to us. We see patterns of repetition in events and acts, predecessor events that indicate future events, experience precognition of coming events, sense things from a distance, and acquire other powers of instinct, intuition, and subtlety that enables us to perceive the flow, and anticipate future outcomes, in life. As the inner being is strengthened and the mind rises to spirit, our connection to universal forces and powers increase, giving us an added insight and power in life.

There is also the further development of our understanding of the relationship between our inner consciousness and the world outside us. We learn how to make life on the outside respond from within ourselves. Stationed within we increasingly call the Force to bring life *to us*, instead of the normal way life works where we interact with life only through our outer actions. We learn the nuances of how the *outer* life responds to our *inner consciousness*, and have ever-increasing experiences in that area. The result is that life comes to us more frequently, with greater results and benefit. In this way our level of accomplishment and success in life is vastly accelerated. We begin to see that such inner power, used in conjunction with the Force, enables us to overcome the normal bonds of time and space and causality. For example, in terms of *time* we enable things that would have taken days, weeks, months, and years to transpire, happen in a flash. In that way we can say that we are able to bring the future into the present. In terms of *space*, we change situations and circumstances that seemed limited, finite in scope to break out into multiplicity, abundance, and vast results. In other words, we bring the infinite into the finites of life.

As we call the Force into life from the depths of our innermost being, we become the masters of life. We have begun to harness the greatest powers of creation, defying the bonds of space, time, finite, ego, and mind; and releasing into life abundance, truth, harmony, and perfection.

As we continue in this process of inner development and spiritual organization, the Force and Power above continues to descend and enter our being. As we continue to make the inner/spiritual change, we experience descents of peace, light, knowledge, power, and bliss from the Divine Force and Power. This is continually working in the background, transforming our once limited and divided mental, vital, and physical parts.

At some point all of these experiences coagulate into something more permanent. At that point experience gives way to further permanent transformation of our being. We have attained the next great milestone on the path, that which Sri Aurobindo calls the "Spiritual Transformation."

Supramental Transformation

The Path then continues on into realms that seem almost impossible to fathom; and yet it is, according to Sri Aurobindo, our ultimate evolutionary destiny to discover and embody. We begin to move towards a Divine Life in which individuals have discovered their supramental, divine nature. There the nature is transformed into something that is unmistakably something beyond the current human functioning.

At that point supramental Force, the great discovery of Sri Aurobindo, has begun to permeate our entire nature, enabling us to become a new form of being; a Gnostic, evolutionary being, with extraordinary powers in life. From that status when we want to know something, it is simply known, without the interference of thought. In fact, in the instant we wish to know the thing, we are able to conjure from within ourselves that very knowledge, whether or not it

ever existed before! We are at once the creator and the knower of the object of inquiry. We are subject, object, and method all in one. A staggering concept to behold indeed!

In everything we encounter we possess a total and integral knowledge of the thing. We know each detail of a thing in reference to every other related detail; and we perceive the right relation of each detail to the whole. We see every side of that object of knowledge that needs to be seen. We also perceive the ultimate source Object, or higher principle from which those subunits are derived. We can even know a thing in reference to the unfolding, to the Divine Will and possibility.

In the outer life there is a supreme harmony, where everything works our perfectly, instantly, abundantly. The inner and the outer are no longer separate, as we see ourselves as truly universal and transcended Selves. In that way, all of the world, the universe itself, is at our command. We are in perfect harmony with everything that is unfolding around us. We are in unity with every other person around us, as we perceive their being is part of our being, that their souls and our own soul are iterations of the same Divine soul. All purpose, action in life is permeated by this unity, which enables infinitely beneficial outcomes in the shortest of periods of time with the least effort.

We see unity and emerging higher harmonies everywhere; in every thing, in every conflict, contention, contradiction, division, and duality.

Further along on this ultimate leg of the Path our bodies are no longer are subject to death and decay because the very cells of our body have been supramentalized so that they respond to the higher Power, preventing their decay and degeneration, enabling them remain alive as long as we desire. In other words, we are on the road to becoming immortal.

At this point we become more like the Creator of the universe, i.e. the Absolute, the Omnipresent Reality, as we experience life as *life without limitation*. We experience life without time, as we abridge time, bringing future outcomes into the present, which can become the Eternal Now. We experience life as spaceless, where we move life from its current limited, finite nature to its unlimited, infinite nature, as vast accomplishment and results manifest from seemingly out of nowhere. We defy the bonds of time, space, and finite; substituting all-time in the now, and all-space and possibility into a single designated space and point in time. In that way a leader, a scientist, a manager, a worker can accomplish a thousand fold in a thousandth of the time with a thousandth of effort. In that way we are able to make the timeless, spaceless, infinite nature of the Divine Being into the reality and becoming of our daily lives.

We also now endlessly experiencing the Divine attributes of Peace, Power, Oneness, Love, Knowledge, and Truth in our lives, not as some abstraction, but as a never-ending, permanent experience, saturating everything we do, in every moment of our lives. In that way we have now become an embodiment of the Divine Being; a form for which the Being has poured Its divine attributes. We have become God in life; fulfilling our ultimate evolutionary destiny.

Divine Life on Earth

It is here that the Path reaches its culmination and goal. We have come to the point where we have overcome the dualities and divisions of our nature and life and existence, and have found the higher harmonies, the unity, the Oneness in all things. At that point we have moved toward the fulfillment of our evolutionary purpose; to bring the Divine Being into life; to spiritualize life so that it can experience its ultimate potentials and possibilities. We have discovered the True Nature of ourselves, of the world, of the universe, of the transcend Divine, and have integrated them into our daily existence. And in that process of discovery, we experience the ultimate Delight in existence, fulfilling the very purpose for which the Divine

enabled this universe; for the joy of discovery of our deepest and most profound spiritual nature, and the unity of that nature with the Divine Source and Creator.

As we approach this supramental status, we are centered in the personal evolving soul, one with the Divine intent, fully utilizing the Force, moving the outer life from within; living a timeless, spaceless, infinite life, of inherent harmony, unity, and Oneness, mirroring those very same properties of the Divine Being from which this universe emerged.

When a number of such individuals come together, they begin to form the basis of a Divine Life on earth, where the social fabric begins to become a new fabric, just as the human as now become a supra-human. The Path extends outwards outside ourselves, to the environment, to others we collaborate with, to the collective, to social entities, the society, the world, the universe, and to the transcendent Divine. Now there is established a new human life, populated with individuals of the highest evolutionary spiritual nature, working in tandem with one another, with the Force to establish the Divine nature throughout society, the world, extending to the ends of the universe.

This then is Sri Aurobindo's Path: a movement from the surface to the depths, from sense mind to logical mind, from ego and separateness to the inner being; a consecrated life opening the Force that enables life to respond with instantaneous miraculousness; a wider opening to the personal evolving soul within, enabling a connection to universal forces and powers, to descents of knowledge as light and intuition from the universal planes, to the discovery of the spirit which enables Delight, and Guided Life from within that helps us perfect the mental, vital, and physical nature; a progressive self-giving and surrender to the Divine Will and Purpose; a spiritual transformation that spiritualizes mind, overcomes the fundamental Ignorance of our nature and life, and brings descents of the Force as Light, Peace, Power, and Bliss into the mental, vital, and physical parts of our being; a movement toward an ultimate Gnostic, supramental nature, where the inner controls the outer, where we experience the true truths through knowledge by identity, and where our human vital and physical nature is radically transformed, leading to a life of unaltered Delight and a physical immortality; culminating in a our new ultimate evolutionary nature as supramental Divine beings living a collective divine life, in which there is the permanent overcoming of the divisions and dualities of existence, and there is the full play of the Divine Being in matter and every element and aspect of the universe.

FURTHER READING

- To read an article that describes Sri Aurobindo's essential vision for the world, click [here](#).
- To see an analysis of Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical opus, *The Life Divine*, click [here](#).
- To review additional thoughts on the life and teachings Sri Aurobindo from the Growth Online Knowledge Base, click [here](#).